

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

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Sacrifice

for Bhagavatam

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

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June 10, 1997, 12:10 a.m.

Dreamt of the lower nature. When I awoke I thought of making a sacrifice for the *Bhagavatam*. Give up lower for higher. Enter, study, relish "my only motives. Srila Prabhupada said, "read my books or else how can you preach?" Not reading to gather material, but to find *bhakti*.

"Sacrifice: 1. n. the offering of anything to God; anything offered to a divinity; surrender made in order to gain something else. 2. v.t. (sacrificing, sacrificed) to make an offering or sacrifice of. To offer up a sacrifice to some deity."

It's nice how the *Cambridge Dictionary* sees it in relation to God. Probably an American dictionary would mention the baseball play "sacrifice," where the batter gives up his chance to get on base in order to advance the position of a teammate already on base.

My plan is to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. What is the sacrifice? To give time and attention to reading rather than concentrating mainly on writing. In the past I would even suspend, or at least minimize my reading so that I could write a book. Now I'm reading every chance I get, then asking my writing self to come along. He can free-write between reading attempts. He may write notes on what "we" are reading, or he may write whatever comes to mind, but he can expect uninterrupted reading sessions to fill his thoughts.

Why? Because I want to go back to Godhead. I want to develop love of God. "If we give up *bhakti-yoga* and simply busy ourselves in the analytical study of the nature of things as they are, then the result will be practically nil." (*Bhag.* 3.29.3, purport)

I can write about *bhakti* without reading all day long because I've read plenty already and I remember it. Still, I want to read to live constantly in the real and vivid Krishna conscious present. I'm desperate for the actual taste and realization of Krishna consciousness. If I don't regularly read, I'll drift into mundane psychology or writing techniques to tap the unconscious. I'll read something else if I don't read the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

When Kapiladeva proposed to speak more on *bhakti*, Devahuti was eager, but also asked Him to describe the details of *samsara*, "For by hearing such calamities we may become detached from the activities of the world." Kapila will speak about time too, something of which I'm often aware. I've found peace in recent years, but I know I can't enjoy it always. Don't you see? One season changes to another and the years pass like that. As the years pass, people change, places change, and events transpire. In this age, those events don't make life more peaceful. We hope to become more spiritually advanced in time, but often we find that we are not, except in slow ways.

*So we'll go no more a-rovin'
a-rovin' in the night,
oh, we'll go no more a-rovin'
when the moon she is so bright.*

* * *

My sacrifice is not always joyfully performed, although *Bhagavad-gita* says that *raja-vidya* is *susukam*, joyful. Coping and sometimes growing tired of *only* that. I try various means to refresh myself, but remain confused. "The only path for mitigating his fatigue in the struggle for existence is the path of devotional service, or the path of Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 3.9.5)

Lord Kapila saw that His mother's questions were asked for the benefit of all conditioned souls and He was moved by compassion to speak. He is so compassionate He sends His confidential servants to deliver souls. If other devotees become compassionate toward conditioned souls, then the Lord becomes compassionate toward them.

Read. You know which book "the *Amala Purana*. It's *bhakti* all the way whether you know it or not. Prepare for the Tenth Canto "Krishna in His original form. Get yourself ready, qualified "detached, learned, obedient, trained, accepting what your spiritual master spent his best moments preparing for you. He could have translated more intimate Gosvami literature, but he gave *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

4:27 a.m.

Mixed devotional service. One who is proud enough to think that he's the best devotee is serving in ignorance. One who tries to draw sense gratification from Krishna in exchange for service, or who wants to become famous or opulent by using the Lord's mercy, is serving in passion. "A pure devotee has no interest but to act on behalf of the Supreme Lord. When one has even a tinge of personal interests, his devotion is mixed with the three modes of material nature." (*Bhag.* 3.29.10)

Pure devotional service (*anya-bhilaSita-Sunyam*) is free from any motive to benefit ourselves materially or spiritually.

Get it? Then where are you? In *tamo-guna bhakti*? Passion?

In mere goodness, seeking salvation?

Or do you think you're above all that?

* * *

8:20 a.m.

I was about to tell Madhu that I didn't feel a need to go over the booklet written by a devotee who has left ISKCON to join the Gaudiya Math, but he brought it in, so we started. Madhu said that he accepted this devotee as a sincere person seeking a deeper level of Krishna consciousness than the one on which he had been practicing. Madhu read the opening pages, then said he couldn't comment yet on this devotee's conclusion. I was a little surprised because I find it hard not to put sincerity and conclusion together. What good is sincerity if it leads to a wrong conclusion? Madhu's point was that we shouldn't be propagandists and just because someone chooses a different conclusion from ourselves, put him down as a nut, bogus, an offender, or whatever.

It's overcast this morning. I started out early enough to enter my favorite logging trail, thinking that I wouldn't meet the rock haulers. Let it rain "I don't care. I hope I can resume my study of mixed devotional service. Do you know what a separatist is? Prabhupada states that we can avoid associating with such mixed Vaisnavas, but we can offer them respects from a distance.

* * *

9 a.m.

A pure devotee doesn't aspire or accept the five kinds of liberation even if they are offered. Does he like a rhubarb pie? Listen to the music of the Planxty?

Does he make good *capatis*?

Who?

The man you envision.

It reminds me of serving Prabhupada in Hawaii. Pradyumna made the *capatis* puff by using a metal grill with a handle and holding them over an electric burner. They blew up like footballs and he brought them in one at a time, piping hot, to Srila Prabhupada who sat in a chair at the table.

* * *

10 a.m.

I mentioned to M. that I had named this volume "Sacrifice." He then used the word as if it were synonymous with austerity.

"Not austerity," I said, "but specifically sacrifice: to give up one thing in order to attain another."

But it *is* austerity to always be reading the "same thing."

It's austere not to be paying close attention to what I'm reading. I pay for my inattention in a number of expensive ways.

That's why the booklet we're reading is such a challenge. The author challenges whether Prabhupada's books need to be supplemented. He writes, "For my spiritual life I need to read beyond Srila Prabhupada's books, which teach mostly *vaidhi*."

I don't want to take that position. I believe everything is in Prabhupada's books.

Then why am I bleary and weary and finding it tedious some of the time?

Here's a verse where Lord Kapila mentions several qualities and activities of a devotee. There are a number of verses like this, all of them packed with good stuff. I ought to go over this one again. A devotee practices nonviolence as much as possible; it's impossible to avoid it completely. He regularly goes to see "My statues in the temple, touch My lotus feet and offer worshipable paraphernalia." (*Bhag.* 3.29.16) Srila Prabhupada says an advanced devotee doesn't see the *arca-vigraha* as different from Krishna. This is all nectar. Please, do it justice.

Dhairya means with patience. "One should not give up the execution of devotional service because one or two attempts have not been successful . . . Patience is necessary for developing the confidence that, 'Krishna will certainly accept me because I am engaging in devotional service.'" (*Bhag.* 3.29.16, purport)

* * *

"Friendship should be cemented between persons with mutual interests and understanding." (*Bhag.* 3.29.17) They talk among themselves regarding the activities of Lord Krishna or Lord Caitanya, not with others.

By the way, this yellow paper upon which I am writing is a bit too bright. And I can't push too hard. I have to be patient and remember what I have read "that when you are patient you can say and believe, "Krishna will certainly accept me because I am engaging in devotional service." What more do I want? Just to say it with devotion and then to relax. Krishna will accept me.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

A devotee should and should not. There are a series of verses spoken by Lord Kapila on this. I read and agree. A devotee should be simple, should always chant, should be equipoised, etc. This is not a Boy Scout's code of honor. We don't have to raise our hand and salute the flag. Feel it "the desire to be compassionate toward the poor, to spend time hearing of spiritual matters, to become completely non-envious. How else to become deeply satisfied and aware "convinced "of the Supreme Lord's love and protection? Feel His mercy. Be respectful to the *acaryas* and Lord Krishna will be respectful to you.

* * *

4:40 p.m.

They leave me alone here. I pushed opened the window to look down into the valley partitioned by meadows for sheep and cows. The valley then rises up and becomes the Wicklow mountains. They make fun of those mountains, those who come here: "I heard there were mountains here, but all I see are these little hills." If you live here awhile, though, you will see them as the grand, sloping, upturned bowls that they are, treeless on top. Now back to myself. Shut the window and chant a round.

I discussed with Madhu points from Srila Prabhupada's 1971 letters to me. In one letter my wife of those days wrote to our master saying she was concerned that I be completely engaged in service. Madhu and I talked about what "completely engaged" actually means. I didn't mention that I had been reading about Herman Melville and his points about leisure. He thought it was better not to have so much outward engagement. Other philosophers have agreed with this. Better to be quiet and let things happen in you. They say you'll get a better idea of reality than if you forced the realizations to come.

As if you could.

Hare Krishna. The quality of mercy is not strained, it dropeth from heaven like a gentle dew.

At 7 p.m., I take rest and M. goes into the bathroom downstairs. He puts a towel across the bottom of my door and one across the bathroom door and he plays his music. He played for three hours last night. I use earplugs so I won't hear any stray sounds. I hope to sleep, for one or two hours, grab a stray dream, then go back under for another

hour or so and again a third time until midnight. Then up for an encounter with the *Bhagavatam*.

Verse by verse Kapiladeva spells out the particular behavior of a devotee. It's not enough to sentimentally chant or to say, "I love Krishna," but there are codes of right behavior. We have to follow the rules in order to build a base from which the "love of God tree" can grow. Worship the Deity. That's a quality I could develop more. Always hear about Krishna. Give up ice cream and doughnuts. refrain. restrain. Look at the emptiness. Deviation is something that begins small and grows gradually, usually due to boredom (lack of taste).

Kardama took Kapiladeva's instructions into his heart, then left home to take *sannyasa*.

Memories and ugly faces from the past. Confessions I didn't make.
Swami, I confess I've been a bad boy
I used to make confession in church and you blasted
that church saying, "They can't answer two questions "
why God has only one son and why they are
killing so much although Christ says,
"Thou shalt not kill."
He had their number.

* * *

Swami, please forgive me for finding fault.
When you speak you make a ferocious attack
yet you are as quiet as a young Prahlada.
(Bhurijana said that.)

* * *

Swami, where are you? Where am I?
Will I come to you at the end?
Does everything change
from one life to another?
And if so where is the continuity of ourselves?
How will you be my spiritual master next life?
Are you the same Abhay Charan De, the
Swami Bhaktivedanta from 26 Second Avenue?
I don't want to pretend to some realization I don't have,
but I'm asking. Is it fair? Where will I go?
Will I lose my individual nature?
I know I won't be Steve Guarino
but will it all be forgotten?
Then how am I an individual eternally?
I don't doubt the meaning of my existence, but
I'd like to know what *sastra* means in my own life.
And I want to know how I can attain love.

* * *

A fellow like me says he can't work hard
so externally anymore. He's tired of those who preach
"Surrender! Surrender! Preach! Preach!"
This fellow wants to feel sensitivity
to pray, to work at surrender
to feel the sweetness of it
and the pain.

* * *

Some say, "Don't ask questions that can't be answered."

Oh, these questions can be answered by a learned *acarya*. He'll blast the truth into all challengers and defend guru and Krishna through logic and a "kick" on the head with boots. He refers to authority.

I'm not interested in following a patron saint of outsiders. I will stay inside ISKCON, with Prabhupada. Like the good guy role I played in the 1974 incident. I just read about it today, how I questioned Bhurijana Prabhu about his deviation. Where was my compassion for him, for what he was feeling. Played the shallow role of guru's servant trying to keep up with him and to keep bad thoughts out of my mind.

O Lord, I wasn't compassionate. It was hard to be compassionate in those days. It was almost as if Prabhupada didn't allow it in us because he kept such a tight rein. But of course, that's not true. Discipline isn't meant to curb compassion. Still, many of his disciples deviated. What could he do but pull at them and try to bring them back? They knew he loved them and they tried to surrender. *We* tried to surrender.

But I couldn't help my brothers much. I didn't have enough compassion "not as a friend, not even toward myself. I was too afraid to allow deviant thoughts to enter my mind. All I knew was that there were those who felt like I did and those who were deviants.

No, that's not it either. Just write the truth of this day "the white keys of the typewriter, the apple juice I'll drink this evening, and the fact that nothing is as desirable as the love I wish I had. Loving service to Krishna, who is far away from me and so great, and love for His devotees. Sometimes I think I don't have a right to know Him. Hare Krishna. At least I chant those sixteen rounds in the early morning hours. At least I'm still doing what I've been told. What other way is there?"

* * *

Night Notes

The consciousness saturated with devotion can capture the Supreme Lord's presence, just as a breeze carrying the fragrance of a flower captures the organ of smell. Oh, let it happen.

Not so easy. But it's here already if you think about it "because God, Krishna, is in everything. In fact, He says if you see Him *only* in the temple Deity and disregard His presence as Supersoul everywhere, "That is simply imitation."

June 11, 1997

12:05 a.m.

The Supreme Lord is present as the Supersoul in all living bodies. The individual soul is also part of the Lord, so in that sense also He is present. "Therefore, persons who profess to belong to some religious sect but who do not feel the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in every living entity and everywhere else, are in the mode of ignorance." (*Bhag.* 3.29.22, purport) reminder: don't commit unnecessary violence against any living entity, however insignificant.

This is a book in which to jot down the Absolute Truth. I have faith that that includes my own experience of trying to live the truth.

I dreamt of modern-day devotees performing yoga feats for preaching. They were trying to convince people of God's power. It occurred to me, even while I was dreaming, that God's power could enter me and inspire me to love Him, by reading the *Bhagavatam*. I can attain *bhakti*. I am studying only for that reason. Perhaps *bhakti* will descend into my heart in a non-sensational, unmagical way. I don't care how it descends. Let me live in the *Bhagavatam's* reality "not just in principle, but in detail and specific context. Kapiladeva is speaking to His mother. Ultimately, we are meditating on Krishna in Vrndavana.

Prabhupada says we should distribute *prasadam*. If we want to elevate ourselves to a higher understanding, we should become compassionate toward others, always remembering that God is present in their hearts. Also, when we practice *sadhana*, we should understand that it is not done only for ourselves, as a private offering to Krishna, but to make us strong enough, and loving enough, to contact others and to give them Krishna. Fortunately, by staying in Prabhupada's movement, we are given the opportunity to contact others and share what we have learned. That doesn't mean the private meditation on the holy name or time spent alone with scripture is less important, but we never forget our mission. We have to first establish our personal loving relationship with Krishna, then we can share it. We must ourselves see His glories in the *Bhagavatam*. Then we will be able to speak of them. That personal act has to come first. We have to be in touch with our own sincerity and our own honest offering. That will form the simple ability to communicate it to others.

* * *

I have not forgotten to write freely.

It has a purpose. It can help bring out *bhakti*.

But let the *Bhagavatam* message seep in.

Hare Krishna. O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service. Even as the clock ticks, the house creaks, we hear the rain amid the silence. O Krishna, may I find You here in my gratitude.

Elizabeth of the Trinity prayed (demanded) that God please remove from her nature whatever was not pleasing to Him: "Break, burn, tear out all that displeases You in me."

And, "O consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, 'come upon me,' and create in my soul a kind of incarnation of the Word."

I don't pray so boldly, but I trust that Krishna will see the good in me even though it's mixed with so many other things. He sees the good and He accepts it. Please, Krishna, take away all that is inauspicious in me. You are Lord Hari, and you remove all that is useless. Please make me more pleasing to You. Let my service to You thus become unhampered. You say I should be patient and confident. You promise to accept me because I am executing devotional service. I am not expressing patience in this prayer, but begging You to please make me a better servant at Your feet. Hare Krishna. Please make me pure.

* * *

"Therefore, I do not find a greater person than he who has no interest outside of Mine and who therefore engages and dedicates all his activities and all his life "everything "unto Me without cessation." (*Bhag.* 3.29.33)

Self-forgetfulness. Is it possible to be consumed by love of God? I can't grasp it clearly. It eludes me. I have a taste and want more.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

I was on the verge of rereading St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, but I've read it several times over the years and it has never become practical for me. Why not pray with the *Bhagavatam*? Simply reading the *Bhagavatam* is prayer. Simply chanting the holy names with attention and feeling. Prayer. Writing is a form of prayer. We can incline ourselves toward Krishna simply by hearing and chanting, praising Him.

I don't know what to tell you, but there is a way to be with Krishna that's less formal and therefore more constant. But nothing is easy. That is, you can't perform any meditation without actually giving yourself. Kardama Muni left Kapiladeva in his home and went out into the forest to seek the Lord in his heart. That's a difficult life. We chant Hare Krishna, which is easier, but we still have to do what Kardama had to do: give ourselves wholeheartedly to the process. Such surrender starts with controlling the mind. It's not enough, as some devotees are saying now, that if we hear some *raganuga* inspired *katha*, surrender will be easier. Our appetites will be so whetted that we will run toward Krishna without cessation. It doesn't seem to be true. The work is still before. We cannot escape the basic surrender of attention to the holy name.

* * *

I have not forgotten to free-write. remember when I wrote *Shack Notes*? It was summer "warm and comfortable at Samika Rsi's house. I would open the windows and hear the wood thrush all day long. The shack itself was a pleasant place to sit, and I used to gather the devotees to read *Krishna* book in the afternoon. Happy days, but I still had to face the crunch. We can't hold onto the past. I have invested more and more of my time and energy in free-writing since those days. Has it made me better? I suppose so.

But it doesn't matter. The fact is, I have come further down this road. I'm accomplishing my mission for better or for worse.

Swami, the effervescent truth is flashing
out of the silver,
the enamel false tooth, the cavity
is happening.

Did you know that the same man is T.P. for two Italian temples? If you go there you will see the hay ready to harvest in the fields and the grapes hanging from tortured vines all along the side of the dirty industry-flanked *autostrada*. If you go there, you will probably have to have your lecture translated. What do you really contribute? You hear their woes? Their lives go on without you regardless.

I am not in Italy but in chilly Ireland. The wind is howling and the rain is slashing and it's not quite dawn and cold. I don't care. I have these few months to make my sacrifice. Oh, stop the flow of words.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Rain misting over my eye glasses. I walked for over half an hour, but I could still see through them. The rain is that light. The birds sound like they're enjoying it.

About the Irish: their generosity has never been tested. Englishmen and Americans have had to learn to live side by side with all races and religions, but not the Irish. Goodness is tested under duress. This makes me think about myself and my good-natured reclusive pose. I haggle with myself over the price, but I never quite get hard on myself. About the Irish Madhu said, "Theirs is a superficial goodness, not tested in the fire of ordeal."

Krishna gives us what we want. We want a body with the power of a tiger and Krishna supplies it. We want to be naked, then stand for thousands of years as a tree. I'm living the way I'm living based on my desires formed in association with the material modes. Still, even from here I can receive Lord Caitanya's clear light, look upward, and move toward it. He doesn't mind the particular shape I have fallen in to or whether I have undergone particular suffering or austerities recently. He simply wants to know whether or not I am sincere about my professed *Krishna-bhakti*.

* * *

Coming back to the house in the dreamy wetness I heard a car approaching. I decided to walk in the middle of road so the driver would see me clearly in advance. Then I saw the car, a small, dull gold-colored car. He was coming on fast "very fast for *this* road. Neither did he slow down upon seeing me in the middle of the road. I jumped to the side and still he drove forward. I began to visualize him smashing into my body. Then he sped by, not dangerously close, I guess, but the road was narrow. Then wind and silence again "no cars, no people "so I put the incident behind me.

* * *

2:47 p.m.

If you don't know that the time factor is "The same Supreme Personality of Godhead," you'll be afraid of time. We could say, "Even if I accept that time is an aspect of God, I'll still be afraid of it, afraid to die." To leave everything we know in this life, what we consider our identity, is fearful. A devotee can choose to trust Krishna fully, however. I remember entering the ocean while holding onto my father's hand. The waves were over my head, but I knew my father would protect me. He lifted me above the waves and helped me to swim. If we want to be protected from the fearfulness of time, we simply have to fall into His arms. If we forget Krishna and think only of death when the body is about to be destroyed, we will have to enter another material body. "They do not know that the span of life in a particular type of body is but a flash in the eternal journey." (*Bhag.* 3.30.3, purport)

* * *

The poor guy cheats to get money for his family members but they eventually neglect him, "even as miserly farmers do not accord the same treatment to their old and worn-out oxen." (*Bhag.* 3.30.13)

I hear the challenges now: is ISKCON taking care of its aged members? Here Srila Prabhupada speaks of employing ourselves in Krishna's service "so that the Supreme Lord can take charge of him, and he will not be neglected by his so-called kinsmen." He also mentions living alone in the forest. How does this translate? One point seems to be real trust in Krishna and real surrender to His service. Another point is acceptance of a renounced, "forest" standard of living.

What about the doctor's bills and the emergency room treatment at the hospital? What about *food*? Who can live in the forest in this day and age?

Near death he lies down surrounded by relatives. He instructs his son for the last time on how to care for the rest of the family, but he doesn't know where he is going. As death approaches, the Yamadutas prepare to yank the subtle body from the gross body and carry it away while dogs bite at his heels. On Yamaraja's planet he will be punished so that he'll be able to endure the suffering he has to go through in his next life.

* * *

"I'm reading about the hellish sufferings described in the *Bhagavatam*."

"Is there anything *nice* in the *Bhagavatam*?" one girl asked, horrified.

Yes, but not here. Here we will read of our worst nightmares. He goes alone to the darkest regions of hell . . . and the money he got by hook or crook "is the passage money with which he leaves this world." (*Bhag.* 3.30.32) After suffering through lower species of life, the conditioned soul finally evolves again up to the human form.

* * *

5:44 p.m., Night Notes

I saw the guy tied up. The wolves were eating his entrails while a black demon pushed his head forward to have a better look. Elsewhere, elephants were lopping off

limbs and heads. No one dies from these sufferings. They can't die because they're living only in their subtle bodies.

I plan not to have to suffer like this, thanks to whatever Krishna consciousness I have performed. But I care for others. This suffering is what most people have to look forward to. The verses tell of people eating one another's flesh, but where there is no death to bring relief, they feel only pain. That's why the book distributors are so glorious. They step into people's path and offer them a direct connection with perfect knowledge. And all preachers in different ways strive for this.

Those who have done even a little devotional service are safe, at least from that. Some say better we spend our time preaching to those who are headed for hell than to cultivate those who have contacted *bhakti*, but I don't agree with that. Maintaining devotees is equally important. ISKCON's life depends on boiling the milk, making ourselves strong. This is where I can help.

The grapes are growing on Italian vines. Gorse, peace, bodies, torture "I read of all of it from a distance. It's nice to study, isn't it? I understand what the *Bhagavatam* is saying all right, and I'm moving through the chapters at a quick pace. There's nothing so complicated here. Do I hear the screams of the damned? Do I smell the fire? How real is it?

* * *

6:20 p.m.

Read a nun's happy letter from the convent. She wasn't complaining but speaking of God, in whom we all live. She said Carmelites prefer to live in silence. They see God in the sacrament and remember the name of Jesus while in the silence, reading scripture, washing, washing, working, praying in their cells, in the cold.

And me? Oh, my letters are different. I'm not a voluntary prisoner in a convent. I can come and go and do so. What can I say of myself? I have no blood relatives interested in hearing from me or me from them. Those relatives cursed me when I entered ISKCON. I'm grateful for the friends I have and sing the cheerful song of Irish banshees, pip-squeak marauders, yellow-bellied sap-suckers, robin thrushes, branch warblers, doves, sparrows, martins, swallows, magpies, crows, ravens, even rabbits as the evening comes on slow and I lie in the semi-dark, semi-truck, waiting for blessed sleep and the dream I won't understand. God be with you.

June 12, 1997

12:10 a.m.

Writing and reading are wed in this book. There's even a recommendation for this combination in a book on *lectio divina*:

An intriguing alternative to *lectio divina* meditation is to enter into the same spirit as meditation but with a pen or paper nearby. As you come upon a text or phrase of scripture that attracts your attention, begin to write. Let the journal writing come free-form. You'll begin to notice thoughts and associations that will emerge that will surprise

you. If you feel there is some point at which your writing stops being meaningful, you can pause, return to the scripture, meditate and resume writing.

Now the *Bhagavatam* is describing birth in the womb. Modern science gives no account for the soul's presence. Sadaputa Prabhu explains the incredible complexity of the natural process of semen and ovum mixing and the production of the embryo. He says the scientists don't really have an explanation for how it's all happening or even exactly what it is that is happening. Therefore, they bluff when they rule out the possibility of soul as the mover of growth.

The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* emphasizes the living being's suffering. Those who expect only solace and inspiration from their scriptures may be put off by sections like this. But it's meant to sober us. We have to face the truth eventually, and the cruelty of nature is important to understand. How else will we build our resolve to free ourselves from *samsara*?

The Supersoul is ever-present with us. We can count on that and need only improve the nature of our relationship with Him. It seems I ought to be capable of talking with Him. I don't have to ask someone's permission to do this. This is prayer, which I sometimes aspire for. Often I live in silence without really attempting to talk to Him. The contemplative takes full advantage of the knowledge that God is within, that He wants our love, and that we can pray to Him to taste loving union. He doesn't allow himself to always remain silent. rather, he engages in an active dialogue with God.

When we hear devotees say that "service" is enough, we have to wonder. Activity, even done in the Krishna consciousness movement, does not preclude the necessity to tenderly and intimately talk with Krishna. In one purport Srila Prabhupada recommends that we ask Krishna's permission before engaging in any activity. After all, our senses and body belong to Him and are properly used only when employed in His service. Therefore, whatever we do should be under His direction. "As such, one should always seek permission of the Lord to act or eat or speak, and by the blessing of the Lord everything done by a devotee is beyond the principles of the four defects of the conditioned soul." (*Bhag.* 2.4.11, purport) To live always on your own "I mean, inside your own mental processes" doesn't seem right. We have to learn to speak to our Friend.

O Krishna, You see everything that is going on within me. Why do I hesitate and think You are too great or too removed to want to talk with *me*? Isn't that impersonal? Why do I refrain from worshiping You in my heart? It seems impertinent not to accept You as my most intimate friend. Please allow me to remember, recollect, and to center myself in Your presence.

* * *

I want to combat the devotees' prejudices, doubts, and disinterest in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The more I can combat my own resistance by reading the *Bhagavatam* myself, the more qualified I become to help others.

We are always speaking of wanting to be with Prabhupada. reading his books is the best way to achieve this closeness. "If you want to know me, read my books." *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is his biggest work.

* * *

Noon

I've spent today proofreading *radio Show*, Volume Two. Done with it now and ready to return to the quiet attempt to build up a rhythm of reading and writing with the *Bhagavatam* as my anchor.

* * *

3:39 p.m.

"Miserable life begins from the moment the living entity begins to contact his material body." (*Bhag.* 3.37.6, purport) We don't take it seriously. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describes everything, but we say, "Come on, you don't believe that about the entrails being eaten by wolves, and the embryo with a soul peeking out of consciousness and saying, 'O God, this is unbearable!'"

I believe it. I count on not having to suffer at the hands of the Yamadutas, though. After all, I'm a devotee who chants Hare Krishna. And if I have to be born again, well, maybe that won't be so bad.

Am I an exception to *anything*? And why should I be?

"I can't act motivated simply by salvationism."

"If I have to come back . . ." at least my parents will be devotees and I'll hear the holy names from birth.

Srila Prabhupada: "All descriptions of the child's bodily situation in the womb of mother are beyond our conception." (*Bhag.* 3.33.7, purport)

* * *

"The soul in the embryo prays to the Supreme Lord as *calac-caranaravindam*, He, "Who actually walks or travels upon the surface of the world." He's a person in humanlike form, and He walked upon this same earth that people walk upon today.

"Everything is myth except me here now."

That's a stupid way to live.

* * *

4:10 p.m.

We need God's mercy. Otherwise we can't know Him. I don't know how they discuss God's mercy in the academic study of religious philosophy, but here it's all-important, a truth, asserted by Vyasa and Srila Prabhupada. God is a person and He's never affected by matter. He has inconceivable potency. Only when He agrees can anyone know Him. From the viewpoint of logic we may say that's not a good argument, etc., but that's the way it is. We can't know Him until we become His friends, subordinated servants in love. real knowledge means to know *this*.

I want to make as many pen marks as possible in the last hours of this day. I want to refrain from any activity that won't further my Krishna consciousness. I am limited. If I make many pen scratches and loops, they will have to contribute to the cause. Otherwise,

I could simply make unintelligible, illiterate marks on the pad, from left to right or up and down: aksddidk eidjkglcjkflk laoieuafkjfkajfi lkf ddfdfj.

I am the soul who will and did pray in positions as painful as the embryo in the womb, but when I got out of the jam, I forgot Him. I grew up and thought about jazz sessions and bop and watched new music be born. No one in that group mentioned God much. I forgot the Lord.

"Unless he is enlightened with the supreme knowledge, one has to undergo the severe penalties of the hard struggle for existence in the material nature." (*Bhag.* 3.31.16. purport) The human body can exert sense control and can understand his destination. The *jiva* offers his obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead who has blessed him with this body "and by whose grace I can see Him within and without." (*Bhag.* 3.31.19)

With your eyes soak in the vision of black Sanskrit letters on the white page. Enter a state of loving surrender to the book. Pause a little with it and consider the *jiva* praying.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

Talking with Madhu about Irish music. He said he used to get up at meetings of traditional Irish music societies and sing unaccompanied. Now he's doing devotee songs in that style. Now the light is fading on this day and I want to say

I'll be here

in the morning

to continue the thread of prayer

the *jiva* makes in the womb.

He's in an abominable situation. We forget so easily.

We are fallen.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings that although he prayed to serve Krishna while in the womb, he was born and coddled into forgetfulness. In old age he regrets how he wasted his time, but it's too late.

Hare Krishna.

* * *

Neti neti. You are a sweet one, a hard flint sailor.

No, no,

none of the above.

You are spirit soul.

Pop! You pop out of the sky like those outer casings of brown plant stuff I see on the walk. Do they cover the blossom of the pine tree? You pop out of it and float to the ground. You are tiny and the wind carries you. Just take shelter of your worshipable Deity, Lord Krishna, who plays the flute.

What is real? Your breath and arms? Your friends and books?

What is real? Your easy-going nature? Your pain? Now four days without a headache and worrying that when Sunday comes, the pain will return?

I have not forgotten
to make music on the pipe of the holy one.
I have not forgotten to make no sense sometimes.
There are one hundred happy ideas to keep after.
Death stalks the proud one.
The literary stuff is crap.
Norman Mailer and Frank Sinatra still alive?
Death waiting to pick them off one by one "or more than one at a time.
I haven't forgotten the old sailors' club and the dreams that I can't get rid of. When
Krishna wants, it will clear and I'll be a different person, just as I am different now from
who I was in 1967 or 1977 . . . I keep changing.

* * *

There are other things I haven't forgotten, better things, things that please Krishna.
But I am closing the curtain on this day because the sun is setting and night is coming
on. Another day of my life gone. Let go of it "let go of everything "and in the meantime,
learn to chant.

June 13
12:10 a.m.

Capture the day. Write a note, a letter, a treatise, or better yet, a poem. Tell the world.
Tell a friend,
tell no one
or God
but write it down
that June 13th is here and I am
too.

I could be anywhere else, but this is Geaglum. They say the grass is always greener
on the other side of the fence. Someone called from America to say that one of my
disciples complained to a GBC man about a T.P. and the T.P. said, "Satsvarupa
Maharaja will have to get involved in *this*."

The *Bhagavatam*, please.

The soul, about to be born in a human body, prayed to God. He knew that once he
was born, God's *deva-maya* would capture him "and immediately false identification,
which is the beginning of the cycle of continual birth and death," will begin. "real
knowledge entails renunciation or non-acceptance of this body as the self."

Yet I dreamt something about an old tune, something about Johnny Griffin playing
frenetic tenor sax. What was *that* about? I didn't bother to reel the dream in so I don't
know. Someone called dream workers New Age. They do spend too much time on
dream therapy, almost as if it's a kind of theology, but it falls far short of
the *Bhagavatam*. In fact, it defies the *Bhagavatam*. But dreams themselves? Oh, use
them as sparks for stories. Some may even be spiritual. We can't stop dreaming, but we

can allow the dreams that take you into strange places within yourself to go dormant. Those nightmares, for example.

What is the soul saying in embryo? "Simply by keeping the lotus feet of Lord Visnu in my mind, I shall be saved from entering into the womb of many mothers for repeated birth and death." (*Bhag.* 3.31.21)

Gut reaction: I'm not so aware of the cycle of birth and death. Where is my urgency to stop it then?

Answer: Hear the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. See through the eyes of scripture. Be aware of *samsara*. Feel the miseries and know they will be repeated life after life. Witness the births and deaths of others and know that both will happen to you. *Brahma-Sabda* can be more convincing than actual sense experience. Because it's true, we live in a very limited area of sense perception and consciousness, and that's why we don't know what will happen in the future. Neither do we care that much, especially when we are enjoying in the present. Animal ignorance. No difference.

* * *

A baby was born dead,
another was born alive and is still
thriving. Both mothers survived.
And the rabbits here in Wicklow "
furry balls of life eating grass "
are sometimes run over by cars or
nature finally allows a fox to
eat one alive.
How horrible! Yet
here I am at the desk
Reading for a little longer.
I confess it.

The few dear friends in my life when they die "I'll be bereft and will know a grief of my own. The rumor that there will a tidal wave over Ireland we deny, but we cannot say, "I will not die," or, "No calamity will happen." The uncertainty "more reason to take shelter.

The child forgets his wisdom when he is born, due to all the untoward events. "Not only children but also elderly persons [that's me] should be very careful to protect their sense of Krishna consciousness and avoid unfavorable circumstances so that they may not forget their prime duty." (*Bhag.* 3.31.27)

These are the hard facts of life. People try to forget it. "The conclusion is that as long as one is fixed in the bodily conception, he has to suffer birth and death." (*Bhag.* 3.31.31, purport)

* * *

I haven't forgotten
you can rumba and Fats Waller is dead. Fats Domino . . . are you still alive? Alive,
Oh. "She wheeled her wheelbarrow down streets broad and narrow" "you think such

songs can save you? They simply distract. All the cults "Irish music, Polish music, ethnic clubs, everyone is ethnic, forensic. Now he's a scholar, so what? She's got freckles and smiles behind her open cage at the Justice Department.

So what.

He dances a jig

so what? There's still jazz

but that's a precarious attachment

if you have it.

Be on your toes, your heart

and chant Hare Krishna

stay close to guru by following his orders.

This chapter of *Bhagavatam* encourages renunciation and sobriety.

* * *

I haven't forgotten but choose not to smell mangos

navels

Central Park

junk without reasoning the connection.

Why? A little fireworks please, and fireworks music

and traveling music to

help us forget.

Lethe.

Drink lethe. Forget on purpose the stark facts "Bosnia, Rwanda, names in the newspaper, Clinton's scandals, Bob Dole lending Newt Gingrich \$300,000.00 at ten percent interest "when the Democrats heard it they grumbled. Forget it all.

Always you can chant. Therese and Elizabeth went to Carmelite cells "no heat or electricity or running water, bandages on hands in winter "as best place to concentrate on God, but died before thirty. Go to heaven? Where's that? Steve Hawkins says there is no such place, and pontificates from a wheelchair on the vast-tiny nothingness of black holes.

A hole in my sweat pants

is like a hole in the universe through

which I may slip

like Alice in Wonderland,

or another book,

where he travelled the route shouting "Howl" over tenement rooftops. In 1956 it was great, wild poetry. Now he is gone "and he *mised* many people. Throw him a sweet ball onto the grave.

Protect us while we chant.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

"When one is attracted by the transcendental beauty of Radha and Krishna, he is no longer attracted by material feminine beauty. That is the special significance of Radha Krishna worship." (*Bhag.* 3.31.38, purport)

* * *

11:37 a.m.

Don't associate with an attractive woman. She's the gateway to hell for the advancing devotee. Men may also be a gateway to hell for women. She was struggling to answer intelligent women who ask, "Why does he say women are less intelligent?"

I told her to first accept everything *sastra* and guru say as true and *then* we can figure how to answer this problematic but minor consideration.

But she says she can't accept the book as absolute because it demeans women.

Then what?

I don't know the answer, but I speak of the *protection* of women. Yudhisthira cared for the women; Arjuna didn't want to fight because the women would be forced into undesirable acts. But she's not satisfied with that. Prabhupada advanced women's cause by accepting them as equals in ISKCON.

But the temples are sexist. Or some of the devotees are, at least.

I say . . . She says . . . What can we do but accept scripture. Everything else is changing. There's something more important than this bodily consideration. Don't lose everything for the sake of that one point. Maybe I should ask some devotees how they answer these questions.

* * *

When I heard that a Godbrother was making a trip just to see me, I visualized myself as a quiet, wise person who lives alone and who can almost immediately dip into heart issues with a friend because I am recollected and nonpolitical. Then I saw how puffed up this is. Maybe this Godbrother is coming to see me thinking I might bloop.

Pain began at 9 a.m. I'm home at my base.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Don't accept service from a woman.

What about a guru accepting service from a female disciple?

Oh, that's different.

Well, you had better make sure it's different.

Similarly, one who "has been endowed with the form of a woman, foolishly looks upon *maya* in the form of a man, her husband, as the bestower of wealth, progeny, house and other material assets." (*Bhag.* 3.31.41)

I like the rain in Ireland. I don't care if it doesn't sun-shine. One feels protected, enveloped by the clouds and rain. Less passion.

* * *

The purport to 3.31.41 is the one I've claimed to be a *maha-vakya* statement regarding dealings between men and women. I remember taking it as important when I was married. It comes after a series of verses forbidding the transcendentalist to associate with women: "In the state of Krishna consciousness, however, such restriction of association may be slackened because if a man and woman's attachment is not to each other but to Krishna, then both of them are equally eligible to get out of the material entanglement and reach the abode of Krishna. . . . both man and woman should be attached to the service of the Lord. Then there is the possibility of liberation from material entanglement for both of them."

Verse 42 is also important to offset the impression that men are good spiritualists while women are *maya-devis*: ". . . not only is woman the gateway to hell for man, but man is also the gateway to hell for woman. . . . It is a question of attachment for another. . . . the woman is dangerous for the man, and the man is also dangerous for the woman. But if the attachment is transferred to Krishna, both of them become Krishna conscious, then their marriage is very nice." The purport goes on to describe the *yukta-vairagya* principle in married life, with Krishna in the center.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

Spoke with Madhu about changes in our lifestyle. I said I now accept my headache condition as chronic, and I read to him from *Headache relief*, by raporport and Sheftell:

Patients must have a realistic idea of how much they can expect from their doctors. As we continue to stress, the ultimate source of headache is in a biological condition, a condition for which at the present time there is no cure. That means that headaches may be controlled, but not cured. Thus patients may be able to go for long periods of time without needing medication "but then suddenly, for some reason, find that the biological mechanism has been set off again. Thus treatment must be renewed and possibly altered. Understanding the nature of headache and its treatment helps to make clear that the renewed onset of a headache is not a "defeat," but merely a recurrence of a chronic, intermittent condition that must be coped with.

As a result, I accept and limit myself from certain activities. I've become willing to stay in one country rather than to constantly travel, and as M. pointed out, this is the first year I have been willing to admit (and not hide) to ISKCON that I am not able to travel as much as I have in the past.

Writing this with fog-vise in head. I mentioned to M. that a reason *not* to stay in one place might be that I'll get bored. But better to face myself in my cell. Yes.

* * *

I remember the first time I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 3.31.46. It has a description of death which somehow clicked with me and made me able to understand a tiny bit how I could survive my body. The example is this: when a person loses his power to see color and form "due to morbid affliction of the optic nerve," then he loses sight. Of course, he continues to exist within the body. He is aware, however, that his instrument of seeing is gone. "Similarly, in this material body, at the present moment the living soul is acting, and when the material body, due to its incapability to function, ceases, he also ceases to perform his reactionary activities. When one's instrument of action is broken and cannot function that is called death." As I can imagine what it's like to survive blindness, I can also at least theoretically picture what it's like to lose my "instrument of action".

Reading it again I don't quite get the same sensation, but it's a good example of what it's like to face death and to move out of the body. "The final change is called death, and acceptance of a new body is called birth. . . . Actually, the living entity has neither birth nor death but is eternal." *Na hanyate hanyamane Sarire*. Even after physical death, the living entity doesn't die.

June 14

12:10 a.m.

Sacrifice for the *Bhagavatam* means to accept whatever it is saying in each section. I'm not selecting a group of prayers or a favorite devotional text, but reading whatever comes up in a day-to-day way. I'm nearing end of the Third Canto. At a peak midnight hour I read verses against demigod worshipers and the purports. What is it my soul is hankering for? I say, "To be with my master in the form of his purports. Hear *whatever* he writes." Be assured it's nourishing, preparing you to be a scholar and preacher of his books. reading in his books begets more of the same. That's the attitude.

* * *

Kapiladeva says that *kama-mudhas* cannot perform devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead but instead continue in *samsara*. They actually prefer to transmigrate in their search for material happiness, even though they suffer constant setbacks. That flickering happiness is mentioned in the song *bhaja hu re mana*: "They do not want the eternal, blissful life of knowledge in the kingdom of God." (*Bhag.* 3.32.4, purport) Neither does God force them to come to Him.

"Them," the *kama-mudhas* "me?"

* * *

Some devotees satisfy their intellects by studying Sanskrit and the *acaryas'* confidential books. Others return to a university to study subjects connected to Krishna consciousness and their preaching. Some fill their days with preaching and management and don't read the books much or at all. Each of these devotees can either live *for* his books but not *in* his books. I want to enter. It's not easy. We hanker to hear

something different or new. We doubt whether reading is service. We may even doubt whether reading is that pleasing to Prabhupada, although he told me that reading was my first duty.

We can enter the deathless worlds by reading the *Bhagavatam*. How slow we are to give up *prakṛti*, the path of forgetfulness of God.

* * *

I read of the worshipers of the Hiranyagarbha expansion of Lord Visnu. They don't approach the Supreme Lord in Vaikuntha directly, but stay in the universe, perhaps in Satyaloka, until Lord Brahma dies. Then they return to the spiritual world. That's not for me. I want to go to Krishnaloka as soon as possible. I don't know anything about my *rasa*, although I know the topmost goal.

One response to knowing the topmost goal is to begin to practice a *bhajana* which focuses on the activities of Krishna's topmost servitors in Krishnaloka. Another approach is to admit that we are too fallen for such *bhajana* at present, but to purify ourselves by developing intense *bhakti*. That means surrendering to Krishna by following the spiritual master's orders, preaching, living with devotees, worshiping the Deity, hearing *Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* "the basics. All of this should be aimed at achieving the mercy of Vraja-Krishna.

When we read of Lord Visnu, we can meditate on our own worshipable Deity. Conversely, "When we speak of Krishna, this refers to the complete category of Visnu-tattva."

Sometimes Srila Prabhupada says Krishna refers only to the two-handed form, which should be our object of meditation and the recipient of our service. Sometimes, however, he encourages us to appreciate Krishna as "the proprietor of the material and spiritual worlds and the supreme cause of their manifestation and dissolution."

* * *

In this morning's meeting, I'm going to read Madhu some snippets from Elizabeth of the Trinity. What I like about her is that she went alone to worship God exclusively. The editor of her letters makes some comments that remind me of my own pursuits, especially my awareness that my diary contains the simple events of a little life:

What was there to relate, then, in the sixty-nine letters and notes that Elizabeth addressed during this period? The various events are hardly sensational: Her first contact with her new cell and rough straw mattress, the unexpected visit from Mother Maria of Jesus, a bat at night during the Grand Silence, the wash done in common and the little tasks in choir . . . a letter received, and frosted window panes in the cloister and her cell.

The editor goes on to describe Elizabeth's difficulties. "Prayer became dry," but she did not complain. Her editor writes:

After her clothing [taking on the nun's habit] her letters speak especially of her joy at being in Carmel, living in community, in silence, in the presence of God, listening like Magdalene to her Master, surrendering herself to the life of "The Three" within her.

* * *

4:23 a.m.

Lord Boar is the personified *Vedas*. The poems of this person can be paraphrases of the *Vedas*. I have come here not to vent my spleen or to praise Caesar or to utter platitudes but to repeat Vedic statements. Yes, dear reader, you and I should be open to hear the truth. What else are our ears for?

May Krishna allow us to chant His holy names. May the Lord of sacrifice, YajneSvara, our Lord, Bhakta-vatsala, incline Himself to us. We are not worthy of His *darSana*, but we expect Him to bestow His mercy upon us at any moment. Prabhupada has taught us that we are completely dependent upon Him. We hanker only to see and touch the Lord, to eat His holy *prasadam*, to make the activities of *bhakti* our daily fare. Oh, may the pure flame of love burn within our hearts.

O Krishna, the 16,000 princesses said that no one else would accept them since they had been kidnapped from their homes by the demon. No one will have me either. My parents have thrown me out and my society has abandoned me. O Krishna, I know You will never abandon me. The wives of the yajnic *brahmanas* prayed that You would accept them. You sent them home to do their duty. But I can't go back. I am bereft. I have only You for my shelter. Please, therefore, give me a place in Your entourage. Let my mind always be rapt on the dust of Your lotus feet. And may the rhetoric of *sadhus* pass truthfully over my tongue, in my own words.

* * *

Madhu served me a bitter, hot lemon drink. That's the way he likes it, but believe me, it's not for sissies who wish they had a little honey on their tongues.

* * *

Lord Boar and all the incarnations are transcendental. The Supreme has an eternal form. Blast away at your stereotypes. God can accept any form He chooses and is not limited in any way. He chose to accept the role as Varaha because He thought it a suitable form for smelling out the location of the earth and picking it up on His tusks. The earth then sat on His tusks, which resembled the scars on the moon.

O moon
of Goloka,
O poets of Vraja.

* * *

The dryness that many of us experience, and the fatigue. The lack of sport. As one brother said, "The ecstasy has been entirely replaced by responsibility."

What is a GBC man? What is a *brahmana*? What is a preacher? What is the position of women in ISKCON? What about grown-up children who survived *gurukula*? How to help all of us from the mistreatment we suffered, to help those who need to heal "students and teachers and men and women alike "to heal? Listen to what Prabhupada says. He says we should always ask the Lord's permission before we act. To do that, we have to organize ourselves, clean our minds, find regulation. That will bring us enough

to the mode of goodness that we can remember Krishna. O Lord, please let me chant for Your pleasure. Too many things we have done for our own pleasure or out of confusion. Please allow my words and thoughts to become Krishna conscious and acceptable. Then let them flow out from me like a stream, like the best of Vivaldi's concertos, to please and charm others into loving you.

* * *

Oh, you want that?

Then you'll become a celebrity. You'll have to run away to the desert so you can chant in peace.

You want *that*?

But your pajamas are falling down. Your poems are falling together while the stars

hang in their places. These June nights are short and the sky lightens before you know it, inviting me to take a walk. My life is free, gratis,

full of fresh air breathed in deeply at an open skylight.

I tell of it freely too.

When you stand on one leg with your arms held above your head, your hands forming *namaskara*, that concentration will enable you to "be there." Your eyes will see the trees in the meadow, and as you continue to breathe evenly, you will see that you simply exist, as simply as the tree.

No, we're no *yogis*. Where is Krishna?

He's in the tree. Attach your mind to Krishna and you will see Him there.

* * *

Lord Kapiladeva is wrapping it up nicely with His mother. He has already described the attachment between men and women and how it creates a distraction from Krishna consciousness. He has also told her about those who worship the demigods and how He doesn't approve. Then He described those who worship the Hiranyagarbha form of Visnu. Now He will describe pure devotion.

And we continue to send out our messages: "Do you hear me? What is the price of cabbage?"

Now listen to the response fresh from the Internet: "We received your message, but forgot what we wanted to say in reply. It appears that you have forgotten the cause of the chemical elements.

You have forgotten, I say.

But Jung, in his eighty-third year, said he could not remember world events, but could vividly recall his childhood. He intended to fend off all other obligations in order to get in touch with those memories.

Very well.

Then when are *you* coming to Gita-Nagari? Is it true that you kidnapped the small Radha-Kalachandji Deities and brought Them there? Now you never come. We are

having a fund-raising event to raise money for the new temple, yet you will not come. We didn't even bother to ask you, as a matter of fact.

And a message from Dallas:

Hey, I'm invited to the 25th anniversary of Radha-Kalachandji's installation, because I am one of the most senior persons and was actually there when they were installed.

Sorry, I can't transport myself over the ocean to be there with you, but here is a memoir of the time when we placed the Deities in plastic tubs and the kids gathered around, interested, although years later they spoke only of the austerities they had to endure. Here is a memory of Srila Prabhupada on the *vyasasana* when I was pouring the milky liquids over Srimati Radharani. He called out, "On the head! On the head!" "not wanting me to pour it wherever I wanted to over Her body.

Bleep! Alert: you didn't pay your bill. We can no longer transmit this message. If you're going to allow dust balls to gather in your room . . .

* * *

8:15 a.m.

Upon entering the woods and when leaving I crossed paths with deer. The air is so clear today that I'm able to see their long necks and ears. They seem not to perceive me until long after I have seen them. Therefore, I have time to get a good look at them before turn and run.

What if they didn't run? How close could I get? I also saw a pheasant fly out of the woods. I can't say that these things delight me, because any attempt to describe them naturally turns me to poetry. But I hear myself ask, "Is this a Krishna conscious moment? Does it move my heart?"

I have to admit that I think such natural sights are implicitly Krishna conscious, and that unless I'm dead stone, then surely "my heart leaps up when I behold/ a rainbow in the sky." Nature is going on all around me whether or not I am consciously witnessing it, and for one who is Krishna conscious, meditation on the Lord covers everything else. In other words, a devotee sees nature in relation to Krishna. Vishvanath Cakravarti explains how a devotee at *asakti* sees a deer and says that if the deer looks his way, he will take it as a sign that Krishna will favor him today. If the deer looks away, however, it means that Krishna will not favor him.

Krishna consciousness is always simple and direct. "Therefore, My dear Mother, by devotional service take direct shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated in everyone's heart." (*Bhag.* 3.32.11)

And don't talk too much.

Some say I write too much. I should be more silent in order to know Krishna. I don't know. Devotees share a secret, private language with Krishna. Who can say who is writing too much or too little? "In that transcendental world, the servant and master are one." We don't lose our personal identity, but become one in interest with the Lord. We shouldn't dilute that truth, but should make it true for ourselves in whatever way is necessary. We have no need for an indirect process. We can worship Krishna directly in our service. And we have no need for any other shelter.

Neophyte devotees seem to sometimes accept lesser shelters, claiming, "This too is Krishna because Krishna is everything/." Such devotees are looking for amusement on the path, or relief from the pressure of having to become honest. They think some separate interest will help. O Krishna.

* * *

12:30 noon

Reading Jung's *Memories, Dreams, reflections*. Amazing religious skepticism, as he himself calls it. God is secret, he says, and His will is hard to know. Jung hated the platitudes and certainty of knowing God's will and goodness in the ways his parson father preached. It catches my attention as I read it. It's fascinating to think of this boy and then young man coming to see himself as two persons: (1) a conventional person; (2) another, true person. Jung sees God as the "Other," and says that He belongs to a real, but inconceivable, world apart from the world of hypocritical, vicious humans. (Jung counted himself among the fools, but knew that as that other, true person, he belonged to the world of the Other and that he was meant to find out God's will for himself. He also believed that God acted upon him.)

It's interesting, but I don't want this to distract me from my attempt to sacrifice for the *Bhagavatam*. Even Jung has to be sacrificed before the perfect knowledge of *Sabda-brahma*, even if does present a challenge. For example, he says that we should not discuss God "shamelessly." When Jung as a boy asked his father questions on religious truth, his father felt obliged to speak as a parson. His mother, on the other hand, *sometimes* spoke (she too was two persons, the conventional and another) with uncanny, natural truth.

Do I speak with respect for my ISKCON office? Sometimes. People criticize me for it. Well, the way I look at it is that I can differ with a GBC decision, but I won't differ with the *Bhagavatam* or Srila Prabhupada. Jung was proud and too attached to his own mind and own experience of God.

But the challenge "God is secret,

His will for me must be sought out every day;

He grants revelation only to those who fully surrender, so we shouldn't simply assume we "know it all" just because we lecture on the Absolute Truth "

there is something there.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Arjuna fought, although at first he didn't want to, because Krishna desired it. "A pure devotee enjoys life in the pleasure of the Supreme Lord." (*Bhag.* 3.32.25, purport)

The Absolute Truth is perceived in different ways according to how He is approached. "Only for the devotee is the Lord visible . . . The supreme spiritual conception is the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Jung wanted to think for himself and admired those who approached truth and God independently. He believed in "God's world" beyond man's, felt it was thrust upon him undeniably. He was intolerant toward what he considered the theologians foolish,

dogmatic babbling. I don't know what he'd think of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but since he never accepted a Vaisnava guru, we can imagine that he probably would have considered the *Bhagavatam's* histories mythological. I saw his statement at the end of the book where he misinterprets Hinduism as teaching endless *samsara* for all. He had read only second- or third-hand reports on Vedic knowledge. Swiss doctor and his own unconscious.

I am too tiny to read further. I need to hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

4:26 p.m.

One simply has to accept the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* purports in toto. The *acaryas* and *sastras* do the research and investigation. We simply accept it. To "study" means to submissively hear the science of God as it is spoken by God's authorized representatives. We are allowed to question in order to find clarity, but we are not allowed to challenge. There is no second opinion. What Krishna and *sastra* say is the truth. Some recoil from this on principle, while some others may find accepting authority easier than accepting responsibility. In either case, there is a truth behind the principle and we are better off accepting it.

I have been accepting it for thirty years. It's hard to fight off old doubts, but my intellect tells me that I really do prefer the Absolute Truth enunciated by the pure *bhaktas* over independent and speculative treatises. I am slow to experience the divine on my own, and I admit it. I can't speak of the experience of receiving Krishna in my reading. Still, enough comes through that I am willing to stay on the path.

O Krishna, I can't even cry out to You with heart, but I write it here again and again: "O Krishna, O Krishna, O Krishna." Please lift me up. I haven't forgotten You.

* * *

Jung's father told him he *thought* too much. He should accept God on faith.

Young Carl replied, "Give me faith." His father shrugged and turned away.

Give me faith. "The form of Krishna has to be understood as it is described in the books of knowledge such as *Brahma-samhita*."

"The Supreme Person has to be understood by the transcendental sound vibrated by Him in *Bhagavad-gita*, wherein He says that there is nothing superior to Himself." (*Bhag.* 3.32.28, purport)

Typical statements we read anywhere in the *Bhagavatam*. We simply have to accept the process. I have come to like that fact. But that doesn't make it less heavy or stark when you look at it from the outside. There is no other way. An absolute statement.

Srila Prabhupada mentions an innate aversion to the Supreme which impels people to refute Him and to choose speculation over hearing from *sastra*. Srila Prabhupada says this nondevotee stance stems from an aversion to God. Where does it come from? Past lives, bad association. We develop an asuric *bhava*, by God's grace.

"It is confirmed in the *Vedanta-sutra*, *sastra yonitvat*: One has to acquire pure knowledge from the authorized scriptures." (*Bhag.* 3.32.28, purport) Srila Jiva Gosvami explains in his *Tattva Sandarbha* why *sastra* is confirmed by *sastra* and how this is not

circular reasoning. He says if *sastra* needed to be confirmed by another authority, it would not be *sastra*. We could argue endlessly about this. Jung writes, "God's existence does not depend on our proofs. . . . Why do these philosophers pretend that God is an idea, a kind of arbitrary assumption which they can engender or not, when it is perfectly plain that He exists, as plain as a brick that falls on your head? Suddenly I understood that God was, for me at least, one of the most certain and immediate experiences."

* * *

6:20 p.m., Night Notes

As I was sankirtana-rasa wanted to know if I was interested to read it. Yes, said Madhu, send it. Then I went downstairs and cut myself a piece of apple pie. I surprised myself with that act and now I hope I can digest it. Not exactly a Mt. Carmel cell, but we're cheerful here. The last couple of hours felt rich.

Almost all the men here will be leaving for three days for London. I will be left alone. Alone with God alone. Goodnight, Lord. I never leave You.

June 15, 1997

3:25 a.m.

I heard a devotee was viciously criticized at a meeting yesterday. I have to stay out of fights between my own disciples, but I don't approve of attacks. So many petty and ugly traits come out when we get together, it seems. What can we do but keep going and try to purify ourselves?

* * *

10:10 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada sankirtana movement.

I answered questions about the position of women. Admitted it's a tough question to tackle. It's difficult to know what Srila Prabhupada means when he says women are less intelligent. One devotee said it refers to their psychological make-up, which is different than a man's. Women are more vulnerable, he said, and are therefore more easily exploited. They should be protected. Still, it's a hard position to defend. Those who fight for the equality of men and women won't want to hear about the Vedic concept of protection.

This discussion took up most of the time this morning. I told the devotees I had written to some women disciples asking how they live with this question and also how they respond to it. First we have to accept the principle of *brahma-Sabda*. Then we can try to understand what the *mahajanas* mean when they say women are "less intelligent."

After the meeting, I read a letter from a disciple who said I write too many books. I defended the prolific nature of my writing. I said I will be dying soon enough and then there will be a limited number of books. I have no reason to stop before that time. Neither does it minimize Srila Prabhupada if his followers write.

As I write this, a green insect crawls along my *dhoti*. I felt weak while lecturing this morning and had to stop, but I'm glad I went.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada says that as soon as you think you are comfortable, you know you have fallen down. There is danger at every moment. Even for devotees. The Pandavas, Vasudeva and Devaki, Queen Kunti "all had to face danger. And Krishna always protected them. One reason Krishna sends danger is to keep us detached from matter. This is not our home.

* * *

Sounds of the bouzouki and Madhu's earnest tenor voice drifts through three wooden doors and up the flight of stairs to this study room. The *gurukula* children drew pictures of me. Their teacher gave them a choice, one out of three: (1) Guru Maharaja on a morning walk in Santivana; (2) writing in his room; and (3) writing in his van. They almost all drew the morning walk. I was depicted with big brown eyes and big eyeglasses. One made a very small head atop a mountainous right-angled saffron body. At first I didn't like that one, but as it comes to mind now I do like it and want to put it on the wall. Pin head drifting through forest walk. Thank you, children. When I touched one of their drawings, I got purple ink on my hands. Their hands were probably also stained with it.

* * *

I knew that Jung went to India. I used to say glibly that he was not able to find a guru. Now I know from reading his words that he deliberately avoided gurus:

By that time I had read a great deal about Indian philosophy and religious history, and was deeply convinced of the value of Oriental wisdom. But I had to travel in order to form my own conclusions, and remained within myself like a homunculus in the retort. India affected me like a dream, for I was and remained in search of myself, of the truth peculiar to myself. . . . in India I had the chance to speak with representatives of the Indian mentality, and to compare it with the European. I had searching talks with S. Subramana Iyer, the guru of the Maharaja of Mysore . . . On the other hand, I studiously avoided all so-called 'holy men.' I did so because I had to make do with my own truth, not accept from others what I could not attain on my own. I would have felt it as a theft had I attempted to learn from the holy men and to accept their truth for myself. Neither in Europe can I make any borrowings from the East, but must shape my life out of myself "out of what my inner being tells me, or what nature brings to me.

"Memories, Dreams and reflections, pp. 274 - 75

Consider the contrasts between Jung and myself regarding India and gurus. First of all, I'm not a great intellectual as he was. As for gurus, I never went to India in search of one. The Indian spiritual master came to me in New York City in a way that was accessible. I was even open to wholesale surrender at that time. It seems to me that I have always been impressionable and ready to surrender to a whole world view that is

presented strongly from outside myself. My whole childhood and boyhood were thus lived within the cocoon my parents created. By the time I began to peek out of my cocoon to find my own taste, I found myself embracing things like the Brooklyn Dodgers, rock 'n' roll, then jazz. Then my intellect was born at Staten Island Community College by my being exposed to the world of literature. Soon I was exploring marijuana and LSD by surrendering to my college friends. My life appears to be a series of surrenderings and accepting the moods of others. Although it was almost as if I was imitating others, I actually loved them sincerely and immersed myself in whatever it was they were offering.

So I accepted Prabhupada and Krishna consciousness. That has actually been my last surrendering. In the meantime, I realize that only lately have I been seriously examining who I am. I practice my self-examination within Krishna conscious boundaries (safe). I find Jung's stance that he had his own truth to discover and thus couldn't open himself to India's spirituality arrogant. But I have to give him credit that he was trying to discover his truth. I am also trying to discover my truth. I find going back into memories sometimes helps. To try to understand how I took to Krishna consciousness, for example, and to see what happened to me since 1966. We often have the tendency to brush aside the ego, even our selfhood, in the conditioned state, as *maya*. Then we define ourselves only by the various services we have done, those things we can describe in external terms and even idealized with rhetoric. We also recite scripture and claim it as belief, but somehow rarely cross the bridge leading to our heartfelt response "or lack of response" to all these things. I don't reject my devotee identity, but I want to examine my heart and find the continuum from past to present. Who am I beyond these service designations and Sastric rhetoric? When I travel to Vrndavana, India, I remain myself, still searching for my real responses to the *dhama*. In Jung's language, I "must shape my life out of myself" out of what my inner being tells me, or what nature brings to me."

I have expressed this in my free-writing in recent years, especially the point where I feel a need to break out of *only* repeating what I have read and been taught by my guru. I want to know who is that person who remains faithful to guru. Who is that struggling and aspiring devotee? I already know all the absolute answers to these questions, but now I want to know the relative ones, the ones that define my Krishna conscious individuality. My working premise is that if I know myself better even as I am in my conditioned state, I will better be able to surrender to Krishna.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

Can't seem to push. Don't feel pain but don't want to push in reading. When it's hard and tangled I stop only to try again later. Devahuti's prayers are so philosophical, so full of *aiSvarya*, the greatness of God. She also says, in a personal way, that it is not so astonishing that the Supreme Lord took birth from her like an ordinary child. God can do anything. Doesn't He like to appear as a child sucking His toe while laying on a banyan leaf and floating on the water of devastation? Srila Prabhupada compares this pastime to the Lord's desire to taste Radha's sweetness in His form as Lord Caitanya.

I already understand these verses because I've read them many times, but now I need to let them come to life in my heart. I can't express it any clearer than that.

The last two hours of the day here are quiet. The sky is still bright, but time seems to move more slowly. These hours are mine to fill with service. I can read, but these hours provide the best opportunity for prayer. Or if not prayer, then at least silence "to silently ask Krishna to please direct me, to fill me, to give me courage.

* * *

Swami, sometimes I must push.

You pushed hard to
work for Krishna.

* * *

I will serve you as
cowherd boy-reader-purveyor of
truth, college lecturer.
Please forgive my
language it
veers off like this
an indulgence, I know.
I mean to say

* * *

I am a boy grown old
who still wants to serve even
though he's a little awry and lazy.
This lazy fellow needs a good kick
from his master or
a kind glance. Then he will continue of
his own accord, preaching,
hearing.

June 16

EkadaSi, 12:15 a.m.

Devahuti's prayers culminate in verses glorifying God's holy names. "Even a person born in a family of dog-eaters becomes eligible to perform Vedic *yajna* if he once utters the holy name, or hears about Him and remembers Him." (*Bhag.* 3.33.6)

Prabhupada referred to this verse and commentary by the *acaryas* to support his own disciples' position. He quoted it once in 1971 when Karandhara performed a fire *yajna*: *aho bata Sva-paco 'to gariyan*

I was reading and thought of the "problem of evil," as Jung addressed it in his religious skepticism. He had concluded in his youth that God must be terrible as well as

good. I thought of reading a Godbrother's essay on this theme, then turned back to the purport.

Becoming a *brahmana* depends on the spiritual master's judgment. You have to chant without offense. When you attempt to control the mind in *japa*, then you are off the platform of offensive chanting.

Oh, I wish to do it better.

He said

in bed and vowed he'd
be a better chanter but
when he began the beguine
it was as slippery as wet rock
and he fell in mind and bruised
his head, elbows, feet,
got up and instantly slipped again
the hellish mind.

O brother, he prayed,
but that mind was gone again and
too hard to find.

Awake, awaken. Thin drizzle. Mind a flashlight flickering, uncertain. (Need new batteries?)

"O mind," he said,

"O mind,

why are you not a Vaisnava?"

* * *

" . . . they have become qualified to be spiritual masters." (*Bhag.* 3.33.7, purport)
Don't have to be topmost by some other standard. The power of the holy name to purify is so great. They did austerities and *yajnas* (not chanting holy names?) in past lives. So pure they are, we characters who are now in ISKCON's ranks. What if we stay only a few weeks or years before we spoil and return?

Don't ask so many questions.

I have to.

No, you don't. Just realize your need for mercy and instruction, and hear and chant.

* * *

Why do I so strongly accept this Vedic view? What is the nature of my wholesale surrender to it? Is it wrong, dangerous, to inquire into the roots of my faith? Is there a reason for it?

If not, am I petrified? Do I care for truth? Or at fifty-eight years old am I concerned more with peace,

poems,

admissions,

the unconscious?

Am I simply crying like a cat or a wood pigeon, an owl hooting?

Spiritual master, I've served you long.

I can't be expected to figure out why there is evil and what to do about it, or even why in retrospect I accept you as absolute.

I did and I do. I rest my case. Assert it.

* * *

4:12 a.m.

M. was smiling when he left. I was sitting in my chair with the *Bhagavatam* open and a good reading lamp turned on. Once he leaves will I do nonsense? No, no, I'll stick to this desk or write somewhere else. I will wander the house more than usual, cut up fruit for my breakfast, take an earlier walk. I'll listen for more silence, and maybe I'll be more conscious of how I use my time, perhaps more conscious of *everything*. I don't expect any great breakthroughs just because I'm more alone. I expect peace.

* * *

5:15 a.m.

Sometimes when I talk about sacrifice for the *Bhagavatam*, it sounds like I want it to be seen as noble. The *Bhagavatam* is the highest truth, and I am renouncing other activities in order to read it. This writing is not simply a sacrifice for the *Bhagavatam*, but a parallel line by which I seek truthfulness. I admit I don't love the *Bhagavatam*, that I find it hard to read sometimes. Is there anything else I would rather be doing? No, not really. This is a battlefield and I have to fight. I can't walk away from the attempt to attain pure devotion, even if I am obviously failing.

I think it's healthy to ask yourself why you are doing the things you are doing. Your reasons should add up to more than just social pressure. Activities motivated by such pride won't please Krishna. He wants everything, and especially our love, lively spirits, creativity. He's not interested only in obedience or conformity.

I keep returning to the text and purport of the *Bhagavatam* even though it's not *my* life's story. rather, it's the history of the devotees and Bhagavan. It all happened so long ago, and it's all quite alien from Western intellectual life, but nothing satisfies me as much as hearing the *Bhagavatam*. Everything else really is speculation.

* * *

7:45 a.m.

Devahuti cried in separation from her son, who was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This was not a worldly sorrow.

* * *

10 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* teach us. We follow. We join a temple or accept particular authorities, try to socialize ourselves in ISKCON, accept the standards of approval the movement teaches, which we are told comes from Srila Prabhupada and

the GBC. We obey the law. We preach, follow the four rules, chant sixteen rounds, try to become "Krishna conscious".

We float around in ISKCON in an external way for awhile, then look for inner reality. Do we have a life other than the one ISKCON has defined for us? Is such self-searching justifiable? If we listen to our dreams, our inner nature, and develop our own aspirations, what then? if we see obstacles and fears in ourselves, and if we seek a path to remove them that is not prescribed by ISKCON, where will that lead us?

The tendency is to assume it's all *maya*. We don't want a well-intentioned but speculative, watered down form of spiritual life. We all want to stick to the rules and regs and find ourselves in that way.

Good.

But who are we? Why do we have to struggle so hard to attain love of God?

Headaches are "a genuine disorder" my headache book say. They are caused by some biochemical problem present in the body from birth. Or they are psychosomatic.

Then *why*?

To become conscious of what's blocking our progress toward becoming what we really want to be in Krishna consciousness "that is a great gain.

It is also our tendency to assume our problems are all spiritual. We suffer because we are offensive toward Vaisnavas or inattentive in our chanting. Maybe there are other problems, however. Maybe we have difficult bodies or psychological factors that inhibit us. If we are offensive toward Vaisnavas, perhaps there's a reason that's causing the problem. We may not even be offensive by nature; we may be afraid. We may resist being manipulated by others. We may be feeling the stress of living in ways that don't make sense to us. Should we learn to assert whatever genuine calling we find within ourselves, in Krishna consciousness? These questions seem relative, but they are common. We simply want to know how we can express our *selves* in devotional service, how to offer the best essence we possess.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Ideal states being described "forgetfulness of one's body, never touched by modes of nature, constantly remembering the Lord (*samadhi*), "He simply works for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna." Does this sometimes leave me feeling left out? It seems far away, like talking enthusiastically about the furthest star in the universe. What good does it do me here and now?

Oh, be assured that this path leads to perfection. If Krishna desires, we could reach that perfection sooner than later. First, however, we have to know and understand our goal. Focus on the goal keeps our self-searching in check. We don't dive headlong into psychology or art or non-Krishna conscious philosophy. We want to find our true selves eventually, our eternal *svarupa* in Krishna's *lila*.

Devahuti found hers in Kapila Vaikuntha.

I want Krishnaloka.

But I have no rocket fuel
or rocket

or space suit
and I don't even know the Sanskrit knowledge
or how to practice austerity
or feel greed for *bhakti*.

Then does this, "I want Krishnaloka" means only that I no longer want to rot in a tavern or an office on this earth planet? Or that I don't want to merge into the formless Brahman? No, I don't want to be well-adjusted or well-balanced on this planet of death. I want to go to Krishnaloka.

The *Sruti-phala* at the end of the Kapila chapters promises that whoever reads this confidential description will become a devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and, "thereafter enters into the abode of the Supreme Lord to engage in the transcendental loving service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 3.33.37)

So there, I *am* going back to Godhead.

But when, I don't know. I can't demand that it has to be when Steve John Guarino's son dies. He may not be ripe yet. Too much dross.

But . . . he can write.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Beginning Fourth Canto. Duty-bound to read. Help yourself become Krishna conscious. Akuti, the daughter of Svayambhuva, had partial incarnations of Godhead as children. You don't need to tell us all.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

I'm beginning the Daksa *yajna* episodes. It contains warnings about not offending Vaisnavas. That's worth hearing again during these days of schisms and debates. Looking for an awakening.

Thinking, I have no concept of a life's work the way Jung did. He was a pioneer in the field of psychology and began by studying his own fantasies, confronting the unconscious, and his dreams. He tried to verify his world by gathering evidence from world culture.

No, I'm a simple *cela*, trying to remain faithful to his guru's books and instructions and yet wanting to stay awake and be a self. I'm aware that in the name of allegiance, we can become dull and stagnant. We have to be ourselves, respond to inner callings, yet remain faithful. We have to do all of that.

So, I didn't do anything deviant with my day of complete solitude. I look forward to another day of it tomorrow. Clear of pain. But I didn't, couldn't, pray. Couldn't focus on Krishna. Couldn't, couldn't . . . chanted but it was mechanical. Good Lord, You see me down here. Is this the fate of my life? Will You not raise me up? Or do You say, "I cannot because you have free will and you say you don't want pain. You insist on living in your own world in order to write." Or maybe You are not saying that. Am I holding a contradictory position, trying to build a fire while sprinkling water on it? O Lord, I want

to love You, but it's true, I seem to want to live in my own way. Is that a contradiction? Krishna, I am stuck. You will not take away my tiny free will.

Hare Krishna. It's not how much you read, but the moments of discovering intimacy. You want to adore, welcome, worship Krishna's *darSana* in the *Bhagavatam*. That's the real fruit of reading.

* * *

Crazy look in that *sadhu's* eyes as he gives out cookies. His false teeth create a slanting effect to his face. It makes him look cynical behind that crooked smile. And his eyeglasses magnify his eyes (which are large anyway) so that two orbs flash out from behind his glasses. That combined with the crazy grin. The skin under his chin is beginning to sag. No beauty in this face.

Holding *Begging for the Nectar* in his hand, his cheeks sunken from his days of fasting. Yes, I saw that photo. But no more. Now he's on the right track. The last time he fasted he fractured his ribs when the old piper cub plane landed on the soft turf. O crow, is it true? Leonard Wilder crash-landed and lived to tell about it.

Next month he'll meet with his brothers and cover up who he is. Don't worry, they'll leave him alone. Few people call him where he is because it's too expensive, and anyway, he doesn't have a phone. Besides, what's there to say to the old coot?

June 17

12:10 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada begins the second chapter of the Fourth Canto by stating that "Lord Siva is described here as the best of the gentle because he is not envious of anyone." My reading may draw me toward this great devotee. He seems to me the essence of Hindu foreignness. Krishna is more accessible to me because Srila Prabhupada praised Him and explained Him as the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"Lord Siva is so peaceful and renounced that he does not even construct a house . . . always detached from all worldly things. The personality of Siva symbolizes the best of gentleness."

Why then was Daksa inimical toward him?

* * *

The root of Daksa's problem is pride over his effulgence. Psychologists speak of power and how we shouldn't exert it over others in an egotistical way. Well, Daksa was on a power trip. We see the childishness of it when we read about it in another. Pride forces us to offend Vaisnavas and other living beings. Pride means we want others to respect us. Lord Caitanya instructs that we shouldn't expect honor for ourselves but offer it always to others.

Daksankirtana mission in ways I cannot match. A devotee will not criticize, however, when faced with other's achievements. Rather, he feels his own fallen position, yet feels the security of guru and Krishna's mercy. He doesn't feel threatened by others.

Daksa tries to thoroughly assassinate Lord Siva's character. His words are venomous. Then Daksa curses Lord Siva to not have a share in *yajna*. Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura says this was indirectly a blessing for Lord Siva. It's not fit for the Lord's greatest devotee to sit with materialistic persons, so Daksa relieved him of that social obligation.

There is a practical example set for us by Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji Maharaja, who used to sit on the side of the latrine to chant Hare Krishna. Many materialistic persons used to come and bother him and disturb his daily routine of chanting, so to avoid their company he used to sit by the side of the latrine where materialistic persons would not go because of the filth and the obnoxious smell. However, Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji was so great that he was accepted as the spiritual master of such a great personality as His Divine Grace Om Visnupada Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja. The conclusion is that Lord Siva behaved in his own way to avoid materialistic persons who might disturb him in his prosecution of devotional service.

"*Bhag.* 4.2.18, purport

* * *

Dreamt of the sadness of growing old and of being an artist, broke and lost in New York City. In the dream, I felt the nostalgia of my youth days when I first went to live on the Lower East Side. In those days, I had no security and no money. On waking I concluded that we shouldn't go anywhere or live any life except one fixed on the Krishna conscious goal. Become more and more fixed.

* * *

5 a.m.

Thoreau said that his best experience was the *recurring* of himself a few days after things had actually happened. I notice that same passing through of events in a sifted, considered way. I like this experience especially when something I read last night or the other day comes to mind. I often berate myself for being a writer and not enough of a preacher, but perhaps I'm more of a preacher than I can consciously assess. I'm always thinking how to transform sensual experience into a palatable, literary Krishna conscious message. Maybe that's enough.

While walking this morning, I sifted through things that I had read in Jung and heard by the Jungian analyst, Marion Woodman. I could see that the Jungians are thorough eclectics and speculators. They have a strong affinity for God and religious themes, but lift their religious imagery from different cultures and then make a final judgment on it in their own voices. Marion Woodman was talking about God and Goddess as if she has the right to define God according to her own experience. These people reject God as He appears in any one tradition. Thus they are more humanists than theists. God never appears clearly as the Supreme Person but as something other, something within, something beyond, something *they* create who has come to serve a purpose they designate.

As I said, I was sifting through my feelings about all this while walking. What I feel from it is this: I want to explore my interior understandings. I don't want to play it safe in the name of being a devotee and thereby fall into complacency or intellectual acceptance of my relationship with Krishna in ways that don't touch the heart. I don't want to make that mistake. At the same time, I am not interested in their speculation.

Before going out this morning, Madhu reminded me not to push myself too much on the walk. I felt myself pounding down the logging road, slamming my cane point into the ground, walking faster, not noticing my surroundings. Hardly relaxing. I became tired unnecessarily, thinking I had to reach the last outpost of the walk as if I had been commissioned to walk to the South Pole and back. Well, I have no such assignment. My only assignment is to think of Krishna wherever I am. I should have stopped to see Him in the sky, in the fluffy clouds, in the chill of the air. If we stop to do that, our minds will fill with intimations and memories. How to connect Krishna to the sky? And to your own life? Come through for yourself.

* * *

7:40 a.m.

Infected by anger, even *brahmanas* and Saivite leaders such as NandiSvara cursed and counter-cursed.

* * *

You're stuck and you blame the *Bhagavatam*? Don't lay blame. Just go on counting hour after hour. These sages and *yajna* attendees acted like fools. They should have been above the propensity to curse and to counter-curse. Therefore, Prabhupada's purports to these sections discuss actual wrongs in the behavior of the so-called *brahmanas* and devilish followers of Lord Siva.

Brghu Muni said Lord Siva's followers were blaspheming the *Vedas*. Thus they would become atheists.

No one has to curse me. I'm already cursed with lack of lively interest, complaints, sleepiness over the text. No point in cursing him any further.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Reading of Sati wanting to go the *yajna* festivities, although her husband was excluded. ". . . the word for women is *stri*, which means, 'One who expands the field of material enjoyment.'" Here is yet another example of a woman as more materially inclined than a man. Yesterday at the meeting I admitted to devotees that I have a problem preaching on the statement that women are less intelligent. Perhaps I cave in under so much resistance and displeasure we hear from women who are pained to read these types of statements. I have replied as best I could over the years, but still they remain dissatisfied. Now it strikes me as odd and not commendable that I admitted I had doubts about that. After all, we hear it in Prabhupada's purports. The disciples at the

meeting kindly and gently offered their insights "women too "as to how they understand what Srila Prabhupada wrote.

I say I have doubts, but I don't identify strongly with the resistance to "women are less intelligent" group either. I tend to believe it as I read it in the context of Vedic history, Absolute Truth, etc., but when I have to explain it, I can't insist that women are less intelligent. I believe their intellectual capacity to be as good as a man's, and often they are just as spiritually-minded. I have now written to some women disciples and asked them to explain both how they preach on this topic and how they live with it themselves.

I'm supposed to be fixed up. If I doubt the *Vedas*, then how can I expect my disciples to follow them?

I was just trying to be honest.

Oh, well.

Sati acts and talks like an ordinary woman in her desire to dress up and attend the function with her sisters. Later, we'll learn that her motivation was actually to confront her father and defend Lord Siva's honor. She was prepared to act from the noblest motive, but here Prabhupada describes her as *stri*.

Perhaps I have to swallow that *ordinary* women are less intelligent than men in a general way. Patri explained yesterday that women have a *different* psychological make-up than men. They forgive easily, so are pushovers in that respect. They can also be more readily manipulated than men.

"Oh," I said, "so maybe we can say they are less crafty, less in possession of a worldly intelligence of that sort."

Dina-dayadhra said that when women abandon their natural, soft-hearted nature (in the attempt to be equal to men), they become more hard-hearted than men.

Srila Prabhupada: "In spiritual advancement, association with *yosit* is always restricted because if one is like a play doll in the hands of *yosit*, then all his spiritual achievement is at once stopped." (*Bhag.* 4.3.11, purport) We should understand it properly.

* * *

One wishes Sati could have been more like her husband "detached from name and fame, disinterested in family honor and social functions. Then she could have stayed with him under the tree and said, "To hell with attending the party; I'm satisfied to be with you."

Lord Siva felt sorry to recall Daksa's cruel words. Prabhupada explains that although Lord Siva is *atmarama*, he is in charge of the mode of ignorance. In this world there is sorrow, unlike the spiritual world where there are only different varieties of bliss.

Lord Siva told his wife that because Daksa was so puffed up, it would be dangerous for her to attend the *yajna*. She would only be insulted or neglected. He also told her that Daksa was envious of him. "Being unable to rise to the standard of self-realization, he envies such persons as much as demons envy the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.3.21)

* * *

4 p.m.

Took a break to roam around the house upstairs. Saw kids' jigsaw puzzles, three of which were of Batman. Looked through books "*Pinocchio, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, The Elves and the Shoemaker*. Then one dry-gulch round. Now back here.

* * *

" . . . among Vaisnavas . . . even when a disciple offers obeisances to his spiritual master, the spiritual master immediately returns the obeisances because they are mutually offered not to the body but to the Supersoul." (*Bhag. 4.3.23*)

Lord Siva explains that he's always offering obeisances to Lord Vasudeva in pure Krishna consciousness. There was no neglect on his part when he didn't stand up to honor Daksa.

* * *

Spokes of a wheel spinning. I feel a faint twinge and have to slow down. I can't work all day and night.

Vasudeva refers to both the all-pervading and localized Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Samadhi* is not under the devotee's control. The Lord reveals Himself to the devotee by His sweet will when He is pleased with that devotee. "When the Supreme Personality of Godhead reveals Himself to the pure devotee, the devotee has no other duty than to offer his respectful obeisances." (*Bhag. 4.3.23*)

I like to hear this. Krishna may not reveal Himself to me, but at least I know how He does reveal Himself and to whom. Patience breeds confidence: "One day Krishna will be pleased with me because I am engaged in His service." He is already pleased with me, He loves me, and He reveals Himself to me little by little.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

Sati went to her father out of womanly weakness. When she arrived there, the guests were afraid to welcome her because of Daksa's enmity, but Sati's mother and sisters, "with tears in their eyes and with glad faces, welcomed her and talked with her pleasingly." (*Bhag. 4.4.7*)

Srila Prabhupada writes, "Women are naturally soft-hearted, but men are sometimes very hard-hearted."

Here is an admission that women have a weakness and yet a wonderful soft-heartedness. The "less intelligent" barb has to be understood in conjunction with all the other statements. Women need to be protected so that their good qualities will be preserved and they may be prevented from exposing their weak qualities.

* * *

O man, you're ridin' this day out, refraining from one thing after another. Sneaking in little sessions of reading and writing so he doesn't develop pain. The sun is moving

across the sky. No mail, phone off the hook, no computers, no visitors. Not even an evening program, except your own. Well, heavens to Betsy.

If *prakrti* allows, I'll keep busy until just before seven, then lie down for a blessed sleep under His protection.

June 18

12:04 a.m.

"Since sankirtana Krishna-sakti vina naha tara pravartana.

(I am suddenly alert every time a car passes, even while I'm sleeping. Will it stop here? If a car did pull up full of thieves in the night, how could I defend myself anyway? Goldilocks dodged past the three bears when they found her in their bedroom. No, it's better to tune the ear within and pray to God for protection. If Krishna protects us, no one can kill us; if Krishna wants to kill us, no one can protect us.

* * *

"Here Lord Siva is praised by Sati, partially due to her personal respect for Lord Siva, since he is her husband, and partially due to his exalted position, which exceeds that of ordinary living entities, even Lord Brahma." Sati's motive in going to her father's house was to establish her husband's glories. She didn't go for the social life. "That was a plea only, for actually at heart she maintained the idea that she would convince her father, Daksa, that it was useless to continue being envious of Lord Siva." (*Bhag.* 4.4.16)

* * *

Pause and rest.

Finger your beads and sometimes
bring the mind under control.

Pray within. Hear your master.

My bare sixteen rounds are my offering
of life breath mixed with
scattered inattention, but
at least I count them
and utter aloud the sweet
holy name which
can conquer all.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Into the forest. After walking awhile I got tired and stopped. Looked up and said, "Hello trees." Then I felt "asked myself "what do I yearn for? What do I want? With whom do I want to be? I sensed that I was alone and that's why I spoke to the trees. At that moment I couldn't honestly say that I wanted to be with Srila Prabhupada again. I

felt his stern demeanor suddenly, and became a little afraid. And Krishna felt so far away. I'm more alone than I even guessed.

Of course, this was just a temporary mood, but most of the time I really can't feel anything with deep honesty. I don't like the conclusion of this morning's walk, and neither do I see it, actually, as a conclusion. I'm grateful that at least I was honest enough to feel where I'm at, however. Now I have to go further into that and make my life better than it is now. I should want to be with my spiritual master in his spiritual form in the spiritual world. I pray for that three times a day.

* * *

8:38 a.m.

Writing down bare notes of what Srila Prabhupada said is like dropping seeds as I walk along. Perhaps they will grow into plants to form a trail to lead me from the witch's house back to the safety of my own home. I am lost in the wilderness of No Taste, and have been captured by the witch of Inattention.

There are already trails visible, but not ones I want to follow. A devotee has to allow some trails to vanish, to merge back into the forest. You wouldn't want to be stranded on some senseless path when walking it could be the last thing you do in this body. O Krishna, please allow me to turn to You at the end of my life. When I stand in the light of Your presence, my foolishness will be exposed. Will that be hard to face?

Psychotherapists speak of the lost, abandoned child in each one of us. They say when the unique self is squelched or abandoned during childhood, or when parents tell us we cannot be or think in a certain way, a part of us becomes this abandoned child. In therapy they take you back through memory and association to that point of abandonment, and then they have you become the parent and nurture yourself past that stage. Sometimes the abandoned child is really lost; lost in the sub-basement of the unconscious, they say.

So what? Does this archetype mean anything to me? Just that I wonder whether I may fear standing in Krishna's presence because your rotten self with its poor attachments and illusions will be exposed. That's what started this train of thought. Could I bear to admit my actual flaws and then reform them? Or would I find it too humiliating?

Yes, I am a helpless child. To admit that means admitting that for years I have wasted my time. Everything I have done has been flawed by basic offenses and defects. I don't dare to know what they are.

Krishna, if You think You could let me know some of this . . . In the guru reform days, they dropped it on me: "You are wrong and should repent." I did gradually and I survived. I can do more. In those days I used to say, "Give me the mandate and I'll follow it." Tell me what to do and I'll surrender. They told me and I especially listened to those whom I considered friends. One guru Godbrother said, "You should take part in *forming* the mandate."

I'm sorry I don't surrender to Krishna. I don't seem capable of rallying my forces for a heroic climb to regions I haven't yet reached. Where will I find the power to do this?

O Krishna. A streak of rain is running down the windowpane. "There is such transcendental bliss in simply meditating on the lotus feet of the Lord that one can forget everything but the Lord's form." (*Bhag.* 4.4.27, purport)

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada is beyond ordinary concepts and memories. I don't mean that he's impersonal or abstract, but I meditate on him as mysterious. Where is he now? How does he guide me? These are not ordinary things. If my memories of him are sometimes too human, that's my fault, but he is mysterious in his ways. I want to know him in essence. As a person. My master.

* * *

3:10 p.m.

Mount Kailasa is described as full of natural beauty "hills, waterways, birds, animals, trees. In this connection, Srila Prabhupada discusses *tirtha*. He refers to Narottama dasa Thakura's statement that there is no need to travel to holy places if you can take shelter of Govinda's lotus feet.

Anyone who is fixed in the service of the lotus feet of Govinda is called Tirthapada; he does not need to travel on various pilgrimages, for he can enjoy all the benefits of such travel simply by engaging in the service of the lotus feet of the Lord. . . . who is engaged one hundred percent in the service of Lord, can remain anywhere in the universe, and that part of the universe immediately becomes a sacred place where he can peacefully render service to the Lord as the Lord desires.

"*Bhag.* 4.26.25, purport

I may consider making my place in Ireland. Not that I'm a great soul and can turn my residence into a *tirtha*, but I can find *tirtha* wherever I am by executing devotional service. Often when I go to the Indian *tirthas*, they appear covered. It may be that they are influenced by materialistic people, or I'm just unable to see below the covering. Whatever the reason, pilgrimages in India often leave me cold. The travel is troublesome, and I feel alien. I do better in a quiet place, and especially an isolated country atmosphere away from the bustle of the city, and even away from the busy community life of a big *aSrama* of devotees.

"Materialists get incited by sex desires when they go to a beautiful, scenic spot. But in the spiritual world, although the residents and the place are extremely beautiful, there is no impetus for sex life." (*Bhag.* 4.6.31, purport) I can live in a nice atmosphere and not get agitated. rather, it calms and inspires me to chant, hear, and remember Krishna in *bhajana*.

* * *

4:36 p.m.

I read of Lord Siva sitting in meditation on the Supreme Lord in *brahmananda*. I read but couldn't concentrate. Crow cawing insistently nearby. Madhu will be back shortly. Concentrate on the *arca-vigraha* of the Supreme. Lord Siva is also thoughtful about how

to deliver the demons from their fallen condition of life. Lord Brahma spoke respectfully to Lord Siva.

June 19

12:10 a.m.

It seems far off that I could love *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and become absorbed in it all the time. I need to take breaks from it and preach. But still, I always gain by trying. Who can say reading is ever wasted time? Yesterday after reading, I thought of the descriptions of Kailasa and the situation with Lord Siva there. I'm constantly being educated when I read, and my life is enhanced even without my knowing it. Lord Caitanya ordered Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami to pass his time in Vrndavana simply reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Raghunatha Bhatta's read aloud and then lectured on it. Let me simply read now and write my notes of appreciation, gloss and objections and distractions. I hope the day will come when I'll always be absorbed in it, and that I will speak it to whomever I meet.

* * *

Lord Brahma says, indirectly, that Lord Siva needn't have killed Daksa since envious persons are already killed by providence. A Vaisnava ought to be compassionate and revive people's Krishna consciousness.

This morning I'm having trouble reading. The print on the page stares back at me (I dislike the faded print and too thin paper of the Australian edition). I have to read each paragraph more than once to focus my attention on it. It's a rare quality, attentiveness. Whatever you experience, don't find fault with *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. "A devotee doesn't find fault with the behavior of the Lord in any circumstances." (*Bhag.* 4.6.36) Don't ask why Vyasadeva wrote the *Bhagavatam* and not something else. And more, don't ask why Srila Prabhupada repeats himself in the purports. Just accept what's there and use it as an aspiring devotee would.

The *lectio divina* spirit is important to me. Even if I don't use any of the specific techniques, I find the concept of prayerful reading helpful. The techniques are simple: pray before reading; enter into the spirit in which the book was written; treat the reading not as a time for thoughts *about* God, but as a direct, personal encounter with Him. (I translate this as, "read thoughtfully. Always ask yourself, 'Am I reading with attention?' Pause and appreciate." For example, when Srila Prabhupada quotes a verse within his purport, it provides me with an opportunity to hear that verse in a new context. This itself provides novelty while reading. It allows me to be creative.)

The author, the reader, the persona. Persona means role, and when you identify with it totally, you may lose touch with your actual self. Other people will also mistake the persona to be the self. But it's not; it's a mask. The mask may not be wholly false, but it's not the person in toto, the changing, flexible self.

Krishna, Krishna, I have not forgotten the desire to move the hand in writing.

Manu dasa and company were disappointed when they tried to put on their play at the London festival because the sound equipment failed. The audience couldn't hear them

and people walked out. The audience was dead. "We got very few laughs," Manu said. Madhu's act went over better, he said, although there was no microphone on the bouzouki. That was pleasing news.

* * *

Brahma asks Siva to settle up. He asks that Daksa be given his life back and that the sacrifice, which was to be offered to Visnu, be allowed to continue.

Sacrifice. I used that word in the title of this volume of EJW. I mean it as a verb, an action word. It means I am sacrificing other things I could be doing in order to read the *Bhagavatam*.

But "sacrifice" is also a noun. It means *yajna*. If there are discrepancies in the *yajna* "wrong motives, faulty priests (sub-persons), offenses "let it all be corrected, settled up, so the sacrifice can continue. "One should not work for his own sense gratification. Everyone should work for the satisfaction of God. That is called *yajna*." (*Bhag.* 4.6.53, purport)

Yajnas usually costs money, but I am the priest at this inexpensive one. *Yajnas* are meant to benefit the whole society. I pray for this conviction

to sit and play and
pray and construct the work
free from distractions
free to burn to
chant the mantras, observe and participate,
be constant, enthused, to
please Krishna.

* * *

4:33 a.m.

If you take some scripture and read it in a personal way, aloud or quietly murmuring, that's good. It'll take your mind off yourself.

But I sometimes *try* to bring my mind to myself.

Okay, you're a *person* who has to serve Krishna. Then kick off the restraints. Break out of your cell, climb over the wall, and go to the football game, the bar, the grill. Seek out old and crunchy words or new and junky ones, words that scar you like heavy metal, zinc, half-assed baboons. (That just came to me. I don't know what it means.)

Remember Baladeva's house at Sant Colony?

Yes, why do you mention it?

Because I'm tired.

There was a man there who fed sugar to the ants. He used to pour it down their holes. Later in the day the boys would go the same field to play cricket. They didn't care that this was the holy ground where Krishna and the *gopas* played. For them, it was a cricket field. Local boys, born in Vrndavana. Do they know it is holy land? I don't know. What do I know? I can only say what I know of myself and even what I cannot know. right now I know I'm drowsy in the face and can't push this writing. I better go open the window and breathe in some fresh air.

* * *

Hare Krishna. I can see a print through my foggy eyeglasses "the long thin leg of Sudama Vipra extending downward. Krishna has taken his foot in His hand and is bathing it. He's looking at the *brahmana*, who is astonished that Krishna would bathe his feet. Rukmini-devi is crouched behind the Lord, assisting Him with articles for the worship. Above that is another bathing picture, baby Krishna's *abhiSeka*. And a large picture of Krishna-Balarama, one of a nocturnal outdoor *kirtana* with Lord Caitanya and His men carrying torches, Lord Nityananda swaying.

Hare Krishna. Pray through scripture and say good-bye to spring. It's definitely summer here now.

Shovel the coal down the chute to earn "blood money," as my father called it. He was remembering the days when he accepted any work just to keep bread on the table for his little family. We survived and were grateful to him for that bread. It's all right that he didn't know who I was because I didn't either. He could have been an expert father and encouraged me to grow according to my own nature, but he thwarted me in a lot of ways.

It all worked out in the end. No boyhood religion, but that got fixed too. Would I be a better devotee if I had not been so screwed up by my parents? Hard to say. Maybe Krishna arranged those days of suffering to make me eligible to be open to Prabhupada. Hare Krishna. Michael Grant invited me to come. He preached to me.

* * *

9 a.m.

Now Lord Siva will respond to Lord Brahma. Don't expect Siva to comply completely, but surely he will be merciful and forgiving. He said he punished the demigods because they "are childish and less intelligent." He punished them as a father corrects an errant child.

I saw the wood pigeon flap
against the blue sky and knew
I didn't have to write about it.
I don't even know how I
feel or how a brother might
see. I'm afraid of pain.

The weeds change in late June. I'm waiting to see the soft tassels of the rye grass. When I arrived back at the cottage I heard Madhu singing, "He's a lover, He's a thief and His love you can't defeat . . ." playing his bouzouki. I lingered at the front door. That tune rides through my mind even now.

Lord Siva said that Daksa would have a goat's head, Pusa would not be given back his teeth. Lord Siva left in some of the sting.

* * *

Don't read superficially, but don't wait forever for peak quietness and spirituality. I gotta read somehow, plow on. Just read for five minutes and began to feel a twinge

behind the eye. Slow down. Press the intercom to call M. and say, "I want to hear the first song on the tape you made of your live performance in London "I'm reading right now, but cue it and I'll hear it when I'm done. From what you said, that one was the winner." Then back to Lord Siva and the *yajna*.

When Daksa returned to his body, he carried his former consciousness, even though he now had a goat's head. When he saw Lord Siva, his heart became cleansed of envy. He prayed with eloquence and humility. Would I be able to do that before *my* superior authority if I had been reduced and punished for my upstart ways? When and if it happens, don't forget Daksa's example.

* * *

12:28 a.m.

An hour ago I took an Esgic. I still have the presence of early pain behind the right eye. I don't like to take these pills, but I allow myself to do it once a week. I've gone five days without a headache, so you could say I shouldn't try to stop the pain this time. But I'm eager to read and write. If I do get relief later today, I'll use it to study.

June 20

Midnight

Yesterday was lost to headache pain. Now I wish to re-enter *Srimad-Bhagavatam* topics, which have kindly been given to us by Srila Prabhupada. Some people think, "These topics could be more *rasika*." read with faith in guru. That alone will bring good results, including realization of *Krishna-lila*. I beg you, Srila Prabhupada, please accept my reading your books as an act of faith. Please make the topics real. And make me a defender and preacher of your mission.

* * *

Daksa accepted his punishment. He prayed to Lord Siva as the protector of *brahmanas* and referred to himself as *brahma-bandhu*. Thus he expected protection (and punishment when necessary) from Lord Siva.

A sincere devotee takes punishment (suffering in life) as the Lord's mercy. Daksankirtanam visnoh smaranam, as a verse to use when praying to the holy name for forgiveness for offenses. Thus we acknowledge that we are being punished for our *nama-aparadha*. That punishment takes the form of not being allowed to taste attraction for the holy names, and it's just, something for our ultimate purification. Daksa prays, "I did not know your full glories. For this reason I threw arrows of sharp words at you in the open assembly, although you did not take them into account.

"Because of my disobedience to you I was going to hell, but you compassionately saved me by awarding a punishment which was lesser and which neutralized my offense.

"I request that you be pleased by your own mercy since I cannot satisfy you by my words."

I am disobedient. I do not recognize the full glories of the holy name either. I don't pay attention to my *japa*. rather, I pay my attention to *pramada*, madness and distraction.

O Krishna, please be kind.

* * *

I'm finding out what it's like to live with a musician. I'm a bit like the quiet, conservative father with the live-wire practicing musician as a son. His energy is permeating this house. I can't be neutral or it might be discouraging, but of course there's a limit to how far I can go with him. Still, I sincerely want to encourage him because it's a first-class preaching expression.

* * *

Lord Narayana appeared in the sacrificial arena after the *brahmanas* cleaned it of the pollutants thrown by Lord Siva's ghostly followers. I too have to "clean up my act" before Krishna will appear in my *yajna*. I must admit, however, that I do feel good that at least I am *performing* this sacrifice called reading the *Bhagavatam*. May I continue it perpetually. Even in its outer form "sitting with an open book and moving my eyes over the page "this sacrifice is auspicious. Now if only I can find its inner form. " . . . and as the service increases, the Lord reveals more and more to the devotee. But there is no limit to His glories, and there is no limit to engaging oneself in the service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.7.24, purport)

My hope is that I can increase my service without increasing the *varieties* of service. Can I be satisfied with the simple activities of reading, chanting, writing, and living a retired life? More than that, is Srila Prabhupada pleased by this sacrifice? I may never know for sure. I can only pray for his blessings. I do hope that Krishna will reveal to me when and where to preach more outwardly, if He desires that of me, but at present it seems best that I increase my absorption in scripture. I know many ISKCON devotees don't read much. I want to prove that I can read steadily and that it can develop into a genuine love for his books. I really want that. I want to banish the idea that I need something more than what my spiritual master has given.

There are those who would challenge ISKCON's brand of allegiance to Prabhupada. Is it enough, they want to know, to read only Srila Prabhupada's books? Is Daksa's sacrifice in which eight-armed Visnu appears equal to hearing of radha-Krishna's midday pastimes at Radha-kunda? I want to face this challenge. It's not a one-sided question that can be answered with dogma. Living alone enables me to face the ambiguities or complexities of such questions, separate from a too-shallow pro-ISKCON view. I don't want to sell pro-ISKCON views short, as if they are *alltoo* shallow, but I think you know what I mean. Write it out and find your response.

* * *

4:12 a.m.

I have not forgotten to free-write. In 1996 I lived for a few weeks in a cabin at Saranagati and wrote *A Poor Man reads the Bhagavatam*, Volume 2. It's now being edited. I used a method called "Hand writ," where I imagined that my hand had something to say. I went down the page and let the hand talk. The hand then gathered

words from both the periphery and the center of my consciousness, and I allowed it to stretch out sometimes for several pages.

With a typewriter I have two hands to generate energy. A devotee wrote me and said she had written a book which her writing teacher wants to title "Compassionate Divorce." I thought the title would not be a hit with an ISKCON audience. The essence of her book, however, was her description of the whole ordeal and her finding shelter in Krishna consciousness. I'm sure people would want to read that. She broke up with a husband who was not a devotee.

Stack of books, I reject you without even reading through any of you. Music of the spheres, I don't hear you. Past, I do not need to love you, you who were not a devotee, but I can remember you sometimes. O Krishna, Krishna. I began to listen to music in the 1940. The war was on and we turned to our Victrola and our 78 rpm records that broke so easily. The Andrews Sisters' "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree With Anyone Else but Me," and Bing Crosby's "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas" "no, we had no pretensions. We didn't listen to classical music but pop and maybe something Irish. Who had even heard of Hare Krishna *kirtana* at that time? I didn't hear about it until I was already twenty-six years old. Still, I wasn't too old to chant. My master captured me and gave me my life's work. I went to Boston on my own in a pinstriped blue and white summer jacket. Begged for a job. I was a good worker. I even had it on my file that I had broken through the strikers' picket. It was to my credit.

The past reminds me that I had wanted to make a lifetime career of smoking marijuana and writing, of being sad but creative. Sooner or later I probably would have found a woman. Maybe I would have been saved by some church. I was living in the slums. Who knows what could have happened to me? You, past, can't tell me. Maybe I would have imitated my old buddies and got a college professorship before it was too late. Would have gone straight. Or died. I might have died.

But I didn't. I live clean now. Writes letters to disciples, repeating the truth.

* * *

A brother wrote a paper saying that we should not expect to "automatically" advance in Krishna consciousness without explicitly choosing to chant and hear. I want that reality, that direct touch in my life. I am focusing my limited energies to get it. That is my sacrifice, and it's what I realize I need to do for myself. Yesterday I was out of action with pain from 9 a.m. until midnight. I have so little time.

The Christians call this the Mary Magdalene approach. Mary Magdalene sat at the master's feet and listened as he spoke. When Martha complained that she wasn't sharing the work, Jesus said, "Mary has taken the best part and it shall not be taken from her." One book I read argues that this incident has been wrongly used by priests and nuns to assert that they are better than the lay people working in the world. It's probably a common problem: preachers versus contemplatives.

* * *

9:03 a.m.

Back from a walk in the rain. Didn't take my *japa* beads because they would have become soaking wet, but chanted more than usual. Sighed now and then. Physical tiredness. When I returned to the house, M. didn't hear me enter. He was singing his song about London lights.

Priests, Daksa, and Lord Siva offered prayers to Lord Visnu, who was present in the arena. Lord Siva says he is always meditating on the Lord's lotus feet and therefore will no longer become disturbed when people criticize him. Srila Prabhupada recommends this path for everyone. Be busy in loving service and you won't be affected by the modes.

Dear Lord Visnu, You are an expansion of Lord Krishna. I am reading and praying that I may come under the shelter of the original Vraja-Krishna. The material world is full of dangers life after life. Krishna consciousness is the only way out. I have very little realization about the cycle of birth and death, but I have faith in this path. Do I need to feel more its reality? Will suffering more help me? Make me more surrendered? I don't know. I don't think that's necessarily true. But I need to surrender.

"One should depend on the causeless mercy of the Lord for deliverance and not even slightly on one's own strength." (*Bhag.* 4.7.30, purport)

* * *

10:45 a.m.

The vise descends on my head.

Welcome it?

Accept it.

It keeps me on the bench.

I can sit down instead and ask Krishna, to be kind to me, to allow me to pray in my *japa*. But the vise. I wait out the pain, trying to live in Krishna's mercy.

O Prabhupada, I don't want to die so bereft, but it seems I have no choice. I know I'm not what you hoped I would be. I'm simply not. Still, I desire to come close to You in loving service.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

"O Heartsmit, O yoke of dullsmit, your blue ink pattern bespatters me," said the old Quaker.

His mom replied, "Henry, come home and eat your pie. Do you have a bit of a headache today?"

"Yes, Mom, there is one in my head."

They concluded he shouldn't push the page beyond its natural limits. Let the ink dry between words. Go take a medieval bath. The halls resound with quarrels. Do they also resound with libertine laughter? Take to your cell, pained one, and pray, although you don't know how.

* * *

4:08 p.m.

You can't know Krishna by material methods. I can't seem to know Him by reading either. He's far away. At least I *hear* of Him. The devotees understand Krishna through their service attitudes. Impersonalists have no hope. I keep reading statements like this, but ask myself, "Am I like the devotees described here? Where is Krishna in *my* life?" I don't deride Krishna. I'm not a *mudha*. Still, I am a left out, a would-be devotee.

Krishna means all-attractive. That's His best name. Why doesn't everyone accept Him? Because we are sinful rascals. Me too? We have to ask these questions. We really do. We are official devotees, but where are our hearts?

It's simple, isn't it? Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill. Therefore, He is God. Then why am I so out of touch with Him? I assume I'm not one of the *duskrtinas*, *mudhas*, *naradhamas*, or *asuras*, but why don't I surrender? I just don't know.

"Everything about the Lord "His activities, pastimes and uncommon features "should be accepted as is, and in this way, even in our present condition, we can understand the Lord." (*Bhag.4.7.32*, purport)

Srila Prabhupada promises us that if we follow Him, we'll know Krishna. We seem to follow, yet we don't know Him. If pressed we'll say, "Yes, I acknowledge Him as the light of the sun and the taste of water," but we don't usually make the association. We mull it over, go for a walk, utter a few mantras "not much.

"As an elephant gets relief from a forest fire by entering a river, so our minds can find relief from the forest fire of material existence by entering into the river or the Supreme Lord's transcendental pastimes." (*Bhag. 4.7.35*) I spoke on this at a Boston nightclub once to introduce our *kirtana* act. My wife played the *mrdanga*, I played with a bow on a one-stringed African-middle-Eastern instrument I found in a shop, and someone else played *karatalas*. I thought of the elephant, and the poetry of the *Bhagavatam*, just discovered in those days. "O Krishna, please save me from disgrace."

* * *

Yes, I can keep reading, but I seek quality. I have made the sacrifice. I have given up other practices to favor reading. But if my reading is inconsequential, then what? At weak moments I don't know that this is enough. Maybe I should admit again that I'm not a Haridasa Thakura or a raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami. I can't subsist only on chanting and reading. When I try, it doesn't amount to much.

But I get headaches. I cannot make radical changes in my life. So as little as it seems, I have to cling to this sacrifice. Each person or group of persons is stepping forward to offer prayers at the feet of the eight-armed Visnu. I am hearing that it is important to think of the Lord with love and faith, and to know Him as *bhakta-vatsala*. He loves His devotees. We have to grasp what we can.

June 21, 1997

Midnight

In a purport where Vedic *yajna* is described, Srila Prabhupada states that in the present age, the only acceptable *yajna* is *sankirtana*. At first glance you might think you've heard that statement a million times. I decided to look at it again. Then I felt the assurance of my *yajna* here. Sure I could be more active, but I'm still within the fold. The verse *Krishna-varnam . . . sankirtana prayair yajantahi sumedhasankirtana-yajna.*" (*Bhag.* 4.7.41, purport)

I felt my whole appreciation for Lord Caitanya open up with these words. I also felt how my reading and worship is a practical application of Prabhupada's statement. I should be focused on Lord Caitanya, a reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* strengthens my connection with Him because it is the scripture He recommended I read. My *sankirtana-yajna* in the mood of Maharaja Pariksit, who attained perfection simply by hearing it from Sukadeva.

O master, take me along this route. Let it connect at every step with Lord Caitanya's mercy.

* * *

Jnanis meditate on the Lord by philosophical speculation. Devotees know philosophy, but they prefer devotional service. Thus Krishna becomes a reality for them and they merge into transcendence. More important than analyzing Krishna's nature is serving Him personally. Blessed are those who have this faith (*nistha*). And all glories to the illiterate *brahmana* in Rangaksetra; he simply thought of Acyuta's loving compliance to Arjuna's desires and felt bliss. I am fortunate to know of him through my reading, although I am a crow among swans.

When you see Lord Caitanya dancing or Lord Krishna playing His flute, you may know that He is the same *purusa* who rests in the water of devastation on the bed of Sesa. This will help me understand that Lord Caitanya is not an ordinary human. Thus reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* assists me in appreciating God's original forms.

The demigods said, "We are all Your servants (*bhrtyan*). Give us Your protection." (*Bhag.* 4.7.42, purport) Krishna protects His surrendered devotees. It's not a business exchange. They do everything in loving service and He protects them. "Simply surrender to Me and I will give you protection from all the reactions of sinful activities."

* * *

I haven't forgotten to write freely. Let the readers ask where I'm going.

Anyway, it's just as well to be unplugged from today's world of commerce and politics and to sit in your cell chanting Hare Krishna. God be with you.

I have a license to free-write, but better to *prefer* to stay at the Lord's lotus feet.
True?

Madhu got an accordion on loan yesterday, a thirty-year-old Palo soprano. He's in love with it and will jam Irish traditional music at Glastonbury. A fiddle player from Galway will join him. I will go further into the Fourth Canto in the NaimiSaranya forest. I look forward to being more alone even as I afford my servant the chance to preach. I

don't want him to think I would rather he stayed home to make sure I have paper clips. He has his *yajna* amid the wild hordes. Different than mine, but it will make him dear to the Lord.

* * *

When non-ISKCON gurus talk of *gopi-manjari-bhava*, it may not be artificial for them. We ISKCONites don't seem to be able to do it in quite the same way. We can, however, come closer even than those other gurus to understanding Srila Prabhupada's exact presentation. When Srila Prabhupada speaks of the *gopis*, we can come closer in mood, and when he emphasizes other topics, we can come closer to understanding his mood. We can become Prabhupadanugas in the deepest sense of that term. Our audiences accept Prabhupada's mercy in this way. If they want something else, they're free to go, but we will stay at Prabhupada's lotus feet out of devotion.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

Ain't I sweet?/ See me walking down the street./ Now I ask you very confidentially/ ain't I sweet?

He is in his dreams. Last night he was hurrying home. I don't remember much more than that. I remember only that he was vulnerable and old, fragile. He had forgotten where his home was.

What is faith? How do we attain it? Was it that the Swami just came along and told us, "This is what we believe in India. We have held these views for thousands of years. This is the highest truth. Accept it, even if it doesn't tally with modern science. Krishna is the authority and He says He is God." Is that how it happened? Were we so young that we didn't care *what* he said? Would we have believed anything? What is the definition of your faith, and how have you come to accept the bluish God with two arms but sometimes four? Why are you prepared to renounce all spiritual paths for this one?

I can't exactly say. Maybe it was those ISKCON bullets, or the way Swamiji smiled, or the way he told stories. *He* was convinced. I was unhappy and he was kind. I wanted a guru and here was a guru.

Early faith. I'm not sorry now that I followed him. I gave up my addictions. And they were strong, weren't they? He cut through them immediately. That was the basis for my initial faith. It wasn't blind.

Besides that, I liked the persons described in the *Bhagavatam* "Vyasadeva, Narada, and others. I liked to chant. I liked the idea of *bhakti*. I liked the storefront. Nothing else out there was as good as what the Swami was offering. Not for me. I wanted to be a monk and to give up everything for God. He captured me.

I joined and then served in ISKCON for more than thirty years. Now I'm tired of serving *only* the movement. I want to find my essential roots as a devotee, to examine my initial faith and to find the spirit of what attracted me. I know we're not supposed to retire, and neither am I retired. I'm writing books and letters, lecturing, doing what I should. But it's true, there's a certain kind of participation that's beyond me right now.

Oh, old man, hurry up and go home. You are getting drowsy. If you don't get home by midnight, you're afraid your horse and carriage will turn into a pumpkin drawn by rats. Hurry home and chant Hare Krishna on the way. You won't live forever, but still, this day looks good (although cold, dark, and rainy). It can be offered to Krishna.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada says (expanding on verse 4.7.44) that our first attraction for Maya is the temporary body. This leads us into a horrible condition of life from which, "There is only one way of liberation "to engage in the activities of transcendental chanting and hearing of the holy name of the Supreme Lord: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare."

If you find your realization of this superficial, then that means you don't know the truth of it. We might have a veneer of agreement with the spiritual master without investing anything of ourselves. Why? We are sleeping awake.

Then gently pray for Krishna to appear as you read. Don't flirt with skepticism. Pray that the scriptures will come to you in their intended meaning. Ask to enter the spiritual master's words. Extend the time in which you live in the scriptures with a faithful attitude.

A preacher is convinced in the potency of *Krishna-katha*. I want to preach to myself and be converted again. I want to taste the conversion this time and renew my spirit. I want to feel the deeper transformation. "Because we know that if one simply chants and hears the topics of Krishna one's life will change; he will see a new light, and his life will be successful." (*Bhag.* 4.7.44, purport)

Expose yourself.

Take off your protective covering and
allow the *Bhagavatam's* rays to
bathe you.

It's not difficult, harmful,
or painful,
and the gain is great.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Read a line spoken by the yajnic priests to Lord Visnu. The whole incident was delicate because the priests had offended Lord Siva, yet were Lord Visnu's devotees after all. They said, "Simply by chanting Your holy name one can surpass all obstacles." (*Bhag.* 4.7.48) I read it and wanted to emblazon it on my jacket, my mind, my heart.

* * *

Each purport is filled with possibilities, depending on how I receive it (*ye yatam mam prapadyante*). Take a simple statement like, "As far as the spiritual entrance into the material world is concerned, all beings are parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord, but

under the covering of different material qualities they have different names." (*Bhag.* 4.7.51, purport) That could blow my mind, make my hairs stand on end. Or, if I'm not awake and receptive, it might do nothing. I could even be disinterested.

"For the purpose of creation, Brahma is manifested, and for annihilation there is Lord Siva." Brahma and Siva are inconceivably great persons, and creation and annihilation are beyond my understanding "great, great universal events. If I accept hearing these statements from the viewpoint of a privileged *cela*, I'll be astonished. Krishnadasa Kaviraja says these topics are wondrous, *cirat carat*, Lord Caitanya's *amrta*.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

If you hear the Daksa *yajna* narration with faith and devotion, you'll be cleared of material contamination. Of course, it's expected that once you are clear, you won't contaminate yourself again.

Then how to avoid contact with matter? It's not done by hating the body or the world. Yet it does mean avoiding sense gratification. Nothing should be done independent of Krishna's service. When Krishna is in the center, then we can undertake so many projects (*yukta-vairagya*).

I don't understand much, but I have been trained in Krishna consciousness and want to always keep that *siddhanta* as my own truth. Once I leave it and make Krishna consciousness only one of several influences in my life, then I'm a tiny creature afloat in the vast material ocean.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

The Christian author writes that God made man and woman and gave them sex, so it's a beautiful thing and should be celebrated without prurience. I don't know exactly what he means. He doesn't make it clear how sexual enjoyment is service to God. Is it that you say, "O God, thanks for the beautiful body of the woman, which I enjoy so much! You really gave us a treat! Thanks, Dad." Or is there some way to make it purer service?

In Krishna consciousness we say that sex is no great thing. The Christians seem afraid to say that these days. They want to get rid of the old notion that Christians beliefs are anti-sex and anti-body. They say sex is great and is praised in the Bible's "Song of Songs." That is, we can understand a soul's union with God by understanding man's union with a woman. This author says that the spiritual union must be understood in terms of the beauty of actual physical sex. What is that mystical sex-like union of soul and God, which resembles in so many ways the passion of a man for a woman? "No one can say exactly, but it is a kind of union (like sex) in which you become completely absorbed in the Other."

Krishna consciousness is clearer. We say God gave sex pleasure so that creatures would procreate, but we have to give it up in order to transcend material consciousness. The highest love of God is to assist Radha and Krishna in *Their* conjugal pastimes, but Their conjugal pastimes are not material sex. Therefore, we don't need to understand material sex to understand *madhurya-rasa*.

This is quite different than what I just read in the book describing St. John of the Cross. To a devotee's ears, the mixture of mundane sex and impersonally tinged love of God is too strange. Let us have the clear Krishna conscious light as Lord Caitanya offered it.

A devotee here read my "Simplify, Simplify" essay and had a few objections. He thinks that Thoreau was an ivory tower intellectual who didn't understand *grhastha* life. Maybe he's right. I wrote him that I only want to encourage *grhasthas* not to sacrifice *sadhana* in the name of working for a living. Save your time. I know it's radical, but devotees ought to consider it. We are meant to save our immortal soul, even if that's done at the expense of gaining the whole world. Thoreau was an example of someone willing to live his own life and not get sucked into everyone's definition of the "necessities of life". Devotees should be intelligent in the same way.

Okay, what else? Clinton's attempt to keep his presidential name above the scandals of fund-raising? Starvation? Hostages? No, don't. Just write "Krishna," and that will justify your sticking your head in the sand (as some might accuse). That's simplicity too.

And don't forget to burble like the brook. When the time comes, take off your scarf and restrain yourself. Freedom is yours for eloquent or poor *japa*. You choose. Hare Krishna.

* * *

6:25 p.m.

Oh boy, I want oats and poems for breakfast, and vistas of maroon. I want to be a brethren of honey-made worship and don't need John's *nada* or *toda*, although I appreciate him as a great man. I want God in love. Impressionable fool, hero to myself.

Oh heavens, tomorrow I'll lecture if I feel all right. They may give birth to a few more children in this community, but I may not be around when they are ready to be initiated.

Now purple your blue, be as light as yellow, and blue bedeck pink. O soul, Krishna is the cowherd boy who rules the universes.

June 22, 1997

12:05 a.m.

I see how reverses in people's lives work in their favor. When St. John of the Cross was put into prison, he experienced union with God and wrote his great poems. When Dhruva's stepmother wounded him with cruel words, she also remarked that only if God favored him could he sit on the throne. "Indirectly, the words of Suruci were a benediction for Dhruva Maharaja. Because of the influence of his stepmother's words, he became a great devotee." (*Bhag.* 4.8.20, purport) I don't ask for trouble.

Srila Prabhupada paraphrases Suniti's advice to her young son, "Krishna is so kind to His devotees that if you go to Him, then the combined kindness of millions of mothers like me will be surpassed by His affectionate and tender dealings. When everyone else fails to mitigate one's misery, Krishna is able to help His devotee." (*Bhag.* 4.8.22, purport)

Srila Prabhupada writes, "As soon as one places the Supreme Personality of Godhead within one's heart, everything becomes easy and successful."

I send my drawings "home" to be kept. My handwritten pages are also sent away. Any effort to express God consciousness is worth saving.

Oh, not always physically, but as something to share. None of it is useless.

Trying to . . .

don't put me down. I'm

just a little boy a

toy of Prabhupada

Reading the story of a boy who was pushed off his father's lap

who then roved the night.

Not these cold rainy Irish nights

or low Wicklow hills. Dhruva didn't write an autobiography-diary-treatise-poem, but he found no home but His lotus feet. No telephone but the line to God.

Go to the Supreme to mitigate your misery, Suniti told her son. Don't go to anyone lesser. Save yourself for great loves; don't waste yourself on something lesser.

I'm waiting for Him to come. I wait for Vraja-Krishna and for Lord Caitanya, for my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada. Then I'll go no more a-rovin'. I'll be situated at His lotus feet.

* * *

Prabhupada gives the same examples. It's the same Dhruva, the same heart beating, but ever new love of Krishna and Radha. Old pains, old perfect system of *bhakti-yoga*.

Same incantations to dissolve tedium too. O Krishna, at the end of my life I'll say, "May all my papers and ashes be scattered and mixed in Yamuna." Bury me in my Mayapur,

or if it's too far away . . .

What if I die in Mississippi mud? Will they ship me all the way to India?

Don't bother. Make my *puspa-samadhi* there. Dress me in my tailored suit of ochre, a smile on my lips, eschewing mad cultists. Say I died in ISKCON's good graces.

* * *

12:15 noon

Morning class went okay. I read from my mail bag: a devotee in prison, a devotee who preaches to the New Agers, a devotee in Africa where people are starving and robbing, a sixty-year-old *nama-hatta* devotee from Scotland, a newcomer who visited Puerto rico ISKCON and loved my disciples.

My disciples, my disciples, me, the spiritual master. I use these words freely and take up the persona. I've been doing it since 1978, despite changes, so to deny it or be completely shy isn't even honest. I do think of "my disciples," but it's also a fact that I have been cutting down my profile. That's honest too.

Oh, he's a spiritual master

from rio Grande

and he's got a big name

among his own.
He's on a cult high-horse but
he's a 'umble man.

* * *

He toots his horn in a
hundred-plus books
and gives out looks
and assurances too to
the ladies and men
and their children.

* * *

He can't be hired, begged,
or bought
but he's not so brave.
He reads and writes and
scampers up the stairs
when he hears gunshots
or a knock at the door.

* * *

Heard that a book distributor had a fist fight with rowdies on the street. God bless him and protect him. I asked if the police intervened. I heard they didn't. The devotee giving me this report said that they had once had some trouble at Inis rath-Geaglum. When they phoned the police, the police said they didn't want to come out at that hour (8 p.m.) because it might be an IrA trap. I began to worry, "What kind of trouble were they having at Geaglum that they had to call the police?" I thought that was an all-peaceful abode. Who would come there and start trouble?" Well, it happens. Nowhere is safe in this world, although Krishna is always in control.

* * *

Oh, he's a spiritual master
and can fire off a riposte
to the atheists of yore
and those of today.

* * *

He's a fiery guru
on a soft seat awhile,
"Drag him down!" shout

the demons in my dreams.

* * *

He's an ISKCON guru
one of that sort
but unique in his way
I can't slow down to say
just what he feels
but he's trying for that.

* * *

Oh, peace, please
tell me who I am.
Let me live for His
service.

* * *

2:39 p.m.

Narada heard that Dhruva went to the forest, so he went and touched his head. I'll tell you about it here, but you'll probably read it yourself, dear friend.

God is great. Suniti was right. They had been lamenting, mother and son, but what use was that? There was no remedy. (Srla Prabhupada said that. Whatever I say I got from him. He repeats his own spiritual master with full faith.)

As I was saying, the Supersoul sent His representative, Narada, to initiate Dhruva.

My little life runs like counterpoint to what's happening in this book. Did you know we went and looked at a devotee's land? It was isolated, although an elderly couple live not too far away. The devotee had to walk by their house on a pebbled path. They don't interfere.

(M. just came in and asked if we could skip our session on talking about Srla Prabhupada's letters because he wants to have a practice session with Ani, who is in town. All right. Now I have to, can, want to, *will*, face this void known as the crunch of reading and writing.)

In the morning class, a devotee said he likes to maintain a balance between reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta*. He intimated that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* teaches us of God's greatness, which is required, but that *Caitanya-caritamrta* contains the nectar Yes, that's true. Vaikunthanatha is great, and we need to see that, but even more what we see in the *Bhagavatam* is Krishna's intense affection for His devotees. Therefore, we shouldn't judge the *Bhagavatam* as containing only the *aiSvarya* feature of Krishna.

When I held up three-year-old Nimai's drawing to show the audience I said, "He is more advanced," and everyone laughed. What did Nimai think of that? Srla Prabhupada writes that a child doesn't usually take honor or insult seriously, although Dhruva was fiery by five years old.

* * *

Our bodily concept subjects us to enjoyment and suffering. reverses are accepted as coming from the Lord. "When a devotee is put into distress, he accepts this as God's mercy and offers Him repeated obeisances with his body, mind and intellect." He is satisfied.

* * *

4:27 a.m.

From the Fount book on Kierkegaard, by Peter Vardy:

The question for faith is, effectively, "Is God at the center of your life? Are you in a love-relationship to God?" You cannot answer this question by reciting theological doctrines or by pointing to the books you have read, or the objective truths you say you believe. The answer is to be found only by looking inside yourself and seeing whether God is, indeed, at the center of your life and whether the whole of your life is determined by and focused on the relationship with God.

. . . faith means staking one's life on something, with total passion, knowing that there is no proof and it is always possible one could be wrong. Faith necessarily involves risk . . .

I find Kierkegaard's philosophy stimulating, and I agree with this statement. When I put the test to myself and ask whether God is really at the center of my life, I can't respond with an unqualified "yes." Certainly I believe that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but it seems to be more like a doctrine than a passion to which I am totally dedicated.

I wonder if I was ever different during my career as an aspiring devotee. It seems now that Prabhupada has left this planet, there is no one left to inspire me in the same way. Or command me. Prabhupada willingly led me forward, and I willingly followed. Prabhupada saw me as sincere. He said that I did whatever he asked. Maybe I was more outwardly surrendered in those days than inwardly, but I don't want to disparage that. Whatever I was doing, I was making an expression of will and putting my body on the line. The mind seemed to be automatically controlled by my attention to serving Prabhupada. Serving Prabhupada meant serving his mission.

Since his disappearance, there's no one who can inspire me in that way. For the first few years after Prabhupada's disappearance, I accepted the mantle of one of Prabhupada's expansions, but that wasn't real. Now the honor has been removed, and I have further removed myself from the front lines of the mission. It's a strange position. I am no longer a commander, but neither can I see myself as among the commanded. Some of my friends see that position as all right. I'm still working within ISKCON, although in a nonmanagerial way, I still preach, I maintain my *sannyasa* vows, I take care of my disciples. Especially, I don't speak against the doctrines of the GBC or ISKCON.

But in terms of this inwardness described by Kierkegaard, I feel my own shortcoming. Maybe, as I say, I was able to pass off surrender as outward activity in the past; now I'm faced with having to look within myself for surrender. In previous decades it would

almost have seemed ridiculous to use the word "inward". Surrender was defined by hard, physical labor in Prabhupada's service. Nowadays, I assign it much more meaning. I'm not juggling words when I talk about this, but saying that we really do have to look within ourselves and ask, "Do I love Krishna with my whole being?"

Kierkegaard (as expressed by Vardy) says that it is not enough to say that you believe God exists. The important thing is to *believe in God*. When you believe in God, you give your life to follow Him. For some of us, it may be a struggle to say from the depth of your heart that we believe God exists. Kierkegaard is referring to a higher level of awareness of God's existence and our own relationship with Him. At least we believe in the life of a devotee and would have no other life. We take shelter in that life, but it's not everything. Something is still missing. That is, where is the burning dedication to Krishna, the attempt to fix the goal on attaining His loving service and nothing else, the desire to know Him and to please Him? We have to look for that higher state and find it within ourselves.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

More from Vardy's analysis of Kierkegaard:

Faith is the highest that any individual can attain, yet modern speculative philosophy mocks faith and makes it out to be nothing. This Kierkegaard refused to accept. If faith is the highest, then reason has no right to cheat people out of faith "it is not possible to go further than faith. Faith is the highest and most difficult demand. It is not something that one can achieve and then move on, it has to be lived out hour by hour, day by day, month by month and year by year for the whole of one's life. It is totally demanding, challenging, uncomfortable and lonely.

Krishna consciousness is more positive than this. It asserts that the actual spiritual platform is not one which could possibly be wrong, and which then makes one uncomfortable and lonely. We say *brahma-bhuta-prasannatma*. We rise above the modes and miseries. This is, of course, perfection. It is within Krishna conscious philosophy to admit that there is anxiety in the intermediate stages, but we tend to think of it as spiritual anxiety. There is even anxiety in the highest stages, but it is caused by separation from Krishna. I guess in that sense you could say the *gopis* live a life that is "totally demanding, challenging, uncomfortable and lonely," but it is also ecstatic. They're fully aware of Krishna's beauty and love for them, and they feel His presence at all times either in union or in separation. Their so-called anxiety is actually love.

* * *

5:35 a.m.

Narada said to Dhruva, "It is very difficult to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.8.29) The Sanskrit doesn't have an explicit word for Supreme Personality of Godhead, but Srila Prabhupada translates it that way. Are you going to find fault with him for that? I say categorically, axiomatically, you don't find fault with your guru. He's right, now find out how. In this verse he's making it explicit. You could even say he's putting a bit of purport into the verse. But it's *Srimad-Bhagavatam*

siddhanta. Extra care is needed to fend off the possibility of Mayavadi interpretation. Also, it's his ecstasy to write the words "Supreme Personality of Godhead." I welcome that ecstasy. Previous verses and subsequent ones use explicit words for *iSvara*, *bhagavan*, etc., so there's no harm if Srila Prabhupada spells it out here too. The word *yoga* is used in this *Sloka*, and *yoga* means to satisfy the Supreme Person.

Narada tests Dhruva.

Bhakti is easy if you are sincere.

Accept your whatever it is as Krishna's will. Don't work to change your position, but to find your heart in devotional service.

Krishna consciousness is really blissful. Kierkegaard is a melancholic thinker, and he's always anxious about his inability to totally surrender. Besides, his positive love relationship is centered on Christ as the only way. I can't accept that.

Srimad-Bhagavatam is my feast and my daily bread. I just told M. that I heard Srila Prabhupada say a dancer has to *practice*. M. is playing with Aniruddha, who has a 12-string guitar. M. says A. is "rusty." So, he should practice. M. said some people may be regimented, but better than that is to feel love for the music "which makes you want to play (and practice) both in private and on stage.

"Loving practice" I said.

Try to live out these words.

Narada, Narada

come to me too.

May Supersoul send my master

Prabhupada. "What! Again?

Hasn't he taught you enough?

He calls you repeatedly but

you get restless and want to

go away."

May he call me now

and change me.

I want to be changed.

* * *

Dhruva admitted he had material desires, and he thought those desires excluded him from worshipping the Supreme Lord. No, not true. *Akama sarva-kamo va . . . tivrena bhakti-yogena hi jeta-purusam param.*

The purports are long in this section and this day is almost over. I guess I'll stop here. Dhruva wants to know how he can become king. If Narada knows how to achieve that, Dhruva says, then please instruct me. Otherwise, there's nothing he can learn from Narada.

We need *brahmanas*, Prabhupada said. Give the society a sane head.

I used to be a *brahmana*. Still am. read the Vedic book wearing a MacGregor gray sweatshirt with hood.

In Ireland, last sunlight "it's actually the first sunlight of the day "slanting over my shoulder. Yesterday was the summer solstice, observed by neo-Druids on Mount Tara. Devotees were invited and chanted there, photographed by the *Irish Times*.

Narada, if you teach me
bhakti I'll take it but
I'm not austere even a drop
like Dhruva was. Give
me the easy way.
Chant Hare Krishna. Awaken
in me that love.

June 23
12:10 a.m.

We can be with the spiritual master in a mystical sense even after his departure. It takes confidence. Srila Prabhupada said it also takes purity. I'm reading how Dhruva met Narada and was appreciative of him. It makes me think of the possibilities of being with Prabhupada now. I have to both desire it and show him my worthiness. I have to be willing to be honest before him about my inability to do some of the things I used to do on his command. I have to place myself at his feet and ask for a service I can do. I also have to beg him to accept the service I am doing now, and to find sincerity and determination there. To cultivate a relationship with Prabhupada through his books and lectures is a solid approach. I want to feel desperate enough for Prabhupada's association that I never lose my focus on this approach.

* * *

Dhruva is an example of someone determined to achieve his desire, and who wanted it through the sanction of guru and Krishna. The Lord was kind to him and rewarded his desire beyond even Dhruva's expectations. He gave him pure Krishna consciousness and fulfilled his material desire. Later we will read that Dhruva regretted coming to Krishna with material desires, but at the time, he couldn't seem to repress his material desires. Krishna didn't hold it against him. Dhruva's determination earned him the right to receive Krishna's mercy.

I think about this for myself. It reminds me of Blake's saying that if a fool persists in his folly he'll become wise. The main thing is to go to Krishna for *whatever* you want. *Akama sarva-kamo va*. Krishna states that He is more intelligent than we are. We ask Him for material desires and He gives us the taste of His lotus feet "which we find much nicer than anything we thought we wanted. *Svamin kutatosmi varam nayaje*. "When Krishna offers anything, it is beyond the expectation of the devotee." The spiritual master is as powerful as Bhagavan. "Naturally his only activity is to bestow the greatest benefit upon whomever he meets."

* * *

Narada said that Suniti's advice to Dhruva was "just suitable for you. You should therefore completely absorb yourself in the devotional service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.8.40) Narada didn't simply give Dhruva what he wanted, nor did Krishna give Arjuna what he wanted. "Narada Muni asked Dhruva Maharaja to undergo devotional discipline in order to achieve a desired result." (*Bhag.* 4.8.40, purport)

Here is more good advice for me. Disciples may expect me to hand over a blessing, and if I think I am supposed to pull them up, it bewilders me. How can I calm their grief, make them happy, take away their confusion, their *maya*? " . . . that is not the duty of the spiritual master. His duty is to engage the disciple in proper devotional service as prescribed in the *sastras*." I need to do that in a way that inspires them.

Confidence and faith: engage in devotional service and believe that all your needs (including the religious principles from economic development to liberation) will be fulfilled. Krishna will take care of everything. We should also be confident in our service, especially that it represents one or more of the limbs of *bhakti*.

Narada advised Dhruva to live at Madhuvana in Vrndavana, to bathe in the Yamuna three times daily, and to practice *astanga-yoga* in devotional service. Srila Prabhupada recommends living in Vrndavana "unless one is very advanced in spiritual life." The advanced preacher can live anywhere. I have to make the best of my situation. Vrndavana-living doesn't seem possible to me at present. Therefore, I have to make Ireland my Vrndavana. Let me think of Krishna here in a peaceful setting, reading and writing, my version of *astanga-yoga*.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

Truth is subjectivity, especially in our relationship with God. It's not determined by conformity to a community or by reciting a creed. Think personally.

It's cold for the end of June. That's Ireland for you. In America, they'd call this "unseasonal," but it's *often* unseasonal here.

Oh, stop talking about
the world, Stevie Wonder.
But it's a wonder, I
can't see how you can just dismiss
the world in the name of
preferred God consciousness.

And so the artist applied his brushes full of green and red, dabs of yellow applied to a cramped, A-4 space. Is that a green swelling breast? I listen to Srila Prabhupada's *bhajan*s as I paint. I write in holy words, rubrics, runes. "*Patita-pavana hetu*" is written on a painting with a speedy car. The front of the car looks like a Concord jet, something an eight-year-old boy might draw, full of pep and boyishness.

God. Plain, abstract truth.
Peanut butter,
Rubber bands,
bracelets,
firm bread, firm

soggy toast and
bare knuckles.

The priest can't save you now. "In every city of the world," he said, "there are people looking for a fight with someone weaker than themselves. They think devotees are weaker." One devotee here proved them wrong.

Some devotees cringe and cower. ruffians and coarse people laughed at Kierkegaard's spindly legs, and the *Corsair* attacked him. He was laughed at on the street, and definitely not worshiped as one of the greatest intellectuals to champion theism. Good fellow for Christ.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

It looks like I'll be having a headache for the rest of the day. It's already settled behind the right eye. That means I won't be able to read or write. I feel like saying I'm being cheated of my favorite activities, but maybe I'm the cheater. Early this morning I felt the warning, but I went ahead anyway and now I'm paying for it.

Now while I sit it out and measure pain, let me try to appreciate my situation. Krishna is in control.

June 24, 1997

11:30 a.m.

My headache lasted all night, so I had to rest. Then when I recovered, I decided to answer the mail that came yesterday from America.

One young man who writes poetry and even reads it publicly wrote that he's going to move into a temple. I usually advise him that he should become more situated as a devotee before he takes up full-time his writing career. I encouraged him that he'll have more interesting things to write about when he lives in the temple.

A GBC position paper also arrived in the mail. I liked it because it wasn't offensive in anyway, but stated its points succinctly and clearly and gave good evidence.

Somehow the combination of these different events "the headache and the mail" churned up something in me and I felt different than I did yesterday. It's not unusual that this happens to me when I get a twelve-hour headache. It's as if I'm running along on a certain track, then suddenly, after the pain disappears, I find myself running along a different track. This time I began to think I should go to America, live in a temple, and become a more active preacher. My advice to that young man continued to ring in my ears and I thought, "Yes, you'd have more interesting things to write about." So what if I wrote and read less? So what if I had to expose myself more to stress? So what if I had to attend all the programs? I would adjust somehow. Would this enhance my spirit as a Prabhupada follower? I would at least be able to assure people to stick to Prabhupada's path.

I let those thoughts bubble for awhile, then realized they weren't realistic. I felt like an old horse who looks at the raging river where young horses are being carried away and says, "Let me try to swim it." Even thinking about made me feel another bout of pain

coming on. I just can't do it. Nevertheless, I was glad to have felt the sentiment to want to be an active preacher and not to become too relaxed.

* * *

3 p.m.

We are unaccustomed to loving surrender because the objects of surrender are unworthy. I used to surrender or dedicate myself to certain idols. That's good, now surrender to Krishna. But I'm older, it's harder and I can't "see Him." That's a sorry condition.

"This surrender by the living entity occurs automatically as soon as he sees the beautiful, youthful nature of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.8.46, purport) The paintings of Krishna are not imaginative when done under the guru's direction and according to the *sastras*.

He remains always in trance on the Supreme Lord. I have to consciously remain fixed minute by minute on reading and chanting. Where is that stage where one can remain in trance? From that stage, one never falls down.

Dhruva was advised to simultaneously fix his mind on the Lord's ever auspicious form and to chant the mantra his guru gave him. The mantra is confidential in the sense that it has to be given by the spiritual master in *parampara*. "One should not artificially try to see the form of the Lord while chanting Hare Krishna, but when the chanting is performed offensively the Lord will automatically reveal Himself to the view of the chanter. *The chanter, therefore, has to concentrate on hearing the vibration, and without extra endeavor in his part, the Lord will automatically appear.* (*Bhag.* 4.8.53, purport, emphasis added)

* * *

4:25 p.m.

Om namo bhagavate vasudevaya "that's what Dhruva chanted. The purport to this verse is one I know well and have often quoted. Srila Prabhupada defends his Western devotees against Indians who may criticize them for not doing things exactly on the Indian-Hindu standard. Narada asks Dhruva to worship according to rules and regulations, "but this should be done in consideration of time, place and attendant conveniences and inconveniences." (*Bhag.* 4.8.54, purport)

The mail tells me that others are stuck in their *Bhagavatam* reading attempts. I tell them I know what they mean, but that I have overcome it. I read daily, and I have built up my stamina.

I say it as if it's *fait accompli*, but it's not. I face the same blocks again and again. One devotee said, "I read the *Bhagavatam* for half an hour at night. I know that's not much." I told her it was pretty good. Then she hinted that she doesn't *always* do it. Let me become their champion "the honest elder who admits it's tough. He is part of the culture.

* * *

6 p.m.

He said his mind was like a grasshopper. I know what that's like. The mind hops. You are reading of Dhruva and suddenly you recall a letter from Guyana. From there, you enter a mental fantasy about being with two devotees in a car going to the ferry. Oh, back to Dhruva Maharaja. Water can be used for worship as available in the West, but it must be clear and pure. Do things according to time and place. Be peaceful. Eat whatever fruits and vegetables are available.

My mind hops to lunch. It was simple (that's good). and dessert was a liquid custard with a sweet ginger-type bread-cake. Not *that* simple, I guess.

My mind hops to a letter about the disciples' meeting in Guyana. Ranchor told them how I stayed in his house in New York and ate a lot of something or other. What was it? Some dessert. If the guru eats a lot, they take that as a good sign.

Hop: telling Baladeva something about cooking or . . .

Hop: an hour ago I read Kierkegaard on despair. Aesthetic and ethical stages lead to despair. Then you surrender to God. That means faith in the eternal and acting for Him in your life. Temporary concerns become subordinate. For SK, a religionist has to accept Jesus Christ as savior. The life of faith is demanding, lonely, and it can't be done for you by a group, not even by the Church.

Hop: Srimati Govinda dasi introduced *tulasi* in the West. Prabhupada's gratitude.

* * *

I think I have read enough for tonight. Sufficiently tired in eyes. Salvaged the day, which was mostly recovery and answering mail. Look for a more sattvic (wish I could say *Suddha-sattvika*) day tomorrow. Find the Lord's lotus feet through the narration of Dhruva's devotional austerities and ecstasy. These cantos lead you to the Tenth Canto, and even here Srila Prabhupada says Krishna is the source of all forms of God. Goodnight, eagle rest, pheasant standing on stone I saw, grouse, spare them, rabbits too nibbling on grass awhile before foxes attack.

The world is like that.
Tell us how you write.
I take a deep breath and
plunge in with my
pitchfork and work like
crazy. I snooze and
cruise with a Sheaffer
pen. I grasp my *japa*
beads and tell you what
comes.

* * *

Old memories
not allowed or what
I read on the tourist map
of Wicklow: B&B,
pottery store, acting club,

horse club, stud farm,
what about churches?

* * *

The controversies never die
but I . . .
pray hail Marys.

If I don't accept Christ as SK does, does it mean I'm nowhere in His book? He's got more than one son. May Christ be kind to me and send me to Krishna's lotus feet.

June 25
12:10 a.m.

Narada instructs Dhruva to worship the Deity, chant the mantra, and meditate on the Supreme Person's transcendental activities in His different incarnations. "If one is very serious about liberation, he must stick to the process of transcendental loving service, engaging twenty-four hours a day in the highest stage of ecstasy, and he must certainly be aloof from all activities of sense gratification." (*Bhag.* 4.8.61)

Srila Prabhupada sometimes says we cannot imitate Haridasa Thakura and chant twenty-four hours a day. Then he recommends other services we can be active in to remain always in Krishna consciousness. I admit I can't *only* read. I take breaks to do something else. But the breaks should not be excursions into *maya*. Neither should the breaks become the norm and the bouts of reading become short episodes in my life. Always return to focus on the *Bhagavatam*. Thus I advise myself.

Real *vimukti* is to always be directly engaged in devotional service. In other words, we become liberated when we spend our entire day in devotional service. Sometimes I make such suggestions to devotees, and householders find it impractical. They argue that it sounds like I am proposing they practice *nirjana-bhajana*, that I need to consider the social dimension. Okay, I admit I'm in a different *aSrama*. Then let me take my own advice and accept the burden of responsibility to read and chant and write. Whatever breaks I take should be oriented toward service. I am not a gardener or a physical worker, but I can clean my room, walk outside or back and forth in the house, chant extra *japa*, free-write, or just think of making myself more receptive to Krishna.

"Only persons who are completely free from the contamination of sense gratification can execute *bhakti-yoga*, or the process of devotional service, very purely." My service should be free from sense gratification.

King Uttanapada repented banishing Dhruva and worried about his well-being. Narada assured him that Krishna was protecting Dhruva, "Anyone who engages in devotional service, anywhere within this universe, is never unprotected." (*Bhag.* 4.8.68, purport) Even me.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Who's gonna live forever? Words to that effect. Hoopla. Where were you, where was your body-sex? I was floating in an unconscious mass. I am the perpetrator of a lie.

* * *

Word Mess "Don't ask me to explain

Demon versus devotees

dork and pie

yeah but you gotta be a devotee or hell-bound, a Lutheran mess. Asleep-a-bye "a hundred percent escaper, the realtor. No one at my door. He escapes into addiction, and I into sleep.

I was afraid a headache would come, so didn't paint my pictures. For the same reason, I may hesitate to walk in the misty rain.

Kowit and Murray. Where was that dream? It took place at L.A. Crescent Beach. We were walking with our guru, who opened our eyes so we wouldn't become drug addicts, prim and tough. No straight or square sharp-shooter intellectual lawyer-professors, prose-writers for bucks.

She said, "We women tend to have our intelligence covered over by emotions." Will you write PMrB again?

Maybe in a new way. But I have no intention of stopping what I'm doing until He stops me with His shepherd's hook.

Life in the temple: sirens all night and someone banging on the front door, but we survived. Mice and roaches in the kitchen. Woke up to see faces of fellow devotees, but don't talk to women. In the kitchen, Mas are making sweets for radha-Krishna and we obediently went to *mangala-arati* after a cold shower and wipe down, you coward-towel-slurp.

You chant on empty stomach all sixteen. Now it's time to eat, but you don't feel much like it.

Then? Go out on *sankirtana*, or work in the kitchen or office, or lecture to newcomers from notes on *sastra*. You choose. If you live here, you have to *work*. We stand, and on the leader's signal we sing, don't shriek, all as a flock

do pray.

* * *

Henry Katz and other Jews.

Timothy Russo and Cosmos and Jimmy Duncan. Our master says no more nationalism or racism, but everyone under one God and one religion.

But which one? Bahai? Mormon? Hare Krishna?

No, not like that. One God approached by love. We agree to that. This is in our books. I'll mess your face if you blaspheme.

You want to run around crazy with your mouth drooling and mind bouncing off walls?

No, sir.

Then do as I say. read the newspapers. Come here and work at 9 o'clock.

Is this a next life? I like the life I have. I'm trying to learn to pray to God, and you can do it no matter where you were born.

He said, "I'm so loose and in need of light stuff only, I prefer your *Sketchbooks of Joy* and can't read the heavy stuff." Well, then I served, I suppose.

Look out, spies, see Madhu coming with the bowl of cereal, coconut waffles, holy Eucharist. Euke! Here it comes. Offer it up sober.

* * *

8:52 a.m.

Dhruva undertook the most difficult task: To satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "Every devotee, therefore, should be determined that in this life he will be able to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by that process go back home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.8.69, purport)

Can you please your spiritual master? Can you make an increased effort in these last years of your life, or are you slowing down, gliding to a stop? Love him. I put that in the imperative tense. One brother is drained of his natural love and affection for the spiritual master when he hears some of the imperatives: "You must do what the spiritual master orders." He doesn't want to serve out of guilt or fear of failure.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Doubts plague, but lets look at them one at a time. Dhruva followed his spiritual master's instructions (*Bhag.* 4.8.71). Srila Prabhupada remarks that we will be sure to reach perfection if we follow our spiritual master. I think, "Why this insistence, why this brow beating: you have to follow, you have to follow?" Am I thinking this because I just read a letter from a brother who feels he can't follow each and every edict and who feels he failed? Then, "A spiritual master is expert in giving special instructions to each of his disciples." Again the doubt. Can he do this when he has thousands of disciples? It seems he orders them in a more general way, or he orders them according to the needs of the mission rather than their personal needs. They go to the front lines as gun fodder. They give up their youth and health to push on the mission. But that too I read in the letter from my brother.

Much of what I write is off-loading of something I picked up. It gives me relief to put it down, "Here, this burden isn't mine. I don't have to carry it any further. I am tired of carrying it." Still, are there answers?

Yes.

But burdens "finally (after a brief, firefly life duration) we put down our biggest burden and leave the body behind. Were you ever able to be yourself in that body? Were you ever able to find the answer to these questions and thus please guru and Krishna? Did you find faith? Or did you cheat yourself and others?"

Doubts plagues. Kierkegaard: ". . . depart from me, damned assurance! Save me, O God, from ever becoming absolutely certain. Preserve me in the hinterland of

uncertainty so that it may always be absolutely certain that if I attain salvation I receive it by grace."

That's something I read, but they're another man's thoughts. Follow guru, feel confirmation in your heart, but if you're so ornery and doubtful when you read his purports, how do you expect to receive grace?

By being a basket case.

By his finding something sincere in me.

A devotee asked me what Srila Prabhupada means by his use of the word liberal. I couldn't think clearly at the time. Now I see he means lenient, giving an opportunity to all. Surrendering to God is difficult. Dhruva performed extreme austerities to achieve it. Lord Caitanya made it easy. "But if we don't follow even the liberal instructions of Lord Caitanya . . . "

Four rules, sixteen rounds, accept *prasadam*. Be determined, you goddamn slave. Work!

You reprobate, do what you're told. Follow, obey. Don't be a slouch.

There you go again, speculating and sense gratifying. Takes these whips on the back, they're good for you. O Christ!

Hey, if you listen to doubtful brothers, you will become doubtful too. I'm a simple, sweet guy, somebody said. Somehow I'm working it out (writing it out), but I know I falter, yet offer myself to guru. I don't resent him. rather, I fear my *anarthas*.

It's a hard task to get out of this world, so you scrawny s.o.b., do as you're told. Be a man. Be like your strong brothers. We don't expect *so* much of you, so stop complaining.

The galley slave rows on. He knows he's got little chance, at the rate he's rowing, of being accepted to go back to Godhead. Is it a game? You pretend to be sorrowful, resentful, rebellious and the Lord sees you're not a half bad guy, so He upgrades you. Then voila! You wake up one day, surprised and in Goloka.

Or is it the opposite? You think you're okay until the bottom drops out and He shows you, "You're nothing. Not a single good qualify. Here's a dose of Kali-yuga suffering "it's about time you got some like the others." And you doubt, how could God be good? For that you get smashed.

O Krishna, please save me! I'm trying to obey my authorities, trying to be simple too. Please help me. But my truth screams out of me. So I sing Hare Krishna just so I can do some simple service. What else is there?

* * *

12:58 p.m.

"We should also be determined to finish our duties in executing devotional service in this life; we should not wait for another life to finish our job." (*Bhag.* 4.8.72, purport) That's a high order. Srila Prabhupada says we've been given every possible concession and we are "absolutely incompetent" to do what Dhruva did. But the easy process has to be followed one hundred percent. We say we can't do it. Then how can we expect to

finish our duties in this lifetime? Srila Prabhupada calls it "the mission we have undertaken." That mission is to go back to Godhead in this one life.

Oh, well.

If we can't do it this time, at least we'll get a better birth. Still, life is risky in this world. We may be there when the tidal waves hit, or the tornadoes rip our lives apart. Or perhaps there will be war or other atrocities to face. We could forget Krishna despite a good headstart if we were to associate with bad boys (as Pinocchio did). No joke, I'm sorry.

I can't see *how* I can finish my Krishna consciousness in the small life duration I have left. I have so far to go. I can only hope for His mercy.

Dhruva stopped eating and breathing and stood on one leg, his mind fixed "without diversion to anything else, upon the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.8.77)

* * *

2:45 p.m.

" . . A person who always concentrates on the transcendental form of Krishna within his heart can very easily strike the whole world with wonder at his activities." (*Bhag.* 4.8.78, purport) Did I once think I might do something like this, by Krishna's grace? I'd write something to knock their socks off. Now my achievements level off. realistically, I'm not so empowered. Still, I don't doubt it *could* happen, even to me. It did happen through Srila Prabhupada; the Hare Krishna movement, a most unlikely phenomenon, exploded all over the world. His Divine Grace perpetually deserves the credit for this explosion of mercy. Our preaching was only done to glorify him further. We want Prabhupada to be recognized and honored as the greatest spiritual revolutionary. He knocked on the heads of demons and *mudhas*. He expertly adjusted things and gave us the chance to practice *bhakti*. Now I want to be a credit to him too. If I end my life properly, that will be to his glory. Always a follower. Then perhaps I will quality to join him in some way. First, though, I have to clean my heart.

In any case, even if popular history doesn't redeem him, Krishna knows and the great devotees know that Srila Prabhupada made the world tremble. He's the founder-*acarya* of the movement that continues to grow and develop strong roots in all world cultures. ISKCON's schisms, to whatever degree they help humankind, are also claimed as his achievements.

One may argue that it could not be possible for Srila Prabhupada, who was a businessman and a householder in his early life, to spread the holy name all over the world. One might also argue that it was not possible for Dhruva Maharaja, who was once prevented from sitting on his father's lap, to press down the earth with his toe. "This argument is not very much appreciated by the learned, for it is an example of *nagna-matrka* logic. By this logic one would think that because his mother in her childhood was naked, she should remain naked even when she is grown up." (*Bhag.* 4.8.79, purport)

If there is only one pure devotee, he can change the total consciousness of the world into Krishna consciousness. "This is not very difficult to understand if we study the behavior of Dhruva Maharaja. (*Bhag.* 4.8.80, purport)

* * *

I'm able to accept seemingly impossible things, such as Dhruva's holding his breath and choking the universal breathing. If I can accept that, why not accept other lesser "impossibilities" that seem to baffle me from time to time? We have our favorite prejudices and cannot allow Srila Prabhupada or the Vedic knowledge to go against them. But Krishna can make the impossible possible and the possible impossible. It's *possible* that I will overcome mechanical and offensive chanting. It's *possible* that I will do something wonderful. But don't expect the seemingly impossible to become possible without any endeavor on my part. At least I have to cry for mercy.

* * *

Dear Dhruva, please unstop the holes of your body so the universes and all the demigods don't suffocate. We know that you mean no harm, but you have become too powerful by your absorption in Krishna consciousness. Please breathe easily so that others may also. In order to bring this relaxation, the Lord, riding on Garuda, went to Dhruva at Madhuvana. As I read I think, "I hope He hurries up. I know they will talk together and Dhruva will make lengthy prayers. I hope he stops suffocating the universe before that occurs. The demigods can't hold their breath for so long." Like a child, I read on.

Magic in the afternoon "rooks cry unseen from the trees on this street, and the sky is overcast with the sun breaking through occasionally. My pen is working, M. is preparing to leave tomorrow, and we are all breathing by the grace of God.

* * *

4:28 p.m.

God is a person and He can be seen "He is seen "by great devotees. Simply hear of Dhruva's ecstasy at seeing the Lord's form. He wants to pray, but he is so small that he doesn't know what to say. Lord Visnu therefore "touched His conch shell to the forehead of Dhruva Maharaja, who stood before Him with folded hands." (*Bhag.* 4.9.)

Out of humility, a devotee may be unable to praise the Supreme Lord. "It is therefore understood that when a devotee writes or speaks about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his words are dictated by the Lord from within." (*Bhag.* 4.9.4, purport)

"One cannot write to glorify the Lord unless one is endowed with His causeless mercy." (*Bhag.* 4.9.5, purport)

Before reaching spiritual realization a person's senses, mind, and intelligence are sleeping. His activities are ghostly. *Jiv jago!* Wake up, spirit soul! Try to realize yourself. When the Lord is actually revealed to him, the devotee praises Krishna. Until that stage, his writing is "still considered to be the action and reaction of the material energy." (*Bhag.* 4.9.6, purport)

* * *

Is it 5 p.m. yet? The day goes by. Dhruva is in the perfect stage; I'm in the mechanical stage. That which appears spontaneous in me "what is it? Ego? Pride? Madness? Passion? Maybe a drop of spiritual energy mixed in with the material. I can't analyze myself so exactly. It is what it is.

June 26

12:13 a.m.

Dreamt that I and other devotees worked in a commercial firm to write scripts of a general spiritual nature. The work was light, the pay low, and the people with whom we worked had broad knowledge of spiritual-religious and cultural trends in world history. Not a bad job for a devotee, yet . . .

Yet, I didn't chant or read the *Bhagavatam* in my sleep. Now use your time while you have it, to give everything to Krishna. Use reading to pray for the Lord's *darSana*.

* * *

Dhruva Maharaja regretted that he had sought the Lord's *darSana* in order to obtain his material desires. Watch the movement of his prayers. Listen to what he is saying. If you hanker for that simple faith you felt in your youth, you can find it in this core activity of hearing from Prabhupada's books.

Dhruva Maharaja and Srila Prabhupada praise "the transcendental bliss derived from devotional service, primarily from *Sravanam kirtanam*, hearing and chanting." *Yogis* meditate on Lord Visnu's form, "but devotees not only meditate on Him but actually engage in the direct service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.9.10, purport)

Dhruva Maharaja is grateful and eager to associate with great devotees. He asks the Lord's blessings. He says he will be able to cross the ocean of *samsara* by devotional service. That ocean has "waves of fire-like dangers."

"It will be very easy for me, for I am becoming mad to hear about Your transcendental qualities and pastimes, which are eternally existent." (*Bhag.* 4.9.11) "*Kathamrta-pana-mattah*" "becoming mad by drinking the eternal nectar of Krishna's pastimes.

This is the famous purport where Srila Prabhupada declares, "Anyone trying to be aloof from this Krishna conscious society and yet engage in Krishna consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for it is not possible." (*Bhag.* 4.9.11, purport) Our devotional service won't mature without the association of devotees. Serve with devotees in this world, and you'll be eligible to render devotional service in the spiritual world.

This reminds me of a letter I received from a man who lived in the Baltimore temple about seventeen years ago. He speaks of abuses he suffered, beatings, humiliations, and insults from the "devotees" who were his authorities. His memories of ISKCON are traumatic, and he poured them out in a letter to me.

That's not the kind of association we will find in the spiritual world, or even the kind of association we hope to find in ISKCON. We should become aloof from a community of wranglers and in-fighters. Petty, materialistic places. All glories to those who work in ISKCON communities and strive to maintain and improve their quality of life, who

follow the routine established by Srila Prabhupada, and who care for the devotees. "It is possible to mature in devotional service only in the association of devotees."

* * *

Rain on roof. Bob Dylan in hospital. Jets, NATO, scandals, revolutions, executions (eight persons received the death penalty in Texas prisons in the month of May). And you just sit herereading? What about heresy and schisms?

Subhas Chandra Bose told Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, "You have captured all these men and they're doing nothing for the cause of Nationalism." Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati said that for Bose's National Freedom Movement, he needed strong men. His men, he said, were weak and skinny. All they can do is chant a little. He said he even had to feed them. "Don't cast your eyes on them." Thus he avoided the great politician and activist.

I too am weak and skinny, a headacher. I say to the powers that be, "Leave me alone. I'm reading and chanting. I'm an elder in this movement and can help by instilling loyalty toward the essential practices and toward the movement. Don't expect more."

Not in this lifetime, anyway. I don't feel guilty. I have done my bit, although many may never agree with that. No, I am not retired from devotional service. I still do my bit, just in my own way. That's the reality of my life.

* * *

4:10 a.m.

Always remember Krishna, and never forget Him. That's the pure devotee's standard. Krishna is great, a personal friend. Artist face the danger of forgetting that, of preferring to have their egos rewarded than to taste devotion as they try to create an "immortal" work. Or they play God themselves, looking at the world through the senses and not even remembering the power that created it. But he's lost

lost

in the powers that God gave him.

No, I don't want to be like that.

Yet I write, running down line after line

in writing.

Sitting in this small study, it's quite cold for the end of June. I'm bundled up in a sweater and sweatshirt, hat and hood, and have turned on the electric heater. Where is M. with my warm lemon juice?

Krishna, Krishna. Praghosa asked if I was in a winding down mood since I'm leaving here soon. No, I intend to go out blazing. But I am putting garbage in bags and lining up items that will be moved north when we go.

Dhruva Maharaja was a small boy praying. He appears tiny before the Prsni-garbha form of four-armed Visnu. No, I'm not winding down. His book was called *White Shroud*. He published it some years ago. I wondered what it could mean. Did it mean he knew he was going to die? And now he has. The thing about Allen Ginsberg's death is that it reminds me I too will have to die, because of course, he is part of the era in which I once lived. Kerouac died long ago of course, and Elvis, but Ginsberg lived on and on

and kind of held that generation together, and, I don't know . . . It had the same effect on Melvin Weeks, who wrote from prison with the news of Allen's death. He wrote, "This death has really had an effect on me." It gave him some resolution to become more serious.

* * *

There is no summer per se in Ireland, just constantly cool weather and clouds whatever the season. rain falls like torrents of mercy. It makes Ireland always green. I dreamt last night of sheep on the road. Without my glasses while walking, I thought a white pick-up truck was a flock of sheep. I really can't see well.

* * *

Henry Adams, the guy with the pipe was Tad who later got initiated by Prabhupada. Don't think he's your disciple. You've got enough, they worship you in your socks and forlorn underwear. They say our guru ate a carob bar then went to sleep. We gave him a donation. He worked even through his pain. He's the guru of Santa Fe, the sweetheart of Sigma Thi.

* * *

He's free of the modes and doesn't read newspapers, as far as I know. He gets a monthly summary of the news from a lawyer friend. Many things about him we don't know. He keeps to himself and writes and publishes just a little. I hear he has a shack in North Ireland maybe we should move there to be near our Gurudeva and hear him give lectures twice a day and cook for him, darn his socks, damn his might, we can turn against him if he goes wrong. We pray that he doesn't fall down *Maya* is powerful.

* * *

These words at 4:30 a.m. seem harsh and mundane. I can't fly to the spiritual world. Too filled up with others' parables.

I feel cold and then it gets hot.
I feel twinges in the eye and have to quit work.
I feel the urge to travel, live in America, live in a temple and be a regular devotee attending the morning program.

Then I know it's not possible.

I ape the dive, fork down the pie, copy the poet, mimic the Jew.

I careened in the pilot house and crash-dived into the lagoon.

It's a secret, a mystery what you do with your life. There are outer-inner secrets and inner-inner secrets that you keep even from yourself.

Warming the outside with electric heater and the gut with warm lemon water, praying to Lord Hari. I want to become mad for the *katha*, as Dhruva stated in the book. During these next four days, I'll stay close to the holy book and minimize other activities. The men will come over with lunch and we'll chat, but then I'll turn away and say I have to get back to my work, my winding down. The secret is I'm living in the pages of the *Bhagavatam*.

This is the hour they are singing *samsara-dava* in the temples. I already had my *mangala-arati* next door. See? I'm a good guy. Hitler is already dead and the war has been won. God is kind, a protector on every level. You don't need to practice yoga, you just need to turn to YogeSvara. He will take care of everything. I suppose I initially joined this movement to save my skin, but also to be selfless.

* * *

8:10 a.m.

Dhruva was able to understand God's supreme form because the Lord touched His conch shell to Dhruva's forehead. Just by hearing we can receive the Lord's causeless mercy and know His different forms. Whether our knowledge is theoretical or realized depends on our reciprocation with Krishna in devotional service. In January 1967, Srila Prabhupada wrote to me that I could understand Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita* because I was sincere. The understanding comes by mystical transference "that much I knew. It can't be grasped by our own endeavor.

Atheists and others like them speculate on God, but they cannot understand the Absolute Truth by that method. "They consider all the statements of the *sastras* to be stories. As a result of their inexperience in the Absolute Truth and their reluctance to accept authority, they become more and more atheistic."

One has to have at least a little of the Lord's grace to understand Him, as Lord Brahma states in his prayers to Krishna (*Bhag.* 10.14).

Persons under the influence of *avidya-Sakti* or *maya*, have neither knowledge or devotion. Those who are a little advanced are called *jnanis*. A *jnana-miSra-bhakta* is a devotee whose love is mixed with empiric knowledge. One who is further advanced knows the Absolute Truth is a person with multi energies. One still more advanced can understand the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. He's the one who can enjoy transcendental bliss. (*Bhag.* 4.9.16, purport) I tend to think I'm not a *karmi*, *jnani*, or a *jnana-miSra-bhakta*. Then what am I? A neophyte student of the pure devotee. I'm connected with an unquestionably pure and powerful devotee who teaches Lord

Caitanya's message without compromise, but I'm not a great devotee myself. I'm not even a devotee. That would be claiming more than what I have been blessed with, and more than I deserve.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

The Supreme Lord assured Dhruva of a long, long life during which he would perform sankirtana yajna "and give away *Krishna-prasadam* "and, "then at the end of our lives we shall certainly be able to remember Krishna, and our program of life will be successful."

I want to attain remembrance of Krishna at the end of my life. That's an easier way to express perfection than to say, "I want to go to Krishnaloka at the end of this life." Entering *svarupa-siddhi* is maybe more than I can attain. To remember Krishna at the time of death may amount to the same thing (because Krishna says if you do, you will go to Him), but it *sounds* more possible. However, death is not easy for those who are attached to the body. It may be painful. We may have to face any lingering doubts, desires, fears, and attachments, and we will certainly have to face all our shortcomings.

I want to cry out and qualify. I read and write with that in mind. Still, I have a doubt about whether I am active enough in preaching. Maybe I'm supposed to do more outward work and only that qualifies as *sankirtana-yajna*. By making *that* sacrifice, I will be blessed to think of Krishna at the end. Maybe my approach is too direct "full-time reading and writing "especially since I'm not able to sustain it to the degree that I would like.

But certainly hearing and chanting (and writing) is also *sankirtana-yajna (brhat-mrdanga)* and will help me remember Krishna.

I'll have to watch for Krishna's indication. If my health gets a bit stronger, I may have more options. The point is that we should participate in preaching even in the face of obstacles, and that will earn us the right to remember Krishna at the time of death. Srila Prabhupada said that Krishna saw how much he wanted to serve Him by spreading Krishna consciousness, so He enabled Prabhupada to want to do wonderful things. Prabhupada was motivated by his love for Krishna to fight for His cause. How much of that spirit is in me?

I saw a letter from a GBC man today. It was written to inspire a devotee to go forward and preach despite the problems. In this case, the devotees was being criticized for the way in which he was choosing to spread Krishna consciousness. The GBC man wrote that there were certainly backbiting and undue criticism in ISKCON, but he himself could never leave ISKCON or neglect his duty just because of that. He would prefer to try to make ISKCON more of what he thought Prabhupada wanted it to be than to abandon Prabhupada's movement. Therefore, he encouraged the devotee to fight for his service despite the critics.

I mention this because I thought of it as a letter favoring outward service. And that's true, because the preaching project to which the GBC man was referring was very front-line. As I look at the letter again, however, its inner meaning is clear: we should fight for our service despite the criticism. I have to face that too. It has taken me years to dare to

live alone, to simplify my life to just reading and writing, and to take control of my health.

Even if I were to consider this a material desire "like someone's desire to sing for Krishna, or make money for Krishna, or to get married and raise a family for Krishna "then it is something I have to get through and not avoid. I have to live it to the fullest. I'm doing that. I have to be sure I am preaching, even if some consider my message a little strange.

We can certainly see that distributing books is preaching because Prabhupada wanted it very much. Distributing *Krishna-prasadam* is also preaching, and working to provide ISKCON with a good educational system, worshipping Deities in the temple, educating the devotees "all are preaching. Especially, simply bearing the burden of living in ISKCON's mainstream, with all that means in terms of interaction with devotees and nondevotees, we call this preaching and it is. Publishing Krishna conscious books is also part of preaching.

Then the question is not so much my service but how much time I spend alone. Some would consider my service questionable also: am I producing Krishna conscious books, or just volumes of utterings and mumblings? And look where I live "always somewhere quiet, with rabbits and a place to take a solitary walk. It may be that few will understand what I am doing, but that doesn't mean *I* should negate it. As the GBC man wrote in his letter, "It is a solid step forward and *maya* is trying to discourage you. The path will not be easy. This will not be the only challenge. But be determined, this is what you want to do and do it. That was Prabhupada's spirit. Those who complain are also sincere, but have a different view of Krishna consciousness and how to spread it. That is their diversity. You may not be able to win them over. But as they mature they will recognize your service and achievement . . . Do not be discouraged at this stage. Fight for your service. This is your offering to Prabhupada."

* * *

4:25 p.m.

Even after seeing the Supreme Lord and being awarded residence on the spiritual planet, Dhruvaloka (a spiritual planet situated within the material universe), Dhruva Maharaja felt morose. He was sorry that he had asked the Lord to fulfill a material desire. As soon as he met Lord Visnu, Dhruva disowned his desire for revenge or material kingdom, but Krishna knew his heart, his thinking. Dhruva received everything he desired as well as promotion (after 36,000 years) to the spiritual world.

What do *I* want?

Better give it up. Just desire Krishna's service.

Wind blustering. This neighborhood is called rathgorragh, which means "the windy fort". When there is a breeze in Dublin, there is heavy wind in Wicklow. I like the sound of the wind as it rattles the roof and other parts of the house. reminds me of the wind out on the desert-like plain of Berbice, Guyana, at New Panihati. Hare Krishna.

I will be forced to accept the material desires I have yearned for. What are they? Fame? It doesn't matter. Whatever they are, they will restrain me from going back to Godhead. "Everyone of us who is engaged in devotional service in Krishna

consciousness should be completely free from all material aspirations. Otherwise we will have to lament like Dhruva Maharaja." (*Bhag.4.9.31*, purport)

* * *

5:40 p.m.

Dhruva Maharaja had not been able to take Narada's direct instructions for *bhakti*. He wanted revenge and a material kingdom greater than Lord Brahma's. Now he regretted not being able to take the very best instructions offered to him. Still, Krishna awarded him the Vaisnava goal. Consider all this and what you can do with the remainder of your life. You don't seem able to raise yourself. You should want only the privilege of seeing God. That's real independence. "If we want anything else, it is a sign of our misfortune." (*Bhag. 4.9.35*, purport)

June 27

12:45 a.m.

The king and his two queens came out of his palace to meet Dhruva Maharaja after he returned from his *darSana* with Lord Visnu. The king embraced his son. "But Dhruva Maharaja was not the same as before; he was completely sanctified in spiritual advancement due to having been touched by the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag. 4.9.43*) Dhruva Maharaja had no animosity toward anyone.

Yeah, Steve, listen. Stick it out for two more months with the *Bhagavatam* only, then travel. I bless you to do it. Me, your father.

Well thanks, Dad. There may be some who don't like it, who'd like me to go to rathayatras and meetings and not stop in any one place. Oh, I will take this brief remnant of a summertime regardless of what they think. And within this time I'm sure devotees will visit, I will give lectures, write letters, but mainly read as the Fourth Canto flows toward the Fifth.

* * *

Suruci blessed Dhruva Maharaja because people naturally honor pure devotees. I noted that down because I know you like to read *Bhagavatam* notes. Or get a break from the free-writing. I could have a ball "a stall, a Professor Staal, a personal language like a race track at Belmont where horses and rabbits and jockeys and dogs go on show before a race.

Waking in cold room, sending messages through the ether to GNP workers how it's raining torrents of mercy and how one devotee I know writes poetic meditations on the rain.

And Madhu sings. I hope this upcoming festival doesn't turn out to be muddy and ruined. I'm alone in the house, and when I wake up nervous I chant Hare Krishna for protection from fear. No one else can help me but Krishna.

(Quick, write that down and preserve it.)

Write this down before a headache comes and closes the shop. Thoreau wrote an entry on November 1, 1858, which a scholar says is one of the best entries in his diary. It's

about his dedication to living in Concord. The scholar said it takes a lifetime of dedication to a place to be able to write something as good as this:

Give me the old familiar walk, post-office and all, with this ever new self, with this infinite expectation and faith, which does not know when it is beaten. We'll go nutting once more. We'll pluck the nut of the world, and crack it in the winter evenings. Theaters and all other sight seeing are puppet shows in comparison. I will take another walk to the Cliff, another row on the river, another skate on the meadow, be out in the first snow, and associate with the winter birds. Here I am at home. In the bare and bleached crust of the earth I recognize my friend. . . . think of the consummate folly of attempting to go away from *here*! When the constant endeavor should be to get nearer and nearer *here*. Here are all the friends I ever had or shall have, and as friendly as ever. Why, I never had any quarrel with a friend but it was just as sweet as unanimity could be. . . . Take the shortest way round and stay at home. A man dwells in his native valley like a corolla in calyx, like an acorn in his cup. *Here*, of course, is all that you love, all that you expect, all that you are. Here is your bride elect, as close to you as she can be got. Here is the best and all the worst you can imagine. What more do you want? Be hereaway then! Foolish people imagine that what they imagine is somewhere else.

I was thinking that after a lifetime of dedication to writing and *bhajana* and Krishna conscious reading and hearing and serving and admitting "things I repeat again and again "some of it will come out memorably.

* * *

Sometimes we read quickly, eagerly, recognizing old friends. Suruci and Suniti. Suniti is Dhruva's real mother, so she was exonerated as the "mother of a great hero." All glories.

Like Dhruva, I was rejected by my parents. I went out into the forest of New York City, wandering crazily. I was actually rejected by the whole society, and I reflected it back by living in a haze of intoxication. Krishna sent Srila Prabhupada to me, my Narada Muni, and he gave me a mantra, the best mantra. I chant it and within six months I know God (to a small extent) enough to become His devotee. I perform the austerity of preaching and helping to maintain the Boston temple. I was hero who has since been decapitated. I mean, retired. I mean, sanctified. After all, the offer's always open to come back and rule a kingdom.

No, I don't measure up to Dhruva Maharaja. That was just an exercise. My teeth are in the highlands.

* * *

Hold on. Go slow, old horse. The river is flooding. Young stout horses are being carried away, but still you walk to the water's edge and say, "Shall I dive in? How is the flow?"

Yeah!

* * *

7:48 a.m.

How could there be airplanes of gold in those olden days? Gold is too heavy. And where is there such quantity? The science of flying airplanes was invented only in the twentieth century.

Srila Prabhupada and the *acaryas* don't care what the materialists say. Man didn't go to the moon? No, he didn't. Even if he did, his trip was useless. That Dhruva is coming home to a big reception is more to the point. Dhruva lived in Satya-yuga, when people lived a hundred thousand years.

I spent extra time resting this morning. My body needed it. Now I want to recover from that and read. Dhruva married after his father left for the forest. King Uttanapada couldn't wait to perform the marriage; he went off to practice self-realization as boldly as his son had done before him.

Later, Dhruva's brother was killed by a Yaksa, so Dhruva set out to avenge his death. He fought the entire race of Yaksas. When Dhruva Maharaja was overwhelmed by their mystic weapons, the sages encouraged him. They advised him to chant and hear the Lord's holy names. I once quoted these verses and claimed that the unrest in ISKCON was illusory (at a speech for the opening of Srila Prabhupada's palace in New Vrndavana). But I was wrong. The unrest was real. The leaders had become corrupt. Still, the advice stands: chant to remove illusions and to see the Lord. If a devotee chants the holy name at the time of death, he will surpass the ocean of the material sky and enter the spiritual sky.

So you see? It doesn't matter what the scientists say.

* * *

10:10 a.m.

At the end of the month, a Godbrother will visit. I'll meet him probably over lunch. I'll say, "I am doing all right, but sometimes I get indigestion. I rarely take Tums for the tummy, but I do sometimes."

He will smile in a condescending way, or so I imagine. He is working hard and I salute him, but that doesn't mean I have to become a cringing rabbit or mole. I will just be there. I don't have to blurt out, "I have a chronic disease and I read and write a lot of letters and I'm doing a series called *A Poor Man reads the Bhagavatam*. It is a life's opus." Be who you are and when the occasion arises, say, "Yes, I travel to many places in the van."

He will smile who will smile.

The fork in the road on the walk I didn't take. Took extra rest this morning. I couldn't believe the clock was moving so slowly, but then it suddenly sped up when I wasn't looking. I wrote a poem or two. I moved along and got things ready for lunch. I mean, I prepared a few things to say to him: "Jupiter and Mars are in alignment, but I didn't see the comet. How are you?" He may say it's windy, but warmer. It was quite cold this morning. I'm sure he'll be bringing me letters. It will be my once-a-day delivery. I must remember to ask him to bring lemons tomorrow.

* * *

12:24 p.m.

Each day is sacred, each one another chance. This afternoon I'll read more and write more, unless I get pain. Lord, I am trying to be with You and receive You. As the Christians say, we should know that God loves us more than our "badness" can disqualify us. I tend to think when my poorness is exposed that God rejects me, as proven by my dryness. But no, He loves me; He waits for me. He wants me to come to Him. I dare to tell Him, "*I love You.*"

* * *

2:58 p.m.

I think I have to read slower. This scanning the page quickly with the eyes while thinking of something else "where will it get me? "I read that one, I read that one, now I'll read this one . . ." I approach each verse and purport like a logger ready to cut down the next tree. I get paid by the piece. What chapter am I on? How many more purports before I finish this chapter? What's next after Dhruva?

Slow down.

"Everyone else is trying to satisfy himself, whereas the devotee tries only to satisfy the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.11.14, purport) The devotee finds unlimited happiness in pleasing Krishna.

* * *

Lord, I'm pounding away to stay with the purports and verses. I get a little credit for that. You are so hard to understand. "Only by His inconceivable power is everything happening," Svayambhuva tells Dhruva. I hear it and want to follow, although I do it poorly.

I worry to hear that many of my disciples are going along with the crowd to see that swami from the Gaudiya Math. What he hell, I'll just stay here and let it blow over. If they want to go, I can't stop them. Maybe they're just sight-seeing. Perhaps they don't even know the issues at stake. Someone said, "Many devotees are turning to him not so much for what he is teaching, but as an alternative to ISKCON 'with Prabhupada's blessings.'" Makes me want to be loyal to ISKCON. Wish it wasn't so lacking. Of course, if the Gaudiya Math guru attempted an institution like ours, he would have the same troubles we have. Might as well stick with ISKCON. But here I am in the boondocks, reading Svayambhuva Manu's speeches. Well, that's ISKCON too "Prabhupada's books and where your heart is.

What is going on? I lose my consciousness, my clarity.

Viking distributes a catalog of office supplies. They'll deliver free within twenty-four hours if your order is worth over fifty pounds, "and that's not all!" Big office desk, chairs "buy something and get something else free. See the smiles of happy office workers and executives?

Where's my overdue package?

Write until you're dead.

Don't worry when. Just write every day and die.

God is so difficult to know, and so great He can't be understood.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

"Inconceivable by our tiny brain." Yes, that's Him. The Supreme Lord sets up the action by His energies, but He is not the Actor. "It is not within the power of one's small brain to comprehend; unless one accepts the inconceivable power and energy of the Lord, one cannot make any progress." (*Bhag.* 4.11.18, purport)

Devotees are not interested in reading of killers like Hitler and Napoleon, who were themselves killed. Srila Prabhupada calls this "the flickering history of the world." Devotees are interested only in Him who is the original creator, maintainer, and annihilator. Who wants to hear of lesser creators, star performers, artists?

June 28

12:58 a.m.

Couldn't fall asleep, maybe because of being alone. Couldn't center myself. The hours eventually passed, and I decided I felt too weak to push myself up by midnight. Here I am, an hour late. read and write anyway and begin *japa* late? But I'm on the edge of feeling pain.

I want to be nonpretentious. This expectation of pain is a daily drama. The most important thing is not the pain, but to pursue my Krishna consciousness. "Always think of Me and fight," Krishna says. Surrender is most important regardless of your circumstance. Each day is counted like an integer, and within it, I have to write something, read something, and chant my quota. There's no much time left over after I do these things. I have no time to weed the garden, no time to travel, no time to go to town.

A sane man concludes that the business of sometimes being a mosquito and sometimes Lord Brahma is fruitless. By hearing from Vedic literature through the spiritual master, and by engaging in devotional service, the sane man regains his identity as Krishna's eternal servant.

That's the philosophy. Believe it?

Srila Prabhupada wants us to go beyond belief. He wants us to know, with conviction, that what he is teaching is fact. Then he wants us to act upon our conviction. You get some conviction and then you go out to preach. You find out quickly enough that most people don't want to hear about Krishna, can't accept the Deity, have other plans for their lives. You care, so you regret their inability to take to Krishna consciousness. It's the modes, you decide. Then a little voice inside your head asks, "What about you? Are you really convinced? Why not leave these people alone to do as they please?" You don't take the voice seriously, but it's there every now and then.

Yes, we have all been disappointed in one way or another with this institution and its power trips, mistakes, and abuses. ISKCON is like a juggernaut. One brother said Srila Prabhupada knew that this was what it took to go against material nature. He had no illusions, so he got the juggernaut rolling. (Unfortunately, heads are rolling too.) Nice feelings are crushed along the way. Lots of superficial schisms, pain in the neck forms to fill out, meetings, wrongs, newly discovered abuses . . .

The juggernaut stops and then moves forward again, and some are crushed beneath the wheels.

"Okay, I say more power to the juggernaut, but I just don't know personally how to relate to it. Where do I fit in?" Someone asked me that question.

Should I tell him we fit in under the wheels? Maybe he would prefer to sit up on the cart and wave the Deities' fan. Then everyone would know he was a good servant. (I did that going down Fifth Avenue one year: "He waved the fan the whole time; a humble servant (in silk)."

A priest asked Srila Prabhupada, "Do you ever doubt?" I think the priest saw doubt as human, and suspected the True Believer.

Srila Prabhupada replied, "Why doubt?"

He bashed that interreligious dialogue mood. We take part in it, but he didn't.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, My friend, brother mind, you are being washed away in *maya's* waves of time. Understand that you are the Lord's eternal servant. "Then everything will stop and you will be eternally happy." He believes "is convinced "and he preaches to his mind, "Why are you not a Vaisnava?" Epistemology.

Anthology. *Vedanta*, the soul. He combats his pride. He's a product of Vedic culture. I'm a product of American *vikarmi* culture. Can't seem to escape it.

Speculate as you like, the *Vedas* say it's our desire and action that will determine our next life, just as it determined this one. Our karma is what we want and do. We get a body and a temperament, and live under a particular combination of the modes. Philosophy should deal with these essentials facts of who we are.

We accepted the Vedic knowledge somewhere along the way, and chose to live our lives accordingly. Srila Prabhupada warns, however, that we shouldn't add to what the spiritual master has taught, or we'll spoil everything. Just repeat the teachings.

Yeah, but where am I?

You are there, you tiny spark, fool. Face it. That's all you are.

Okay, but can I breathe?

Yes, so writing helps.

Karma. We make our choices at every moment, although we are carried by forces greater than ourselves. If we choose *maya*, we are immediately thrown into the powerful material energy; if we choose Krishna, we are carried back to Godhead.

Swamiji, I choose you, again, today, right now. I'm reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* with faith and taste.

Purify your desire and employ it in devotional service. Want to serve Krishna. "Then our desire of wandering in the universe in different forms and conditions will end."

* * *

5:15 a.m.

A small batch of daisies grows at the entrance to the logging road. These aren't the typical, small Irish daisies, but large ones that grow on bushes two or three feet high. I stopped to look at them this morning. They seemed to dazzle in the early morning hour. Previously, I chose not to pick these flowers. I thought it would be better that they grow in nature. Now I have decided to clip a few for Prabhupada.

Oh, did you know we will be leaving here the afternoon of the day after tomorrow?

* * *

Last night I dreamt of Prabhupada. I was his servant, but couldn't understand what he was asking. He called me over and said, "Which of the pictures of Krishna and violets do you like?"

"Yes, I heard you say we must understand this."

But I didn't answer as to which was my favorite. I wanted to tell him that I liked some and not others. Then as I was looking at Prabhupada, I thought, "I'll answer anything he asks me in a simple way. I can't tell him of my intense desire to be a writer. Better I be simple when I am with him."

* * *

8:25 a.m.

Straining to know the Absolute Truth "it can't work. Nor on failing to perceive God is it justified to conclude, "We tried our best, but He just doesn't exist." Dr. Frog tried too hard in his feeble way. The sun in the night sky is imperceptible, even if you shine a torch into the heavens. Yet the sun is there. Although I've heard these examples many times, they are powerful. I consider them again and it gives me intellectual relief. We cannot know God by speculation or material investigation. It's not a weak argument to say we have to approach Him according to His own way if we want to know Him.

Have you noticed how we have relegated theology to a lesser, sectarian study? We think it proves nothing. But the science of God is valid, and its object is the most important of all objects of study. God simply can't be "studied" however, by manmade methods. He's too great for that.

* * *

Lecturing in Bombay, Srila Prabhupada repeatedly referred to "these American and European boys and girls" who have become advanced devotees. They are succeeding because they have heard the right thing (from Srila Prabhupada) and they're taking it seriously. They are fortunate in not living a hodge-podge of Hindu beliefs. Srila Prabhupada told us about Krishna, and we accepted it. It was that simple. We're still progressing with that simple acceptance, although it may seem less simple sometimes and we ourselves don't seem so advanced.

Study *Bhagavad-gita*, accept it as revealed scripture, and you can know God.

The Lord has an eternal spiritual body. He is not contaminated in any way (birth, death, anger, lust, etc.) by the material modes.

What is a spiritual body?

Keep hearing and I'll tell you. I'll tell you what it is not. And what I have heard.

But I don't really know. We can "see" Krishna's *sat-cit-ananda* body in the narration of His pastimes and in descriptions like those given in *Brahma-samhita*. He is more beautiful, stronger, and wiser than any materially embodied person, but His spiritual

body is no less sentient than a material one. He's infinitely more personal. His spirit and body are one.

I'll tell you. My own body is diminishing, hurting, and these are "yellow light" signs indicating future total breakdown when the soul will have to leave. It's a delicate machine, this material body, and it easily becomes nonfunctional. It can be disrupted by suffocation within a few minutes, and the life-body mechanism can be knocked out of commission permanently. If the body becomes too decrepit or nonfunctional, the soul won't bother to stay. Even if there is no violent or diseased cause of death, the body parts wear out and cannot be replaced. It's only a matter of time.

My head has veins or arteries that contract and expand and cause pain. That's the theory explaining my headaches, but it doesn't bring relief. Fortunately, life is more than medical understanding, more than animal drives, aesthetic and intellectual capacities, and more than ethical duty. It's a chance to awaken spiritual consciousness and to understand that we are sparks of spirit, one in quality with Krishna. I've taken on a material body due to false ego. Please, therefore, allow me to revive my spiritual identity and take on my eternal spiritual form.

Will we return to the spiritual world after this lifetime? I don't know. Srila Prabhupada states that devotees who render Krishna continuous service will go on doing so in the spiritual world in the next life. But "continuous service" may be more than we're doing. Can we reach that stage in our crippled condition? My crippled state is mental, spiritual, and physical. The verve, the courage to surrender, the simple faith of youth with Srila Prabhupada leading the charge, was a strong combination, but some of those ingredients are no longer present. Still, *he* is present, and we have to go forward under his grace, serving his mission constantly.

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9:58 a.m.

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Svayambhuva Manu asked Dhruva Maharaja to check his anger and to see the Yaksas as nondifferent from his brother. "Srila Pariksit Maharaja said that the constant hearing of the pastimes of the Lord is the panacea for all material diseases. Everyone, therefore, should hear about the Supreme Personality of Godhead constantly. By hearing one can always remain in equilibrium, and thus his progress in spiritual life will not be hampered." (*Bhag.* 4.11.31, purport)

Svayambhuva asked Dhruva Maharaja to pacify Kuvera, the family head of the Yaksas. He did so.

* * *

3:32 p.m.

Quiet rain. Kuvera says to Dhruva Maharaja, "We have heard that you are constantly engaged in loving service to the Supreme Lord. Therefore, you are worthy to take a benediction. Please ask one from me."

If I were asked would I say, "Please give me freedom from material desires and devotion to you?" Or give me the association of the devotees life after life? Something general but right, total yet humble. Not a bad wish you'd later regret. I don't know. Have to think about it. Attentive reading. Courage to face the problems of life that come without asking. Srila Prabhupada said no one goes to the temple and prays to God, "Please let my house be set on fire." Those troubles come on their own accord. Ask for strength to remember Krishna in all circumstances.

Don't ask for the formula for a best-selling book or for critical acclaim. Or how about this: Please let the deal on the house go through in my favor.

No, I would rather be recollected, as they say, and stuck blissfully in the *Bhagavatam* "so stuck I can't get out. "I don't know what happened. But I've grown so attracted to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I can't wait to get back to it. Sleep and eating and anything else just seems like an interruption."

My writing . . .

Dhruva Maharaja, "Begged that he might have unflinching faith in and remembrance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for thus a person can cross over the ocean of nescience very easily, although it is very difficult for others to cross over." (*Bhag.* 4.12.8)

Purport: ". . . he simply asked that wherever he would remain "whether in the spiritual or material world "he would always remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

* * *

This is a *yajna* of simplification. If you are thirsty, drink water. That's simple. If your back hurts while you're sitting, snuggle it into the office chair. Then go back to reading. Dhruva Maharaja was a father to the citizens. The rain falls quietly. The book distributors are out regardless. The *gurukula* boys are amusing themselves while they learn (the girls too), and their parents are their educators. I can see the *aSrama* from my window. Patri said the *brahmacaris* (who visit on weekends) are "role models" for the young boys. I doubt anyone would want to be like me. I'm old, big-eyed, bespectacled, wizened . . . I don't appear to live an exciting life.

But I do.

* * *

6:25 p.m., Night Notes

Dhruva Maharaja eventually left his attachments and again went to the forest, this time to BadarikaSrama. Imagine it.

The rooks *do* have a nest in the chimney. I saw them today. The chimney has a guard over it, but still they have nested there, and they squawk and sing while they provide for the family.

Dhruva Maharaja did yoga and concentrated his mind on the *arca-vigraha*.

Prabhupada *murti*. Put him in his blanket for rest.

If you really advance, you'll have to leave behind a lot of what you are now doing which seems so body and mind conscious. Dhruva Maharaja forgot it all. Tears flowed,

he felt shivering in his body, and felt the ecstasy of *prema*. He forgot his body altogether.

We are so tiny. Krishna, Krishna.

Dhruva was a *maha-bhagavata* and he was *mukta-linga*, liberated from his subtle body.

There's a knowledge even beyond hearing and the descending process. For example, I hear that a beautiful airplane descended from the sky and that Dhruva Maharaja saw this plane at BadarikaSrama. I read it, but Dhruva *saw* it. It was real to him and it is theoretical to me. I "believe" it happened, but I guess not with total faith, intensity, and eagerness.

Still, I appreciate what I have been given.

June 29

I dreamt that I was rediscovering my worship of small radha-Krishna Deities along with a deity of a sage named Aniruddha. I seemed to have forgotten my worship for a long time, and was now starting it again. While I was worshiping the Deities, Srila Prabhupada came by. He noticed a Second Canto sitting on a chair and said, "Oh, this is important. read this and this." I took it that the Deity worship would be described in the Second Canto and he confirmed this. Somebody then told him that these were my personal Deities. Prabhupada said, "Your Deities?"

"Yes." He took a little water from Them and touched it to his head, then sprinkled it toward me. Madhu poked me and said, "See? Prabhupada recognizes your Deities."

Prabhupada was then heading back to his room. I thought he looked ecstatic. He wasn't bluffing. He was happy.

Before going to sleep, I thought it would be nice to have a dream from which I could draw material for a poem. I accept this dream as a response.

* * *

6:30 a.m.

Keep head cool, I mean, calm. You have to speak to the community this morning.

That means sacrificing this early morning time to rest and compose my head. The pain has already begun. Maybe I can bring it down.

He pushed himself

Swami Prabhupada, we want
all wills to be surrendered to you.

Always we hear from you.

Maybe they don't understand,
but I do, and brothers and sisters do,

that you said no one can

Replace the spiritual master.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

Long day away from reading and writing. Dhruva Maharaja saw Lord Visnu's beautiful associates coming down in the plane. I've been seeing this world. I talk *about* God, *about* chanting and hearing, then finally you experience what those states really mean. Thank the god of pain-free that I could make it. It won't always be possible. Try to prove to Krishna that you want a life of pure devotion so He will grant it in this life or the next.

"The chanting of the holy name of the Lord is perfect; even though one does not know how to please Lord Visnu or His associates, simply by sincerely chanting the holy name of the Lord, everything becomes perfect. A devotee, therefore, either in danger or in happiness, constantly chants the Hare Krishna mantra." (*Bhag.* 4.12.21, purport)

Srila Prabhupada repeatedly says that the Krishna consciousness movement is potent, and that by following the principles and attaining love of God, "one can very easily go back home, back to Godhead." I don't doubt it, but how can it be possible for me in my present condition? That's what I really want to know. Is there really a spiritual world, Swamiji? Can we actually go there and be happy? We are so prone to material attachment, so little interested in Krishna consciousness. How can we possibly change so much in order to go there? Please tell me, because it seems so unlikely.

And now you, dear Swamiji, have left us. I assume that's where I'll find you. You don't seem to be here where we are fighting and breaking into schisms. ISKCON is not the rosier of places. We have heard that we can develop love of God by staying in your society. I'm holding to that hope, although that too seems unlikely. Why does it seem so unlikely? We've read the *janma karmaverse*, and we've read *Krishna* book a number of times. We know Vraja-Krishna, at least in theory, and we recognize Him as the original Personality of Godhead in truth. We've all lectured on these points countless times, and tried to convince others. But gee, Swamiji, it seems so hard

to realize it all

in our puppy brains.

Did you know just how lusty and prone to quarrel we actually are?

"Please come with us and live there eternally."

Peter Pan wanted those children to live in Never-Never Land with him forever. We are not interested in such places, but in the spiritual world. But we can't there by any mechanical means. Only on the honesty of our spiritual progress can we go back to Godhead.

And that's my point.

Rooks, good-bye. You can inhabit the chimney. I'll leave the day after tomorrow. We weren't attacked in any way here, and I managed to live out my sacrifice, but Time's agents nibbled away at my duration and it's time to move on.

* * *

Dhruva didn't become puffed up when invited to Visnuloka. He performed his last sacred duties on earth, bathed and dressed, then offered obeisances to the sages at BadarikaSrama and accepted their blessings.

Off you go. Hayagriva went somewhere, and Upendra, and Gauri, and . . . I can't remember them all, some big names, some small. We all go . . . somewhere. My turn is

coming. Saroyan went, Ginsberg went, my father went . . . Come on, *ahani ahani bhutani*. Say your prayers and take your bath.

Pray on a death cot, if you get one. Ask wryly for a comfortable one. Gallows humor. You may not want to write with a pen or dictaphone. Lose interest or ability, but not yet.

* * *

4:25 p.m.

"Everything in the temple is as worshipable as Lord Visnu or Krishna." (*Bhag.* 4.12.29, purport) Of course, not if you do nonsense in the temple.

Sit back and look out the window. I'm getting tired of the rooks' one-note raucous cry. Perhaps it's the juveniles who make that noise.

Dhruva worshiped the airplane. He transformed into his spiritual body. We also transform when we hear submissively. We no longer belong to the nondevotional world.

* * *

A devotee's death is not the same as a nondevotee's. The cat carries a kitten and a rat differently. Carver wrote a poem called "My Death" in which he said he wished to see his friends at the time of death to say farewell; that would be asking enough, he said. In case he was to die without that, he said he was writing his farewell poem in advance.

We aspire for much more than that. We want our friends to know we are blissful, beatific, to promise them that they will be with Srila Prabhupada and Krishna."

Is it really like that? "Swing low, sweet chariot/ comin' for to carry me home."

Dhruva thought of his mother Suniti, and Lord Visnu's associates assured him that she too was being carried in a plane to Vaikuntha. Srila Prabhupada states, "Even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he will be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka." (*Bhag.* 4.12.33, purport)

* * *

5:37 p.m.

"Only by arriving in Vaikunthaloka can one live an eternally blissful life." (*Bhag.* 4.12.35, purport) The ISKCON illustration shows an airplane with just an open platform, like an ornate Ratha-yatra cart without wheels or *srngasana*. Nanda and Sunanda are piloting the plane, but there's no instrument panel, no controls, and no one is wearing a space suit. Necklaces and garlands lay flat. There is no sign that the wind is blowing. Quite remarkable, as Sadaputa Prabhu might say. It can only be understood by a reality other than the one we know as governed by physics. Yet it partakes of that physical reality too. It's baffling. Maybe the ISKCON painting is a simplification of the reality to provide food for meditation, but whatever it is, it is personal.

Then suddenly in the midst of the verses about space travel comes a verse that states that one can only reach Vaikuntha by being merciful to others. "Only persons who constantly engage in welfare activities for other living beings can reach the Vaikuntha planets."

Yes, now Prabhupada's personal mood will come out in the purport. Unless you care for others, he writes " . . . not just by mystic attainment or purity in solitude."

This confirms a point the GBC position paper makes, that Srila Prabhupada's particular mood is that we will enter Krishna's pastimes by preaching. The paper cites Lord Caitanya's statements, along with the statements and examples of His ideal devotees, Vasudeva Datta and Haridasa Thakura. All express compassion toward the conditioned souls. "A Krishna conscious being is always engaged in planning how to take all of suffering humanity back home back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.12.36, purport) We should imbibe compassion and feel it ourselves: "Vaisnavas . . . come forward in the actual field work of Krishna consciousness to reclaim the fallen souls." There is no one dearer to the Lord.

June 30

12:10 a.m.

" . . . every Krishna conscious person can expect to reach the topmost summit of all three planetary systems . . . We can only imagine how highly exalted the actual position of a devotee is, and certainly we cannot even conceive how exalted is the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.12.38 - 39, purport)

Well, you mean . . . ? Me? Not if I continue to wallow in fault-finding and controversy. They defend ISKCON. right and left wings debate. "In the spiritual world, even there are mistakes and fault-finding," Srila Prabhupada wrote in a February 1972 letter to Atreya Rsi. "There is transcendental envy among the *gopis*, but no malice. 'She has served Krishna so nicely. Let me do even better.'"

It is good to be up early considering these things. I like the example of the clean river water always washing the devotees' minds.

What did Dhruva do once he got to the spiritual world? I don't think we will hear much of that, but it can be known from *Brhad-bhagavatamrta* and other scriptures. There, Sanatana Gosvami describes at least a little the lives of such devotees.

Narada, like a happy father, went off to a *yajna* and praised Dhruva Maharaja in three *Slokas*. Narada said that the Lord allowed Himself to be conquered by Dhruva Maharaja by "the specific qualifications possessed by the Lord's devotees." I wish I could get more of the Lord's mercy so that my dutiful execution of chanting and hearing could yield more appreciation for the glories of His names. Then my chanting could produce more chanting. Krishna is not giving me entrance. If I could appreciate His reality more, then I would stop merely going through the motions. My writing would cut through. Could I bear such surrender? I don't know if I dare. Do I dare to be merciful toward others? Krishna can change me. I can only continue doing as I am for now, although I know it's not right. I'm inattentive in *gayatri* and *japa*.

Pure devotees are fully confident of Krishna's reality and His loving reciprocation. They go forward out of attraction to Him. Out of even purer love, they sometimes make Krishna subordinate to them. He enjoys in this way, *rasa-sekhara*.

Prabhupada, please protect me. No one can replace you in my heart.

Dhruva Maharaja's devotional service was executed under the order of the great sage Narada. *Adau guruv-aSrayam*: "In the beginning one must accept a bona fide spiritual master."

It's not just for the beginning. "And if a devotee follows strictly the direction of the spiritual master . . . then it is not difficult for him to achieve the favor of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.12.42, purport)

The sum total of devotional qualities is unalloyed love for Krishna. "This unalloyed love for Krishna can be achieved simply by hearing about Krishna." (*Bhag.* 4.12.42) Dhruva Maharaja is called *Krishna-parayana*. You may say it is the Prsni-garbha expansion who appears to him, and you can say that Krishna teaches Arjuna in a Vasudeva form and not as original Krishna who never leaves Vrndavana, but still, we are *Krishna-parayana* when we hear about Him. The authorities say that it is good for the development of our *Krishna-bhakti* to hear how Dhruva conquered Lord Visnu with love.

Narada praised Dhruva for attaining Vaikuntha in one life. Srila Prabhupada adds: "My Guru Maharaja, Sri Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Prabhupada, used to say that every one of his disciples could attain Vaikunthaloka in this life, without waiting for another life to execute devotional service. One simply has to become as serious and sincere as Dhruva Maharaja; then it is quite possible to attain Vaikunthaloka and go back home, back to Godhead, in one life." (*Bhag.* 4.12.43, purport)

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5:30 a.m.

Last morning walk in Wicklow. It's windy high in the sky. I see the gray clouds moving quickly against the sky. The pines are revealing their flexibility. They tolerate. Following yesterday's practice, I deliberately emptied my mind so I could concentrate on the simplicity of a walk in nature. Looked at the white clover instead. Memories popped up one after another like undergrowth, but I didn't follow them through.

Some of the darker, see-through clouds move more quickly than the others. They look like horses against the distant blue. The whiter clouds are more stationary.

Madhu was supposed to arrive home today. I heard from the devotees that the Glastonbury musical festival was a washout. Ninety thousand people attended, but rained so hard that everything turned to mud. We'll hear whether the devotees were able to reach people with their singing or not. I've enjoyed the solitude.

A sudden rush of adrenaline. A deer! He ran and I stood watching. Dark fellow. Yes, I like being alone and I know it's not permanent. It's a gift from Krishna. Srila Prabhupada said we benefit from the sun. Actually, we can't live without it. We should consider how we pay taxes for our electric lights, and how if we didn't pay, the power would be shut off. Who pays taxes to the sun these days? We are meant to perform *yajna*. Otherwise, we are stealing.

sankirtana-yajna means hearing and chanting and sharing the results. This has been my *Bhagavatam* reading *yajna* to make myself fit to tell others about Krishna.

* * *

8:35 a.m.

Some less intelligent people want to go abruptly to the *rasa-lila* of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, "as if other portions of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* were useless . . . A sincere devotee should read every chapter and every word of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, for the beginning verses describe that it is the ripened fruit of Vedic literatures. Devotees should not try to avoid even a word of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." (*Bhag.* 4.12.44)

I've got a faint tingle behind my eye. Nothing much yet. I'm playing a cat and mouse game with it. right now "afraid if I start reading and writing it will increase. Extra rest? No, hear a little more first what Narada has to say.

I noticed earlier (was it during *japa*?) that two loops of thought kept repeating in my mind to distract me. One was a worry about the latest challenge to ISKCON, and I forget the other one just now. In Zen they say that you should gently notice what you are thinking, then put it aside with detachment, noting its larger category, "Envy again," "Anger," "Fear." Even if you can't stop such thoughts from coming, you can help them lose their power by noticing them. That may leave you with more attention to chanting, reading, or writing. Bundle the errant thoughts into groups. There are the draining emotions and the uselessly repetitive themes that get you nowhere. Put them aside.

Everyone can get what he desires by hearing of Dhruva Maharaja. That explains why the *Sruti-phalas* are sometimes materialistic. Everyone can become encouraged. Those who want pure devotional service, however, don't want the materialistic benedictions, and they don't claim them. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* says in plenty of places that the real benediction is pure devotional service. Hear of Dhruva Maharaja and aspire to become a great devotee, an *acyuta-priya*.

Srila Prabhupada says the nondevotees think, "How can people devote so much time simply to talks of God?" The more devotees hear and speak, "the more they become enthusiastic to hear." The Hare Krishna mantra is the repetition of only three words, but devotees can chant constantly without becoming fatigued.

My solitude is over. M. has returned. I'll talk with him, then I have to pack.

* * *

2:59 p.m.

Too unsettled to edit poems on this last afternoon. Ate potatoes, vegetables, and tapioca for lunch. I was hungry since my breakfast was light. Words slowing.

A devotee bought me a book on Kierkegaard in England. He had heard me mention something I had read that was of interest.

Here is another quote from Lefevre's book on Kierkegaard:

A little later he concluded that since Christianity had been so watered down that its central themes and concepts had almost lost their meaning, what was needed "was to win back the lost power and meaning of words.

"I mean to labor to achieve a far more inward relation to Christianity; hitherto I have fought for its truth while in a sense standing outside it.

"The age needed education, and, "God chose a man who also needed to be educated, and educated him *privatissime* so that he might be able to teach others from his own experience."

. . . he gradually grew in his capacity for openness. He understands that in his writing he must give a personal and direct witness to what Christianity is . . . Kierkegaard wrote in his journal: "I prayed to God that something new might be born within me . . . Something new was born in me: For I now understand my duty as an author in quite a different sense to the direct spreading of religiousness." His new understanding of his role in relation to Christianity now brought him to the front as a prophet of Christianity within Christendom."

I underlined these sections because I felt they had some relationship with my own life and life in ISKCON.

* * *

5:40 p.m.

Just didn't feel like doing anything much this afternoon. Last touches in packing luggage, a few last letters to devotees here in Wicklow. I leave at 4:30 a.m. with Arjuna. Madhu will join us at Manu's by late evening. I'll move in by myself, make Prabhupada comfortable, then have lunch. Tomorrow, a new volume of *Every Day, Just Write*. That's my life "one book after another.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada comments on Utkala, who was a *bhajanandi*, then mentions that *gosthyanandis* "preach to increase the number of devotees. But even such preachers also avoid opposing elements who are unfavorably disposed towards spiritual life." (*Bhag.* 4.13.10, purport)

See? But devotees stayed up all night in the tent in muddy Glastonbury, chanting with harmonium. I write

damn it,
and I will find the way.
I'll keep going and learn to pray.

* * *

Night Notes

Scratch hatch. Another tape. Please stay in the good graces of your chosen scripture. I bought the three volumes from the Swami and that's when I began, never to stop.

Interrupted, started again, dissuaded, not interested, seeking relief from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* "then back to it again. My life will end in the middle of it, or at the start or the end.

Persona pretending to write a book, to be a writer,
to be a devotee,
a *sannyasi* "
who are you anyway?

I find the concept of prayerful reading helpful. The techniques are simple: pray before reading; enter into the spirit in which the book was written; treat the reading not as a time for thoughts *about* God, but as a direct, personal encounter with Him. (I

translate this as, "read thoughtfully. Always ask yourself I find the concept of prayerful reading helpful. The techniques are simple: pray before reading; enter into the spirit in which the book was written; treat the reading not as a time for thoughts *about* God, but as a direct, personal encounter with Him. (I translate this as, "read thoughtfully. Always ask yourself, 'Am I reading with attention?' Pause and appreciate." For example, when Srila Prabhupada quotes a verse within his purport, it provides me with an opportunity to hear that verse in a new context. This itself provides novelty while reading. It allows me to be creative.)

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