

JOURNAL AND POEMS

*tathāpi kīrtayāmy aṅga
yathā-mati yathā-śrutam
kīrtim hareḥ svān sat-kartum
giram anyābhidhāsatīm*

In spite of my inability, whatever I have been able to hear [from my spiritual master] and whatever I could assimilate I am now describing in glorification of the Lord by pure speech, for otherwise my power of speaking would remain unchaste.

—*Bhāg.* 3.6.36

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JANUARY

January 1, Gītā-nāgarī

I begin with a proposed schedule: build up health at Gītā-nāgarī for the month of January, then resume duties and go to Potomac; by mid-February we should be off to India—first Vṛndāvana, and then Māyāpur.

My recovery of weight and strength is going slowly, and even today headache pains and exhaustion came after attempting a few exercises. Sometimes I grow tired of the austerities required, such as control of the tongue, and weary of the considerable time I've given for exercise and rest. Therefore, I took it as support of my complaint against striving for physical fitness when I heard Prabhupāda denouncing the concept that physical strength is necessary for spiritual life.

He was commenting on the Vedic aphorism, *nāyam ātmā bala-hīnena labhyaḥ*, which literally means one cannot succeed in transcendental endeavor unless he has strength. Vivekananda interpreted "strength" to mean physical strength and stressed a program of physical fitness in India as a prerequisite for spiritual fitness. But Śrīla Prabhupāda said that *bala* specifically refers to the spiritual strength endowed in a devotee by Lord Balarāma.

I don't think I am contradicting the meaning of *bala-hīnena*, but I need health to perform my active duties. Working for that healthier state has been my main outward service, while at the same time I have tried to cultivate patience and surrender. At least during January these health regimens are priority over writing schedules, managerial work, temple attendance, or more external preaching. I should not be soft or lax in my recovery efforts, but rather perform them in a manly way, as a soldier-servant who wants to resume hard work for his spiritual master.

OLD DIARIES

I'm continuing a practice begun in December 1985 of quoting from my old diaries for self-help, to reminisce, and to spark

new life. From a 1967 commonplace notebook of Satsvarūpa dāsa Brahmācārī, consisting of sixty quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and talks:

* 25. *Mother Earth as the cow lamenting Lord's departure:*
"Who can therefore tolerate the pangs of separation from that Supreme Personality of Godhead? He could conquer the gravity and passionate wrath of His sweetheart . . . and others by His sweet smile of love, pleasing glance and hearty appeals." (S.B. 1.16.36)

I was (and am) attracted to the description of Kṛṣṇa's sweet smile, pleasing glance, and especially "hearty appeals." The particular words Śrīla Prabhupāda chose in his self-realized translations were also an important aspect of the hearty appeal which he evoked in us toward himself, as well as toward Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa was his, unknown to us. Prabhupāda knew Kṛṣṇa, could see Him and speak with Him, and Prabhupāda had come to share Kṛṣṇa with us.

"Deluded by the three modes," says Lord Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.13), "The whole world does not know Me." But—"The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth" (Bg. 4.34). By associating with Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, serving his orders, reading his books, others can also become devotees and enter into the loving dealings of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

26. *"His acts, even when He acts in the human society, are all transcendental as they are all accentuated by the spiritual energy of the Lord distinguished from His material energy. As stated in Bhagwat Geeta such acts are called "Divyam"—He does not act or take His birth like an ordinary living being under the custody of material energy. Neither His body is material nor changeable like that of ordinary beings. And one who understands this fact either on the version of the Lord or through authorized sources, does not also take his birth again after leaving the present material body."* (Purport to S.B. 1.18.10)

This statement is similar to the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9): "One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna."

Especially compelling is the promise that one may understand "this fact" either on the word of the Lord or through authorized sources.

Serious transcendentalists and religionists are trying to quit the entanglement of painful existence in this world, but liberation is not at all easy even after attempting for many lifetimes. Even if one achieves impersonal liberation, it is inevitable that he will fall back into rebirth and death.

Personalism is a rare jewel. It must be obtained from a person who is himself graced with it. By associating with him, one finds that it becomes very easy. A prime example is Nārada, who as a lowborn five-year-old boy gained the association of the *bhaktivedāntas*. They stayed at his mother's house for a few months in the rainy season, and just by becoming their menial servant—washing their clothes, cleaning their rooms, and by once eating the remnants of their food—the small, uneducated boy became freed of all dirty things in his heart. The *bhaktivedāntas* also favored Nārada because he was disciplined and submissive in his behavior with them.

This potency is available even today by hearing from the Lord directly or from authorized sources, provided that the candidate sincerely serves the authorized *bhaktivedāntas*. Prabhupāda writes:

One can attain the perfect stage of liberation from birth and death simply by knowing the Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There is no alternative because anyone who does not understand Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead is surely in the mode of ignorance. . . . Such puffed up mundane scholars have to wait for the causeless mercy of the devotee of the Lord. One should therefore cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness with faith and knowledge, and in this way attain perfection.

—Bg. 4.9, purport

Things to Do During Rest Week

Drink Dvīpa's raw milk;
look out at cold sunny days;
distinguish the nuthatch from the chickadee,
from the titmouse, from the junco;
hear the ox cart approach;
walk in the woods at dawn,

listen to Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana;
 add logs to the stove;
 open a door for fresh air;
 deep breathe with the *mahā-mantra*.

Tidying my desk,
 writing notes to Baladeva,
 talking with Dāmodara,
 correcting him;
 trying to remember
 to breathe through the nose,
 to stand up straight,
 to sleep during the day,
 relaxing, remembering
 how rest week
 is service to Kṛṣṇa.

DIET

I have quite an appetite nowadays. After finishing one meal, I think of the next one. Because I did considerable fasting, it seems to have increased a keen interest and almost an anxiety about eating. Also, because the diet is quite simple and austere, it seems to produce more desire to eat whatever is there in quantity. Also, the fact that I have lost fifty pounds and I'm only gradually gaining it back intensifies my desire to eat and increases interest in each meal. I hope it will even off in time.

My worshipable deity saves me from eating sin. "Take more!" said Swamiji, and I do. The pure devotee, however, lives not for the tongue and belly but for pleasing Kṛṣṇa.

January 3

SATURATION IN KṚṢṆA-THOUGHT

As I walk each morning and hear a tape of Prabhupāda, I'm becoming more impressed by his consistent description of Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This consistency is also the nature of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Other methods of improvement are kicked out, and *bhakti-yoga* is upheld.

By contrast, as I look through different centuries of Oriental literature and modern American literature for poetic forms, nowhere do I find even a trace of solid, knowledgeable personalism. Aside from the *Vedas*, there is no other substantial science of God. But the Vedic literature, guided by the disciplic succession, continues to give this information to those who actually hanker for returning to their original nature.

Prabhupāda is like a beacon light. Without trace of impersonalism, with full faith, as well as logic and argument, he gives out the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I have been impressed to hear this in his taped lectures, and as a result, I am submitting more by my intelligence to accept Kṛṣṇa, and I'm yearning to become more Kṛṣṇa conscious. The methods are chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* and hearing *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

First comes *śravaṇam*. Then comes *kīrtanam*. We have to hear, but we have to chant. Not just by hearing (absorbing the knowledge and remaining silent) do we become Kṛṣṇa conscious. We have to do some kind of preaching—writing, speaking, going out to meet people to tell them about Kṛṣṇa. When we hear the agnostics' arguments and resist them, and when we have enough faith to repeat the message of Kṛṣṇa, then our own Kṛṣṇa consciousness strengthens. And when *śravaṇam* and *kīrtanam* go on, not just sporadically but regularly, then *viṣṇu-smaraṇam* occurs.

If I pay attention to Śrīla Prabhupāda, not only do I find his lectures impressive for their thorough saturation in Kṛṣṇa-thought but all his acts are like that. His followers also demonstrate thorough Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Just now the Prabhupāda book distribution marathon has ended and there are many reports of how devotees have acted in extreme self-sacrifice to carry out Prabhupāda's wish for distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The spirit of self-sacrifice is a sign of his true followers. They are not blind followers, but they are realized in the higher taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I desire the blessings of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers that I may become strong physically and spiritually to serve among them, following their own self-sacrifice. I too aspire to be in saturated Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

27. *Padma Puranam:*

"Let my mind be occupied with Thee, O Lord! Even as minds of young men and women remain occupied with thoughts of their young lovers!"

When Baladeva saw this quote, he commented, "Sex life is the most entangling aspect of material life—how did Prabhu-pāda extract Satsvarūpa dāsa Brahmācārī and all the other boys away from the loose, hip scene?"

It was easy and effortless. As soon as chanting with Swamiji on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights began, all bad habits stopped. What I had tried to do before now simply happened. And so the *bhakti-yoga* process proved itself to me in a very important way.

We advocated *brahmācārya* to others, but mostly they didn't want to try. One disciple even quit Prabhu-pāda's camp on this basis, claiming that Swamiji was "denying the prime necessities of life." Yet according to all the world's genuine scriptures, a serious transcendental seeker knows that renunciation is essential.

Baladeva asked two other questions, "What was the reaction of your peers or those to whom you were preaching about your new-found freedom?" and, "Did this knowledge create a club-type atmosphere at 26 Second Avenue, an in crowd of your own?"

Ed Sanders, the obscene-lyric rock musician, and Steve Goldsmith, the friendly lawyer, both disliked Swamiji's preaching about sex. But people like that (and they were the majority) never considered giving up sex, licit or illicit. According to their viewpoint, those who advocate celibacy are either disappointed in love affairs or are inhumanly suppressive. Nevertheless, sex attraction has to be given up at death. If one retains sex desires in the heart, then he has to be reborn again and come back for more. "Is there sex after death?" someone asks, and the answer is yes, but along with more sex life comes more birth, death, disease, and old age.

By hearing from Swamiji, we accepted this truth, but we tried to act humbly. One could not keep up his pure consciousness or his celibacy by being proud of it. A devotee shares the truth of renunciation, but he doesn't try to force others or reject

them. More often, it's the materialists who reject the devotees. I remember sitting down to chant with the devotees in Tompkins Square Park when a young woman approached me and asked questions about sex. She asked me what I thought of the body. I said the important thing was the life in the body. But she persisted, what about the body itself? I said that the body was actually dead matter, enlivened by the spirit soul. Hearing these words, she became highly insulted and walked away. So usually it was the sex advocates who rejected us, not we who rejected them. Prabhupāda invited everyone to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, even if they couldn't follow the four rules.

Similarly, this *Padma Purāṇa* verse is not negative but positive. It is a prayer for ecstatic higher taste. The taste of attraction to Kṛṣṇa appears to be like conjugal attraction in this world, and yet it is far, far beyond it. A devotee once asked Prabhupāda bluntly, "What is Kṛṣṇa consciousness?" For reply, Prabhupāda asked another question: "What do you feel when you see a pretty girl walk down the street?" "You mean it is like *that*?" the boy asked, surprised. "Yes," Prabhupāda replied, "it is a natural and spontaneous attraction." When we are covered over by material desires, our natural attraction for Kṛṣṇa is not manifest. But by practicing devotional service, the full spontaneous love breaks forth, and then no one has to confirm for us that we feel it. Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive, eternal bliss and knowledge, whereas material sex attraction flickers as an illusory attraction (based on lumps of decaying flesh) and later proves to be a bad dream.

Something within the body—
the squirrel jumps.

When it leaves the body—
a roadside corpse.

January 5

Waiting for the sky to lighten. Rāma Rāya dāsa says a quarter of an inch of snow fell overnight. "It's dusty—" he says, "footprints everywhere." I've achieved a degree of quietness: no schedule, no clocks, no calls or calendars, but today is the last

day of it—rest week. By last night I was starting to do more writing and work than I was supposed to.

The back road and meadow have become a busy section, quiet only in the early morning and at night. Gītā-nāgarī men are cutting wood in the meadow and building a house for the ox-power unit. Yesterday I walked down to see it.

Four oxen walk around a circular power unit that turns a rod that moves a conveyor belt that rotates a saw blade. From different paths leading up to the woods, other oxen haul sleds loaded with tree limbs that the men then feed into the power saw. The whole operation can be done more quickly (but not better) by use of gasoline-driven power saws, but because the power saws depend on the whole industrial civilization for gasoline and motor parts, and because they are also not part of the sattvic Gītā-nāgarī scheme, they've been abandoned in favor of ox power. Ox power and cow protection is the religion of Gītā-nāgarī—it can't be abandoned any more than offering vegetarian food to the Deity or hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* daily or any of the spiritual necessities. So it is a real inspiration and stimulus to the devotees here that they've actually achieved something practical with their oxen. The men raise the beams and rafters of the new building even while the oxen continue to work outdoors, prodded by the whips of ox men who stand in the upraised center of the circle.

"Come on, Lee! Come on, Burf!"

The fact that I've lost my little backwoods solitude is not so important for the larger Gītā-nāgarī. I may try to find some new, quieter trails. And there are still early mornings to come out here. Besides that, I'm supposed to move outward, to build up and rejoin the communal spirit.

A thin layer of powdery snow. The morning sky clearing—gray clouds fringed with pink breaking up and moving quickly across a pale blue sky.

28. "(Lord Caitanya) established that Vedic literature is meant for three things: to understand our relationship with the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to act according to that understanding, and at the end to achieve the highest perfection of life, Love of Godhead. Anybody who wants to prove something else except the

above three things must be in imagination and as such he tries to screw out some meaning without any fact.” (TLC [Teachings of Lord Caitanya])

An advanced devotee feels separation from his goal, love of Kṛṣṇa, and he receives solace by remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes (*līlā-smaraṇam*). Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this in the *Kṛṣṇa* book chapter, “Uddhava Visits Vṛndāvana.” When Uddhava went to Vṛndāvana, he found the inhabitants there, especially mother Yaśodā and Nanda Mahārāja, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs*, and the cowherd boys, all simply thinking of Kṛṣṇa at every step. They remembered the particular exchanges with Kṛṣṇa when He was playing with them, blowing His flute, joking with them, embracing them.

“Those who are in the most exalted position of devotional service and ecstasy,” writes Prabhupāda, “can live with Kṛṣṇa always by remembering His pastimes. . . . Any book of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, even this book, *Kṛṣṇa* and our *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*, is actually solace for devotees who are feeling the separation of Kṛṣṇa.”

But what about we conditioned souls who have not yet been awakened to attraction and relationship with Kṛṣṇa, how can we feel separation from Kṛṣṇa in the mood of *līlā-smaraṇam*? The answer to our plight is found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. He has simultaneously presented, in the Bhaktivedanta purports, instructions from the first stage of Vedic knowledge: understanding our relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead; then on to the second stage: acting in devotional service; and he has given us full subject matter in the highest perfection of life, love of Godhead (through *līlā-smaraṇam*).

By placing this *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* quote in my gray book, I was also thinking of the preachers’ needs. To sum up all Vedic philosophy as the pursuance of these three objectives is an amazing accomplishment done by Lord Caitanya. Everything is simplified, but without reduction or elimination. All the different parts of the *Vedas* must conform to these three things: awakening our love of God, relating to Him through service, and attaining the goal of pure love of Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda quotes Śaṅkarācārya’s lament that out of the

whole human population, hardly anyone is interested in even the first stage of spiritual realization. Among children there is distraction from the truth by play or childish sport. Then as the children grow up, they only become absorbed in another type of illusion, chasing after women and becoming serious about their material careers. And as we observe the elders of society, even when they finish their mad attempts to become masters of all they survey, they spend their last days in an invalid, reminiscent state. Thus Śaṅkarācārya concludes that out of the whole population, no one is interested in Brahman, or spiritual inquiry. Śrīla Prabhupāda used Śaṅkara's statement in connection with the first stage mentioned by Lord Caitanya, the awakening of a soul's relationship with God. Even the first stage is rarely attained. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is dedicated to bringing about this *awakening* stage, then bringing sincere souls further along into their actual *activities* of relationship, and *finally* unto the goal, love of God.

January 6

Hearing the Book Bhāgavatam

Hearing *Bhāgavatam*
in Prabhupāda's books
& recorded lectures
while lying down, walking,
sitting in a car, in bath,
every day I'm hoping
to cross over at death.

Hearing what the sages said,
from Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā,
Vyāsa, Śukadeva,
never claiming
to know it all
or to reach the end.

TEACHING BY REPRIMAND

The *līlā* of Lord Caitanya and Dāmodara Paṇḍita reveals intricate dealings among Vaiṣṇavas, especially on the subject of reprimand between the master and his servant.

Devotees ask, "What about reprimands today? Did Śrīla Prabhupāda ever chastise his confidential servants? How should the devotee accept reprimand in order to make advancement?"

Reprimand is one of the essential methods of instructing by the spiritual master. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says that if a teacher or father does not reprimand his students or sons, they will become spoiled by leniency. So sometimes the master encourages with sweet and gentle words, and sometimes he strongly points out the student's foolishness. Both are for the good of the servant. It has also been explained in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* how the eternal associates of Lord Caitanya hankered for chastisement from the Lord. Advaita Ācārya complained to Lord Caitanya that the Lord treated him with respect as an elder and did not give him the intimate exchange of reprimand as was given to Kamalākānta Viśvāsa. Sanātana Gosvāmī also complained to Lord Caitanya that he was treated too respectfully, unlike the younger Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. Of course, we cannot presume to imitate these dealings of confidential devotees or compare ourselves (in the reprimand that we may receive from our spiritual master) with the behavior of exalted but reprimanded devotees such as mother Śacī or Śivānanda Sena. The chastisement we receive from our spiritual master is certainly transcendental, but it is also a serious matter meant for our rectification. A reprimand is a sign that we have displeased the spiritual master in some way. Unless we rectify ourselves and please our spiritual master, we cannot make any spiritual advancement.

We should also appreciate that our spiritual master is giving us personal attention, which is a form of his loving care. We should never resent or find fault with our spiritual master's reprimand, or if we feel that we are getting a direct reprimand from the Supreme Personality of Godhead through unalterable dealings of providence, we should also accept that without resentment and be thankful to the Lord for correcting us.

Rectification is practical. If we are cooking for the spiritual master and we burn his vegetables, we should learn how to cook properly. And when he is satisfied, then we know that we have rectified. We cannot go on making the same mistake. If during our spiritual master's lifetime we do not make rectification of

some offense, it may cause us great pain throughout our life. Even in that case, we must find out the means of rectification after the disappearance of the spiritual master and come to full surrender within our lifetime. If we are introspective and also take counsel from other devotees, we will be aware of where we failed our spiritual master, and we will know what we have to do. We will remember his words of instruction and reprimand and how we failed. And when we finally take the right course of action, we will feel in our hearts, in reciprocation with *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, that we have finally done the right thing.

Since rectification of an offense is so important, therefore the reprimand is a great blessing. If the Lord or His pure devotee did not reveal to us that we had wronged them, then we would have remained forever a blind fool. Their pointing out to us our faults is their mercy on us. Only a foolishly proud person will refuse to see his own wrong and go on defending himself. We may think it is too painful to take the prescribed medicine of the reprimand, but it is actually the only way for us to get relief from the greater pain of living in offense to the Vaiṣṇavas. We should pray, therefore, to receive as many reprimands as possible from the Lord and the Lord's devotee, until all our dirty things are removed from the heart. Better to be chastised than ignored or given polite respect.

Sometimes it is said that only an advanced devotee will be reprimanded by the spiritual master. The spiritual master may see a certain disciple as too weak to receive severe correction. Rather than force the disciple into direct disobedience, the spiritual master deals more leniently with him. The disciple should not think that he is getting off lightly or is getting a better treatment if he is spared all reprimands. Thus a disciple can appreciate that his relationship with his spiritual master is deepening when the *guru* feels more confident that he may point out his disciple's faults without the disciple misunderstanding the exchange or feeling too sorry or resentful.

Little children may cry if they are reprimanded, and they thrive only on flattering encouragement. Therefore sometimes a teacher cleverly encourages them even when they are acting too proudly. The encouragement is given just to incite the student to go on and perform his lessons, and the hope is that eventually such an immature student will learn higher motivation.

To be given direct reprimand for foolishness will speed up the progress of a sincere worker. If I actually respect my teacher as a master in the art of devotional service, then I should want him to point out the faults in my own performance so that I will learn how to do it better—how to do as he does. If I accept him as my teacher, why should I want him to flatter me untruthfully? Certainly he can see my faults, and therefore only when he reprimands me does he give me actual instruction in how to improve in the art of devotional service. In that sense, the reprimand is more important than the encouragement, and therefore only the advanced devotees can actually be guided through reprimands.

I speak here in an idealistic way regarding what we *should* do, but I myself was not able to bear the full brunt of Śrīla Prabhupāda's reprimands on me. I always feared them, and when they came they could quickly turn me to tears. Perhaps for that reason Prabhupāda was light with me, although I also received some reprimands, for which I am now very grateful. But I lament that I took advantage of Prabhupāda's leniency and was not sensitive enough to the *hints* of disapproval which he gave.

A reprimand should not have to take the form of chastisement (corporeal punishment) before the dull-headed student realizes he is being corrected. The disapprovals can be given subtly, but it requires a submissive disciple to change his ways at the sometimes subtle indications by the *guru*.

When I think of it now, I think that Prabhupāda would have preferred, for example, that I had stayed as his personal servant in 1974 rather than go travel and preach. But I was headstrong to do what I thought I wanted and what I thought was best for me. Therefore I left the personal company of Prabhupāda, and I continue to lament for this. Neither did he ever reprimand me for it, and yet I missed an opportunity. In this case, there was an absence of reprimand, and yet in a subtle sense I ignored the positive suggestion of the *guru*. To ignore the positive suggestion is also a wrong, and upon thinking it over, one can conclude that he has been reprimanded by his own dull-headedness in failing to respond to a positive instruction. In such a case, when the disciple finally wakes up, he himself delivers the reprimand, kicks himself in the head, and realizes

that he should have been more pleasing to his spiritual master. For this there is also a course of rectification, and the sooner one takes to it the better. In my own case, I am trying now, even after the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, to again become his personal servant, although I do not know if it is possible.

Serving the Person Bhāgavata

Blinking tears from cold air,
looking up at winter sky,
hearing from Prabhupāda.
“We have to study,” he says,
“how Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person.”

And Prabhupāda
is a person,
speaking, writing,
moving in his disciples,
living in his *vāṇī*.

Blinking and breathing in the cold,
nurturing hopes of serving him
with rejuvenated health—
But am I ready to go to him
as servant again,
and this time for good?

Stumbling on frozen earth,
trailing after his sound:
“Why Kṛṣṇa comes,” says Prabhupāda,
“and *what* He does—
just know these two
and you are liberated.”

If I can just know *you*, Prabhupāda,
that will be my liberation,
wherever you send me.
Please make me like that,
a preacher,
your servant.

January 7

Trispr̥ṣā Mahā-Dvādaśī (Fasting)

For this Dvādaśī, Anila dāsa has given me the following quote from the *Hari-bhakti-vilasa*, Chapter 13, verse 269:

*aruṇodayā adya syād
dvādaśī sakalaṁ dinam
ante trayodaśī pratas
trispr̥ṣā sā hareḥ priyā*

“When the Ekādaśī ends after sunrise, and Dvādaśī lasts the entire day, and Trayodaśī begins before the next sunrise, the day is called Trispr̥ṣā-dvādaśī. This day is very dear to Lord Hari.”

Our ISKCON standard, as introduced by Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that a devotee must fast on Ekādaśī, at least from beans and grains. In a lecture given in August 1974 in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned the benefits of fasting:

Tapasya means to undergo voluntarily some inconveniences of this body. We are accustomed to enjoy the bodily senses, so *tapasya* means to give up the idea of sense gratification. Just like on Ekādaśī, it is one day’s fasting in a fortnight. There is also *tapasya*, or fasting on other auspicious days. The *tapasya* is good even for the health, and what to speak of advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The giving up is itself Kṛṣṇa. It was in the form of the sound syllables *ta-pa* (austerity) that Kṛṣṇa appeared at the beginning of creation within the heart of Brahmā to enlighten him about his service. We have grown accustomed to different enjoying practices, and we have to give them up in order to purify our existence.

I confess I’ve been overeating, forcing the stomach to take more than it needs until it is overloaded. It’s something recent; I used to be quite controlled. But it will have an eventual bad result.

I vow now to control it—don’t overeat; use intelligence; prepare the mind beforehand; obey the burp. Decide how many bowls of salad, how many *capātīs*, how much milk, etc.—not more than you need.

If you have no hunger, especially at that time, don't eat too much, or it's better not to eat at all. According to hygiene, one should eat regulated by hunger and not be obsessed with regularity according to the clock. We can understand Rūpa Gosvāmī's injunction against *niyamāgraha* in this way: *Niyama* means regularity, and *āgraha* means to be overpowered. Therefore, we should not be overpowered with regularity in eating according to the clock, but we should consider the higher priority of hunger, and also whether we are in a peaceful mind for eating, or whether we are too sick to eat, or whether there is desirable food, etc.

And in an *Upadeśāmṛta* purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda warns that it is possible to indulge in sense gratification even in the name of eating *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*:

... Vegetables, grains, fruits, milk products and water are proper foods to offer to the Lord, as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself prescribes. However, if one accepts *prasāda* only because of its palatable taste and thus eats too much, he also falls prey to trying to satisfy the demands of the tongue. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught us to avoid very palatable dishes even while eating *prasāda*. If we offer palatable dishes to the Deity with the intention of eating such nice food, we are involved in trying to satisfy the demands of the tongue. . . .

Those who suffer from diseases of the stomach must be unable to control the urges of the belly, at least according to this analysis. When we desire to eat more than necessary we automatically create many inconveniences of life. However, if we observe fasting days like *Ekādaśī* and *Janmāṣṭamī*, we can restrain the demands of the belly.

—*Upadeśāmṛta*, Text 1, purport

In *The Nectar of Devotion*, fasting on *Ekādaśī* is listed among the ten preliminary necessities for beginning the discharge of devotional service. Śrīla Prabhupāda also comments in *The Nectar of Devotion*, "The basic principle [of observing *Ekādaśī*] is not just to fast, but to increase one's faith and love for Govinda, or Kṛṣṇa. The real reason for observing fasting on *Ekādaśī* is to minimize the demands of the body and to engage our time in the service of the Lord by chanting or performing similar service. The best thing to do on fasting days is to re-

member the pastimes of Govinda and to hear His holy name constantly.”

The next entries in my commonplace book are excerpts from the foreword to *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya*, a biography of Lord Caitanya written by Prabhupāda’s Godbrother Professor N. K. Sanyal. The New York disciples had found the book in early 1967 when Śrīla Prabhupāda was in San Francisco. When they informed him, Prabhupāda wrote back that this was an important book and they should hold it for him to see when he returned to New York. He also said that books by Professor N. K. Sanyal written up to a certain date were authoritative but after that date his books could not be fully trusted.

When I went to Boston, on Prabhupāda’s request, I found Professor Sanyal’s book in the Widener Library at Harvard. Using a friend’s card, I borrowed it and began methodically reading through the biography while staying in a furnished room in Central Square, Cambridge. During these days, since I was alone, I did not have much outward preaching engagement, and neither had my welfare job started. So for a period of a few weeks, I chanted thirty-two rounds a day, offered simple food-stuffs (usually consisting of cereal and fruits) on an altar, and read Prabhupāda’s books as well as the Sanyal book. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya* was introduced by a foreword by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. I was especially attracted to his writing and therefore entered it into my little gray book, along with the long list of some of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s attributes, which Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had compiled from verses of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Hand printing each “Kṛṣṇa is” quote into my book was a careful meditation on Kṛṣṇa, and helped to control the mind toward His supreme and personal nature.*

29. From a foreword by Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami:
“The busy people of this world have decided that the gratification of senses should be the essential aim of all our enterprises here as well as in the next world. So they have deemed it fit to adopt the principle

*See Appendix I.

of an ethical religion supplying their wants and to fulfill whatever we are in need of. These triple results are the covetable solutions of the enjoying calibre of sentient entities. This sort of mentality is found in the enjoyers. But there is an opposite section who believe that unless such desiring agencies are stopped, no eternal good can be expected. So they have formulated a different goal for their purpose. These men consider that salvation is required from phenomena by practicing a noncooperative mood from all and even the necessities of life, which tantamount to suicidal commission. By following the high sounding words of annihilation in the Absolute by dismissing the three respective positions of observer, observation, and observed, they covet to be finally rescued from phenomenal troubles.

"The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna-Chaitanya has neither encouraged the enjoying elevationists nor the renouncing salvationists. He has prescribed the pure theistic thought of spiritual devotion to the Personality of All-love by the loving function of the unalloyed souls instead of plunging into the ocean of miseries which offer extreme troubles to elevationists and to persons who, having bitter worldly experience, desire to terminate their animation by the process of annihilation. The Supreme Lord has thereby settled the question of transmigration.

30. ("Kṛṣṇa is" compilation. See Appendix I.)

31. Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Hay; Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Hay; Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Rakshaman; Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Krishna Pahi-mam; Rama Ragava, Rama Ragava, Rama Ragava Rakshaman; Krishna Kesava Krishna Kesava Krishna Kesava Pahimam.

January 8

Today there's more build-up of activities for me. The doctor said I should think that I am now out of the hospital, a discharged patient, and if anyone asks me, tell them I'm a success. Back to a scheduled temple attendance and a two-hour writing time, followed by forty-five minutes of exercise, management, answering letters, meeting with my secretary who is filled with news he's been withholding from me—and readying myself for speaking at the annual *saṅkīrtana* festival in a few days.

A larger test will be to return to numerous active exchanges with Godbrothers. For that also I had an insight I hope I can maintain. It occurred to me that taking on burdens is a source of energy, not just a drain. I shouldn't think that I will be crushed by overwork or drained by others coming to see me. If I act in false ego, then certainly "I" am a tiny creature who will be easily overcome and who can't solve anyone's problems. But if I realize I am a servant of Kṛṣṇa, a spirit soul, then I have unlimited resources. Kṛṣṇa is behind me, and I can truly say to another, "Don't worry, I'll take care of your problems."

VAIṢṆAVA CALENDAR

Today is the disappearance day of two notable Vaiṣṇava associates of Lord Nityānanda, Maheśa Paṇḍita and Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura. The following information is from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapter Eleven:

Maheśa Paṇḍita and Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura were associates of Lord Nityānanda. All of Lord Nityānanda's associates were formerly cowherd boys during Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana-līlā.

Maheśa Paṇḍita was the seventh of the twelve principal cowherd boys, and he was very liberal. He lived in Nadiyā in the village of Masipura. When the Ganges changed its course and covered Masipura, Maheśa Paṇḍita moved to Pālapāḍā. He participated in a festival with Lord Nityānanda at Pāṇihāṭī.

Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura was formerly Subāhu, the eleventh of the twelve principal cowherd boys. He was a resident of Saptagrāma on the bank of the Sarasvatī River. Uddhāraṇa Datta was a householder all his life and managed the estate of a prominent Zamindar in the district of Naihāṭī, and he belonged to the *suvarṇa-vaṇik*, or gold merchant community of Saptagrāma. This community eventually settled in Calcutta and came to own more than half of that city. Most of the members of this community belonged to the Mullik family, of which there were two principal divisions, the Sils and the Des. His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda appeared in the De family.

Maheśa Paṇḍita and Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura seem far away today. They lived on this earth many centuries ago, and

also they were far exalted beyond my comprehension, as associates of Lord Nityānanda. Their pastimes are not mentioned at great length in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. They were cowherd boys from the spiritual world come to this world to take part in a *līlā* with Lord Nityānanda, so it doesn't matter that their *līlā* is not mentioned extensively. They were pure devotees, like many who were with Gaura-Nitāi, all pure and nonenvious souls who didn't care whether their names were remembered in books, and who didn't insist that they had to write the books. They served, and they loved their Lords Gaura-Nitāi; whether they served in a big or small way, it was always personal.

The life of Maheśa Paṇḍita and Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura is not easily visible if we go to the Bengali villages today, but it is still visible in sincere devotees wherever they may be. Prabhupāda has many sincere followers. I even have a disciple named Uddhāraṇa Datta Ṭhākura dāsa. He is a householder like the original Uddhāraṇa Datta. He's not so exalted—a Dominican man with a sincere but demanding wife, a child to worry about—but Uddhāraṇa Datta and his wife are very dedicated, no doubt about it. She goes every day into city places like airports to sell books, and whatever she collects is for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. And he also distributes books with his broken English-Spanish accent. They are somewhat independent in their ways, but Uddhāraṇa Datta dāsa is always welcome in an ISKCON temple, and he and his wife are eager to hear their *guru* and to serve in a personal way.

For us there is no question of imagining we are in a certain *līlā* with Lord Nityānanda or Lord Kṛṣṇa. Let us prosecute the *līlā* of the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as carried on by Śrīla Prabhupāda. What is wrong with that? Nothing is lacking there. We don't have to aspire further. We are already within the *līlā* of Lord Caitanya, carried out in the modern times. We don't have to go back to the Bengali village to taste it, or even go to Kṛṣṇaloka. Kṛṣṇaloka is here now, and so is the Śvetadvīpa portion of Kṛṣṇaloka as it exists eternally. We simply have to surrender to the topmost *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes as given to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda, who erected Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples everywhere in the world. Then Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will be revealed to our love-annointed eyes. Anoint the eyes with practical service and *kṛṣṇa-līlā* will be as clear as

day, and as clear as the night illuminated by the moon shining on Śyāmasundara at Varnśīvata.

A January Two A.M.

Bedside
heater
humming all night.

In the cold,
silent opossums
stalk their prey.

Suddenly the cabin moves
water in the pipes.
Night
dreams fade.
Cold splash,
hearing the *Vedas*,
dressing in saffron.

January 10

Enough gray-book entries for now. My next available old diary is from 1972. I'll enter here what catches my eye, like this one:

Theory and realization—there is a world of difference. What have you realized? What do you know of spiritual life? It can only be as much as you have practiced. Where can you get this engagement? Only from the self-realized pure devotee spiritual master. Go to him. Serve him. He will teach you how to love God.

A management memorandum, just before Prabhupāda's 1972 visit to Dallas:

- (1.) Gurukula go to bed at 8 P.M.
- (2.) Get media and V.I.P. room at airport, set it up
- (3.) Set up TV show while in town
- (4.) Advertise speaking engagement
- (5.) Children should be engaged in regular schedule when

Prabhupāda visits, but even the all-temple reception has to be controlled in 3 departments.

Notes as a temple president.

1. *Humble & meek—I am not the doer.*
2. *Personal—transcendental, intimate exchange of what we have realized—speaking that, acting that way, personally—not as formal administrator but humble devotee—eager to serve & eager to hear about Kṛṣṇa.*
3. *Program with nondevotees: approach them humbly with desire that they take a book to read about Kṛṣṇa—out of our real, sincere desire. Not as controller-book-seller.*
4. *Not heavy preaching but we are following this process, trying to become fixed up ourselves & we invite them to join us.*
5. *“Do the needful” comes before “dovetail your desire.”*

Why so many devotees leaving?

Notes taken while in the garden with Śrīla Prabhupāda at the Los Angeles temple:

Dvīda gorilla fought with Kṛṣṇa. To become God is not so easy. Has to show strength & face so much trouble. Not easy.

Our duty to inform them, “My dear American brothers, you have so much wealth, pleasure. Use it for Kṛṣṇa consciousness so it won’t be degradation.”

Notes from Venice Beach walk with Śrīla Prabhupāda just after his awarding *sannyāsa* to four disciples:

A sannyasi is not required to do Deity worship. Lord Caitanya never used to carry a Deity.

Q: Mental Deity?

A: Yes.

Q: Danda deity?

A: No.

Q: Offer food to danda?

A: (Laughed.) No.

Hare-nama—(give me shelter).

Beads and danda—always have.

*Small mantra at beginning of Gayatri mantras.
The other (Avanti-brahmana) occasionally remembered.*

January 11

I just heard the G.B.C. meeting at Māyāpur is scheduled for after Gaura-pūrṇimā (March 27). That changes the neat schedule I proposed on January 1. I feel inclined to move to Potomac, but India-going will probably be delayed.

Discontents

Pain in side, pain in tooth, headaches daily—although not of the magnitude of last summer (and not aggravated by any drugs)—no more complete solitude on woods path, land frozen desolate, less time to myself as we build up a daily schedule. Little quarrels with my associates, discontents with self, unrequited hankering to write more poems, hankering for conditions in which the poems can be better written, a general delay in returning to a strengthened health that will banish all weakness and propel me into suitable action as traveler-preacher. Low-level operator.

Contents

Awareness that these discontents with headache are petty, bodily, and that my life-shelter is beyond them. As spirit soul in connection with Kṛṣṇa, I'm assured (even while more serious troubles approach me like the massive weather fronts approaching in the sky) that what I've already been given, the practice of chanting and serving in sinless state, will save this tiny soul. Maybe outdoors there's something for me now. Go and see.

Today is the appearance day of Locana dāsa Ṭhākura, the disappearance day of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and the disappearance day of Śrīla Jagadīśa Paṇḍita.

Dr. Sarma's response to my persisting headaches is to tell me not to consider myself incapacitated. As much as possible, I should simply return to normal behavior and take the pain philosophically as part of the material condition. He said he never really treated my headaches as a disease but has tried to teach me the methods of natural hygiene by which I can

continue throughout life to raise my level of health and overcome all pains in that way.

So he admits there is no short-term banishment of the pains. Due to a childhood and youth (twenty-six years) of bad eating and living habits, my body has become affected by different toxins and depletions, and even since taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness I have not acted in an ideal way regarding health practice. Especially the last five years when headaches started coming, I took to aspirins, then Anacin, then prescription drugs, and hampered my condition until it reached the chronic stage. *So it may take years*, the doctor admitted today, before the nerves in the head completely strengthen as a by-product of strict adherence to hygienic principles.

Yesterday I found direct statements by Śrīla Prabhupāda on natural health practices as within the jurisdiction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the Fourth Canto, Nārada tells the allegorical story of Purañjana. He describes how old age, in the form of a woman named Jarā, tried to approach Nārada. Because Nārada is a *brahmacārī*, he avoided the advances of the woman Jarā. Prabhupāda explains that those who are free of sex addiction will not suffer from maladies, especially in old age. “But those who are too much sexually addicted,” Prabhupāda writes, “become victims of Jarā, and very soon their life span is shortened.”

Prabhupāda’s direct quote about nature cure is as follows:

One who does not actually follow the hygienic principles prescribed in the Vedic rules and regulations will be subjected to many contagious diseases. Because the students in this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are advised to follow the Vedic principles, they naturally become hygienic.

As long as my head pains continue, I will go on applying harmless, secondary practices for relief—splashing water on the head, taking to rest and relaxation, regular exercise, avoiding worry, a simple diet of fresh vegetables and fruits, boiled vegetables and avoidance of rich foods—but since the physical condition is chronic, I can expect the pains to continue, although in a diminished way. The question remains, however, how much I can neglect the disturbing symptoms and go on with normal work. As soon as possible, however, I should include myself among the mortal beings who have a share of aches and pains,

but who do normal routine work.

Although I have not become completely free of the chronic condition, I have faith in the potency of these sattvic methods of hygiene, and will try to keep practicing them, believing that the more I do so the more I can stave off the unfavorable advances of Jarā.

In a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport, Prabhupāda goes on to say. "If a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he can work like a young man even if he is seventy-five or eighty years old. Thus the daughter of Kāla [time] cannot overcome a Vaiṣṇava." Prabhupāda gives the examples of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Sanātana Gosvāmī, who all "began their spiritual lives at a very old age," yet who "presented many valuable literatures for the advancement of spiritual life."

Thus Jarā, the effect of old age, does not harass a devotee. This is because a devotee follows the instructions and the determination of Nārada Muni. . . . Because a devotee rigidly follows the instructions of Nārada Muni, he has no fear of old age, disease, or death. Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subjected to the symptoms of defeat experienced by a common man in old age. Consequently, old age does not make a devotee fearful of death, as a common man is fearful of death. When Jarā or old age takes shelter of a devotee, Kālakanyā diminishes the devotee's fear. A devotee knows that after death he is going back home, back to Godhead; therefore he has no fear of death. Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him become fearless and thus happy.

—*Bhāg.* 4.27.24, purport

Walking on the back path. Frozen ruts of the oxcarts. I want to get to Kṛṣṇa fast. Hankering to express the Supreme Lord, listening to Prabhupāda's strong words. Sometimes he sounds irritated—"That is wanted," he says. "Don't be afraid that if you surrender to Kṛṣṇa you'll be a debtor to other things. Although we are a debtor to so many things and persons, surrender to Kṛṣṇa relieves us. Hare Kṛṣṇa."

The new building for the ox-turning unit looms ahead. Now they've got the roof up. It's a manly scene, especially on a *mahā*-Saturday. All men and a few boys. Even the bovines are of the male variety. And the work is no-nonsense. The oxen

walk round and a dangerous, naked saw blade is whirring. A piece of log is moved into the saw blade. Vaiṣṇava dāsa holds the log on one end, Manu dāsa on the other, and they slide it over the saw blade. In an instant—with a loud whine—it's cut through, tossed to the side. Bhakta Bill picks it up and puts it onto a waiting sled. Nearby Ray and Ralph stand on an up-raised platform in the middle of five oxen whipping and calling to them as the silent beasts walk around the radius. Above in the rafters, men measure and hammer, covering the roof.

More things I don't have time to do: get deeply into haiku; spend hours like Thoreau said he did staring at some little scene of nature; chant thirty-two rounds a day; read more, as I should, in Prabhupāda's books, or hear recordings, even if I can't read much with my eyes.

Appreciation of the Poetry of Gensei, a Seventeenth-century Japanese Monk

I've been reading from *Grass Hill, Poems and Prose* by the Japanese Monk Gensei, translated by Burton Watson. I've found it helpful to see how a fellow monk, a literary man, has expressed his personal life and religious doctrines in his poems. I have found some important similarities between what he has done and what I am attempting. I also appreciate his writing, not merely so that I can borrow techniques, but because of his appealing personal nature.

If Gensei were alive today, I would like to speak with him. He mentions in several places how he aspires to improve himself in future births, according to the law of transmigration. If he were present in another life today, I could express my appreciation, and also tell him something about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so deep and comprehensive that it actually includes Buddhism, and has the capacity to help guide kind-hearted and renounced souls like Gensei.

In his introduction, Burton Watson writes, "Though he wrote some works of a specific doctrinal nature, the majority of his poems deal with his daily life and activities. This highly personal quality is one of the outstanding characteristics of his po-

etry and the chief reason that it remains of interest to us today." It encouraged me that there is scope for writing about one's daily activities in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, and doing it in such a way that it may continue to interest people for hundreds of years.

I was also attracted to Gensei's literary views. He reacted against a school of poetry current in his time, which advocated careful imitation of the masterpieces of the past. Gensei favored personal and emotional aspects of poetry. "When feelings overwhelm you," he wrote, "and you can't drive them away even though you try, then write a poem to describe them." He also gives down-to-earth advice about how to improve writing: "Read diligently and write a lot. Then you won't have to wait for other people to point out to you—you yourself can see what is good or bad."

Gensei believed that morality is the root and literature is the branch. A person of sound moral quality will naturally produce writings of worth. His life was not very dramatic, yet he drew from his own daily experiences for his principal subjects. Burton Watson writes, "... he manages to be almost consistently interesting, mainly because of his careful observation, honesty of presentation and underlying air of religious conviction."

One of his poems is called, "Fifteen Years You Kept Me Company." He wrote it after a boy broke a walking stick Gensei had used for fifteen years. Gensei consoles himself with a poem, and subtly weaves in the Buddhist philosophy on the temporality of all material existence:

Shriveled up cane—one might have guessed your age,
but what frail stuff you are made of! I look at
this world of ours—
everything that has form fades away,
"like the dew, like the lightning"—
so the Buddha preached, I have heard.
Who could doubt the truth of it?

Another poem is called "Troubled with Boils"—such a mean and unlikely subject, and yet, based on sincere

realization. He weaves together personal experience with inner realization based on his Buddhist doctrines.

I can barely fold my legs to sit in dragon-coil position;
My right side won't let me sleep in the Lion's Rest . . .
In pain and grief I pass my days, but why should I resent it?
These "swelling tumors, protruding wens" are all the work of
Heaven.

Gensei writes in a very casual and free way, which makes him appear to be a modern poet, especially in the free verse translations of Burton Watson. I like his own humble, almost apologetic attitude toward his own poems. They are not built-up, formal poems, and he knows it, and yet they have a strong appeal all their own. This is revealed even in some of the titles, such as "Letting the Brush Write Anything It Wants," "Ugi, Written on the Spur of the Moment," "Impromptu," "Written on Getting Up from a Nap," "Poem Without a Category."

Simply by mentioning the paraphernalia of a monk's life, he evokes attraction for renunciation and *dharma*. This can be more effective sometimes than more direct preaching. This is done in a simple way in the poem, "Coming Home Late from Kyoto":

Sundown I gaze at cloudy hills that rise beyond the city,
crowds and crowds of palanquins, a long road ahead.
Chasing profit, galloping after fame—no concern of mine.
Riding the moonlight, I fly over Gojo Bridge.

Who can say but that persons even today who are groping for a way of life might become attracted to a monk's renunciation when described in an honest way by an honest monk?

Mountain home sleeping,
no dreams of dust.
Three robes are plenty—
who says I'm poor?
One for my pillow
one to serve as mat . . .

And although he was reported to be a strict and faithful follower, he even admits to impatience in practicing his voidistic meditation. From his poem, "Incense Stick":

Deep in good conversation, a foot-long stick seems short,
But when you're weary of doing zazen, even one inch is
too long!

Gensei makes several references to his possible past and future births. One is in a poem, "Such a Lean and Hungry Dog," in which he describes how, in an impulsive act of pity, he fed a dog. "Now that we've established this little bit of *karma*, in another life perhaps we'll be companions."

In a more serious reference to a future life, he laments that he did not engage as much as he could have in helping other people. "I have grown old living far off among these clouds and hills," Gensei writes, "and in the course of this life I have at least attained enlightenment. In my next life, I must use this understanding of the *dharma* realm to save as many living beings as I can."

I wish I could reach gentle Gensei, chant the *mahā-mantra* with him, and explain the all-inclusive *dharma* of *bhāgavata* philosophy. Vedic knowledge is the elder brother to all religions of the world, and has a capacity to ease the apparent conflicts that agitate the neophyte followers of different sects. It should be possible for monks of different doctrines to converse.

It is actually possible to express Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Gensei (or his readers or scholars) despite the time differences and the fact that he has passed away from this world. One soul is here now in a particular body, another soul has come and gone, and only Kṛṣṇa Himself can say who has met who in the past, or who will meet again in the future. But aside from the intricate mysteries of *karma*, it is also possible, through timeless poetry, to share and enter dialogue with like-minded souls of the past and the future. If I point to Kṛṣṇa, someone will see.

January 12

THINGS I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO

In a book of spiritual autobiographies by early Americans,

there's a chapter, "Providence for Posterity." I don't have time to read it. And each night Dr. Sarma asks me, "Have you read any more in that book?" He means Dale Carnegie's *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. I haven't had the time for that either. (We are supposed to discuss it to root out my own worrying tendency. I admit, even though I'm a *guru*, I have worries. But my worries are spiritual anxieties. Still, why should I look at Dale Carnegie? Why not simply turn to Kṛṣṇa?)

Other things I don't have time to do—call up everybody and get involved. That's also a case in which I lack energy and strength. Even if I consider the immediate assigned duties, there's not enough time to answer letters, now backlogged into well over a hundred. If I had time, I could sing and play the *mṛdaṅga*, also get a harmonium and learn to play it. Sometimes I would like to go into the kitchen and cut vegetables, cook, talk with little children, and walk more. When I walk now, I hear Prabhupāda's tapes, but sometimes I'd like to walk without hearing the tape—but there isn't enough time for both kinds of walks. Some days I find I don't have enough time to do the prescribed exercises, although I say they are a high priority—neck, breathing, eye exercises—not enough time.

Yesterday I went out and watched the activities of *mahā-Saturday* at Gītā-nāgarī. As many men as possible got together for cutting and hauling wood for the stoves on the farm. But I didn't have time to be with them for more than fifteen minutes. But why should I be anxious or pretentious about my lack of time? It is simply the way things are. There is not enough time to do everything you want to do or everything you're supposed to do. As best as I can plan, based on principles of vital economy, I should do *something*. Never neglect the vow to chant sixteen rounds. But some promises, like worshipping the Prabhupāda deity, can be delegated: You see that it gets done while you do something else. And there has to be time to do things that are life-giving.

Ice shrinks the canal.
Under the desk,
Cold chills my legs.

I can't stand still for the haiku. I keep roaming to get more space in prose. Also I keep trying to get back to Kṛṣṇa in words. Just as we use this lifetime trying to get back to Him, so in writing I may start with what I see out the window or what I feel, but I must follow it back to Kṛṣṇa as soon as possible.

Sign on my desk: "L.I.S." I got this from a magazine article wherein I heard that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has an "L.I.S." sign on his desk. It means "Let It Simmer." Let the ideas work in your subconscious, don't think you have to decide too fast, or else you'll get a burnt idea. Let Kṛṣṇa and time help solve it. But L.I.S. doesn't say that the heat should be turned off. Let it simmer. Different plans and projects, keep them on the burner. If they are simmering on a low heat you can keep many. Projects for Kṛṣṇa or problems you have to solve, decisions you have to make—there's not enough time to do them at once; not enough energy or intelligence.

To a Friend

1

At death,
all that matters
is how much attraction
you've acquired for Kṛṣṇa.

So plan it—
join with like-minded,
read the books,
hear recordings,
seek out the teacher,
so you'll remember Him
at Death.

2

With chill in the body
you watch the ice freeze,
the earth brown and frozen—
but you've got a human life,

& cause to be happy
even in a bad age.

If you chant
the *mahā-mantra*,
knowledge that eluded you
in thousands of births,
can spring up in your heart,
here and now.

January 13

Dattātreyā wrote me this note: "You ask for ideas about how to have a dialogue with Gensei. My feeling is that the best way to do this would be for you to visit his monastery in Japan and create literature describing what you see."

Yes, I could do it, visit the Buddhist places in order to preach in my journal. I could do it after Māyāpur.

But this raises a larger question: I have to see the value of doing things that enrich my writing. I have to understand that the journal is so important that I can go to places, spend money and time and energy, just to promote that inner life. Preaching for me may sometimes mean something like this, going to a place that may seem indirectly related to preaching, but is actually a source of dialogue, enrichment for my primary service.

I have yet to realize my journal writing as being such important direct service. My conviction is growing in that direction, but I am yet hesitant to come out with it. Here again, my own conviction of my service may be in conflict with my worry about what "they" will think. But Dattātreyā's invitation has awakened in me the idea that I should do what is enlivening for the journal, and that may include traveling.

Now if one of my Godbrothers asks me why am I traveling to such-and-such place, say Italy, or wherever, I would reply, "I want to see the preaching there." For most preachers, that usually means they want to see how a temple is decorated, how book distribution is being organized, or how the devotees in that country are running a radio station or restaurant. Then a preacher goes back to his own *prabhu-datta-deśa*, inspired by association with devotees, and he implements some plan in his

own preaching field. But for me, if I am trying to preach through journal writing, it may be important to decide what travels best promote preaching. Am I still so timid about this that I would want to cover over my real reasons for traveling, since they are too unconventional and not understandable by most?

For example, if everyone knew that I was going to visit Italy, that would be very acceptable since it is such a thriving place in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But the other example, of Japan, would be difficult to explain. (Neither am I convinced yet about that particular visit.) Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says do not go anywhere unless there is a friend, a worshipable Deity, and a holy river. However, Prabhupāda went to Moscow, where none of these were present, because of the other, higher reason—to deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness to an atheistic land. Could I say that by going to Japan I would preach through my journal? I don't see it so clearly. But maybe by visiting some new ISKCON places the same principle could be served—stimulation of the senses and mind to see devotional service in a way that can be beneficially transmitted to my readers through the medium of my journal-writing self.

But does this mean that if I don't travel I will stagnate and produce less interesting literature? Thoreau stayed in Concord, Massachusetts, and had strong things to say about the superficiality of wanderlust. He didn't think he could find more inner truth or more comprehension of the universe or transcendence if he packed up and went running off.

Anyway, I'm still restricted by my health. My plan is to stay in one place and try to rid myself of chronic headaches and eyeaches. Only when I have to travel, in mid-March, then go. And that travel should be direct—to where I have to go by duty, to India, first to Vṛndāvana. Vṛndāvana is the holiest abode of Kṛṣṇa, and it is Prabhupāda's residence. I have not been there in over a year. There also I have to fulfill a duty to see the *gurukula* children and my devotee-Godbrothers. Vṛndāvana also is the closest place to my destination of duty, Māyāpur for the G.B.C. meetings of March 28. Then, if after the G.B.C. meetings I am well enough, I could consider some travels on the way back West.

Even for the time being, as I am confined to Gītā-nāgarī,

working on my health buildup, I am inclined to act and think in a way to promote the best Kṛṣṇa conscious writing.

Today is the annual *saṅkīrtana* festival for our zone. I will read definitions to prove that *saṅkīrtana* includes all the preaching activities we are celebrating today—results from year-long book distribution, and sales for fund-raising. Because *saṅkīrtana* means congregational glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, it includes all these front-line sacrifices devotees perform for maintaining and spreading ISKCON's teachings.

Our festival centers around gift-giving to devotees who have accumulated the highest scores in a year-long performance. The gifts we manage to give are not of such great material value, but devotees are pleased to see who comes out in the competition and how they reciprocate with their spiritual master. I will read Prabhupāda's statement about Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*:

... My dear friends, do not think for a moment that I have been dealing with you just like ordinary devotees. I know what you are. You have forsaken all kinds of social and religious obligations, you have given up all connection with your parents. Without caring for social convention and religious obligations; you have come to Me and loved Me, and I am so much obliged to you that I cannot treat you as ordinary devotees. Do not think that I was away from you. I was near to you. I was simply seeing how much you were anxious for Me in My absence. So please do not try to find fault with Me. Because you consider Me so dear to you, kindly excuse Me if I have done anything wrong. I cannot repay your continual love for Me, even throughout the lifetimes of the demigods in the heavenly planets. It is impossible to repay you or show gratitude for your love; therefore please be satisfied by your own pious activities. You have displayed exemplary attraction for Me, overcoming the greatest difficulties arising from family connections. Please be satisfied with your highly exemplary character, for it is not possible for Me to repay your debt.

—Kṛṣṇa, Chapter 31, "Songs by the *Gopīs*"

Saṅkīrtana means to practice austerities. The giving-up of material pleasures is Kṛṣṇa Himself.

The penance by which one can see the Personality of Godhead face to face is to be understood as devotional service to the Lord and nothing else because only by discharging devotional service in transcendental love can one approach the Lord. Such penance is the internal potency of the Lord and is nondifferent from Him.

—*Bhāg.* 2.9.23

One of the staunchest book distributors in our zone is Prabhupāda's disciple, Vijitātmā dāsa. Nārāyaṇa-kavaca dāsa describes Vijitātmā as being in *saṅkīrtana samādhi*. He never wastes a moment but is always listening to Prabhupāda's lectures on his Walkman as he runs from building to building at the temple, even while he's in the bathroom. He doesn't talk *prajalpa* or anything not connected with *saṅkīrtana*. He has been performing *saṅkīrtana* for fourteen years. He never misses a morning program, regardless of how late he gets in at night.

One day Vijitātmā met a few Russian people who were favorable to hear about Kṛṣṇa. He wanted to give them books, but he had only one book left in his bookbag. He lamented he didn't have more books, and when he went home that night he prayed to Kṛṣṇa that he could meet them again and give them books to take back to Russia. The next day, while distributing books in the subway with a full bookbag, Vijitātmā suddenly saw the same Russian people and he ran over and gave them all books. They were leaving for Moscow in the next couple of days. In a city of two to three million people, somehow Vijitātmā met these particular Russians again and was able to distribute books to them, as was his heart's desire.

My disciple Ekatvam dāsa, from Puerto Rico, is also one of the staunchest. About him, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma dāsa says that he read the *Journal and Poems* as his whole inspiration for the book distribution marathon in December. Ekatvam spends his morning reading and chanting very attentively, and then goes out on *saṅkīrtana*. The last five months of this year he worked seven days a week. During the last week of December, he thought he wasn't working enough hours so he rented a room at the airport hotel and started working at five o'clock every morning and didn't come back until late at night.

One of the top *saṅkīrtana* salespersons is Prabhupāda's

disciple, Balabhadra dāsa. His meditation is that he is collecting for the cows. He recently got a new tattoo on his arm of a bull, and told Puṣpavān now he would never forget the cows. During the marathon he worked alone and put in eleven hours a day in the store.

I have just mentioned a few names, and not even the first-place winners, like Jahnavī dāsī and Nṛsimha dāsa. There are dozens more, one excelling another in austerities and results. Lord Caitanya's movement of *vairāgya-vidyā* is very much alive in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, especially as demonstrated by the devotees on *saṅkīrtana*.

January 14

OLD DIARIES

On the occasion of my *sannyāsa* initiation in May 1972, I started another diary.

In the early pages of this 1972 diary, I made notes from Prabhupāda's lectures and talks while we were together in Los Angeles.

Eating: Don't overeat in the name of prasadam.

Eating when you are not hungry is like poison.

When you are hungry you'll eat any damn thing.

Much of what I recorded has to do with *sannyāsa* life. Clearly, Śrīla Prabhupāda was preparing young men for *sannyāsa* in order that they should preach. There was no idea that we would now become recluses.

There will be so many questions and opposing elements.

He gave an example to show the preacher is the best devotee, and gets special consideration from the Lord: just as the soldiers in Germany got butter even if no one else got it, so too would the preachers attract Kṛṣṇa's attention.

First thing is enthusiasm. Don't be dead. He said, "You have to work more than me. Anyone who has life, he can preach. I said to my Godbrothers—you are all dead. You have no strength, no life—

what have you done? Because I am trying my best, blessing is coming from my Guru Maharaj. It is not to be advertised but seen."

Simply touring is not required. By traveling we have to do something substantial to increase this Society.

[We must] spread conviction by literature, speaking and preaching. The preacher is the best devotee because he is the soldier.

We have to be spiritually strong. If superficially we want to be managers, it won't be good.

Don't try to be the proprietor of bricks and wood. That is not life. Preach.

*"Go and preach,
Go and preach,
Go and preach!"*

A Vaisnava doesn't stop activity. He changes it. A businessman is touring all over the world, and so are we. He travels to get orders for business, we for pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sainly life doesn't mean stopping activity. The politicians use a big meeting hall and we need one to speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

January 15

DO YOU FORGET US?

I met with Ekatvam and Mādhava dāsa, devotees from Puerto Rico who attended the *saṅkīrtana* festival. They have both recently taken wives, and so we talked mostly about that. Then Mādhava inquired, "Do you forget us?"

I wanted to say, "No, I never forget you," but at first I groped. How could I claim I never forget any of my hundreds of disciples? I replied with an example of a father and his children, how he never forgets them and they never forget him. If someone asks a father, "Do you have a son?" he will never say, "I forget." The relationship of father and son is permanent, even in separation or quarrel.

I also gave the example of how Akrūra remembered Kṛṣṇa when he saw the Lord's footprints in the dust of Vṛndāvana. Akrūra was already thinking of Kṛṣṇa, yet when he saw the

Lord's lotus footprints, he lost his mental equilibrium and fell in ecstasy on the ground.

The relationship of *guru* and disciple always exists in the mind and actions of a sincere disciple and bona fide *guru*, but it may be revived, intensified, and rejuvenated. By personal contact, by letter exchange, by reading the *guru's* books, by hearing the philosophy, by serving his orders, we may regularly deepen and revive the reciprocation. But we don't forget each other.

Although I asserted that I don't forget my disciples, yet on a lesser level of human fallibility, I may forget. Even Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was the perfect *guru* and pure devotee, would sometimes ask, "Is that one of our men?" Or he would even ask one of his disciples, "What is your name?" That was not imperfection on his part. He generously took thousands of disciples and never forgot for a moment that he was living to serve them, bringing them to Kṛṣṇa. He worked always for his disciples, as well as for all conditioned souls.

The basis on which I answered Mādhava's question, therefore, was hearing from *authority*. This is knowledge beyond imperfect sense perception. We know we are serving Kṛṣṇa and *guru* because we have heard it from them. We may not directly see that Kṛṣṇa eats the *prasādam* we offer, but we know He eats in His own transcendental way. If we don't see, it is because our senses are not yet purified. Similarly, if we serve the *guru's* order, we may see and hear our *guru* is pleased with us, or we may simply have faith in this—trust that he will accept our offering and give it to Kṛṣṇa. We don't doubt or take the *guru* in *paramparā* as an ordinary person. He is linked in the transcendental system, and his own connection to Kṛṣṇa is the way we connect in devotional service. So the basis of spiritual knowledge and reciprocation is faithful hearing and submissively acting upon it.

The soul can be known by perception (its symptom is the feeling of wakefulness spread throughout the body), and the soul can be known by analogy (it is that which gives us permanent identity even though we experience our bodies changing from boyhood to youth to old age), but ultimately, we have to rest on Vedic knowledge for scientific information of all aspects of the soul and its relationship with the Supreme. By acting on

this knowledge, we will eventually gain direct realization of the same facts.

Sometimes, however, we demand personal contact with Kṛṣṇa or *guru*—direct confirmation with our senses. When this is a sincere sentiment of love, Kṛṣṇa may reciprocate, as He desires. Kṛṣṇa knew the *gopīs* each wanted to love Him and be with Him in a personal way, and so by His mystic *yoga-māyā* He expanded Himself to be with each of them. Each *gopī* danced alone with Kṛṣṇa and thought, “He is now only with me.” Lord Caitanya also expanded in the same way to appear simultaneously in the different *kīrtana* groups at the Rathayātrā festival. Each group thought, “The Lord is only with our group.”

It is also a mystic potency by which I can act as *guru* for my disciples. It is not ordinary officiating. Even if I forget a disciple’s name, or cannot say exactly what they are doing at every moment, the essence of the spiritual relationship is vital and alive. The real factor for me is whether I maintain exemplary behavior. If I act as representative of Kṛṣṇa for them, then the *via media* channel is ever open for their service to go through me to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to Kṛṣṇa. I am simply the menial servant, but by chanting, hearing, and serving—and by right behavior—I may serve others who approach me for Kṛṣṇa conscious guidance, as long as the instruction I give is exactly what I have heard from Śrīla Prabhupāda. This potency is even beyond my own perception of it, although sometimes we can know it directly.

In December, I composed a relatively large number of three-line haiku stanzas; in January so far, only a few. One reason is that I want to speak directly about Kṛṣṇa, and the poetry seems to demand a more indirect utterance. As I read published haiku and commentary—both of the Japanese masters, as well as of the current American experimenters—I find little encouragement for making direct prayers or glorification of Godhead. One nun who publishes frequently tells how the American priest-poet Raymond Roseliep (who was both a Catholic priest as well as a leader in writing haiku in America) gave her essential lessons in haiku. One of the primary rules he teaches is:

“Don’t write on religious themes.”

By contrast, Nārada Muni instructed the poet Vyāsa that he should write with more concentration, specifically and exclusively about the name, fame, and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Certainly I desire to make beautiful and compelling Kṛṣṇa conscious poems. But perhaps, in the highest sense, only a devotee will fully appreciate them. Our Vaiṣṇava poets of the past never refrained from full glorification of Kṛṣṇa. And Prabhupāda strongly criticized Rabindranath Tagore for his indirect references to “thou” instead of identifying the Personality of Godhead. So while I may not excuse myself from the demands of language—the demand to make excellent utterances in praise of God, and the demand to make it accessible even to the nondevotee—let me be free of the contamination of voidistic poetic theories. Let it sometimes be a sermonette. Let it preach. But at the same time, let it come from the intuitive, realized heart—and let it strike at the stone-hard hearts of the voidists.

January 16

GĪTĀ-NĀGARĪ COLD

This morning it was five degrees above zero. Baladeva explained the process of freezing. Molecules don’t move as fast and finally they slow down to the point where a solid is formed. In this way the top of the creek has slowed down and turned to ice. The squirrels also slow down and don’t come out, and if the birds don’t get food, they slow down and die.

Although this is the coldest weather so far, the season is moving, already past the winter solstice. The days grow longer. But most of the snowfall is still to come. The *varṇāśrama* boys are plotting to go out with torches at night for ice-skating.

Purple grackles fly across the fields in large flocks. They approach in waves, the first birds touching down, picking at seeds of weeds, and then rising again by the time the last birds in the flock are landing. As they move in waves, their colors change in the sunshine.

Now the ox trails are frozen with a slight covering of snow. It’s nice for sleighs, but very dangerous for bringing down loads of wood. Dhruva Mahārāja dāsa says, “Coming down one of the forest trails backwards in front of a team of oxen with a



Oxen hauling fire wood.

heavy load of wood is like running backwards over an ice rink—one that has an obstacle course on it—and with a locomotive rushing toward you.” With a little more freezing, these trails will be unusable.

Usually we say that the wild animals always get their food, and it is only man who faces shortages, due to his mismanagement. But in the bitter winter, even the birds and beasts sometimes have difficulty finding enough to eat. Since the ground is covered with snow and the tree limbs are frozen, they cannot find bugs. Near the temple building, a few devotees have taken to the practice of throwing out *prasādam* rice for the birds, and they bravely flutter in that area. These winter birds seem more domestic and unafraid of the humans, probably because of their desperate dependence on any food. Our woodsmen say that when they turn over a log in the forest, the birds fearlessly land on the log looking for bugs beneath. With everything frozen, water is also scarce for animals in the wild. But as D. H. Lawrence wrote, “I never saw a wild thing sorry for itself.”

Inklings—that I may get better health, not headaches daily, and may be able to function. But I have to learn to function in any case, even if pains come.

Inkling—that if I attend the morning program I’ll gain appreciation for chanting *japa* and *kīrtana*, and gradually I’ll enter back into these direct sources of Kṛṣṇa conscious inspiration.

Mulling—whether haiku can be used in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Dattātreya says yes: “A true haiku is a three-line poem that evokes Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

And in the mail,
a letter from a poet:
“Hi—
I’d like to know more
about ISKCON.”

*

*

*

At Gītā-nāgarī
even the dogs
have spiritual names,

Bhīma and Arjuna.
They walk together
across the shiny ice
to the other side.

January 17

IS GOD ALLOWED IN HAIKU?

I received another letter from Nick Virgilio:

... you will learn more about what constitutes a good haiku by interchange with the editors, especially Bob Spiess. Please study the following:

Rising and falling,
a blanket of blackbirds feeds
on a snowy slope.

You'll notice there's no mention of God; but He-She is there. One could not run away from Him-Her if he-she wanted to. You acknowledge God when you acknowledge His works. One should not label the ineffable; one cannot find God in intellect or in words. God is an experience that transcends words, the intellect.

Please don't proselytize religion in the haiku form. Only when it comes natural—repeat natural—in the formation of any poem can religious terms be allowed. The purpose of the haiku is to communicate experience; if one uses intellectual words, arcane expressions, religious terms known only to a coterie or group of followers—where is the universality of expression? Haiku should communicate to as many people as possible. Haiku converts one to Reality beyond words to that which is and always will be. And that is the experience of God.

Nick's insistence that God is ineffable reminds me of the question in, "Prayers by the Personified *Vedas*." Mahārāja Parīkṣit asks, "Since the mind is material and the vibration of words is a material sound, how can the Vedic knowledge expressing material sound or thoughts of the mind, approach transcendence?" King Parīkṣit's inquiry was to ascertain whether the Absolute Truth was impersonal or personal. The implication in his doubt is that the ultimate may be impersonal. But in answering the question, Śukadeva Gosvāmī replied that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Absolute Truth, and He has created the mind and senses of the living force.

God has created our material bodies with senses that we may use either for sense gratification, or for becoming liberated from birth and death. As conditioned souls our original knowledge and senses are covered, but they can be purified and then we can know and describe God. *He* created the bodies of living beings, and the entire cosmos, therefore He must be a person with His own senses and intelligence.

Nick Virgilio reprimands me for imposing God into poetry. He says God is beyond expression. He considers descriptions of God's name, fame, and form to be sectarian, unnatural. For him, God is ineffable, and He is mostly a taboo subject. But it seems to me that Nick is acting in a prejudiced way against God and God's devotee by trying to banish them from haiku.

I can agree that God is present in His works, but He is not *only* present in His works. Kṛṣṇa is indirectly present in the blackbirds feeding on the snowy slope. But why not give the creator of this natural scene some credit? We may taste God in water, but the personalist also thanks God for supplying the refreshing water. And that gratefulness, that glorification by the devotee, comes naturally from his heart. A devotee who has practiced devotional service under the guidance of a spiritual master, bowing down to the Deity, hearing the teachings and pastimes of Godhead comes to the stage where he is convinced. Out of his realization, from spontaneous feelings, he utters God's name. Who shall say that this is "not allowed" in poetry? What overseer or committee-in-charge-of-poetry shall enforce the rule that God's name cannot be uttered in a poem?

Even the original Japanese masters of haiku, although philosophically voidists, were followers of Lord Buddha, and sometimes addressed him as their deity. For example, in the last verse of Issa's journal, *The Year of My Life*, he gives praise to his deity:

Trusting to Buddha
Good and bad,
I bid farewell
To the departing year.

There are other direct references to Buddha, such as Basho's haiku in which he praises the auspiciousness of a fawn

being born on the Buddha's appearance day. But it's a fact that spiritual poems and prayers are scarce in the original Japanese masters' writings. If the poet himself has not received enlightenment or lacks devotion for the Supreme Godhead, then we cannot expect him to express it. But one who has received this gift should not be muzzled. For those who know God in their heart, the "ineffable" is not an unreachable or merely intellectual idea. As Śrīla Prabhupāda paraphrases Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, "I shall glorify the Lord. *Whatever* I have got, I shall express my feelings, O God, O Lord, You are so great. . . . How can *anyone* describe God or understand His glories? He's unlimited. But despite whatever limitation you have got, if you express feelingly, 'My God! My Lord!' that will be accepted."

In the age of faithlessness, God consciousness is diminished. Therefore, according to vox populi, praises of God may seem less than "universal." The community of devotees may seem to be a coterie. The Sanskrit *Vedas*—original knowledge intended for all mankind—may appear to be arcane expression. But that does not mean that the followers of the Vedic truth should give up their pursuit, or that their knowledge must be confined to their own group.

January 18

Today is completely unseasonal, temperature into the sixties! But the ice is thick enough so that it remains. I took a long walk, circling around the farm. It made me aware how much I've been confined due to the cold, usually staying within a very small area—my cabin room and a few paths. It was nice to be bareheaded in the sunshine, and to see land, cows, and different buildings. *Gurukula* girls were ice-skating on a pond.

I stood leaning on a fence near where the oxen and sheep are kept. An ox was licking at the ice.

Later I met up with Gour Hari. He had an accident yesterday—an empty ox cart ran over his leg. He's battle-scarred, but all right. I told him that as far as I understood from natural hygiene, he was leading an ideal, healthy life. He's outdoors much of the time, and by working hard he naturally will have good digestion. I said I thought he would probably live to a ripe old age.

"No, I'm too sinful," he said. "I'll probably get run over one

day by these oxen, they'll get back at me for always whipping them."

"Well, if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa when it happens," I said, "you'll be successful."

We talked about *gurukula*. He said that most projects in the material world have some kind of statistics or previous experience that they can graph their progress on. But *gurukula*, like so many other things in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is being done for the first time in the West. I got enlivened thinking about this, how we are pioneers. We take for granted our day-to-day existence, the politics of ISKCON, the troubles and struggles. Neither do we know where it's going to end. We should not despair, however, but go on following Prabhupāda, trying to create Vaiṣṇavism in the West, and also recording it.

Taking advantage of the balmy weather, I'm sitting outside by the splashing, gurgling pond. A new *San̥kīrtana Yajña* arrived, the first issue of the year, covering the week of January 1-5. All the scores start back from zero. A new year's competition for book distribution and fund collecting.

Everything continues, just like the running waterfall into the pond. We are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa so that after the end of this body, we can go on in a better next life. Surely our next life will involve us again as a *śiṣya* of Śrīla Prabhupāda, somehow or other. Whatever pious credits we've gained this life, we ask only that they be converted to causeless devotional service of the Lord.

I like to be in solitary, peaceful places with a few disciples encouraging me to write books as the best preaching. Baladeva said that in management, however hard we work, people and situations often completely change around from one week to the next. Yes, I said, but because things change, that doesn't mean that we shouldn't attend to them. He knows that, but his point was that writing will be a permanent gain. So we are planning how to pursue it always. Now I have a new proposed schedule, through April.

Schedule

It's where I'll go
if Kṛṣṇa desires.

Its bare-bones outline
shows our intentions.

To carry it out,
you need health-strength.

It's a long poem,
an airplane ride,
a public lecture.

In acts of providence,
it's unforeseen;
it's going back to Godhead.

January 19

Poetics

Don't proselytize religion
in the haiku form—
says who?

If Kṛṣṇa is already there
in every poem
why not say His name?

January 21

A CHANGE OF PLANS

It happened like this. Baladeva attended Dr. Sarma's evening lecture on degenerative diseases. The doctor was describing miraculous results from nature cure for patients who are about to die. One woman with cancer went to South India, to Laksmāna Sarma's sanatorium, and placed herself in a program of drinking only tender coconut water, living outdoors, taking plenty of air and sunshine, spinal baths, tona (enema), and within a few weeks she completely transformed into a healthy, happy woman.

In distinguishing between degenerative and chronic diseases, Dr. Sarma mentioned that the program for degenerative patients is much stricter. They have to follow ideal conditions

even in detail. For chronic patients, sometimes the ideal conditions may be suspended, according to inclination and whether the patient has enough time to practice it. Baladeva then asked whether a chronic patient could benefit by the intensive treatment given to degenerative patients. This query sparked the doctor as well as me and Baladeva into a train of thinking regarding my own case.

Within a few minutes we were discussing the likelihood of my leaving early for South India and undergoing a month's treatment in a sanatorium before going to the G.B.C. meetings in Māyāpur.

So we have come up with a new schedule calling for immediate departure from Gītā-nāgarī for Potomac.

I still want to retain the Japan trip. One reason I want to go is that it means meeting opposition through encounter with Buddhism and the Zen-influenced art. During the morning class, I raised a question with arguments from the disbelievers. As soon as the arguments for and against Kṛṣṇa consciousness began, the audience became more attentive, with Guḍākeśa dāsa countering my skeptical questions. When there is a dialectical exchange, the fuzziness of the mind is cleared, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness shines through beyond dogma. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the king of knowledge, and often this comes out only when there is challenge. Prabhupāda has written that the devotee is content to chant and hear the glories of the Lord, but when doubters come, he's ready for the challenge.

Yesterday I also heard devotees reading from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in a section where world preaching was stressed. In the Fourth Canto, Lord Viṣṇu visited the Pracetās and was very attracted to their association. But in order to bless His unlimited devotees in different places, He left the Pracetās. Prabhupāda compared this to Lord Caitanya's departure from the home of Advaita Ācārya shortly after Lord Caitanya accepted the *sannyāsa* order. Advaita Ācārya and other dear friends of Lord Caitanya wanted Him to stay, but the Lord left their company in order to bless other souls by a tour to Jagannātha Purī and then to the south. This is also the mood of Nārada Muni, who constantly travels everywhere to deliver the

message of Godhead. As I gain health, I also want to go to many places and preach.

So our present plan is to spend a month on health cure in the ideal place, South India, and then travel and preach.

PRAYERS OF THE SKEPTICS

When I saw the ad for *An Exile from Silence*, by Patricia Wilcox, I was attracted to the book's subtitle, *Poems to God*. But now that I've got the book, I'm turned away by doubtful, blasphemous addresses to the Supreme.

"The book's most appreciative readers," writes the editor in the introduction, "will be those who cannot abide by the various and conflicting certainties of the many religions available to them." The chronic doubters become pleased to hear *Poems to God*, which deride the Supreme:

God, you murderer, you scapegrace,
MALINGERER!

. . . I will not call you *Lord. Master, King, et al.*
You fail, as I fail, as people fail . . .

The doubt is complex, mixed with need for faith, but mostly I find these expressions incomprehensible. It reminds me of a more directly expressed collection of poems in the same mood, *Psalms*, by Ernesto Cardenal, a Catholic priest who was excommunicated.

O God . . .
don't you care now
about victims of exploitation?
Are you happy
seeing the masses oppressed?

Both poets address God with doubts as to His existence. They disbelieve either His omnipotency, or His all-goodness. How can He be all-powerful and allow evil in its various forms? Or if He is all-powerful, then how can He be good and yet create and allow evil? We expect these doubts from the atheists, but

not from those who make prayers and devotional poems to God, and who presume to address Him in intimate language. When they spew out ignorance of the science of God, actual devotees of Godhead cannot appreciate it, and how will it help everyone else who is already in doubt?

These “prayers” are more like mental speculations, unguided by *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*. Although there is an advanced stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in which the intimate servant of the Lord chides the Lord, these poets have not earned such intimacy. They barely understand the God they address, and they do not take to the process of faithful hearing by which doubts may be cleared up.

The great stumbling block for them is the existence of evil. But Kṛṣṇa clearly explains it. The conditioned souls have brought about suffering by their own doing, by misuse of their small amount of free will. Because we are of the same quality as God, we possess some free will, and when we misuse it, we create suffering and evil for ourselves and others. Kṛṣṇa does not want us to create sinful life and its reactions, but when the spirit souls insist on such behavior, He allows them to carry out their illusions within the material world. The material existence, therefore, is a place constructed for those who desire to break the laws of God. But Kṛṣṇa never abandons us, and so He comes to the material world to give us information of its suffering and illusory nature. He invites us to return back to Godhead, to devotional service in eternity, bliss, and knowledge.

Evil can be eliminated within ourselves and within the world only when we give up our independent ways and turn to the principles of devotional service. Therefore, only those who distribute real knowledge of God consciousness can bring relief from evil. Poems, prayers, and psalms based on knowledge of God and on faithful surrender to Him can actually inspire others to devotion, but not the outcries of doubters who think that God is dead or that God is a painful paradox never to be solved.

CREEKSIDE NOTES

As I write, Vaiṣṇava dāsa yells and whips the oxen. They are trying to pull a car out of the mud.

Headaches came today as if to confirm our decision to go a month into a sanatorium. But also, waves of optimism. Also, my

mind is filled with the busy particulars of moving tomorrow. We may not be back here for four months.

My optimism is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but I can't quite express it, nor do I need to. It is beyond me. The cause for great satisfaction is not my own achievement. I have many, many lackings. Stuck in the mud. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness fills me with great hope.

Glory to the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This *saṅkīrtana* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious.

—*Śikṣāṣṭaka*, Verse 1

Wherever I go I will think of Gītā-nāgarī. This is Paramānanda's project, given to him by Śrīla Prabhupāda. So he meditates all day how to make Gītā-nāgarī Kṛṣṇa conscious, and he constantly deals with its affairs. I'm also connected here, resident of the cabin, the initiating spiritual master of many Gītā-nāgarī-ites, lover of Tuscarora seasons, hankering for another return to this country.

What's the creek saying?
Washing by like surf on a beach.
Sometimes the ice cracks.

Just think—
how everyone dies.
and every soul lives.
Think of Kṛṣṇa,
controller of the universe;
the creekside is but a speck to Him,
yet each and every creature
moves only by His will.

The creek says,
"Gītā-nāgarī."

Lord Dāmodara is pleased.
His devotees have succeeded;
these woods are a spiritual village.

Paramānanda says he'd rather not go to India for the festival this year. Too many things happening at Gītā-nāgarī. Just about that time he hopes to start building the sewage plant and building a toolhouse, and then spring plowing. I said I didn't mind his staying back. Rather, it gives me a feeling of security to know he'll be here, even while I'm in India. And on Gaurapūrnimā, Paramānanda intends to accept his first disciples. I'll go to Māyāpur as Gītā-nāgarī's representative.

Mud mixed with ox turd on the back road. Many shades of dull brown: dead leaves, the flowing creek, the bare trees, tree-top squirrels' nests made of brown leaves. Looking across the fields, I can see bright orange *dhotīs* hanging on a line outside the *brahmacārī* house. Manu dāsa is slowly pedaling his bicycle from the temple down to the house.

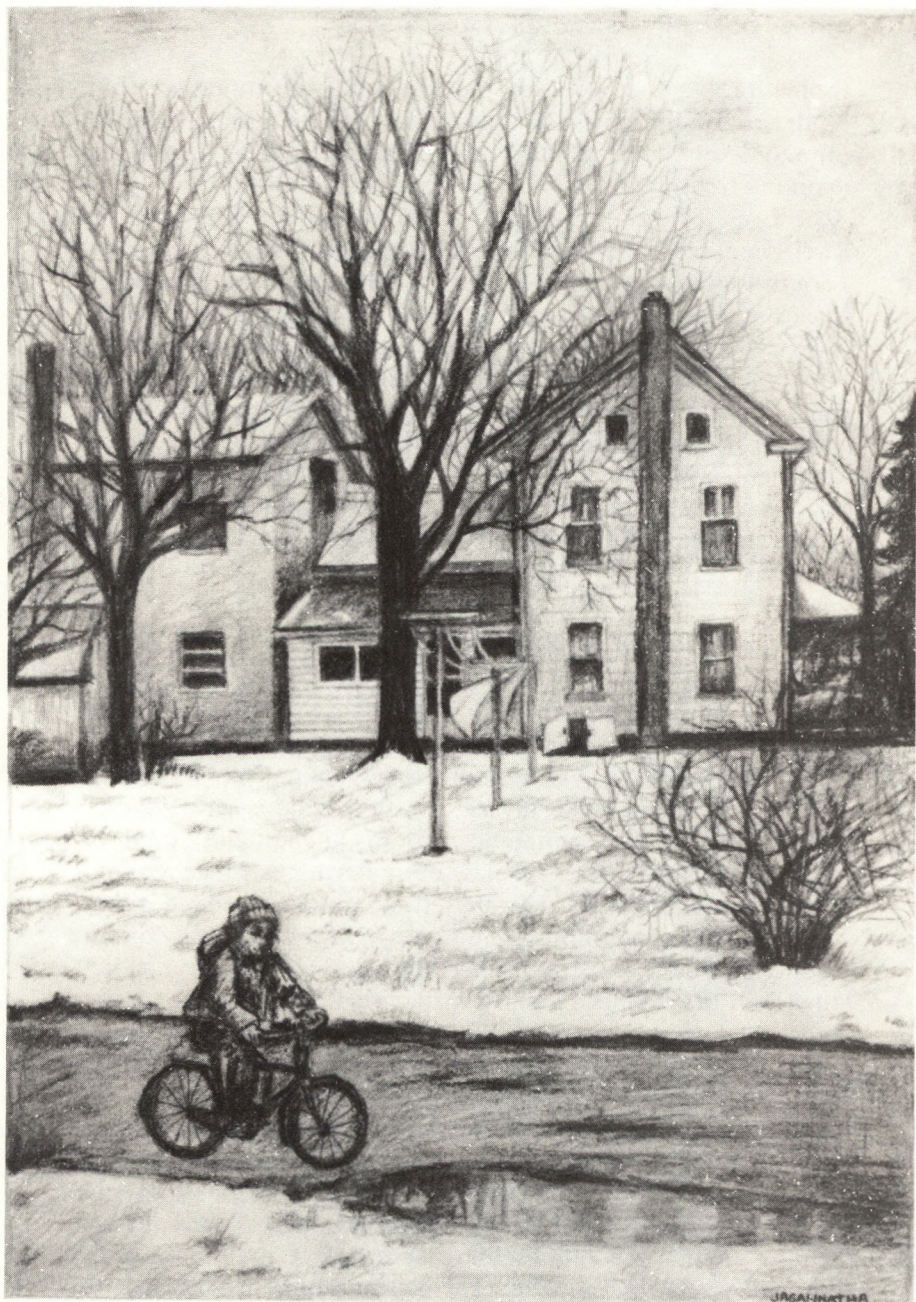
This morning two teams of oxen went lumbering peacefully past my window, and three ox men walking beside them. The ox men had only to slightly flick their whips and speak a few words—and the oxen were willing at the beginning of the day, to go do their duty, hauling wood.

Outside my cabin, forsythia bushes seem surprisingly alive, although it's mid-winter. The snow has vanished and these flower bushes are giving us a reminder that they'll be blooming again in a few months. By the time I come back—in May?

January 23, Baltimore, Jaya Gaurasundara's house,
Letter-answering marathon

Suhotra Swami reminds me of the ISKCON controversies. He represents the European ISKCON bloc opposed to the expansion of initiating *gurus* as resolved last September by the G.B.C. "What good," he writes, "will lurching from misguided individual absolutism to misguided collective egalitarianism do for the stability of ISKCON?"

I have been avoiding these controversies, seeing them



Brahmacārī āśrama at Gītā-nāgarī.

sometimes as unnecessary politics and confrontation. But Suhotra Swami writes, "I am sure all of this and more will be the topic of choice in the Māyāpur meetings. This year, I am coming well-prepared."

Even if I want to remain nonpolitical, I too will have to be well-prepared. Good health will be part of it—so we will go to South India for a month. I'll have to be prepared with an inner peacefulness also. And positive thinking—confidence that ISKCON is Lord Caitanya's movement and therefore cannot be disrupted. Also I should not think that my Godbrothers are mere political wranglers and that I am above the fray. Those who are worked-up into thinking that a particular type of government or ideology must prevail for ISKCON are acting out of concern for Prabhupāda's movement. So I shouldn't be cynical. But I have to be prepared in my own way.

OLD DIARIES

I am trying to decide whether to write about the time I was Prabhupāda's servant. The partial record is in the 1974 diary I am now looking through. I have already covered this period in *Life With the Perfect Master*. Why go over it again? One reason is that I did not fully admit to some of my failings.

Some details—like my eating sweets guests gave to Prabhupāda. I would keep the boxes in his kitchen and offer him the sweets with different meals. But a few times I reached into the box and took a sweet for myself. It sounds trivial and harmless, but with this transgression goes a wrong mentality and a guilty conscience. Also, in *Life With the Perfect Master* I didn't dwell on the extent of my dissatisfaction and my present regret about it. I wouldn't call *Life With the Perfect Master* a whitewashing treatment, but it is simplified, brief.

I also omitted an exchange with Prabhupāda on the airplane that I regard as my low point in being his servant. We were flying alone, I think we were on our way to Australia from Europe. Śrīla Prabhupāda had already agreed that I should leave his service and start the library party in America. Brahmananda was supposed to take my place as Prabhupāda's servant. (Śrīla Prabhupāda: "He likes my company.") But there was some doubt whether Brahmananda could get free of his Af-

rican duties. Being alone with Prabhupāda I reminded him that he had promised I could go to another service. I don't remember the exact change of words, but the spirit of it went like this:

SDG: Śrīla Prabhupāda, you promised I could go. So even if Brahmānanda isn't allowed to come, some other arrangement should be made because you promised. Right?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

In effect, like a demanding son I pressured my father to give me what I wanted. I took advantage of the intimacy I had gained as his servant to remind him of his promise and to make sure that he granted it. And what was that promise? That I could get free of being his constant, menial companion, and go out and preach. This was the low point, and I remember it today with regret.

I will go ahead and give some 1974 diary quotes in a spirit of documentation, to put it down clearly for myself to see. Also, although it is not an attractive self-portrait, it will give us some Śrīla Prabhupāda *līlā*. I hesitate because I don't want to show myself in the wrong. I fear that my own disciples will misuse it to justify their offensive attitudes and lack of surrender. But these are not reasons to hold back. The real reason would be that the whole thing may seem trivial, and may read as boring—details of a wavering mind. For now, tentatively, I will go ahead.

The meaning of Gosvami

From notes by Jai Adwaita das:

Prabhupada: "You look a little sickly. Why is that? Ah. Heavy bhajan. Just like you have seen the picture of the Gosvamis, how they are thin." (Then he quoted from the prayers to the Gosvamis in Sanskrit.) "Eating, sleeping, they minimized all these bodily demands. Just like Raghunatha das Gosvami—every alternate day he was taking this much butter" (indicating the tip of his finger). "They minimized these four things. That is the meaning of gosvami."

As a beginning *sannyāsī*, I was especially trying to record quotes that were instructive and inspiring for the *sannyāsa* order.

Sannyasa and Sense Control

Purport, S.B., 4.22.30:

If one takes up the sannyasa order of life but is not able to control the mind, he will think of objects of sense gratification—namely family, society, expensive house, etc. Even though he goes to the Himalayas, or the forest, his mind will continue thinking of the objects of sense gratification. In this way, gradually one's intelligence will be affected. When intelligence is affected, one loses his original taste for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

S.B., 1.3.42, purport:

It was delivered by Srila Sukadeva Gosvami and he had nothing to do with Bhagavat business or to maintain family expenses by such trade. Srīmad-Bhagavatam should therefore be received from the representative of Sukadeva, who must be in the renounced order of life without any family encumbrance.

From the Light of the Bhagawat:

"God is satisfied only when His devotees take all sorts of risks to propagate the glories of the Lord."

I compiled some of the scriptural quotes in connection with my difficulties as Prabhupāda's servant. When I became restless as his menial servant, and when I could not control my tongue and sometimes took Prabhupāda's sweets, it only made me more dissatisfied. So when I came upon a quote in the *Kṛṣṇa* book emphasizing that a pure devotee of the Lord is free from all such inebrieties, I grasped at it. I felt such statements were strongly reprimanding me, and entered them in my book in hopes that they would save me:

From Kṛṣṇa book, "Rasa Dance":

On the material platform when a servant serves a master, he is not trying to satisfy the senses of the master, but rather his own senses. The servant would not serve the master if the payment stopped. That means that the servant engages himself in the service of the master just to satisfy his senses. On the spiritual platform, the servitor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead serves Kṛṣṇa without

payment, and he continues his service in all conditions. That is the difference between Kṛṣṇa consciousness and material consciousness.

During this time, I was also aspiring to go out and preach. I envied those who were pleasing Prabhupāda by taking such risks and approaching the nondevotees. I was feeling too closed-in, too domestic, a mere assistant to Prabhupāda in his preaching. I wanted to be a preacher myself, and I minimized the value of being his personal, bodily servant. So some quotes express my growing desire to please Prabhupāda by being a bolder preacher:

A preacher has to face many difficulties in his struggle to preach pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Sometimes he has to suffer bodily injuries and sometimes he has to meet death also. All this is taken as a great austerity on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa therefore said that such a preacher is very, very dear to Him. If Kṛṣṇa's enemies can expect salvation simply by concentrating their minds on Him, then what to speak of persons who are so dear to Kṛṣṇa? . . . the salvation of those who are engaged in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the world is guaranteed in all circumstances. But such preachers never care for salvation because one who is engaged in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, devotional service, has already achieved salvation.

Trying to be self-satisfied as Prabhupāda's servant, I discussed it with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, who was also in Bombay at that time. He encouraged me that intimate servants of Lord Caitanya pleased Him in different ways. Lord Nityānanda pleased Him by preaching in Bengal, and Svarūpa Dāmodara and Govinda pleased the Lord by being His personal servants. I should not distinguish between the two, thinking that one is better than the other.

I tried to realize my great fortune in being Prabhupāda's intimate, bodily servant and secretary. By enlivening myself with the available duties, I realized that by hearing the *śāstra* I could stay on the transcendental platform. But certain duties were particularly difficult, such as the fact that I had to chant my rounds silently in the small kitchen in Bombay so as not to disturb Prabhupāda. Also, I did not have much regulated time

to read his books. Trying to gain appreciation, I entered quotes in my diary that stressed the importance of reading books. My idea was that if I took time to read books, that would encourage me to stick to my present service.

From The Teachings of Lord Caitanya:

Lord Chaitanya was praised by Sanatan Goswami after speaking on the atmarama verse—as the Supreme Personality of Godhead—He replied:

“Do not try to praise Me in that way. Just try to understand the real nature of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Srimad-Bhagavatam is the sound representation of the Supreme Lord Krishna. Therefore Srimad-Bhagavatam is not different from Krishna. So as Krishna is unlimited, similarly, in each word or letter of the Srimad-Bhagavatam, there are unlimited meanings and one can understand them by association of devotees. Don’t say then that Bhagavatam is a collection of answers to questions.”

I knew my discontent was an offense to association with the pure devotee, and so I tried to remind myself of the actual position of the spiritual master:

From The Caitanya-Caritamrta:

“The spiritual master is nondifferent from Krsna—this is the deliberate opinion of all revealed scriptures. Because it is Krsna only who delivers His devotees in the form of the spiritual master.”

Verse 45:

“No one can visually experience the presence of the Supersoul. He therefore appears before us as the liberated soul. Such a spiritual master is no one other than Krsna Himself.”

Verse 58:

“A pure devotee who is constantly engaged in loving service to the Lord is identical with the Lord. Because the Lord is always seated in the heart of the devotee, a bhakta and Bhagavan are identical.”

Only Duty (From Bhagavatam, 2.9.8 purport):

The disciple must be ready to execute the instruction of his spiritual master, as Lord Brahma executes the instructions of his spiritual

master, the Lord Himself. Following the order of the bona fide spiritual master is the only duty of the disciple, and this completely faithful execution of the order of the bona fide spiritual master is the secret of success.

Finally, I asked Prabhupāda if I could change my service. He said that my idea was whimsical and that I should stay as his servant. I immediately regretted asking and tried to discipline my crazy mind to accept my position as Prabhupāda's servant. I realized I was treading in dangerous territory. One has to obey the order of the spiritual master; that is the secret of success. So why should I want to be doing something other than what Prabhupāda wanted? Prabhupāda wanted me to be his servant. My idea to become a "preacher," something else, had to be put aside.

In *Life With the Perfect Master*, I describe myself as satisfied after Prabhupāda told me not to think of changing my service. I was satisfied for some time, but again the discontent arose. Therefore I wrote down more quotes, sometimes in desperation, trying to beat my mind into submission. Not only Prabhupāda himself said that I should remain as his servant, but the *śāstras* also declared it—only if one executed the order of the *guru* could he become successful.

It was a struggle between irrepressible personal desires in the name of spiritual life, and the direct order given by the *guru*—and all this in the intense atmosphere of living day and night with one's spiritual master. My duties were all domestic, and I was feeling repressed. But worse than that, I was kicking myself for such dissatisfaction in the presence of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee. And I feared the subtle dangers of *guru-aparādha*. There was never a question of my wanting to do anything other than serve Prabhupāda—it was just a question of how to serve him. But there was a conflict between what Prabhupāda wanted and what I wanted, and this brought about my suffering condition.

How to Advance, by Rupa Gosvami (Cc.):

"He advised that in order to make rapid advancement in the cult of devotional service, one should be very much active and persevere to execute the duties specified in the revealed scriptures and

confirmed by the spiritual master. Such activities are enriched by the process of accepting the path of liberated souls and by such association of pure devotees."

How to Chant (from purport to song by Locan):

"We have to chant this mantra with faith and conviction; at the same time we should be guarding against sense enjoyment. One should give up sense enjoyment."

From letter by Srila Prabhupada to me, Aug. 9, 1972:

"Now you go on preaching with full vigor and determination, keep our standard of Kṛṣṇa consciousness always at the highest level, and remain sincere always by remembering Kṛṣṇa, through vibrating His holy name."

July 25, 1972, from letter from S.P. to Prahladananda:

"You are engaged in preaching work, therefore you are being specially favored by Kṛṣṇa. . . . So you may know it for certain that Kṛṣṇa will give you all facility to improve in every way, according to the sincerity of your attempt to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the battlefield of preaching work."

Again, praise of the preacher. Other entries from this time, reflect the situation, "Reading and Continue Duty," "Sannyāsa."

Sitting on the floor of the Bombay kitchen, with Śrīla Prabhupāda only a few feet away in the next room, I began to write more directly about my plight. As I had turned to Prabhupāda's books and to Godbrothers for a solution, so I tried to find peace through expression in writing.

Notes of a Fallen Beggar (March 22, '74, Bombay):

In an attempt to find out why I am unable to control my senses or relish the words of my spiritual master, in an attempt through writing to find out why I am unhappy although engaged full time in spiritual life, I will set down purports to various verses of the Caitanya-caritamṛta—the main attempt will be to seek earnestly my own self-purification, and it may be of value to readers in that I know the final goal of spiritual happiness—only attained when one

is blessed—is to make empowered glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Kṛṣṇa.

1. By remembering the lotus feet of the Panca-tattva, a dumb man can become a poet, a lame man can cross mountains, and a blind man can see the stars in the sky. (Cc. Ādi-līla, 8.5)

My bad habits are not horrendous vices, but petty, embarrassing deficiencies which nevertheless can in time completely surround my growing devotional creeper. Stealing from the spiritual master's pack of sweets is slight enough to seem even humorous. But it has the nature of offense. More serious is that I fall asleep during his evening lectures. The point is how can a person who is weakened by such a lack of sense control claim to be a gōsvāmī, a representative of Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master? How can he hope to change others' lives toward tapasya? How could he chastise others for their own good? One who himself smokes cigarettes cannot tell others, "Don't smoke!"

As for unhappiness, it lies in my lack of enthusiasm. I do not chant the holy name with dependence or even attention, just with deadened duty. Like that I am stuck. The example is given of a man who falls into a covered-over well in the field. Far from any people's hearing, he may yell but who will hear him to help him? So I have by myself gotten into these bad habits, lost the taste of enthusiasm and immersion in preaching thoughts, and so my lament can't bring help.

While my Godbrothers consider me a surrendered, humble devotee, I am falling asleep when my spiritual master speaks and more—a whole list of offenses and bad mental habits.

Not immersed in Kṛṣṇa thought, so these things disqualify me as I pray to the Panca-tattva to please grant me life enough to worship at Their feet and chant Panca-tattva and Hare Kṛṣṇa with real feeling and attention. That will save me from the swarm of petty vices which have weakened me, and then I can tell the whole world how the chanting of these mantras will save them from the hell-bound path of mass forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa, which is making chaos in the world.

My attempt was to start a preaching diary which combined instruction for the nondevotee along with the confessions "of a fallen beggar." I would admit that I was not an ideal devotee,

and yet try to encourage myself and others by speaking the teachings of Kṛṣṇa.

So if someone is taking these beggar's notes as views of a sectarian monk, refer to Kṛṣṇa dasa's verse: "If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful."

We do not put forward mundane dry logic. This is not what he means. Not logic or science or philosophy based on the imperfect senses of this material body. But if you study impartially, you will agree that there is no one who can surpass Lord Caitanya in humanitarian activities. Because He is awarding love of God. It requires study. You may think it sectarian, although very quickly if you listen you will agree that it is very scientific and not bogus. Srila Prabhupada once wrote an essay, "Who is Crazy?" The materialist may think we are crazy, but if one is actually living for the pleasures of this body, which are taken away very soon—and where we go after this body we do not know—then such a person is crazy.

Lord Caitanya is benefiting the eternal spirit soul. Why Lord Caitanya and not Jesus Christ, Mohammed or someone else? Because He is giving love of Kṛṣṇa most freely and He is Kṛṣṇa Himself, so His method is most authoritative. Whoever you are, whether you take this as preaching or whatever, please listen, it is for the greatest good. Even though I have admitted so many of my personal deficiencies, and even though you may be already conversant with many high level understandings of the mind and philosophical thought and experience in the world—please go on studying this Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Srila Prabhupada called me and said, "Keep a book. I get many ideas. Write them down and consult with management." He outlined the plan for book distribution here in Bombay: Saturday and Sunday, a sankirtana party from 5–8 P.M., girls with selling carts on the beach. Also, reprint small books, go door to door, girls selling cookbooks, make intimate connection with the people. He spoke full of energy. I said I would tell the president here to organize it. "No, you do it!" he said. "G.B.C. means to engage everyone and then no one will be sleeping." He then called Mohanananda who he had told earlier that morning to help himself or else what good was

the spiritual master's counsel—and he gave Mohanananda a whole life-saving engagement to organize printing of small books and the sankirtana party going out with books and leaflets.

In the midst of such dynamic instruction, I see my therapeutic writing as no service at all. Writing is first-class, but it must be vigorous glorification of Kṛṣṇa, topical address to the world to take this movement seriously.

Even the writing could not help me out of my predicament. I had tried to wake up to the exciting potential of always being near Śrīla Prabhupāda and to give vent to my preaching desires—through writing. But somehow, my deadened mentality weighed down also on the writing. I felt the combination of confession and instruction to be incompatible, and so I didn't pursue it regularly.

While my Godbrothers are out preaching I am receiving training as the secretary of our spiritual master. Sometimes I think, "Why be so eager to go and preach? You have no potency." But of course Kṛṣṇa helps even a neophyte and new devotees become attracted. As I see my duties, the first thing is to attend to the particulars of my service, writing and filing letters, seeing that Prabhupada's personal needs are met—and then of great importance is hearing attentively on the morning walk and the evening lecture.

FEBRUARY

February 2, Washington, D.C.

Last night I spoke at Mr. and Mrs. Sankla's house. Their daughter, Vinita, brought some students from the University of Maryland. They showed sustained interest and asked questions after the lecture while taking *prasādam*.

From reading about Buddhism, I felt an influence (good and non-threatening), and my lecture stressed impermanence and illusion. But all is not void. I recited *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Eight, *ā-brahma-bhuvanāl-lokāḥ*—every planet is a place of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. *But* for one who attains to My abode, says Kṛṣṇa, he never comes back again. In a positive response to the negativism of Buddhism, I spoke about the Supreme Being—Bhagavān—the names of God, descriptions of His transcendental attributes, Parāśara Muni's definition of all-attractive Godhead in six opulent features, and our relationship with Him. The students (one with an earring and short, dyed hair, hard to tell whether a boy or girl, others all girls) asked how to offer *prasādam*, why to offer it, what is *karma*.

As I was about to eat *prasādam* with the guests, I realized that my new temporary false tooth might pop out at any moment. So I only drank milk; a new social restriction.

“HAIKU ARE THE MOST SPIRITUAL POEMS— 'GOD' NEVER HAS TO BE MENTIONED”

I received a friendly letter from Alexis Rotella, former president of the American Haiku Society and author of many haiku collections. She is interested in *Journal and Poems* because she has also been struggling with illness in recent months. She offered different suggestions on how to cure headaches, such as use of flower essences, cranial adjustment, and release of blockage in the crown *cakra*.

Rotella's response regarding God consciousness in haiku:

The beautiful thing about haiku is that it does not try to impose values. Haiku takes the world as it is. Haiku, to me, are the most spiritual poems when successfully written. For the word

“God” never has to be mentioned. But that under-current of emotion that gives meaning to the words is THERE. The crow, the cardinal, the daisy—they all wear the face of God. Nothing tires me more than to constantly use the word “God.” God goes beyond words and you can tell just by looking at a person’s face if they are one with spirit or not. And even if they’re not, the spirit will catch them sooner or later—maybe in twenty lifetimes. But what’s the rush, anyway?

Your comment about haikuists being atheists is, I think, a bit premature. Have you read Rumi or Kabir or Tagore? I love the mystic poets. I love the way they dance with the Light. But haiku is an altogether different discipline, one which few people master. So many people insist on intellectualizing; they simply can’t refrain from keeping their imaginations out of haiku. They force themselves and their egos and beliefs onto nature and the result is: non-haiku.

My first response to this is that I must somehow or other write about Kṛṣṇa; whether it is considered haiku is not important. Be it haiku or short poetry or free verse or prose-poem or prose—a devotee-writer is one who engages in *kīrtana*.

Neither does a devotee deliver dry sermons about “God.” My shortcoming is not in poetics but in love of Kṛṣṇa. Touched by the conch of Lord Viṣṇu, a devotee-poet composes beautiful, spontaneous prayers, even though he may be a five-year-old child like Dhruva or Prahlāda. The pure devotees are the true mystic poets, and they dance in their *rasa* of loving service with Lord Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates.

I cannot jump artificially into Kṛṣṇa *rasa*. But by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s grace, I have accepted the conclusions of *bhakti* into my heart and mind. I no longer see the world without Kṛṣṇa in the background. Neither is it enough for me to meditate on nature as the universal form or on the impersonal Light. But since so many haiku teachers tell me that direct utterances of the names of the Supreme Lord do not belong in haiku, maybe I should stop insisting. I may be barking up the wrong tree. Nevertheless, Rotella encourages, “I like your haiku about the *japa* beads in *Modern Haiku*. Very lovely and inviting.”

I will try to follow the writing instructions of Nārada Muni and compose verses glorifying the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It may be broken or non-haiku. But it is not my own imagination or belief. Nature *is* Kṛṣṇa. Devotees see Him in the

Deity form and hear Him in His holy name, and by this *kīrtana* they are becoming liberated from all miseries. A devotee's acknowledgment of Kṛṣṇa in all things is not the same as saying, "The crow, the cardinal, the daisy—they all wear the face of God." Yes, they are His artistry, His material, inferior energy; but Kṛṣṇa Himself—His own face and form—is present everywhere, although only revealed to those whose eyes are annointed with love. And He is not "beyond words." My mission as a writer is to describe Him in selected words, as spoken by His recognized devotees, and to reveal Him to others.

OLD DIARIES

May 27, 1974, Rome

I will no more write this dialogue which is like a dialogue between good and evil. I have resigned to follow Sri Guru's desires. Now I pray to find a way to expand my service as secretary. My worshipable Godbrothers have suggested I take on various serious writing projects. At present I have no such desires. So I should try for it. And be conscientious about Prabhupāda's needs as my duty. And take advantage to preach and give classes when possible.

It was Bhagavān dāsa who suggested to me that I should write a diary about Prabhupāda's activities. Good advice to keep alive. But it wasn't meant to be. Now I try it, though I cannot write down what Prabhupāda did today, how he looks, or the many intimate exchanges. Somehow, I missed it.

When I arrived in Rome they said, "You look like someone dumped yellow paint over your head." In one morning lecture Prabhupāda said, "There are three miseries. One is *adhyātmika*, pertaining to the body and the mind. Just like today we may have jaundice or our minds may be bothering us."

I mostly lay down on the floor. One time he passed through the rooms and saw me and told Bhagavān that if I didn't get well he would leave me behind when he traveled. Morning walks, catching a cold . . . stuffed-up nose, someone gave me a big turtleneck sweater. . . . But no shoes, just rubber flip-flops from India. The walks were a sanctuary—Prabhupāda speaking pure philosophy. In his company we transcended, struggling along beside him, happy to take part in the teaching exchange.

"That Dr. Bannerjee," I said, "in Delhi, wrote a pamphlet

saying that Kṛṣṇa was a man but he was deified by His followers."

"Oh?" said Prabhupāda, surprised. "He has said like that?" Devotees on the walk laughed, charmed by Prabhupāda.

Prabhupāda: "Why big, big men like the Pāṇḍavas who were also present at the time of Kṛṣṇa were not picked up as God? Why only Kṛṣṇa is declared as God?"

"Because His activities are greater," I said.

Devotees bring up their doubts and tell Prabhupāda anecdotes about ancient Roman gladiators and modern day anomalies. Although they jump from one topic to another, Prabhupāda keeps us in line—pure *kṛṣṇa-upadeśa*. With such a perfectly learned person as spiritual master, who but a fool would go to someone else?

I could have written
of his days and nights,
but it wasn't meant to be.

THE VIEW FROM COLD MOUNTAIN

Poems of Han-shan and Shih-te

Why am I attracted to read the free verse renditions of the Chinese-Buddhist hermits who lived on "Cold Mountain"? One reason is I like honest poems by disciplined monks better than poems by others. Han-shan is particularly straightforward, rough-hewn, vigorous, renounced. He lived austere, alone on an icy mountain—something like a *bābājī* or Himalayan *yogī*. He communicated through his poems self-satisfaction in *nivṛtti-mārga* and delivered bracing admonishments to worldly people.

Buddhas left their *sutras*
because men are hard to change
it's not just a matter of saintly or stupid
each and every heart throws up its barricade
each piles up its own mountain of *karma*
how could they guess that what they clasp so close
is sorrow
unwilling to ponder, as day and night
they embrace the falsehood of the flesh.

—Han-shan

It encourages me to see that poems professing a definite world-renouncing doctrine *can* be written, admired by poets, scholars, and students, and considered as great poetry. A genuine religious conviction is itself a rare quality and a valid basis for literary expression.

Here's a nice one by Shih-te, Han-shan's hermit companion, which is a bit like Prahlāda Mahārāja's prayer for the souls in *māyā*:

If you want to be happy
there's no other way than the hermit's
flowers in the grove, endless brocade
every single season's colors new
just sit beside the chasm
turn your heads, as the moon rolls by
yet though I ought to be at joyous ease
I can't stop thinking of the others.

—Shih-te

Rough Devotional Lines

Why do they all agree
no God by name please!
Do they think His name is too holy
or like the caste *brāhmaṇas*:
“God is sleeping, don't awake Him!”
Or are they *embarrassed* by Judeo-Christianity,
can't explain God in a world of evil?
Are they simply atheistic,
propounding “all is One”
or “all is none”?
Why are they blind
to the beauty of His form
and deaf to His presence
in the holy names?
Is it because they never heard from His devotee?

Whatever their reasons,
I don't want to join them;
I'll write my non-haikus

for the innocent and honest;
 I'll try to do better;
 yet whoever says "Kṛṣṇa"
 is following the swan's way—
 all others are like crows
 in the places of garbage.
 That is the statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,
 and that is the opinion of Śrīdhara Svāmī.

February 4

RETURNING TO ACTION

I have to find my identity again as active worker. But it is not exactly the same identity I left off in September 1984 when I first went for health repair and stopped active traveling and meetings. So there is something like a crisis or search for identity. I don't have to be in anxiety about it, but I do have to move—retaking up my duties.

Over the year I have developed another personality, that of a journal writer, and it has become a full-time duty. Now I have to ask the writer to move aside a little and let the G.B.C. man, the active meeter-of-people, take some of the time. This change is also producing tension. Moreover, there remains a weakness in health. And the mind affects health. I cannot wait for perfect health—but I have to courageously enter action, assuring myself that my health is in a good enough state and that if pain comes, I have to put up with it. If I do that, perhaps I will find that I can operate again tolerably. I'm beginning more active service even before I leave for India. I will attend the Zonal Management Committee meeting, and a *Back to Godhead* staff meeting. And then go off to Kerala for more of the retired life, another intensive effort at getting closer to nature for bodily repairs. One more month of it, especially getting more air and sunshine and raw diet, then off to Māyāpur.

A Godbrother says I have accepted reduction in the ceremony of *guru* worship because I am weak and because I am ill, because I have a philosophical misunderstanding, and because I have allowed people in my zonal area to get out of control. Yet others say that I have acted wonderfully by adopting changes of

reduction in worship. They say I am a forefront leader in progressive change.

Some say my disciples are not pleased that I've introduced these changes, even though they appear to accept it. And yet leaders among my disciples say that they fully accept my stand and that it is working well because my Godbrothers are cooperating. The changes we have already enacted in our zone will be debated at the G.B.C. meetings and Temple Presidents' meetings in Māyāpur—whether the reduction in *guru* worship will be allowed, or whether even the expansion of *gurus* will be allowed. Previous decisions may be reversed. These are the inner affairs of ISKCON—I sometimes hesitate to write them thinking they will later read as unending.

I also hesitate to write about the controversial factions within ISKCON, because I pride myself as being nonpolitical. It is a fact that I don't find these discussions very absorbing or illuminating. But I cannot say that I am nonpartisan or even nonpolitical. By accepting the reduction of *guru* worship, as well as encouraging Godbrothers to become initiating *gurus*, I have taken controversial action. Therefore, some are pleased and some are displeased. Perhaps by "nonpolitical" what I mean is that I am not in anxiety over what I have done; I'm not anxious to convince others to do as I am doing, but I prefer to engage myself in other thoughts and talks.

OLD DIARIES

June 1, 1974, Geneva

Reading Gita. "There is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. . . . And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time." Earlier it states that one has to approach the spiritual master with submission and inquiry in order to know this true knowledge of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

The realization that satisfies is a very deep thing, very profound, not a matter of being in this or that material circumstance. And a simple formula for being fixed in loving service connection with Kṛṣṇa is to please His most dear servitor, His pure devotee. All things considered, that must be my prime motivation—even if out of self-interest—to cooperate with the desire of the spiritual master. Now he

has named me his personal secretary, to ask for a change in post would inconvenience him in his desire to be relieved of management botheration. His desires have to come first in my life—in that way I will also become successful in spiritual life. Although I hold this as the ideal course it is very difficult for me to control my mind from thinking of other service in which I will be more independent and free and preaching on my own like my Godbrothers. As I stay and do my menial duties, it appears to me that I am suffering in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and becoming less enthusiastic and therefore this service is not good for me—as proved by the fact that I am not happy. But that is not necessarily the criteria—my idea of happiness. Let my spiritual master decide what is best in my assistance of his mission; I will follow. Now I pray to Rādhārāṇī to give me inspiration and strength to assist my spiritual master and think more of his needs than my own.

This is a good attitude, and I was trying to assume it, although the wrong attitude also peeks through—to go and do what I want to do. As if one can do what he wants to!

My diary entry admits to independent will, but concludes in submission to *guru*. I should not discredit the conclusion that I reached, even though I couldn't always sustain it. Sometimes we give more importance to the admission of weaknesses: "Look, in his diary he has written down his weaknesses!" But the setting down in print of one's positive resolution is also an important act: better praise Kṛṣṇa than *māyā*. Negative thoughts come and when they do, they should be reckoned with—resolving them is part of the cleansing process. More important is the positive thought and action.

Even when we cannot love spontaneously, it is victory to plug away, following the *guru's* order: "If you cannot fix your mind on Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*. In this way develop a desire to attain Me" (Bg. 12.9).

In Geneva 1974, when I admitted to restlessness before one of my Godbrothers, he said, "Your service as personal servant is like that of a fireman. Mostly you wait idly, but when you are called it is a most urgent service to society."

Sitting in the room, I thought of others with their travels, their lecturing, and their followers. The servant sits among his spiritual master's suitcases, rearranging *guru's* socks, and even

when his *guru* rings the bell, it is often only the smallest duty that is called for.

Nice milk there in Geneva;
a nice house,
Jean Herbert, a scholar of the *Vedas*, came,
and Prabhupāda was wonderful.
There's a photo—
he's sitting peaceful in his room,
but I should have wished
to remain his dog.

JAPANESE PILGRIMAGE

Someone left me a book, *Japanese Pilgrimage*, a journal kept while visiting the temples of the Buddhist saint Kobo Daishi. There is also a description of Amida Buddha, whom devotees sometimes mention as teaching personalism within Buddhism. But what is Amida's relationship to the *avatāra* Buddha? Is his Pure Land a material heaven? I don't know yet. I have to be careful not to endorse saintly persons or their practices just because they somewhat resemble *bhakti*. What is their actual connection to Bhagavān?

Amida Buddha was a king who became a saint. After many births he attained enlightenment. He is supposed to have his own abode where his followers may join him by chanting his names.

Amida's follower, Kuya, conducted a street chanting movement for devotion to Amida and going back to the Pure Land.

Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me.

—Bg. 9.25

Japanese Pilgrimage makes me wonder what purpose we would serve by visiting these temples. We should not stumble about blindly. We should know what is the teaching that permeates the places we visit. Are we going there to criticize? Are we going to sightsee? To "commune"? What does that mean—commune? Are we going there just to say, "It's a shame they are

not following the Buddha but have been misled”? Will we be awkward in our Vaiṣṇava saffron robes, looking like we’re in the wrong place and not knowing whether to bow or pray? Of course, we will chant Hare Kṛṣṇa wherever we go. But why there?

February 5, Potomac ISKCON

I got annoyed at my secretary and servant for staying back from *māṅgala-ārati* without asking my permission. I allowed myself to get angry so I could reprimand them. But anger has to be carefully controlled or else a cloud of moroseness will fix itself over your head. Dāmodara and Baladeva are sincere workers.

Nārāyaṇa-kavaca asked me if I would like to attend the temple *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* this morning.

“Will it help?” I asked.

“You mean will it help get the devotees to surrender? I don’t know. Every day one third of them don’t attend the full morning program even though you’re personally here.”

Hearing that also got me angry. Why are they committing offenses to the spiritual master? It made me think of the criticisms against me that I allow things to get out of control.

Notes while listening to Nārāyaṇa-kavaca’s *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī*: He says he doesn’t like to keep repeating the same chronic problems. But they need to be corrected. He confesses he doesn’t know whether to stress the positive aspects or again point out the faults. “I don’t know which to say. I don’t feel right saying everything is all right because *saṅkīrtana* is going out. I have to point out the faults out of duty.” Whether to be optimistic or negative? There is a time for both: A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to weep and a time to laugh.

I decided to speak up in the *iṣṭa-goṣṭhī* with my own comments: Your *guru* is here and still you aren’t submissive. I suggest a key to success: the devotees accept the temple president as the representative of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa.

Paramānanda suddenly arrived here. He came a day earlier, thinking the Zonal Management Committee meeting was today. We spoke together for one and a half hours and now he’s going back to Gītā-nāgarī, to return here tomorrow. My attending the Zonal Management Committee meeting will be a

real test for me. I think I will do all right.

While talking with Paramānanda a headache came, but after putting on a wetpack and resting in bed, it has gone down. I'm hopeful that the repair work going on in my head no longer has the devastating punch it used to. If Kṛṣṇa wants it to happen again, I have to simply depend on Him and His will. I may be getting a token reaction from past sinful life.

What does it mean to tolerate? Should I just tell my headache, "All right, if you have some more repair work to do, go on with it, but try not to be so loud. You've been with me for a long time now, so go on and finish your work, but I'm not going to be so disturbed?" I think if I am careful with diet and if I develop more an instinct for how to balance work, rest, and therapy—and if I'm not frightened at the first sign of a headache—if I try my best, I can function more as a normal worker.

February 6

OLD DIARIES

1974, Geneva

Srila Prabhupada is allowing me to go to the U.S. to lead a traveling party for distributing books to the colleges and libraries. He says it is very important work. It is all happening so positively! He is very intent on the distribution of his books to the libraries. Having received one report on the activities of one such party, he is always telling the guests about their success in contacting professors, getting the recommendation and placing the books in the libraries. The other night I simply volunteered to go and he accepted it. Since then I have been patiently waiting while steps are taken to bring my replacement.

The night this happened in Geneva, I was in a state of joyous celebration. My G.B.C. Godbrothers also smiled and patted me on the back; I had won my heart's desire, Prabhupāda's blessings to go for active preaching. So Kṛṣṇa rewards us as we desire.

I have documented in my diary and in *Life With the Perfect Master* that Prabhupāda was very pleased with the library distribution service which I undertook. I never heard him say he was displeased with me for transferring to the preaching service. But with an analytical, retrospective view, I feel mixed emotions about the incident. Since I have become Prabhupāda's biographer

and have become very absorbed in trying to write about him, I may conclude that it would have been better to stay close by him. So even as I record the “happy ending” of the little drama, I should note the mixed feelings. Once we are committed to a path that is assigned to us by our spiritual master, and that is our desire, then we should devote full energy to it, as I did in the library work in America. But in introspective moments we may also sort out the mixtures and be very careful about future action in relationship with the spiritual master.

I think of Dhruva Mahārāja, who was ashamed of his material desires when he finally gained the *darśana* of Lord Viṣṇu. The Lord awarded Dhruva his heart’s desires, including his return back to Godhead, but first he had to carry out his material desires on earth, as a ruler of the greatest kingdom ever given to a human being.

I was impetuous. In Paris, June 1974, I wrote, “I am daily learning about the pure devotee’s ways and his thinking, but the service is not very active and I want to go and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in that active way.” In those days I could not realize how in my own life I would come to see that writing of the pure devotee’s ways was itself a kind of active preaching. Preaching through writing has become for me the most valuable and lasting form of service.

Even after creating my new assignment, Prabhupāda gave me another chance to stay if I wanted. While massaging him one day in Paris, he questioned whether any other devotee could do the U.S. library work. The other man Prabhupāda mentioned had given up his *sannyāsa* vows and gone back with his wife. I frankly doubted that he would be in a position to take up such traveling work. Another man Prabhupāda mentioned was intent on a different kind of mass book distribution, and I also thought he would not be able to concentrate on the library work. But I could have told a “white lie.” I could have said, “Well, maybe they can do it.” But I was very intent to go myself, and I also thought that no one else would do it. “Yes,” said Prabhupāda, “it is very important work. All right.”

Hearing from Prabhupāda and reading in his books about the importance of preaching, it is natural that a disciple will become determined to go out and try his own strength in the preaching field. Among Prabhupāda’s disciples, the active

preachers are the most recognized for valiant service. Where else did I get the idea to “go out” except from Prabhupāda himself? But perhaps I was also thinking of building my own career. I did not want to be left behind in the competitive race with my Godbrothers for achievements in the field of book distribution. I wanted to be a leader, a recognized preacher, and I wanted the blissful taste of personally distributing his books and reciprocating with the fallen souls in my own country. But now I think I miscalculated. Prabhupāda’s writings and speeches are still present, and will be present for at least ten thousand years, and all aspiring devotees may follow them and go out and preach on his behalf. But Prabhupāda’s actual personal presence among us, at least in his *vapuḥ* form, was only for a few years.

If I think in terms of rectification, I should apply myself to both the active preaching, and to cultivation of personal relationship with Prabhupāda. By reading his books and hearing his talks and worshiping his form, I may cultivate his personal relationship. And since I strived so hard to become free for preaching, and since he blessed this desire, let me now become bold like Prabhupāda. Let me travel in his footsteps and not merely stay home worshiping memories of my *guru*. As I distribute his teachings, then he will be pleased with me.

June 18, Germany

Sometimes I feel that if Srila Prabhupada would have questioned me about my desire to leave my present position and do traveling sankirtana to the professors and libraries—I would be incoherent on a Kṛṣṇa conscious level. I have the feeling that my wanting to leave is largely negative. But that is not so! In today’s ISKCON there are so many advanced devotees expert at book distribution or management or money collection or Sanskrit and I cannot do any of these things well. But to go at a determined pace to all the colleges and libraries with a team of brahmacharis and present Srila Prabhupada’s books—that important mission I could do. And as secretary, I am certainly serving Srila Prabhupada, but it is all in small matters, holding his spectacles, giving him his cup—and I yearn to hand it over to another more worthy of such an exalted position. For myself I will be dutiful even if not replaced, but I feel sometimes resentful—

which is offensive—and always yearning to prove myself in the opportunity of traveling sankirtana.

For a while it looked doubtful whether my replacement would actually come forth. I had to be patient. Nowadays, I am often advising my disciples and Godbrothers to be patient. We ask a young woman to be patient before we can find her a good husband. Sometimes I have also asked a personal secretary or servant to be patient in his desire for more active *sankirtana*. In 1974, I also applied myself in an effort to be patient while waiting for my replacement. Times like these may seem to be periods in between real action, but actually they are important tests. If we can subdue our own tendencies to be the controller and doer, and wait on Kṛṣṇa's explicit permission, then we can gain determination for the further inevitable tests of patience that will occur throughout our life up until death itself. If I am actually not the doer—and that is the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā*—then I should be patient with the will of my master. If I am actually the servant, I should live to do the bidding of my lord.

June, 1974, Germany

Getting a man to replace me has become complicated. I must be patient, do the needful, but nothing passionate or rash. If Kṛṣṇa doesn't want me to take a party to the U.S. colleges, then no endeavor on my part will make it possible. I should not lose all enthusiasm for my present duties, but execute them as nicely as possible. My efficiency as secretary should not fall off because of my yearning to do the other work. All things considered, I am not the controller, I have no real choice but to remain peaceful and engaged as I am at present.

So many contingencies before I am replaced. As a result I have become a little lost, wondering what will happen and confused whether this or that action on my part is self-motivated.

February 7, 3:00 A.M.

Right now I am feeling hopeful because I underwent almost a full day's meetings yesterday and this morning I am feeling quite fit. I stayed in the meeting room for one hour and then retired for half an hour, then went back in for another hour, then out for half an hour, and in this way I went throughout the

day up until 7:30 P.M. I am feeling that return to a regular G.B.C. status is quite possible.

The threat of legal suits against our temples perpetuated by the anticult movement mounts. Their strategy is to destroy our movement by this "bleeding" tactic. We have to defeat them enough so they desist from their pernicious attacks. But the costs and threats mount. Paramānanda inquired about the proper Kṛṣṇa conscious attitude to take toward these cases. He is doing the needful but prefers not to pursue it or think of it constantly. We discussed how much to continue with our regular preaching duties while depending on Kṛṣṇa, and how much to enter into legalistic offensives.

While I am feeling good about increased participation in meetings, I'm also concerned how to write of these experiences. It doesn't seem as easy to put inner-ISKCON affairs into a literary journal as it does to write nature descriptions or straight philosophy, etc. It would take many paragraphs to fully describe the different agenda topics we cover at a Zonal Management Committee meeting. I will be continuing to question and also to work out whether these topics are important and enduring, worth expressing. Some managerial topics are better unmentioned, based on Cāṇakya Paṇḍita's advice: one should not reveal his plans, lest they be disrupted by others. But it also seems improper that any vital experience be omitted from the journal.

Representatives from New York ISKCON came to our meeting and asked us to consider accepting their temples into our own zone. After lengthy discussions we gave them the clear impression that we cannot expand our zone. I certainly don't feel capable of taking on twice as much management as I presently have. I'm trying to come back to managing what I had before my illness, so I cannot conceive of doubling the size of those duties. We also discussed how to provide financial support for our *gurukula*—and one after another, vital agenda topics.

We will not have a Zonal Management Committee meeting in March because many of our members will be away at the India pilgrimage. But they want to have another meeting in mid-April at least. My own schedule, however, doesn't bring me back into the U.S. until May 8. So a tension is present, along

with the good signs of my returning physical endurance—how much time to devote to writing and how much to other preaching and managing.

A new letter from Bob Spiess (*Modern Haiku's* editor) is encouraging. He prefaces his remarks by saying that haiku is an art and therefore "its 'rules' or even its principles should not be taken as strict fiats—and this includes what I probably will be saying in this letter." He then admits that all areas of experience can be subject matter for haiku but that religious themes "tend to be more difficult to write on than say material that is more nature oriented."

He says the "danger" of strictly religious haiku is the tendency to make them sermonettes or overly personal, "and ego expression in haiku often does not work out particularly well—it perhaps tends to be somewhat blatant instead of suggestive."

He makes the point that religious haiku of a particular denomination or religion tends to lack universal appeal. "I am not at all 'against' religious haiku," he writes. "I would like to see more truly good ones. But mere praise of God, Christ, Buddha, Allah does not automatically mean that the haiku is aesthetic or artistic—and it is this aesthetic appeal that is one of the principal attributes of a genuine haiku."

He also makes a distinction between personal and private—"private haiku tends to be cryptic and persons find it difficult to enter into them or empathize with the situation.

"Haiku that are expressions of religious praise or adoration frequently lack another of the primary qualities of most haiku, that of juxtaposition of perceptions, of the use of internal comparison where each of the two separate perceptions nonetheless enhance each other and at the same time create a third aspect (unexpressed) of an intuition that transcends both the perceptions."

These remarks are encouraging, in that he likes religious haiku and would like to see truly good ones, and he admits that there are no rules against them. But it is discouraging to think that spiritual haiku is less likely to succeed. It is like saying, "You can try religious themes, but you already have two strikes against you. Good luck." I should not shy from a difficult challenge, but it makes me question whether the haiku expression is worth so much effort. I do want to create aesthetic experiences

for as many people as possible, but I cannot water down a *kīrtana* just so that no one is “offended” by the name, form, and paraphernalia of Kṛṣṇa.

Listening to Prabhupāda on a tape. He was speaking strongly how Kṛṣṇa is nonsectarian, yet it is very rare that a person can understand Him in truth. I took this as literary advice in contrast to the advice I get from secular editors.

Prabhupāda said Kṛṣṇa is not a Hindu god, although He is defined that way in the English dictionary. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says, *sarva-yoniṣu*: He is the father of all living entities. It is our task as devotees to inform others about nonsectarian Kṛṣṇa and His all-knowing dominion over all that be. If I omit direct reference to Kṛṣṇa, it may please some editors, but I will face the greatest loss.

Very few people know Kṛṣṇa. They do not like us to speak directly of Him. But we have to take up the work, trying to inform them how Kṛṣṇa is nonsectarian. According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.3), few will be able to understand Kṛṣṇa in truth. But by our attempt to know and glorify Kṛṣṇa, He will be pleased with us.

LAST DAY AT POTOMAC

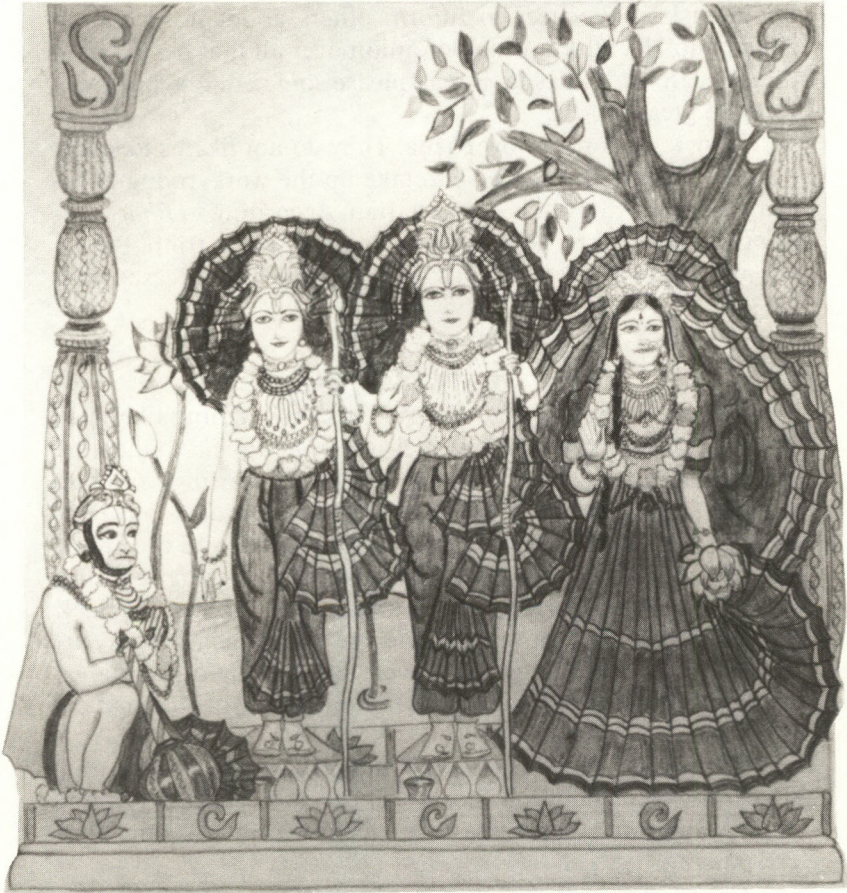
Ice-crusty snow on the ground, wet snow falling like mist. Here they have gray jays, but their *wheelde wheelde* sounds the same as the blue jays of Gītā-nāgarī. Lots of starlings and two or three large crows gathered on a few trees. Devotees have left some garbage on the ground here in the woods, and the crows (just as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) are congregating. One of them sounds a warning as I approach, but the starling flock is complacent. They move from one tree to another. The gray atmosphere, the barrenness, and even the droning of jet planes overhead, make it all rather eerie, reminding me of a cremation ground.

The winter woods leave very little privacy. As you turn in almost any direction you face an upper-class suburban mansion. A sign on a stout tree just over our property line: “No Trespassing.”

I can help the devotees of Potomac *dhāma* just by staying here. Śrīla Agrāṇī Swami has also agreed to visit once a month.

Those who stay here all the time have a hard row to hoe, gathering finances, facing the opposition of the nondevotees, and quarreling among themselves.

In the *Bhāgavatam* class this morning, Vidura dāsa emphasized the importance of chanting *japa*. He said he has been traveling for a year interviewing Prabhupāda's disciples for *Prabhupāda Nectar*. He met with many persons who no longer follow the principles of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In almost every case, when they began to describe their departure from Kṛṣṇa conscious life, they mentioned that their first weakness was a



Śrī Śrī Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Hanumān, New Hastināpura.

gradual slackening in careful chanting of their *japa* rounds.
And that one slackening led to others.

Saddened—
by demons,
by my inadequacy,
by departing,
by struggles of my disciples
who can't rise early,
who avoid surrender
and who lodge complaints.

Sadness is the taint
of this mortal world.
Happiness and safety
are on the path
back to Godhead.

February 8

OLD DIARIES

July 19, 1974, Los Angeles

By Kṛṣṇa's grace, I now have everything I yearned for in the past months, recorded above. I have my own traveling party and an excellent assignment fully approved and blessed by Śrīla Prabhupada—to travel and distribute books to the colleges and libraries. And today I finished an essay about preaching, for BTG magazine. I am working in separation from the spiritual master, but I do not feel depressed or sorry about anything. He very kindly and expertly allowed me to transfer to my present engagement. Now I must always pray for the determination to carry on with this present library distribution party in the U.S.—because it is a long-term project, as Kṛṣṇa desires.

We were off on a wave—his blessings, and immediate good results. With men like Ghanaśyāma dāsa (now Śrīla Bhakti-tīrtha Swami) and Mahābuddhi dāsa going into the colleges, we were destined to succeed. These two men, with unbeatable determination and sharp intelligence, achieved brilliant results. Twelve years later, the U.S. libraries continue to receive volumes

of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* series. And Śrīla Prabhupāda's books also spoke for themselves. They *wanted* them.

With my U.S. road atlas, I projected visits to almost every college in every state. It would take years. We would live on the road, in our vans. This was freedom and opulence even greater than that awarded to Dhruva Mahārāja.

Prabhupāda was pleased. Our exploits were broadcast in the BBT newsletter.

Baltimore, Jaya Gaurasundara's house

In the car en route, Advaita Ācārya asked me what he can grasp onto when he is tempted amidst his coworkers at the hospital. He wants something he can immediately cling to, to bring him into Kṛṣṇa's shelter. I said you should try to always chant the holy names. You can chant in your mind at those times when it is not allowed outloud. He said he never thought of that, but he would try. He sighed, and I also sighed, "Hare Kṛṣṇa!"

I said we could also remember the philosophy—everything is temporary, only Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual world will endure. And we can remember our spiritual master and his instructions. We can meditate on our mission for going back to Godhead. But the holy name is the method that gives the most *instant* connection with Kṛṣṇa at all times. It is the most available and recommended method for realizing Kṛṣṇa. Even fear personified is afraid of Kṛṣṇa, but a devotee can become fearless by taking shelter in His holy name.

I recommend, but cannot
chant Hare Kṛṣṇa always
within and without.
Sighing, laughing,
singing, praying
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare,
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma,
Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

In the Home of a Disciple

Chanting the holy name,
we wait at the curtain

to see Rādhā-Govinda.
 How can they accept me
 as their *guru* to bow down to?
 Because I bow to Prabhupāda
 and Prabhupāda accepts me
 as his servant.

“TELL EVERYONE YOU MEET—”

In a poem by the Buddhist monk Ryokan, he seems to admonish himself for his reclusive life:

When there're
 those who give their lives
 trying to save others,
 to hide in a grass hut
 because I want a little leisure—

For the Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee also, a life alone, even though spent in spiritual pursuit, is not as pleasing to Kṛṣṇa as a life spent helping to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others.

For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.

—Bg. 18.68-69

And so we build our temples and monasteries in the cities and go out chanting and begging downtown. This attempt to maintain and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness among worldly men often produces a clash. Parents become enraged if their son or daughter joins us. When we ask them for a donation, they denounce us as parasites: “Why don’t you get a job!” Those who are averse to our way of life are annoyed even by the sights and sounds of our street chanting. Some Christians tell us we will go to hell by praising Lord Kṛṣṇa and not Lord Jesus. Fanatical parents have formed “anticult” leagues as an attempt to defame and destroy us by propaganda and court cases.

Much of this we could have avoided if we were less evangelistic. But this is the heart of our renunciation and devotion—

to broadcast Kṛṣṇa's glories in the Age of Kali. Whoever hears the chanting of His holy names or reads a page of Kṛṣṇa conscious literature may save himself-herself from the greatest sufferings in the next life.

Expressing his dedication to preaching in the Caribbean, Agrāṇī Swami wrote to me:

I feel very happy preaching in the Caribbean, and I've given my heart to serving Prabhupada here. Because of the pervasive hardship and suffering I witness in these countries, I really feel for these unfortunate people. I am gradually learning that the highest happiness is in acting instrumentally to deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the spiritually destitute of this world. I hope to one day develop genuine compassion so that I may completely lose myself in the mellows of distributing the holy name.

This is the spirit of a realized follower of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

But some people praise the recluse as better than the preacher. They say the nonpreacher sets an example rather than delivers sermons, and thus he is superior. But both example and propagation of precept are required if we want to contact and influence as many souls as possible. The compassionate Vaiṣṇava cannot bear to see his worldly brothers suffering and bewildered by *māyā*, and so he approaches them with the message of Lord Caitanya: "Wake up, sleeping souls! Wake up, sleeping souls! You have slept so long in the lap of the witch, *Māyā*."

Renunciation

Nowadays a monk may carry
a Samsonite briefcase;
he may even be chauffeured
in a limousine.
People don't understand,
but the representative of God
may be honored
as good as God—
if in his heart he knows
"I'm just a servant
of the servant of the servant

of the servant. . . .”

And if his tongue and belly are controlled
by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa,
and by honoring *prasādam*
in a simple way.

February 10

OLD DIARIES

July 26, 1974, San Francisco

Our party is going nicely. Others are pleased with our work. At the same time, there is the opportunity to expand my service by taking on management of the old Central U.S. zone. It is a vacant post so I have volunteered for it. We shall see. In this case, whether or not it is awarded, the alternatives are very hopeful. I have to deal with myself as a conditional devotee, although His Divine Grace says service should be without condition. Thus my progress, I admit, is slow.

August 30

I am moved about like a chess piece on a board—Kṛṣṇa is the player, through His various energies. So it has been settled that I will not manage the Central zone. For the past month I have been thinking about it much and for the past ten days I have actually taken the post under reappointment by Śrīla Prabhupada through the mail. But now it is worked out that Jagadisa will take back the vacancy which he himself created. Therefore I am going back to what I have written elsewhere as the “simple, sublime” traveling library work. It is really very suitable for sannyasi life. Traveling constantly with a devoted team of brahmacaris, successfully distributing books in the libraries of colleges, big cities, and preaching in the ISKCON temples along the way. Dear Spiritual Master, dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, please let me do it without thinking I should do this or that instead. Let me understand how Kṛṣṇa is letting me serve free of entanglement in this wonderful library party. This also should allow me more regulated time for writing.

Here there is a tension between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Both are sometimes called for, and the art is how to balance them.

I was given a wonderful service to travel as a *sannyāsī*. One should be satisfied and not think he has to do more than his

prescribed duty. Sometimes when we see what our peers are doing, we think we have to imitate them. A *sannyāsī* especially should be satisfied with “simple living and high thinking.” He doesn’t have to have the largest area of management or the most men and money. He should keep his brain cool for understanding and presenting the philosophy. In my own case, Prabhupāda gave me and other G.B.C. Godbrothers *sannyāsa* just so that we could be engaged in traveling and preaching. Therefore it may seem strange that in 1974—after praying and going through anguish while I was with Prabhupāda, because of my desire to transfer—that I should very soon again be dissatisfied and looking to go “beyond” the service of the traveling library party. I wanted to add more service to my portfolio.

But the dissatisfactions have a favorable side. Prabhupāda was not satisfied to sit in Vṛndāvana. He wasn’t satisfied with writing a magazine but also wanted to print books. When he went to America he wasn’t satisfied to give a few lectures, but he wanted to establish his own center. Then he wasn’t satisfied with one New York center, but he wanted another and went to San Francisco. If you can call it “dissatisfaction,” then the follower of Prabhupāda always remains dissatisfied, wanting to expand more and more for Kṛṣṇa. If you give him a million dollars in one day, he can spend it and ask you for more the next day.

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction can work together. A pure devotee is satisfied to sit anywhere and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and to speak to whoever comes. “If no one comes, you can chant to the four walls.” He is satisfied with whatever food he is given and he doesn’t hanker for wealth or women. He does a little service, and stays out of politics. But he may also be dissatisfied at his lack of spiritual advancement and with the fact that so few people are taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Baladeva is leaving for the day—
 twelve errands, over two hundred miles,
 while I sit here.
 But I am also busy—
 three phone calls,
 one walk in the park,

two exercise sessions,
 sixteen rounds *japa*, three *Gāyatrīs*, three meals,
 some reading if there is time,
 and the journal pages are ready
 for endless entries.
 If I could only make a Kṛṣṇa conscious poem!

Two of my Godbrothers were displeased with me. I took the time yesterday and today to speak with each of them on the phone, and I mostly patched up my friendships with them. But Śeṣa analyzed the cause of the disagreements: I am not associating enough with others. When relationships get neglected, then even a small disagreement can be blown out of proportion. So I promised to spend more time in personal meetings with my colleagues. I don't plan to be a hermit. But I can still savor solitude when it comes.

Reading the poems of Santoka Tanada, a twentieth-century wandering monk. What I admire about his poems is that they are completely his own. They come directly from his life, personal, simple and stark, inseparable from himself. He was a Zen wanderer on the path of poverty, solitude, and meditation. I have no desire to follow his ways, except that I would like to find my own voice.

The natural form that I am seeking is nothing less than genuine realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When I actually awaken to my relationship with Kṛṣṇa, when I come forth spontaneously to serve Him, and if I ever do attain to love of Kṛṣṇa—then I will be able to speak in my own voice as the servant of the servant. To reach that goal, I do not have to invent a process or imitate others' paths. I must carry out my own program in ISKCON, as given to me by Prabhupāda and his representatives. By following the previous *ācāryas*, I will find my own self. When I surrender to my authorities in spiritual life, then I will actually be on my own, otherwise I will be intimidated by false ego and sense gratification. Full surrender cannot be attained by a weak person who just follows along with the crowd. But how to exert free will? By molding myself according to the orders of the great souls: *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*.

In my begging bowl
 violets and dandelions
 jumbled together—
 I offer them to the
 Buddhas of the Three Worlds.

—Ryokan

Raising my voice above the wind:
 Hail to the Bodhisattva of Compassion!

—Santoka

The pine branches hang down
 heavy with the chant:
 Hail to the Bodhisattva of Compassion!

—Santoka

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I dream of chanting:
 Prabhupāda's *japa* tape
 on auto reverse.

Prabhupāda's *japa* tape
 hearing while chanting
 his and my own.

February 11

OLD DIARIES

October 4, 1974

It is not that I am constantly experiencing difficulty in devotional service, but mostly I write difficulty in this book so I can see it for what it is. It is only for my reading to help me become satisfied and be obedient to my spiritual master. The record I have left of my thoughts while serving as Prabhupada's direct secretary is therefore

very valuable. By reading it over, I can see my actual state and why I wanted to leave. Otherwise, with the passage of time I might forget my actual motives and lose the sense of reality.

Even when I did not want to stay as secretary (because I wanted active preaching), I knew that if I displeased my spiritual master I would be doomed.

Presently the service I am rendering—in heading a five-man party in library distribution—is certainly pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda. He recently wrote me in a letter from Vṛndāvana that he was pleased, that I had Kṛṣṇa's blessings in this work and that I was accepting what he said. So there is no question of changing it. Traveling G.B.C., I pray to remain enthusiastic.

We had two vans at first. Mahādyaṭi dāsa was good at maintaining the fleet. After a mere thirty-five thousand miles we would turn a van in for a new one, so that we would always have first-class vans and not be hampered by breakdowns. It was also economical for the trade-in value. We stayed in campsites, or during the winter, at motels, and weekends at the temples. Evenings I would read to devotees from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. As the *sannyāsī saṅkīrtana* leader, I also spoke privately with each devotee. I went out sometimes to sell books but wasn't very good at it compared to Ghanaśyāma and Mahābuddhi.

We ate uncooked food, mostly fruits and nuts and milk products, and some salads. We felt that ours was a more genteel sort of book distribution compared to the airport distributors, and we felt humble before their combat austerities. But we had our own esprit de corps. We often discussed how to convince a professor or librarian to buy the books. The main difficulty was that they saw Prabhupāda's books as sectarian or too religious. This was their own lack of scholarship. Professor Hopkins has since explained that Śrīla Prabhupāda's method of commentary is in the centuries-old scholarly tradition of Vaiṣṇava *paramparā*.

Mahābuddhi used to remember the professors' names, drop the names of their colleagues, tell football stories, or whatever came to his mind. He was so affable and persistent that he convinced them somehow or other. There was an intense competition between Ghanaśyāma and Mahābuddhi. One of my

main services was to separate the two of them from in-fighting. Ghanaśyāma spun webs of words, Princeton graduate that he was, and his charm and rapid conversation moved things along to the final conclusion—book sales. Actually, both Ghanaśyāma and Mahābuddhi succeeded because of their intense, prayerful attitude. They were surrendered souls, and they entered each campus in the morning praying to Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda that they might be able to take a standing order for his books before leaving that night.

October 20, 1974

I have been hearing of the activities of a demon in the U.S. called the deprogrammer who is paid by parents of Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees to kidnap and torture the devotees into giving up Kṛṣṇa consciousness and returning to karmi life. Last night I woke from a dream-state and felt like I was under a spell or process which was trying to "deprogram" me. It was not one of intellectual argumentation creating doubts or terrible blasphemy but an incoherent physical machinery—a feeling seducing my being to consider all reality as ultimate sense gratification. It was something that used to happen to me also in my sleep when I was a child. Whatever it was, I learned from it that my chanting has become not very thoughtful or full of pleading to Kṛṣṇa. Also it indicated to me a direction in which my preaching to devotees could be most helpful for them; think of preaching as a strengthening of devotees against all forms of deprogramming sent by Maya. Prepare the devotees for the fight which is going on now at all subtle levels. We should be progressing, growing stronger, we should be very vigilant of weaknesses.

Also talking here in Detroit with Govardhana Prabhu—how Kṛṣṇa Consciousness is not hankering for a position but to stay focused on the goal of achieving attachment to Kṛṣṇa.

Sometimes we are afraid, but we have to fight them. Now they are increasing the stakes. Not as much violent deprogramming kidnaps—although that also continues—but they have gotten support from psychologists saying Kṛṣṇa consciousness is brainwashing. And they use the courts, suing for millions. Attack, attack. And we have weaknesses too. Where will it end? Won't Kṛṣṇa protect us? Can they actually take away our temple? Could they take away someone's *bhakti*? Not really.

Kṛṣṇa says, *kaunteya pratijānīhi, na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*: "Tell the world, Arjuna, My devotee will never be vanquished."

Haridāsa Ṭhākura also went to court
dragged by false *brāhmaṇas* and Muslims:
"Give up chanting or we'll beat you to death."
He went to jail, unafraid
and informed the inmates:
"You should be glad,
here you have no illusions of happiness."
And when punished, he survived serene
under Lord Caitanya's care.

May Lord Nṛsiṃha protect us
bringing us closer
to His holy name.
May Lord Hari take away
our false prestige
and leave us dependent only on Him.
May They grant us courage
to increase the *saṅkīrtana*
despite the demons' clever moves.

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Counting off the days
until my departure.

Heavy snowfall—
will it stop us?

Walking in the woods:
feathery snow drops,
as we talk of South India.

Bramha-saṁhitā was discovered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at the Ādi-keśava temple in Trivandrum. We may visit the temple, but is there any sign of His visit? I'll bring a copy of *Brahma-saṁhitā*. On His southern tour Lord Caitanya also went to the tip of Cape Comorin to Kanniya Kumari, and then northward by the Payasvini River. *Brahma-saṁhitā* is the apex of

Kṛṣṇa conscious realization—in contrast to the mere “nearness to religious principles” that was all Lord Buddha was able to impart to the atheists of his time. Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana in the supreme cause of existence, and He is the all-beautiful person playing with His intimate associates. Prabhupāda and his spiritual master invite us to meditate on the hymns of *Brahma-saṁhitā* as a regular daily function.

February 12

OLD DIARIES

November 2, 1974, Cincinnati, Ohio

I don't want to go out in suit and wig to the professors for selling books. I will still intimately manage the men in the party—three vans crossing the country, one state after another. But I propose to follow behind them and do lecturing. In that way, my desire can be an expansion of our present college program, and more enlivening to me. I pray this proposal is not selfish, displeasing to my spiritual master—and I pray to more personally desire and effect the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am a person with desires, let my real desire be to spread this movement and enthusiastically, even though the great majority of the population is opposed. Let me become an ideal sannyasi. This involves availability of a vehicle and added manpower, but if it looks possible, then I will write to His Divine Grace that this is my wish. “Sannyasi means freedom and preaching.”

I wanted to lecture in the colleges and at the same time guide the men to sell the books. Selling the books was the more important work. But we could do both and increase our college approach—salesmen selling books, and a devotee in saffron robes lecturing in classes—and he also selling books.

I made the point in my diary that I wanted to personally desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It has to be like that. We have to love it. That is best—if we live and sleep and breathe and dream our service. Otherwise, we will perform bodily functions like a dumb animal.

Think how to perfect your service. Be so inspired by it that you jump up from your chair and go tell others about it. Even while resting at night, meditate on how to do it; work out the practical details of the next day's service. When it is time to ac-

tually do the work, be willing and energetic. Surmount the obstacles. *Phalena parīcate*: get good results.

But what if the *guru* or his representative asks us to do something we feel is not our psychophysical nature? Then, that "nature" should be put aside for the time being. We should transcend according to his order. The Vaiṣṇava is above designations such as *brāhmaṇa* or *kṣatriya*. But when it is possible, a devotee may work in the way natural to him. Whether by tendency or superior order, we have to surrender to our work. There are different departments, and the spiritual master is expert in asking a devotee to serve in a way according to his tendency. This sometimes takes time to work out, but it will come.

One of our successful *saṅkīrtana* devotees told me that as a child he always wanted to grow up and become a secret agent. Now he's working in that way for Kṛṣṇa. Others have a *kṣatriya*, take-charge mentality, and some want family life integrated into their spiritual life. Eventually, they get it. Someone writes books, someone is a lawyer, someone is scientific, someone clerical—all surrender.

Somehow or other we have to be fervent in our work and in our chanting, reading, and preaching. We cannot continue to drag ourselves through a life in devotional service like a donkey being prodded. If we feel like that, sooner or later we will refuse. If our performance of transcendental loving service is only lukewarm, then *Māyā* will push us into passionate material ambitions, or she will pull us down into laziness and sleep.

Combine the two:
what I want
and what I should.
Meetings—poems.
With others—alone,
always in His service.

November 24, 1974

I have written to His Divine Grace asking what I should do. Now I am writing essays for a book for use in colleges and engaging in preaching. I asked His Divine Grace whether I should take on a project more suitable for a GBC man. But my Godbrothers like

Jagadisa and Rupanuga indicate what I am doing is very important. . . . GBC means "ideal Vaisnava" and "keeping the standards." I am satisfied with sannyasi life, not attached to any party or faction, but always traveling and studying, preaching, writing. I am aware my course may be radically altered at any moment by actions caused by the will of the Supreme. "God disposes." I am feeling transcendental pleasure and much freedom in this life.

We were not lone, poor wanderers, like the Zen monks or recluse *yogīs*. We were booksellers in suits and ties. But in spirit we were as renounced as any mendicants. We were *brahmacārīs*, servant-preachers, absorbed in following the order of our *guru*.

Our freedom: always on the road. Work a college by day, then travel down the highway to the next college. Driving at night, talking excitedly, singing, hearing Prabhupāda singing over the van's tape recorder speaker, finally taking a cup or two of hot milk and lying down in our sleeping bags on the metal floor of the van. We were certain we were doing the right thing; it was pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda; it felt right to be a *brahmacāri*-worker for His Divine Grace.

Wet with morning dew,
I go in the direction I want.

—Santoka

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Traveling for Prabhupāda
but still I doubt—
"Am I doing right?"

Doubt means, "I could do better,"
but it also means I'm careful,
avoiding women's ways.

I won't give up this freedom
nor my analytic worry—
I know He's my protector.

February 13, 2:30 A.M.

PREACHING IN A DREAM

The Pope had come to an American city, and the devotees were present. A reporter stopped Paramānanda dāsa and asked what he thought. Paramānanda said that the eight million dollars spent on the Pope's reception could have been spent to protect some cows. Media people were interested and began to take down Paramānanda's name and take photos. The devotees with Paramānanda, including myself, were very inspired by this. Later I was expressing to some of my disciples appreciation for Paramānanda's deep and fearless conviction about cow protection. I was also a little disappointed in myself, thinking that I had not such conviction in a preaching project. Who could have conceived that Paramānanda could turn a seemingly unconnected incident about the Pope into the preaching of cow protection? But how could I have done anything similar? In the dream we also thought that the Pope was coming to Gītā-nāgarī and we wondered what we should do.

Then in the dream, a young woman disciple of mine presented me with a collection of pictures. She said that she was a representative of a heavenly planet and that this collection was her preaching propaganda. There were many devotees present and I politely and formally accepted the package from her without knowing what it was. I felt obliged in the public setting to acknowledge her work. I opened the package. It contained pictures of the girl in various poses. I said politely, "Oh, the queen of heaven." Then I said, "You can't expect me to look through these pictures very quickly so I will not use it now. I will let you know later." I realized it was a very dangerous situation, since these pictures could be classed as a kind of pornography. What could this lead to but some kind of falldown?

Then I said, "There is a picture-looking incident in the *Kṛṣṇa* book. There the lady Citralekhā draws pictures of beautiful men and shows them to her friend, Uṣā. But that incident was based on Uṣā's wishing to get married. And it was marriage to Kṛṣṇa's grandson. Otherwise, picture-looking is *māyā*." Then I left that situation. Some devotee-women who were left behind began to narrate the story of Uṣā and Aniruddha in such a way as to indirectly criticize the girl who had posed for and presented these other pictures. In this way, I escaped the dangerous

situation and I also was able to preach, just as Paramānanda had preached. It was as if my wish had come true to demonstrate a preaching angle.

THOUGHTS ON THIS DREAM

I should be confident that I too have a preaching angle such as speaking on the *Kṛṣṇa* book and preaching to devotees and to the world. Also I should be very careful about dangerous situations and temptations that may be presented to me even in the name of service by devotees.

On waking, I was happy to think that I had spontaneously remembered the *Kṛṣṇa* book. Yesterday I heard Prabhupāda, in a 1974 Bombay lecture, refer at least three times to the *Kṛṣṇa* book. He was lecturing on the fourth chapter, verse nine of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *janma karma ca me divyam*: "One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." Prabhupāda said that if one reads the *Kṛṣṇa* book *seriously*, simply from that he will be able to go back to Godhead. When we travel I am planning to take tapes of Prabhupāda dictating the *Kṛṣṇa* book. By hearing *Kṛṣṇa* book, I may defend myself from the invitations of the queen of heaven. And by hearing about *Kṛṣṇa*, I can defeat the negative presentations of impersonalism and voidism and establish strongly in my mind and heart the conclusion that *Kṛṣṇa* is the Absolute Truth.

In the Bombay lecture Prabhupāda also mentioned that reading the *Bhagavad-gītā* will accomplish the same purpose as the *Kṛṣṇa* book. He said that people tend to dismiss *Kṛṣṇa*, thinking He is an ordinary or mythological person, and thus they fail to understand the *Bhagavad-gītā*. The Māyāvādīs think that *Kṛṣṇa* has taken a body of *māyā* and that *Kṛṣṇa*'s statements that we should surrender to Him should therefore be taken in an impersonal way. But if we become a serious student of *Bhagavad-gītā*, we can understand that there is no distinction between *Kṛṣṇa*'s body and soul—both are spiritual. Otherwise, how could *Kṛṣṇa* have said to Arjuna that He remembered all His past lives, whereas Arjuna forgot? Thus the *Bhagavad-gītā* offers self-evident proofs of the supremacy of *Kṛṣṇa* to whoever studies it seriously.

VAIṢṆAVA CALENDAR

Today is Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vasanta-pañcamī, and the occasion of the appearance or disappearance of five great Vaiṣṇavas: Śrī Pundarīka Vidyānidhi, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura, Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriya-devī, and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

Once Mukunda Datta took Gadādhara Paṇḍita with him to the house of Pundarīka Vidyānidhi. To Gadādhara Paṇḍita's eyes, Pundarīka Vidyānidhi appeared just like a materialist. He sat beneath an exquisite umbrella on an expensive couch covered with fine bedding and silk and muslin pillows. By his side was a pitcher of water and a tray of betel nuts. In front of a spittoon was a beautiful mirror. On either side servants fanned him with fans made of peacock feathers. He wore *tilāka* of sandalwood pulp with a dot of *kun̄kuma* in the center. Seeing all this, Gadādhara Paṇḍita became a little doubtful. Mukunda had told him that Pundarīka Vidyānidhi was a great devotee. Since childhood, Gadādhara lived a life of celibacy and renunciation, and he expected Pundarīka Vidyānidhi to be similarly austere. Mukunda knew this and could understand Gadādhara Paṇḍita's astonishment. Thus, just to reveal Pundarīka Vidyānidhi's real nature, Mukunda Datta began to sing in his sweet voice one verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, from the Third Canto, where Uddhava laments Śrī Kṛṣṇa's disappearance.

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitāṁ tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayālum śaraṇam vrajema*

"Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of mother to a she-demon [Pūtanā] although she was unfaithful and she prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?" (*Bhāg.* 3.2.23)

Hearing this, Pundarīka Vidyānidhi began to cry like a madman. Tears of bliss flowed from his eyes. It was as if Gaṅgā-devī had incarnated there. Crying, "Say more, say more," he was unable to maintain his composure and so fell upon the ground. There he began to call in a loud voice, "Where is the Lord of my life? Where is Śrī Kṛṣṇa? Alas! Alas! I have

been cheated!" The ground became wet with the water flowing from his eyes, and all his limbs began to shake. Ten servants were unable to steady him.

Seeing the extraordinary manifestations of love in the person of Pundarīka Vidyānidhi, Gadādhara Paṇḍita was overwhelmed and began to consider himself a great offender. He then said to Mukunda, "Today you have certainly executed your duties as a friend by bringing me to see this great devotee. There is no Vaiṣṇava like him in all the three worlds. Indeed, all the inhabitants of the universe can become purified by seeing his devotional qualities. Since I committed an offense toward him, I should now ask him to initiate me." Mukunda, applauding Gadādhara's sentiments, related all that he had said to Pundarīka Vidyānidhi. Hearing Gadādhara's statements, Pundarīka was very pleased and thus gave him initiation.

Among the theists, the Vaiṣṇavas are the greatest. Beginner theists understand only that, "God is great." But *how* God is great is known to the Vaiṣṇavas, especially the followers of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Among the followers of Lord Viṣṇu, the followers of Lord Kṛṣṇa are best. Among the Kṛṣṇaites, those who accept Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu are best. So devotees like Pundarīka Vidyānidhi are topmost. Therefore, when they hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, they cry tears flowing like the Ganges.

Pundarīka Vidyānidhi's ecstatic bodily symptoms are far beyond my comprehension. He felt separation from Kṛṣṇa out of direct realization of the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa.

Hearing of Pundarīka Vidyānidhi brings me to the feet of the one ecstatic devotee whom I actually know. I don't know Kṛṣṇa. I don't know Pundarīka Vidyānidhi or Raghunātha Gosvāmī. I know His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Again and again I remember that he came to me and to those like me. And today also I worship his form. I am somehow taken in under his *sannyāsa* cloth, gathered in by his mercy.

O Pundarīka Vidyānidhi, on your appearance day, please allow me to honor you by recalling Śrīla Prabhupāda. You must know him also, for he is the savior of this planet by delivering and instating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. He has brought me also the news of your sublime activities, as well as the activities of all the associates of

Lord Caitanya, by giving us his translation and commentary of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. And Prabhupāda has also brought me to understand the exalted position of all the Vaiṣṇavas.

But still, I can barely appreciate Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Due to my previous activities and association, my mind is prone to doubt. Only by Prabhupāda's powerful *śakti* I remain in the process of devotional service, and I am sure that I will eventually be cleansed of all unwanted things.

Pundarīka Vidyānidhi broke into ecstasy on hearing a Third Canto verse as spoken by Uddhava. I know that I cannot reach that, and I cannot imitate it. Śrīla Prabhupāda has often cautioned us never to make false attempts to approach Kṛṣṇa-prema. Therefore, when *prema-bhakti* is genuinely manifest in the heart and body of a true devotee, then we offer him our repeated obeisances. By hearing of his symptoms, we know that the highest love for Kṛṣṇa does exist, as embodied in devotees like Pundarīka Vidyānidhi.

APPEARANCE DAY OF RAGHUNĀTHA DĀSA GOSVĀMĪ

When we disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda first read about Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, we immediately considered it one of the most inspiring and relishable life stories of a Vaiṣṇava. It reminds me of one of my other favorite stories, the life of Nārada Muni, as given in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We were inspired to hear how Raghunātha ran away from his parents. Even in previous centuries, great devotees had the same difficulties that devotees now experience in trying to join Lord Caitanya. Raghunātha was victorious in joining Lord Caitanya, and victorious in the life of renunciation and devotion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often told in detail the story of how Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī gradually cut down his eating. At first he was receiving considerable money from his father, even though he was living as a renunciant. He would use the money to hold a festival and invite Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu for *prasādam*. After awhile, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked His secretary why Raghunātha wasn't holding the festivals anymore. Svarūpa Dāmodara said that Raghunātha thought it

wasn't proper to receive money from his parents while living as a renunciant, and so he stopped accepting it. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu approved and asked how Raghunātha was getting his meals. Svarūpa Dāmodara said, "He stands by the gate at the Jagannātha temple and begs from passersby." Later, when Lord Caitanya didn't see Raghunātha at the gate, He asked how he was doing. Svarūpa Dāmodara said Raghunātha had given up the begging practice, considering it to be like the activities of a prostitute approaching customers. Now he was eating by taking rejected rice from the drain in the kitchen. On hearing this, Lord Caitanya went to Raghunātha and ate some of the rejected rice. Raghunātha Gosvāmī tried to stop the Lord from taking the rice, saying it wasn't fit for Him. But Lord Caitanya insisted and said, "This is nectarean food, why haven't you invited Me to take it with you?" In this way Lord Caitanya showed His great approval of Raghunātha Gosvāmī's renunciation in eating.

Prabhupāda has warned us that if we attempt to imitate Raghunātha's behavior, we will lose whatever standing we have in devotional service. Each of the six Gosvāmīs showed a particular, extraordinary opulence in devotional service. For example, Sanātana Gosvāmī demonstrated Vaiṣṇava humility and Jīva Gosvāmī demonstrated philosophical excellence. Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī showed the example of renunciation.

Lord Caitanya came to teach renunciation: *vairāgya-vidyā nija-bhakti-yoga*. We hope to gradually become true followers of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and not care for the demands of the body.

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs, who were engaged in chanting the holy names of the Lord and bowing down in a scheduled measurement. In this way they utilized their valuable lives and in executing these devotional activities they conquered over eating and sleeping and were always meek and humble, enchanted by remembering the transcendental qualities of the Lord.

—Śrī Śrī Ṣaḍ-gosvāmy-aṣṭaka, Verse 6

Raghunātha Gosvāmī is particularly associated with Rādhā-kuṇḍa, since he spent his last years there and his *bhajana-kutīr* is located there. Devotees sometimes ask if they

should go to reside at Rādhā-kuṇḍa or inquire from devotees living there about the mellows of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's devotional service or the mellows of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't approve of this. We may go and visit when we are staying in Vṇḍāvana, but we will not become real followers of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī by loitering at his *bhajana-kutīr* or trying to become a retired *bābājī*. Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Prabhupāda have condemned such imitative attempts. They want us to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in humility and prosecute preaching duties in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. In this way we can attain the favor of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and the six Gosvāmīs.

RAGHUNANDANA PAṆḌITA

Raghunandana Paṇḍita was a resident of Srikhandā and the son of Śrī Mukunda dāsa. Raghunandana was among the devotees for whom King Pratāparudra provided lodging and to whom he distributed *prasādam* when they traveled from Bengal to Orissa to take part in Lord Jagannātha's Ratha-yātrā with Lord Caitanya. Raghunandana danced with Lord Caitanya and other devotees in front of Lord Jagannātha at the festival.

Once Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke with Raghunandana and his father, Mukunda dāsa, as well as another devotee from Srikhandā named Śrī Narahari. Lord Caitanya asked Mukunda dāsa, "You are the father, and your son is Raghunandana. Is that so? Or is Śrīla Raghunandana your father and you are his son? Please let Me know the facts so My doubts will go away." Mukunda replied, "Raghunandana is my father, and I am his son. This is my decision. All of us have attained devotion to Kṛṣṇa due to Raghunandana. Therefore, in my mind he is my father." "Yes," Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "it is correct. One who awakens devotion to Kṛṣṇa is certainly a spiritual master." The Lord then became very happy and compared Mukunda dāsa's love of Kṛṣṇa to pure gold.

It would be nice if we could all bring our parents to Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this lifetime, but we cannot expect it. We can be a "father," however, for many persons, as we attempt to distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness to whomever we meet, young and old.

One can try to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with one's mother and father, but if they will not hear—and if they detain us and distract us from the path of *bhakti*—then we may have to do as Raghunātha did and flee in the night. This will ultimately be a better service to our parents because a devotee automatically wins liberation for his kin.

Based on our *karma* and Kṛṣṇa's plans for us, different devotees have different relationships with their parents. Some maintain a superficial but dutiful connection and gradually influence their parents to say the holy name, and accept *prasādam*. Some parents actually render direct service under the guidance of their "father" or "mother." Some parents of devotees become softened when they see their grandchildren, born of Vaiṣṇavas. But some parents force the devotee to a severe and permanent separation. This may be for the protection of the devotee, as arranged by Kṛṣṇa. Whatever the arrangement, we should accept it as Kṛṣṇa's grace. Our father may be more like Mukunda dāsa, or more like Hiraṇyakaśipu. In either case, we give thanks to Kṛṣṇa and go on with our service.

Hal Roth's letter is *really* encouraging. He has again accepted some of my poems for *Wind Chimes*. He has also given me the names of haiku persons and places to visit in Tokyo. And his advice:

There are those who take a very narrow view of haiku and quote many rules on the genre. I am not one of them, as you have noticed from the selections of *W.C.* I agree completely with you that one can advocate through poetry. There are those who would say it is fine to advocate through poetry but not through haiku. I believe that is very narrow-minded. I personally do not choose to distinguish between haiku and *senryu* and believe the subjects to be addressed by this genre are limitless. If one cannot express what one is and feels through his poetry, then the poetry, or the definition imposed by some man on the poetry is at fault. I appreciate your confidence in me, but you must not pay too much attention to anything I say or anything anyone else says. I am not an expert. Some will tell you they are—hold them in suspicion. In your art you must first be true to yourself. If, in your poetic art, you choose to use the short form of one, two, or three lines, and if you choose to involve, often, the technique of internal comparison, and if you choose to present your art in a clear, concise manner, devoid of personal prejudice (I mean telling someone specifically

what or how to feel), then you are a writer of haiku. At least this is my opinion. If it is yours, fine; if not, you will find your own.

Although Hal Roth's definition of haiku is very free and open, I still feel constrained by the brevity required. Therefore, I liked this statement by Henderson, which he wrote in reviewing a book:

This is what I had hoped for—not only haiku, but also offshoots of haiku, poems inspired by haiku, the makings of a new, vital, American development.

Rūpānuga's letter is also encouraging, "Preaching means to the *karmīs*, the nondevotees, either by face to face or by writing books as you do. We can never forget how Śrīla Prabhupāda came after us and captured us and he expected us to run after the others also."

Encouragement is such a powerful force. Now I must encourage those who have encouraged me. It can't be bluffed, but even a small, sincere gesture can go a long way, helping others to Kṛṣṇa.

February 15

WORRIES

Today we are supposed to leave for London en route to India. I was worrying that the snowstorm might delay or cancel our flight. Then I thought we might miss several connections, such as picking up books on Lord Buddha in London, or missing our ongoing flight to Bombay. Dattātreya knows of some books that give the oldest accounts of Gautama Buddha's teachings and pastimes. So if this same Gautama is actually the incarnation in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then we could use his words and show that what's in the *śāstra* is true. But to know whether he's actually the same person, we would have to have fully authorized information, and I hope to get that from our Godbrothers. I'm also worried that if we get delayed in the U.S., something might happen to prevent us from going at all—something unforeseen. So I thought of that little prayer: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

I am telling myself to be peaceful and accept whatever Kṛṣṇa brings. The snowstorm is certainly one of those things beyond my control. Remember the attitude of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, “Yes, we will go there tomorrow, *if Kṛṣṇa desires.*”

A Godbrother said I could phone him and he would tell me the latest ISKCON news. I wasn't feeling well enough so I didn't return the phone call, although I wrote him a letter. I started to worry that he might be displeased with me, but I decided it wasn't worth worrying over. What else is there to worry about? I can't even remember all the worries of yesterday, and today there are new ones. I won't let them go uncontrolled. The worries may be as numerous as falling snowflakes, but if I view them rightly, they needn't become worries at all. Seeing through the scriptures: the ultimate method of positive thinking.

Dulles Airport

Sunshine after snowstorm:
Chanting while driving.

Two men and a woman
push a disabled car.

All I report is *japa* done,
nothing else worthwhile.

I liked chanting eight rounds in the car's backseat during the drive. Now, nervous before flight time—a better mood for chanting. Where are we going, and why? To India for health repair.

February 16 (1:00 A.M. New York time, 6:00 A.M. London time)

We are arriving into London on the appearance day of Advaita Ācārya. Everything is tentative. During the night flight the plane shook sometimes from high velocity winds. I also dreamt that a cat was biting me and I pulled out its teeth and its claws. Then I was driving around a city with my mouth open, taking in the sights and sounds and smells. “But you're not recording them,” I said to myself, “and you are not expressing them with Kṛṣṇa conscious vision.

Orange juice with ice cubes,
warm it in the mouth:
recording the public mind.

If I look in that mind
will I find my heart?

When the plane shakes
I think of joining my master,
and my *japa* improves.

Delays at the airport, extra security because of terrorists, standing on queue, overhearing the talk of a lady from Aberdeen, now here in the hotel lobby, soft couches, oboe-and-violin-sweetened rock song, smokers in the lounge—it doesn't affect me: I am spirit soul. Dattātreyā, Ralph, Dāmodara, Baladeva, and I en route to India; one day now in London.

Sheraton Heathrow

Baladeva and Dattātreyā came back to the hotel with half a dozen books from the Pali Text Society. These are supposed to be the most authentic texts of the actual words spoken by Lord Buddha. Baladeva also picked up a little book of "Indian wisdom" that interested him because of its calligraphy, illustrations, and bookbinding. The Indian book has sayings like this one from the *Hitopadeśa* of Narayana: "A thousand reasons for worry, a thousand reasons for anxiety oppress day after day the fool, but not the wise man."

These sayings of condensed wisdom come down from thousands of years and are inspiring and quotable. They made me think, what right do I have as a small person to write at such length and ask others to read it? Am I a "wise man"? Am I a Buddha? No, I'm not wise—I do worry about little things, and I am not an *avatāra* or perfect one. The justification for my writing lies in the fact that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the topmost knowledge. Even Gautama Buddha, throughout his thousands of parables and teachings, is almost completely *silent* on the nature of the spiritual world and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And for all the wisdom of Indian sayings, most of

them fall short of specific glorification of Lord Kṛṣṇa and have very little ultimate value. In His one short treatise—*Bhagavad-gītā*—Lord Kṛṣṇa surpasses the teachings of all the buddhas and wisdoms of India.

I, a tiny worshiper of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, dedicated to the teaching of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, have worthy things to speak of. My self-discipline and devotion to Kṛṣṇa and *guru* are lacking, but nevertheless, I can speak the highest truth and follow the best path by their grace.

We looked at the Buddha's words and then Baladeva and Dattātreyā fell silent, sitting at my feet. I spoke mostly of our schedule, how to adjust U.S. and eastward time so that we will suffer a minimum of jet lag. I asked Baladeva to get us out on time to the airport tomorrow. I did not discourse on Kṛṣṇa very much. Writing also fulfills that duty for me—to speak about Kṛṣṇa, and to be silent in all else.

Pūjā

Lord Jagannātha is happy,
& I'm happy serving Him.

With food, flowers, water,
bowing down, seeing Him,
Lord Jagannātha is happy
& I'm happy serving Him.
This hotel room
is Vaikuṇṭha.

February 18

Today we arrived in Bombay with some jet lag.

It occurred to me that I am going through two significant changes of life.

1. For the first time I am forced to acknowledge that my body is slowing down and decaying. Teeth falling out, eyesight failing, and the whole headache syndrome—these are early signs of old age.

2. For the past year I have been living as an invalid, and

now I am recovering. As I start to come out, this is also a great personal change. I have yet to see how much I will return to the fully active life, taking on social and managerial pressure, etc., as I did before. Will some of the reclusive nature of the invalid stay with me? It appeals to me, and has its positive qualities, but I should not overdo it.

With jet lag, unsocial tendency, "old age," and lingering headache, I avoided most of the morning program.

The Hanumān deity here is very serious, his brows and the brown color of his face look somber. Someone might say, "But his statue should be much bigger. He is supposed to be a giant fighter." We should remember that he can expand his size at will. I noticed Lakṣmaṇa does not extend His hand in the benediction *mudra*; His right hand is at His side. He is the servant, and ready to shoot arrows on Rāma's command. Rādhā-Rāsabihārī take up the most space of the three altars. Their silver dome is tall and the tallest marble dome of the building rises up above Them. They are the center—*arcā-vigraha*.

Early this morning, while it was still dark, I heard a devotee outside sing, "Rādhā-Rāsabihārī," then I heard the Bombay dogs, crows, and hammering, as when Prabhupāda was here.

When my mind is agitated, discontent, *it's because I'm in this material body*. I make cynical remarks about others and events and places and complain and lie down and think of the body and how it's running down and I worry, but it's life itself that makes me discontent.

Devotion to Kṛṣṇa is not so easily attained.

THOUGHTS ON THE APPEARANCE DAY OF MADHVĀCĀRYA

On the occasion of the appearance of Śrīla Madhvācārya, I want to remind myself and encourage myself about preaching by defeating the Māyāvādīs. Madhvācārya is one of the greatest Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* because he systematically and courageously took apart all Māyāvādī arguments. No one could defeat him. Of course, he was an incarnation of Hanumān, an empowered *jīva*. Nevertheless, he studied with different masters, and so he was able to fully understand the Māyāvāda position in order to defeat Śaṅkara.

A Sequence on Jet Lag

Trying to remember
my dream. Was it Kṛṣṇa?
A door slams in the breeze.

Walking, empty;
I remember
who I am.

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Four thousand bananas,
30 pots of milk,
as well as Śaṅkara's *Vedānta*—
all eaten in one sitting
by Madhvācārya.

February 19, Bombay

As my teeth loosen
one by one
I transcend death.

I sat down on the guest *vyāsāsana* to give class at 7:45 this morning—and stopped speaking one and a half hours later! And before that, talking while walking on Juhu Beach. Śrīla Prabhupāda established Juhu Beach as a walking-talking *tīrtha*, and even I spoke philosophy while walking there. While disciples listened, I repeated some of the things I had gathered from Prabhupāda's talks—how he regarded the *karmīs*' working for posterity as ludicrous. They say there is no next life, and yet they say they are working for those who will come after them. If there is no next life, why do they care about it?

Devotees asked some pertinent questions after the class today. One asked if different conflicting instructions are given by one's *guru*, the G.B.C., and by Prabhupāda, which should one follow? I said that there shouldn't be differences among the three of these. *Gurus* in ISKCON are now all direct disciples of

Prabhupāda, so how can there be a difference between those two sources? And the G.B.C. also is in line with these sources. If there is a difference, one should consult one's own *guru* or should consult other senior devotees. I stressed harmony in ISKCON. In past years I might have stressed more the necessity to follow one's own *guru*. As with any *guru*, I want my disciples to be intent and dedicated to my order in a personal way. But that should not be induced by inciting them against their local authorities, or by implying that there is a difference of opinion.

During the *maṅgala-ārati*, the singer (a Prabhupāda disciple) did not sing any *mantras* praising particular ISKCON *gurus*, only Prabhupāda. This didn't unsettle me. I feel content that many of the ceremonies in our liturgy should make reference just to Prabhupāda. But when a disciple of one of Prabhupāda's disciples sings his *guru's* praises, that also seems fitting. It is petty to quarrel over these things. The issues are not petty, but to create serious differences among devotees seems to be a waste of time. It is as if those who indulge in such arguments are not otherwise occupied by deeper thoughts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Having nothing else to do, they quarrel among themselves. This is only a partial explanation, but if we were all intently dedicated to our different services, we could more quickly settle our differences and get back to our real work.

Jonathan Swift has satirized political parties that fight over insignificant issues. Parties were formed based on the size of the heels of their shoes. There was a high-heel party and a low-heel party, and they fought violently over the differences. Another two parties consisted of those holding different opinions as to how many minutes an egg should be boiled. The two-minute party fought a bloody battle against the party that advocated three-minute boiling. Sometimes controversies within religious movements may take that absurd shape.

February 20, Bhaimī Ekādaśī

On our way to the airport, the car stopped and a leper came to beg at the window. Dattātreya said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa." Then there was a silence as we refused to give him anything. The man held up both his hands showing all his finger stubs, and he said, "God bless you. God bless you." I took it that he was cursing us for not giving.

I asked Dattātreya about *hari-nāma* in downtown Bombay last night. He said it was austere but wonderful—a hundred devotees walking through the streets chanting. When I heard it, I felt relieved from the leper's curse. We are working to deliver all people, lepers and other victims, including ourselves. But we have to do it a hundred percent and then we are not guilty.

Poster for a movie: "The Drunken Monk," shows a grotesque cleric. Airport sign, "Trivandrum"—mysterious name to me. In the waiting lounge, a large poster, "Follow the footsteps of Gandhi." We are following the footsteps of Prabhupāda.

My disciple Nārada Ṛṣi dāsa is also accompanying us. He recently suffered from heatstroke and is hoping to recover health and assist his *guru*. So now there are six in our party. It is a *śreyas* (long term) motivation that brings me to Trivandrum. There is no immediate preaching engagement, but if I gain strength, I will be able to strenuously serve in Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission. At the same time, I'm testing my commitment to his mission. I must do my duties, even those that don't please me, such as meetings, managing, fighting demons. Austerity is defined as taking trouble to please Kṛṣṇa, but if it's too displeasing, and if one does his duties without taste for it, that also will lead to dissolution. I'm therefore working out this problem, as well as the lower health problem.

I like to see it as a simple problem and solution: get strength and then you will return to action. Nature cure also provides an intelligent, comprehensive method for balancing work and rest for keeping a high level of health. In nature cure's study of "mind and health," psychological causes of illnesses are given and we are directed to rely on Kṛṣṇa.

At any rate, I'm quite limited. Even when I recover health, I cannot descend like an *avatāra* into ISKCON. I work in ISKCON for my own good and to help those in my areas of service.

TRIVANDRUM

Red bananas, yellow bananas, green bananas, tropical villages cleaner than most, forests of coconut trees, sun-and-shadow patterns on the earth—as we drive to the oceanside hotel.

Two American women in the lobby talk down to the hotel

manager. They want to know the schedule of entertainments and when the phone line will be restored. He says there will be dancers tonight, dancers the next night, then Kathakali dancers.

“What about martial arts?”

“The day after tomorrow,” he says, “but we don’t know for certain.”

“You don’t know? And when will the telephone line be up?” As if the world is meant to serve and entertain rich Americans, as if existence is to stay in a hotel where the honored, monied guest is entertained and served.

Śrīla Prabhupāda presides in our room. If I like, I can take a walk by the ocean or sunbathe. But where is Dr. Sarma?

To the southernmost tip,
Indian crows,
backyard ocean.

Here are small plump bananas,
Lord Buddha’s “impermanency”
and my traveling ache.

Evening

Rain on the resort hotel. Dim lightbulbs make me cease reading. Thunder and lightning, rain to left and right, splashing and running down the roofs. Despite the gathering clouds, the fishermen pushed out into the ocean in their log canoes. They know the art and they have the courage, and the need.

February 21, 5:00 A.M.

Full moon obscured by clouds. Listening to a recording of *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* by Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī. He laments that the pure love of Godhead that Lord Caitanya introduced to this earth has somehow not touched him. We are certainly blessed to be born since Lord Caitanya and not before Him, because before His appearance, such an easy path to the highest goal—love of Kṛṣṇa—was never revealed. Even studying the ancient scriptures and teachers cannot reveal it. Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī strongly asserts that all other paths amount to almost nothing at all compared to the *saṅkīrtana* of the

devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He says that when the devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa in Vaiṣṇava see the ecstasy of Lord Caitanya's followers, their hairs stand on end and they are amazed to see such devotion.

We are not meant for this hotel life. Air-conditioning is forced into the room, and we have to bundle up in all our clothes, including hats. The chairs in the room are lean-back rocking chairs uncondusive to proper posture. Early morning was nicer, but now the crows have awakened, loudly squawking. (In Malayalam language they are called *kāka*.) The odor of a *mlecchā* cooking wafts by our backyard window. We leave here at noon for the hilltop sanatorium. Dr. Sarma is there. We could leave earlier, but there is a local custom that it is inauspicious to attempt an undertaking between 10:00 A.M. and noon.

Passing through Trivandrum city life

Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Marxist—all get plastered with cinema posters, young Indian womanhood for all she's worth in sensual varieties. And outdoor statues of Lord Jesus like the big silver one atop St. Joseph's red brick church, St. Mary's college, Franciscans. . . . A man we spoke to at the hotel said most of the conversions are "buying up the poor." The Secretariat building is big but dilapidated. The best building in town is the world-class Candrasekhara Stadium for useless sports.

I saw "Kṛṣṇa Gopi Hospital," and a form of Kṛṣṇa with flute in threefold bending form advertising a shop which also had a *mūrti* of Kṛṣṇa in the window.

All along the roads into town we saw laborers breaking big granite stones into smaller ones, the women as well as the men swinging sledgehammers. Then with little hand hammers they methodically chip away all day, turning the rocks into granite chips.

Out of town, the hillside is like Gurabo, Puerto Rico: severe winding roads into green hills, and in the distance some mountains.

Arrived at the nature cure sanatorium. Simple, clean life; you wear just a *gamchā*, live mostly outdoors, dwellings are little

cottages, water hauled from a well. Mangoes, coconut trees are everywhere, and the sunshine is filtered by them. Red hibiscus. The only drawback I hear so far is the radio from the valley. I've been here an hour and it's nonstop, cinema-type songs. I suppose you can get used to it, but how can you appreciate the breezes through the palm trees when you always hear false, cheap music?

There is no temple here, but we have brought our own.

The devotees with me say they will also take to the nature cure practices. Let us see.

February 22, Appearance day of Lord Nityānanda

Seven of us, including Dr. Sarma, attended *maṅgala-ārati* at 3:00 A.M. in the cottage where I am staying. Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva, Subhadrā, Pañca-tattva and Lord Nṛsiṁha on the altar. I spoke about Lord Nityānanda and then we all began *japa* for a scheduled three hours.

For me it was like a revival of a lost art—to chant for a full stretch in early A.M. Sometimes I stayed in my room under the florescent bulb chanting along with the Śrīla Prabhupāda *japa* tape and looking at the Deities. Sometimes I walked outside into the darkness where a few devotees stood or walked about. As I adjusted my eyesight, I could see the stars, silhouettes of palm trees and cottages, and an orange moon showing through the clouds. No sounds except crickets. I roamed from one cottage to another, seeing how the devotees were doing with *japa*. A few men sat up under their mosquito netting in bed and tried chanting *japa* there.

Sometimes I think I have no taste at all for chanting the holy names, and I remember that formerly I had more taste. It seems hopeless to revive or uncover the roots of the bad habits of inattentive and sleepy chanting. I think that my invalidism has added a new layer to the unenthusiastic *japa*. I don't cry out. But this morning was better. As supervisor of the others, I stayed with them, gently reminding them with my presence that they should stay awake and chant.

If one goes into a slump, but chants his way through tastelessness, he gains taste again, just as Rūpa Gosvāmī said it would happen in his example of the jaundiced man eating sugar candy. It is the prime benediction for humanity, but unless we taste it as

wonderful, unless we feel strength in it and shelter, unless we cry out to improve our worship of the Supreme by the *saṅkīrtana yuga-dharma*, how can we preach it to others? And what will newcomers think? Bhakta Ralph, for example, was awake and chanting nicely, but an initiated devotee was nodding out.

Thus we pass the best hours of the day. As we start to hear the cocks crow, our devotional service has been tested again, whether we want to be with Kṛṣṇa in His holy name.

Accept the *kāka*
and bilva juice,
if you want to stay.

Into my study room—
old man with a broom.

Malayalam pop songs,
birds and hills
leave me to myself.

Three strokes of the knife,
a bunch of coconuts fall.

If I loved Lord Kṛṣṇa
I wouldn't be disturbed
by the flies.

DIALOGUE

"You talk of being alone with yourself. What's the idea?"

"It sometimes happens when you change your ways, go far away from your usual place—new directions come to you from within. I don't claim the Supersoul is talking with me, but it's heading toward that."

"Sounds mystical. But isn't every place the same? And by now, haven't you proved that you're not going to make any more extraordinary advancement in your life? As for the Supersoul, I thought that was only for the most advanced. So aren't your intimations a bit imaginary?"

"Maybe. Anyway, I already know what I have to do. My

spiritual master has given me many lifetimes of work. But why do you say I've reached my limit? If I can do more, it will be a combination of Kṛṣṇa's grace and some new exertion on my part in response. And even a subtle intimation of progress, such as renewed ability to taste the holy name, is welcome."

"I'd like to see something practical and sustained. Time will tell. Why *talk* of wishes and daydreams?"

"In this age, even a right wish is counted in your favor. There's also prayer."

"Sounds weak to me."

"Even a man of action like Arjuna couldn't *do* until Kṛṣṇa guided him."

"So read your *Bhagavad-gītā*."

"Yes. You too."

Humming birds
in the pineapple tree.
Is the crow jeering at me?

At dawn
he was the first:
Indian whippoorwill.

Before the birds woke,
when we said our *japa*
it was straight through to Kṛṣṇa.

February 23

OLD DIARIES

December 14, 1974

Last night I had a dream I was blooping. The mind is a rascal. By now, 2:30 A.M., I feel very positive about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I have faith and I take that as Kṛṣṇa's mercy on me. The life is sublime. As a sannyasi, everywhere I go I am honored as a genuine representative of His Divine Grace; I'm obliged to reciprocate by being Kṛṣṇa conscious. There's no society as sublime in knowledge—meditating always on the highest truth.

Got a letter yesterday from His Divine Grace. He said going to see professors and getting the standing orders was "the most

important engagement. Do not doubt it." He also said America is a good preaching field. So now I want to be determined to stay with the wonderful devotees in our library party and travel together all over the country to colleges and when colleges run out we will have to think of what to do next. So at a meeting (G.B.C.) in Mayapur, I must not look for any new position but stay with library work at the colleges and traveling, writing, preaching, freedom.

December 27

I have to maintain the library party. But although His Divine Grace emphasizes the "greater preaching" is distribution of books, I don't seem to do it well whenever I try. I can't seem to sell them as a salesman—at least not as well as I can do another service—and that is lecturing. So I would like to push at the colleges with a vigorous preaching program and at the same time maintain the library party, periodically meeting with them. But Hrdayananda dasa Goswami says he has lost faith in lecturing as effective sankirtana.

February 4, 1975

Yesterday I got another important inspiring letter from His Divine Grace. He said service to Kṛṣṇa is not stuck up in one particular service (such as book distribution) but depends on sincere service in any one of the nine ways of service. Out of nine ways, *sravanam kīrtanam* is very important. So lecturing is also *sravanam kīrtanam*. I will try therefore to put together a preaching program, at the same time maintain the library program which is so dear to His Divine Grace.

Also the inspiring instructions he gave is that one has to render sincere service—whatever one can do or offer that is suitable and best. "It is not inglorious" for one to think his own service is best. He also wrote to *Adi-keśava* on the same topic saying all departments of service are absolute but that one must try to do his own service perfectly.

The previous three entries bring up three significant points: 1. freedom in *sannyāsa*; 2. my preference for a particular service; and 3. Śrīla Prabhupāda's approval of doing any service, but especially *śravaṇaṁ kīrtanam*.

1. Freedom in *sannyāsa*

My own spirit for *sannyāsa* is improving. I just have to be careful and not think I am maintaining renunciation by my own strength. Bharata Mahārāja attained considerable advancement, giving up his family life, wife, and kingdom, but then he became insanely attached by affection for a deer.

Don't become a macho *sannyāsī*. Yet there is a positive *esprit de corps* for renunciation when living with other *sannyāsīs* or with *brahmacārīs*, or with householders who are not with their wives.

Here at the sanatorium there is a large open well, and while Bhakta Ralph was pulling up the bucket by a rope, I remarked that household life is compared to a well.

"Is it as deep as this one?" he asked.

"It is more dangerous," I said. "Even if you fell into this well, if you cried out, many people would come and try to save you. But if you fall into householder life and if you have a few children and a job, but then you find it bitter and you cry out, few people will be sympathetic with you."

We don't have to go home to our wives. Our brains are free. We have already come to the last stage of life. A *brahmacārī* is also in this stage, celibacy, free one hundred percent to serve the *guru*.

Our camp in Trivandrum reminds me of the '74 library party which was also a life outside of the association of women—a *sannyāsī* and his *brahmacārī* assistants. Our early morning *japa* on that party was similar to our *yajña* here. Two and a half hours put aside for chanting in predawn, each man chanting in his own way, yet encouraging each other. Dattātreya chants at a distance from the others in a chair facing the bright moon. Bhakta Ralph likes to stay seated in my room facing the Deities. (But this morning he took a couple of minutes outside to show me some constellations, which I had never learned. He pointed with his flashlight and I saw Saturn and below it Mars and then to the right of Mars, Antares, the rival of Mars. And the constellation known as Scorpio.) Dr. Sarma doesn't chant much *japa* yet, so his room was dark and silent. Nārada Ṛṣi follows in my footsteps. Baladeva's *japa* is fast, loud, and clear in enunciation. I also pushed along, fingering the beads and mouthing the *mantras*. I was fully awake, got all

sixteen rounds done in the prescribed time, but my mind was not fixed on the *nāma-rūpa*.

Sannyāsa life is conducive to real freedom, if it is utilized. Otherwise it has no value. "Without purification of heart," writes Prabhupāda, "*sannyāsa* is simply a disturbance to the social order."

2. *My preference for a particular service*

I am trying to build a case for myself as a writer. But within myself I'm also preparing for the G.B.C. meeting—that's why we have come to Kerala. I want to do the needful, but it takes strong surrender and faith to transcend one's likes and dislikes. It is honest to admit one's limitations, but one should do as much as possible in the *guru's* service. That is best and we should want the best.

Prabhupāda discusses this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* purports as *sva-dharma*, one's ultimate duty. In the third chapter, verse thirty-three, Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "Even a man of knowledge acts according to his own nature, for everyone follows the nature he has acquired from the three modes. What can repression accomplish?" Prabhupāda distinguishes duties within the modes of nature and duties which are transcendental to this. The final goal is complete surrender!

... Everyone has to cleanse his heart by a gradual process, not abruptly. However, when one transcends the modes of material nature and is fully satisfied in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he can perform anything and everything under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master.

—Bg. 3.35, purport

3. *Śrīla Prabhupāda approved service in any of the ninefold processes*

Don't think that one service is better than another. The book distributor at the airport may think he has the best service. The traveling devotee may think he is better than a temple devotee. The *brahmacārī* may think he is better than the *grhāṣṭha*, or vice versa. A devotee doing austerities in India may think he is better than the devotees in the West. A devotee serving as a scholar may think his research work is superior to the simple

service of a *pūjārī*. The *pūjārī* may think he is cleaner and more intimately serving Kṛṣṇa than others. But Prabhupāda said that these attitudes are all childish. Service depends not on what department you are in. I remember it was like that in the military service. The airmen would look down on the clerks as sissies, but the clerks looked down on the airmen as fools. In devotional service, the best devotee is one who pleases Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa is pleased by sincere service rendered in any of the nine departments. He was pleased with Śukadeva Gosvāmī for speaking, but equally pleased with Parīkṣit Mahārāja for hearing.

Prabhupāda encouraged a devotee's thinking that one's own service was best, but he should not enthuse himself by putting down the service of others. One should perfect one's own service and always encourage others. Of the nine processes of devotional service, *śravaṇam kīrtanam* is primary and important for everyone.

Sunday

Girls sing Christian hymns,
in converted Kerala;
a woman collects dead twigs,
a car horn honks harshly,
the valley radio spouts nonsense
and we're perched above it,
readying to come down.

February 24

Today is the full moon of the month of Māgha and the appearance day of the great Vaiṣṇava poet, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura.

I think of his songs in two categories. In one type of song, Narottama dāsa enters the spirit of being an assistant *gopī* helping other *gopīs* to offer Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa articles such as musk, and decorating Them with flowers. In the other category of songs, Narottama dāsa laments for his lack of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and describes himself as very fallen and unfortunate. Both kinds of songs are so advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that it is inconceivable to me.

When Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura describes himself as materialistic, without any devotion to Kṛṣṇa, we may interpret this in different ways. From his life history and from his other songs, we can accept Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura as a perfected devotee, and thus we may take his lamentations to be on behalf of the conditioned souls. He is not one of the conditioned souls, but for their benefit he describes their sad lot and points to the way that they may be relieved of their suffering. Another possible interpretation is to consider that a Vaiṣṇava like Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura is actually imperfect and is expressing his struggle through his poems. Another way to take the songs is to withhold judgement on Narottama dāsa's spiritual life and to simply accept each song on its own merit. By this method one might indirectly judge that Narottama dāsa is primarily a poet, and that it is not our business to consider him and his spiritual standing.

Of these possible interpretations, the most suitable one for a devotee is to accept the great Vaiṣṇava as a pure soul and never to take him literally when he states his fallen condition. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that he is lower than the worm. But if we accept this in its literal meaning, and think that he is a very low-class person, then we surely commit Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*. The exalted author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* can never be considered as a faulty, materialistic person. But when Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja or Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura describe themselves as fallen, we may take it that it is actually for the benefit of the conditioned souls.

But this is not a cheap vicarious experience they are describing. Rather, they actually feel like this in their hearts. The history of Jaḍa Bharata also shows that a devotee never considers himself a *paramahansa*, but he accepts reverses in life to be reactions from his past sinful activities. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions this in a purport in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* when explaining Jaḍa Bharata's attitude when he was forced to carry the palanquin of Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa. Vaiṣṇava scholars have analyzed, by studying the statements and life of Jaḍa Bharata, that he was actually a completely liberated soul, and yet he humbly accepted punishments thinking they were minimizations of his *karma*. When suffering at the hands of the dacoits, or when punished by the king, Jaḍa Bharata prayed to Lord

Kṛṣṇa in the mood of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse, *tat te 'nukampām suksamīkṣamāna*. He accepted everything as Kṛṣṇa's mercy, offered Him obeisances, considered the punishment due to his own misdeeds—and with this attitude he qualified for going back to Godhead. The *tat te 'nukampām* verse also explains the mentality of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's singing of his lowly condition.

From "A Short History of the Life of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura":

Toward the end of his life, Narottama dāsa was absorbed day and night in chanting the glories of Lord Caitanya and Prabhu Nityānanda. One day Rāmacandra Kavirāja took Narottama's permission and went to Vṛndāvana where he returned to the spiritual world and entered the eternal pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. When Śrīnivāsa Ācārya heard news of this, he was overwhelmed with feelings of separation, and he also entered the *nitya-līlā*. When Narottama heard of the disappearance of his two dear friends, he merged in an ocean of grief and began to sing in a sad voice: "*je ānilo prema-dhana koruṇā pracur, heno prabhu kothā gelā ācārya-ṭhākur*."

Thus sinking and rising in the ocean of grief, Narottama asked the devotees to take him to Lord Caitanya's temple on the bank of the Ganges in Gambirla. There he asked them all to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and with tears in his eyes, he offered *daṇḍavats* to Gāṅga-devī and sat down in the shallow water at the bank. The *kīrtana* was led by Rāmakṛṣṇa dāsa and Gāṅga-nārāyaṇa dāsa, and it vibrated in all directions. At this time, Narottama asked two men to bathe his arms, and he absorbed himself in the *kīrtana*. Then, just as the two devotees began to bathe his arms, Narottama left his body and joined the eternal pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Loudly landing, disturbing the peace: house crows. Sure-footed on a banana tree branch: jungle crow. Another long-tailed bird screeches right above my chair. Flies and mosquitoes.

A noisy animal lives in between the roof and ceiling of my cottage. Devotees tried to catch it. Baladeva flashed his light: "It looks like something between a cat and a dog." It also looked like a mean hunter, and the devotees went no further. (There's also an animal like that in the roof at Gītā-nāgarī.) Someone joked that it was actually a ghost because of the sound it makes

moving unseen overhead. The caretaker says it is a musang who forages at night for fruit.

Dr. Sarma and I discussed the animal in connection with his theme that I shouldn't worry. I told him I'm not worried about the animal or ghosts. Nor am I worried about the controversies of upcoming G.B.C. meetings. I mostly worry that after I enter the G.B.C. meeting hall, headaches will come and I won't be able to make it through the full sessions. But even that worry shouldn't overwhelm me.

What else? Worried someone will convince me not to write *Journal and Poems*? Worried I'll admit that I have been a much greater rascal and deviant from Kṛṣṇa consciousness than I even imagined? Worried I'll fail tests? Worried reading Buddhism will contaminate me? I'm also worried that I'm a slow, unworried turtle.

February 25

Everyone has their angle, their personal and cosmic suppositions. Montaigne inscribed a medal with his motto: "What do I know?" Descartes began with, "I think, therefore I am." Someone has a button, "Don't trust authority." Krishnamurti said don't accept a *guru*, be your own. (If you accept that, then *he's* your teacher.) Everyone has an "ism," eclecticism, skepticism, whimsy-ism. . . . Emptiness, Christ-ness, Mohammed-ness—everyone is in a state of being, or aspiring for one. I should not allow critics to intimidate me by the sheer fact that I have a particular spiritual master in a particular disciplic succession, and that we favor a particular name of God. They may call us sectarian, but everyone practices their own religion, even if one's god is science or sense pleasure. As Śrīla Prabhupāda said to the Moscow professor, we all have a leader. You surrender to Lenin, and we surrender to Kṛṣṇa. The difference is in the quality of the leader.

The real test comes when we investigate the leaders, their followers, the teachings, and the ways of life. When this scrutiny begins, then I don't feel uneasy. I know Kṛṣṇa consciousness will pass the test of impartial reason. It is superior spiritual knowledge. As Lord Kṛṣṇa describes it:

This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct per-

ception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.

—Bg. 9.2

Early morning rain:
no moon viewing,
just *japa*.

February 27

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

The Foreword

It takes patience, time, and a cool head, but we can follow Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's prose if we are submissive and study in the mood of humble grandchildren-students. A few sentences here and there may defy our understanding for the time being. I mark them with a pen in hopes of one day understanding them when I am more mature.

For the most part all is clear, although it is esoteric in the extreme. It is esoteric in the sense that everything less than pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness is excluded and kept away from *Brahma-samhitā*. And yet all this is being made clear—here is Kṛṣṇa, and here is the supreme abode. He will only be attained by those who desire to serve Him with no reservations, no attachment to *karma* and *jñāna*. The exclusiveness of further entrance into the mystery of *Brahma-samhitā* is made clear without delay. Most are excluded on the basis of retaining attachment for the two pots of poison, *bhukti* (material enjoyment) and *mukti* (desire for salvation). But as disciplic followers of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Prabhupāda, we feel encouraged that *Brahma-samhitā* is certainly meant for our hearing, and we aspire to understand it.

Text 1

As Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura informs us, "This book is a treatise of Kṛṣṇa; so the preamble is enacted by chanting His name in the beginning." In this first text, all the qualifications of Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme, beyond all other gods or conceptions of the absolute, is established. In a very real sense,

*See Appendix 2.

by hearing *Brahma-saṁhitā* from Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, we become purified, receive *darśana* of Govinda, and worship and serve His Divine Grace. This is the purport of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse:

*śṛṇvatām sva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
punya-śravaṇa-kīrtanaḥ
hṛdy antaḥ stho hy abhadraṇi
vidhunoti suhṛt satām*

“Sri Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted” (*Bhāg.* 1.2.17).

This is also the meaning of the verse offered by Rāmānanda Rāya to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu after Lord Caitanya rejected all other suggestions for perfection of religion—attempts through *varṇāśrama* occupation, the taking of *sannyāsa*, meditation on Brahman, etc.

Rāmānanda Rāya continued, “Lord Brahmā said, ‘My dear Lord, those devotees who have thrown away the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth and have therefore abandoned discussing empiric philosophical truths should hear from self-realized devotees about Your holy name, form, pastimes, and qualities. They should completely follow the principles of devotional service and remain free from illicit sex, gambling, intoxication and animal slaughter. Surrendering themselves fully with body, words and mind, they can live in any *āśrama* or social status. Indeed, You are conquered by such persons, although You are always unconquerable.’”

—Cc. *Madhya* 8.67

Text 2

Reading *Brahma-saṁhitā* text two, we get increased appreciation for Vṛndāvana *dhāma*. I look forward to the opportunity of going to Vṛndāvana, being with the devotees at Krishna-Balaram Mandir and sharing with them the descriptions in the purport to this verse: Vṛndāvana is “Gokula of Mathurā province,” nondifferent from Goloka in the spiritual world. But

again, even while explaining it clearly for our benefit, Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura informs us that the mystery is not easily achieved:

... The success in identifying the true self is finally achieved when the screen of gross and subtle coils of conditioned souls is removed by the sweet will of Kṛṣṇa. However, the idea of Goloka is seen to differ from Gokula till the success in unalloyed devotion is achieved.

This is not something to be casually attained, and we may go astray even while visiting Vṛndāvana. If we bring our material desires to Vṛndāvana, or if we associate with the *prākṛta-sahajiyās* who tell us that there is a cheap way to attain the goal, we will be miserable even in Vṛndāvana. As Śrīla Prabhupāda says, you cannot expect to find Kṛṣṇa loitering in Loi Bazaar, or in some bush in Vṛndāvana. Not by attempting *bābājī* in Rādhā-kuṇḍa, not without the express order of the spiritual master. But if we make our Gokula headquarters the prominent temple of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, then we are safe and we can make progress.

Krishna-Balaram Mandir is also Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal abode, his place of *samādhi*, and it is only by close association with him that we get the mercy to understand Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī's writing on *Brahma-saṁhitā*. We may go to Gokula as Śrīla Prabhupāda's servants, meditate on him there, hear and chant without offense, and go out again to our preaching service. Attainment of Goloka is only for the unalloyed servants, yet we may attain it by serving Śrīla Prabhupāda inside and outside of Vṛndāvana or Mathurā.

Text 5

The fifth text gives very confidential knowledge of Gokula that may be summarized by the statement, "There is in this a most hidden principle which only the greatest souls who are possessed of the highest transcendental love, are enabled to realize by the direct grace of Kṛṣṇa."

My impressions:

1. That I am an infant with no possibility of going to Goloka. Only by following my spiritual master, who is very dear to Kṛṣṇa, can I hope to understand it. Śrīla Prabhupāda says

that unless one is a first-class devotee he cannot escape the sufferings of the material world.

2. I am impressed as I read of the failure of ascetic achievements and even devotional achievements for attaining Kṛṣṇa-loka. Ascetics go up and down within higher planets or they may attain to the *brahmajyoti* (described here as *nirvāṇa*) for temporary relief from the ego. Furthermore, those who want devotional service with a salvationist's tinge or with the "ideas of majesty" stop at the Vaikuṇṭha planets and do not enter the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes.

3. Reading *Brahma-saṁhitā*, I think of Lord Buddha's teachings. The fact that he gives none of this confidential information is something to reconsider. His teachings are even less than we imagined, due to the absence of all hints of the many advanced stages of love of Godhead. This lacking is mostly due to the lacking of the people whom Buddha preached to. But again I wonder what is the value in expounding this preliminary *dharma*. I have as my answer the fact that many people remain interested in this preliminary doctrine, as their only connection with spiritual life. Followers of Buddha or Buddhism include many millions on this planet, and they may be inclined, by hearing our descriptions, to move to the more advanced stages. Nevertheless, such descriptions should always be followed up by giving real information which leads to unalloyed devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

4. Any doubts that occur in my mind regarding the truth of *Brahma-saṁhitā* only make me feel shameful, exposing my speculative habits. I see them as the cause of my being left behind in the relative world.

QUINCENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

A few days ago there was a full moon. The next full moon will be Gaura-pūrṇimā, the five hundredth anniversary of Lord Caitanya's appearance. So far, I haven't written much or taken part in many activities specifically aimed at the Quincentennial. Because of ill health, I missed the main event I was hoping to attend, the *pada-yātrā* walking tour through hundreds of miles in India. I remember in January 1985 I was excited with the idea of joining the holy walking tour. I took out some books about travelers, pilgrimages, and imagined myself writing a per-

sonal journal while describing each of the sacred places in India. It would be one devotee's search for the essence of Lord Caitanya, and I would conclude that Lord Caitanya is not only in these ancient places in India, but is everywhere around the world by His *saṅkīrtana* movement. But I couldn't go.

Now I am living on an isolated hilltop in Kerala, South India, at a sanatorium named Manasagiri, and once again I'm not attending the special ISKCON events for observing the Quincennial. These events include a Bombay Ratha-yātrā, a New Delhi Ratha-yātrā with participation by top government officials, celebrations in Calcutta climaxing in a street parade with devotees carrying national flags, a meeting-up of the *pada-yātrā* team with all the festival-going devotees, and the three-week festival activities at Māyāpur. There in the holy *dhāma* there will be nine days of *parikrama* to the nearby holy places, as well as regular lectures, seminars, and association with over a thousand devotees and with a growing sense of auspicious climax as the days count down towards Gaura-pūrṇimā.

Our schedule is to bring us there only two days before the actual Gaura-pūrṇimā. Again, my reason for missing these events is weakened health. I'm gathering my strength here at Manasagiri so that I can attend the events of most importance—the actual Gaura-pūrṇimā day festival and the G.B.C. meetings which immediately follow.

February 28

KĀKA

Bhakta Ralph got a book in downtown Trivandrum, *Birds of Kerala*. The crows are worse than I had expected. There are two varieties, the Ceylon house crow and the Indian jungle crow. Both have allied races all over India. The house crow is slightly smaller, about seventeen inches long, all black, but with a dusky gray neck: "An inveterate pilferer of anything that can be eaten, and audacious in its methods of acquiring it. . . it is a ruthless persecutor of defenseless birds."

The jungle crow is larger, with a heavy bill and a guttural voice, and uniformly jet-black. Like the house crow, it lives on garbage, ". . . but is also destructive to fruit in gardens and occasionally takes to lifting the young of poultry . . . a regular robber of the eggs and young of defenseless wild birds."

From these descriptions, the crows appear to be like *rākṣasas* or demons among the birds. In the sixteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa describes the *asuras* or demons among humankind: "Pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance—these qualities belong to those of demoniac nature." Some of these same traits appear in the impious species of birds and animals, but whereas the crow can kill some chicks and steal some eggs, they possess no nuclear weapons to wipe out entire bird nations. The crowlike man-demon is far more dangerous: "... lost to themselves and who have no intelligence, [they] engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world."

These crows are like symbols of impiety. Each dawn they disturb the peace and remind us that impiety is imminent and will be active all day. As the writer of the bird book observes of the jungle crow, "Omnivorous. Largely commensal on man and often an unmitigated nuisance."

There are many
songbirds in this jungle
but the crows chase them away.

The fairy bluebird,
the black-naped oriole
play in the groves
until the crows swoop through—
"All is mine! Get out!"

Journal Review

End-of-the-month,
I gather a harvest,
one hundred and eight pages.

Each day is infinite,
more than I can tell,
all leading us
back to Godhead.

The sunrise, for example:
look at its steady light

till it turns green in your sight,
be reverent, be joyous
before the king of the planets,
and think of its source, Govinda,
as the eye of this world.

And śāstric reflections,
without which all is prattle
(not just my words, but Shakespeare's too).
Give us *śāstra* on every page.

A journal for devotees
and for those who've grown tired
of the soul-killing, dry-as-dust
fare of the world.

Health talks,
old diaries,
always-new adventures,
bowing down to Prabhupāda,
dreams, confessions,
attacks, retreats,
records of birds' songs
and meetings of the G.B.C.

A private history
of a small section,
in the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya
wherein the world transforms
from winter to spring
by the blessings of Gaurāṅga,
and by the hard work of His servants.



MARCH

March 1, Appearance day of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

READING BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ

Texts 6-28

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī continues to describe the spiritual world as in no way connected to the material world (although this material world is governed by Kṛṣṇa through His energies). I think of the poets and others who pay attention only to this mundane world which they worship as the all-in-all, the here-and-now. They consider the spiritual world a myth. By their very act of stubbornly fixing attention on the material world and not heeding the higher truths as spoken by a bona fide spiritual master, they extinguish hopes that they can ever comprehend Goloka. Nor can Goloka be understood in a part-time, eclectic way, by those whose actual seat of affection is this material world. Goloka is only real to those who are a hundred percent devoted to Govinda and His loving service. Only those devotees who take full shelter of the orders of the spiritual master can become fully absorbed in hearing and chanting about Goloka, Govinda, and His associates.

Lord Kṛṣṇa sports in Goloka in conjugal *rasa*. He is located far away from the act of creation of the material world. That act is carried out by Śambu (Lord Śiva) in connection with Māyā-devī. In his purport to text nine, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī says that this sounds like ordinary or extraordinary sex union, but these are merely the scientific terms. The apparently sexual words cannot be dispensed with, but we should know they refer to the potencies of Godhead, not anything like mundane sex life. Lord Śiva is manifest from Lord Viṣṇu, by His glance as Nārāyaṇa. Śambu is the male generating organ and is joined to the female, Māyā, for creation.

Sometimes it is hard for me to understand exactly what Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī means by “mundane egoistic principle,” or the exact functions of each of the Viṣṇus as he describes them. But I take it that this is the same information as has often been repeated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I can see how Śrīla Prabhupāda has expressed exactly what his Gurudeva has taught him,

but in language slightly different, usually simpler. Somehow Śrīla Prabhupāda's words have directly unlocked our ignorance (*om ajñāna-timarāndhasya*) and so we can understand the spiritual nature of the *jīvas*, even while we are still partially covered. This ability to make it clear to the conditioned soul that he is by nature eternally free and one in quality with Kṛṣṇa, even while the soul is under illusion, is the great gift of an empowered teacher. The knowledge is contained in the *śāstras*, but it takes the *ācārya* to deliver the *śāstra*. Otherwise, for most *jīvas*, the *śāstra* remains unknown or a puzzling text. The *ācārya* unlocks the mystery, and the soul is delivered by the sound from his spiritual master's lips.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's words are not necessarily "simpler," but they are the sound vibration of our spiritual master, and *therefore* we as his spiritual children are directly instructed by them. Just as the mother possesses a "magic" by which only she can comfort her infant, so the spiritual father has the special divine right and potency to release his spiritual children from suffering and ignorance.

In the purport to text twenty-four, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī describes the superexcellence of the *kāma-bīja mantra*. Aside from the Sanskrit *mantra*, his own words in English also work into our hearts like wish-fulfilling *mantras*: "When the devotee is free from all sorts of mundane desires and willing to serve the Lord he attains the fruition of his heart's desire, viz., the love of Kṛṣṇa." Furthermore, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī says that even one in the mixed condition can know "a stage of unmixed predilection even in devotion for the attainment of one's selfish desire." In other words, by gradual practice of *sādhana-bhakti*, even the mixed devotee can attain to the stage of pure appreciation of the essence of the *kāma-gāyatrī mantra*.

He describes how Lord Brahmā chants the *kāma-gāyatrī mantra* and meditates on Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. Those with mixed desires worship Durgā for their material ambitions, but they should know that Durgā worships Kṛṣṇa. In this way Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī glorifies the *Gāyatrī mantra* and distinguishes *kāma-gāyatrī* from all other *Gāyatrīs*. One who has received this *mantra* by second initiation is the most fortunate *jīva* because the proper recitation of this *mantra* promotes spiritual love and entrance into the spiritual world. "In the spiritual

world there is no better mode of endeavor for securing the superexcellent *rasa*-bedewed love.” Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura states that such initiation is not gained by lineage (by birth), but by the second initiation in spiritual discipline.

How far this is above the casual considerations we sometimes make when recommending a devotee for second initiation in ISKCON, or in our own negligence of reciting Gāyatrī! Of course, we may attain to our second initiation by the process of chanting sixteen rounds, avoiding the four sinful activities, and rendering full-time service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—nothing else is required. But when we are inspired by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s words as to the actual nature and purpose of the *kāma-gāyatrī*, we gain determination to never again neglect recitation of this *mantra* or to recommend or accept disciples cheaply into second initiation—“because the initiation or acquisition of transcendental birth as a result of spiritual initiation is the highest of glories in as much as the *jīva* is thereby enabled to attain to the transcendental realm.”

This morning we went to the other side of the hilltop for sunrise gazing. There you can see the range of Ghat Mountains, peaks tall and sharp against the sky. Partly cloudy, but the sun was blazing through, “the image of the good soul, mounting the wheel of time.” *Bhajana* music was playing on a radio below. Devotees joined me, chanting *japa* squatting on a dirt bank, gazing together at the sun. Dr. Sarma says morning sun charges the retina. When we close our eyes we see another sun, surrounded by green and red. *Brahma-saṁhitā* says the sun is “the eye of the world.”

It’s a little jungle village here, just the seven of us in a few cottages, plus the resident doctor, his family, his dogs, and a few workers. Ten acres of carefully tended trees, banana, coconut, jackfruit, mango, and others. Surrounding the property is rural Kerala, jungles, a narrow road, simple houses. Ideal, except for the radios, mosquitoes, and flies.

OLD DIARIES

May 21, 1975

My present program is to try to do everything: editor of BTG, supervisor of BBT library party, G.B.C. for six temples, trying to finish

Vedic reader, and last but not least, college lecturing. So far so good. And at any moment I may have to leave my body, although my Kṛṣṇa consciousness is immature. I pray not to be puffed-up, top-heavy with the externals of too many projects and forget the goal is Kṛṣṇa. Read his books, memorize verses. Talk with devotees. Temple classes and aratis. Controlling the senses, anger, mind, word, genitals. Envious I am, but fighting it. Traveling in a car, by plane. Not thinking of my spiritual master at every moment, therefore lost. Not chanting my rounds with full attention and submission. Not writing any essays anymore. In August I am scheduled to go and be secretary for His Divine Grace. Whatever Kṛṣṇa desires He will do, and I will follow, either as a devotee or a demon. I am praying and endeavoring to be a devotee, not a demon.

B. asks me what is the definition of too much service?

If you are too busy to chant your sixteen rounds. You cannot find time for a minute alone. You neglect health seriously. You become quickly angry or upset. You don't follow any schedule. Overendeavor. Prabhupāda once told a temple president to be careful when you buy a building that you don't purchase anxiety. But we have to do as much as we can. Each person has to do what he (or she) can.

June 26, 1975, Denver

I was associating five days with Srila Prabhupada in L.A. and tomorrow he is due here for a week. I'm not taking advantage of his presence. We devotees see him mostly on his morning walk and while chanting and dancing in the temple kirtana and then hearing his lecture. In L.A. I was always in non-ecstatic bodily condition, worrying about my body's fatigue and so not dancing with great enthusiasm, and for the lecture, often drowsing asleep! Now as I read about the ecstatic pastimes of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityananda and Advaita Acarya in the Madhya-lila, Chapter Three of Caitanya-caritamṛta, I am enlivened and vainly wish I could feel transcendental pleasure in singing and dancing the holy name. Chanting and reading and writing and taking a little prasada.

It seems I will always regret not being attentive to Prabhupāda, both in those days and now. I listen to his lecture and suddenly realize that I just lost reception. I tune in again,

thankful that he is still there. At the time of death, I pray I don't lapse.

I need a better next birth, next body, to serve him. There are so many indications in *sāstra* that perfection is not easily attained in one lifetime. This is the only human lifetime I can recall, but it seems it is the first time I am receiving full Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the pure devotee. Prabhupāda wrote in one letter that some of us must have been Indians in our last lives and we are now coming to rejoin Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement in the West. So it seems you need a number of lifetimes. Then after you are a pure devotee, if you come back, it is like the Bodhisattva conception. But only the Kṛṣṇa conscious "Bodhisattva" has real spiritual engagement to offer people.

Yet, Prabhupāda has said that by the grace of Lord Caitanya we may be able to go back to Godhead in this lifetime. The future prospect is beyond me. I am trying to serve in these days. For example, my present situation is to concentrate on rejuvenation of waning temporary powers at mid-age and become stronger for thirty more years or so. How can I think beyond that? I cannot think, "Which shall I do—go to Kṛṣṇaloka or come back again to this world for Lord Caitanya? Or will I fail below that?" I can only live as Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said, "In times that are with thee/ and progress thee shall call."

As for old diaries, I'm hoping they will help, looking back at service and previous action and providing stories and themes in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The 1975 visit by Prabhupāda to Los Angeles was when he ordered the devotees to produce seventeen books in two months. He also said that he would stay in Los Angeles for two months if necessary to personally guide the Sanskritists in preparing the texts. When he said that, the Los Angeles devotees were blissful and one of them teased me that now Prabhupāda would not go to Denver as planned. At this time I was the G.B.C. for Denver, and Los Angeles's gain would be Denver's loss. But as it turned out, after a few days in L.A., Prabhupāda said that he would continue his regular schedule.

I had joined Prabhupāda in L.A. with the library party. We had several vans and our plan was to stay with him in L.A., then travel to Denver, and then to Chicago, working the libraries

along the way. We would take the advantage of Prabhupāda's association and also give him regular reports of our success in distributing his books to the libraries. Prabhupāda was very keen to hear how the "learned circles" were receiving his books, and he became especially receptive when we began to produce, at his request, letters from professors praising and recommending his books.

Our library party arrived in Denver ahead of Prabhupāda. The devotees were excited; they were very new in comparison to the devotees in Los Angeles, who were used to receiving Prabhupāda, and where Prabhupāda had his own suite of rooms. In Denver, they had a separate house for him, and it seemed adequate. It was just half a block to the temple. When Prabhupāda actually arrived, the devotees were awkward, though full of awe in his presence. He was like a kind king. He received their offerings calmly and expressed appreciation for the Deity, for the clean temple, and he even said at the end of his lecture something like, "Now follow Satsvarūpa Mahārāja." Prabhupāda often did this when he would go to a temple; he would refer personally to the G.B.C. man by name and indicate that they should follow Bhagavān or Hṛdayānanda or Karandhara or whoever was the G.B.C.

During this time, Yadubara and his wife were making a film biography of Prabhupāda. They began in Los Angeles, but in Denver it was abruptly stopped. Apparently Prabhupāda mentioned something like, "Are they going to take more films again? Why so many films?" Based on this hint, his secretary at that time, Brahmānanda, stopped the filming. Now, of course, we regret it very much. Prabhupāda's saying that all the films were just the same thing was no doubt his humility. For us, any activity by the spiritual master is not repetitive or monotonous. If at that time we could have understood that Prabhupāda would only be with us on the planet for two more years, we would have begged him for more film footage.

Prabhupāda's Denver visit was not characterized by much outside preaching—that would come later in Chicago. In Denver, Prabhupāda was surrounded by his disciples, including quite a few traveling *sannyāsīs* who had gathered to be with him. The morning walks were dynamic exchanges with Prabhupāda and Bhavānanda Goswami, Harikeśa Mahārāja, Brahmānanda

Swami, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, and other *sannyāsīs*, most of them leaders of different traveling parties. Prabhupāda was mostly seeing these disciples and doing his own writing. On one morning walk, he began to tell us what he had dictated that morning. He said he had just spoken on an interesting example given by one of the previous *ācāryas*. The example compared the transmigrating soul to a prostitute who changes dresses in order to lure different customers. This example occurs in a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport (6.5.10). Also while in Denver Prabhupāda held philosophical debates with his *sannyāsī* disciples. He invited us to take the parts of Māyāvādīs and skeptics while he defeated us. Some of us were able to stay in the basement of the same house where he was staying so at a minute's call we could be gathered—"Prabhupāda wants to see the *sannyāsīs*!" We would run to be with him in his room to share sessions that were always full of laughter and good spirits, as well as strong philosophy.

As was usual for Prabhupāda in those later years during U.S. tours, he did not get much involved in the local management. Although I was the G.B.C. of the temple he was visiting, he mostly kept aloof from intensive management inquiries or suggestions. He mostly approved what he saw and hoped that we would spend our money properly. He made certain suggestions, but mostly he inspired us with his pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness to carry on and do as he did.

OLD DIARIES

July 3, 1975, Chicago

Came here mainly to meet with the library party. I have my own personal party for traveling, earning laksmi, and personal assistants (three men). In addition I want to start a regular writing program.

One conflict is I yearn to simply follow the library party and preach at the colleges, simple sannyasa life. But as I have volunteered to do G.B.C. management, so I cannot neglect regular visits to the temples; my program is the temples, the library party, my writing and studying. Sometimes it seems too varied and not centered enough. I'll never be satisfied—until I'm Kṛṣṇa conscious. I'll never know the bliss of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness until I become myself Kṛṣṇa conscious. Of course my own tendency is to write (when?)

and lecture, but that doesn't satisfy me unless I can help more to guide our ISKCON. I simply have to surrender and be thankful and relish that I have many different things to do for my spiritual master.

During Prabhupāda's Chicago visit, there was a competitive spirit as the *sannyāsīs* vied for Prabhupāda's attention with their different preaching programs. Most dominant was the Rādhā-Dāmodara party of Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami and Viṣṇu-jana Swami. They had almost a hundred devotees ready for initiation, and they also had a private *darśana* with Prabhupāda in his apartment near the Chicago temple. Our BBT library party was also prominent, although a smaller group of men. We were recognized as doing important work. At the request of the men in the party, I asked Prabhupāda's secretary if we could also visit with Prabhupāda in his apartment. We got permission and went over as a group.

Some of the devotees I remember who were in the party at that time were Ghanaśyāma dāsa, Mahābuddhi dāsa, Gokulānanda dāsa, Suhotra dāsa, Śrī Galima dāsa, Mahādyuti dāsa, Śeṣa dāsa, Kālakaṇṭha dāsa, Cāru dāsa, and Amogha-līlā dāsa. We sat before Prabhupāda and I introduced each devotee by name. When I said the name of Gokulānanda, a devotee from Canada, Prabhupāda's face lit up in a big smile and he said, "Oh, Gokulānanda!" Prabhupāda's exclamation was for the holy name itself, Gokulānanda, meaning the bliss of Gokula. We all became very blissful seeing that Prabhupāda had responded just on hearing the transcendental sound vibration of Gokulānanda. Although the name was used to introduce a disciple, Gokulānanda dāsa, it had prompted Prabhupāda into ecstatic thinking of the spiritual world.

During this meeting, different devotees spoke up spontaneously to share with Prabhupāda our enthusiasm about the program. It became a very surcharged atmosphere as Ghanaśyāma related some of the methods he used to sell books, and how he ultimately depended on Kṛṣṇa. Each devotee spoke in a way to show Prabhupāda that the professors were very impressed by his books, and also that we were trying our best to distribute them. Prabhupāda gave us full blessings by different words of encouragement, by nods and glances, so by the time

the devotees left the room, they were overflowing with happiness, and certainly they had gained great determination. Over the years, we all remembered that visit as positive proof that Prabhupāda was proud of our party and very much wanted the work carried on.

As Prabhupāda traveled to different U.S. cities, our library party would catch up with him. On different occasions, such as morning walks, Prabhupāda would give different tips as to how to distribute the books. When Mahābuddhi confessed that he himself was not a good scholar of Prabhupāda's books, Prabhupāda said that therefore he should just depend on Kṛṣṇa and pray to Him and Kṛṣṇa would personally help him to sell the books. Prabhupāda also reminisced how he himself began such library work by selling copies of his books in New Delhi. He was so successful with the U.S. Embassy that they took seventeen copies of every book that he published for different outlets in the U.S., including the Library of Congress. Prabhupāda had first-hand knowledge of our library work, and this also was a great inspiration for the men, to know that this work had been personally undertaken by Prabhupāda. He also encouraged us to eat simply while traveling, and he encouraged us in the *brahmacārī* spirit. He did not want us to get distracted; he always had something encouraging to say as we met up with him in different places.

Sometimes when we became disappointed or even a little polluted by our association with the professors, Prabhupāda would boost us up. He always had strong arguments against their skepticism. When I told Prabhupāda that professors did not accept our movement as the absolute truth, but rather considered that we were simply one of the many, many sects in India, Prabhupāda had a good reply. He said, "Yes, we are a sect, but this is the sect of the Absolute Truth." This answer, simple as it may seem, is actually a brilliant reply. The Vaiṣṇava cult is, on an external level, one of many sects, but it is the foremost sect—the sect of *bhaktivedānta*, the Absolute Truth. On other occasions he gave us proper answers so that we would not be confused by exposure to atheism and academic speculation, which was always present in the professors. I asked Prabhupāda whether our philosophy should be considered a combination of logic and *śāstra*. I said I had replied in that way in an exchange

I had had with a professor. Prabhupāda said our philosophy was actually one hundred percent *śāstra* and not dependent on logic. Logic could only be used to point us to the Absolute Truth, just as a branch may be used by a viewer to see the moon. But the actual truth was fully contained in the *śāstra*, not that it was supported by logic—but logic could help us to see it. Prabhupāda also answered challenges by professors who put forward other schools of Indian thought like the worship of Śiva, and of course the Māyāvādī doctrines.

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

Texts 29–33

In *gurukula*, the young boys chant the “*Govindam*” hymns daily, as Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggests. Over the years, as they grow up, having memorized the verses of *Brahma-samhitā*, with bodies and minds trained in celibacy and in the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gītā*, after many semesters of Vṛndāvana austerity in winter, as a result of the purification of daily swimming in the Yamunā, gradually they qualify in mature manhood. And what of we who have arrived at Śrīla Prabhupāda’s doorstep as exhausted profligates, skeptics in our mid-twenties? We also, by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, can come to that purity. But like the boys, we must submissively, repeatedly rise early, beat the mind with a shoe, prostrate ourselves before the temple Deities, etc. *Brahma-samhitā* realization doesn’t come cheaply.

And yet Prabhupāda has given us “*Govindam*,” a popular song, a melodious concert played each morning as we stand in *darśana* before our temple Deities. “*Aṅgāni yasya sakalendriya-vṛtti-manti*.”

Kṛṣṇa manifests both material and spiritual worlds, but in the material world only a perverted reflection of the spiritual world is seen. The full spiritual splendor of His amorous pastimes can be appreciated only by “a person, possessed of pure spiritual knowledge and freedom from any relationship with Māyā.” Kṛṣṇa manifests in a devotee only when the spiritual force of ecstatic energy appears in him, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī describes our situation and how our limitations prevent us from comprehending Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. He also scientifically describes Kṛṣṇa in His apparently contra-

dictory nature—the oldest, but a fresh, blooming youth; the source of myriads of universes and *avatāras*, but remaining intact as undivided whole of perfection; appearing in pastimes of birth, but without a beginning—yet within Kṛṣṇa all this apparent contradiction exists as “universal harmonious concordance by dint of His unthinkable potency.”

“How can the *jīva* realize such unprecedented existence?” Only by devotional service. Within a devotee’s loving service mood, knowledge of Kṛṣṇa manifests, not as a separate assertion, but as a by-product of *bhakti*.

March 2

A crow flies past,
full wingspread—
half moon in blue sky.

While a bell rings
in the valley
villagers are walking to church.

Painted on a rock outcrop,
hammer and sickle:
Keralan hillside.

Liberating the hillside,
hibiscus
for Lord Jagannātha.

I just read an exchange of opinions by ISKCON leaders on topics to be discussed at our G.B.C. meeting. The issues are important. I can’t claim to be an amused observer, aloof from the issues because of a higher vision. The truth is I’m a small member of the G.B.C. I have to pay attention and work hard just to stay aware of the issues and hear what is being discussed. I can’t ask to be free of the wrangling on grounds that it is not spiritual. I cannot claim to have solved the problems. I can’t abstain.

Therefore, with three and a half weeks to go, I continue with recuperation, raw diet, sun and air, spinal baths, etc., so

that I can plunge into the arena and last. It is my responsibility to take part in brain-taxing discrimination, long hours hearing fine points, not jumping to hasty conclusions.

I read a *Frog Pond* essay, "Haiku and the Mushroom Cloud." Conclusion: "Writing haiku about the mushroom cloud, then, while certainly not easy, is clearly appropriate, possible and necessary." The author gives different examples, poems written by Japanese recalling the horror, those in the here-and-now of the American scene directly mentioning MX missiles, B-52 bombers, neutron bombs, and those expressing feelings of aloneness and ominous foreboding which may not be directly about fear of nuclear war, but that captures that "momentary clutch of fear" associated with feelings of nuclear threat.

The theme: There is no area forbidden to haiku. As one writer notes, "*We* weren't ready for them. Now we are, and we should recognize that they are not only possible in haiku but absolutely necessary."

Then, where are the directly God conscious, devotional haikus? One cannot say that they are omitted in a neutral, natural way. To omit the Absolute Truth is itself a metaphysical statement. To light incense and not offer it to God. To write of erotic moments in defiance of scriptural codes. To write hundreds of nature poems assuming that the perception of birds, beasts, sky elements, etc., is sufficient spiritual nourishment—and that God is just another "thing." These are all atheistic proclamations.

Write of the bomb? Write of a sexual affair? "We must," they say, "because this is our life, this is reality."

I am no buddha
no Jayadeva,
but someone has to say it:

Which haiku
will save us
at death?

Basho's death poem
is a wishful hope,
wandering across the moor.

Issa gave a humble *farewell*—
“I was a fool,
so are we all!”

Which haiku will save us?
The frog jumps in?
The wings of the dragonfly?

Talented poets,
please make a poem-prayer.
But first you have to learn it.

Delicate senses
in a floating world,
is not enough.

Don't you know
we all have to come back
to another body?

Now who will come forward
and say it
with beauty?

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

Texts 34-50

Yogīs and *jñānīs* reach only a “simple absence of misery.” This may be called a happiness, but it is too small and uninteresting to destroy material life completely. We need the eternal existence in our self-realized state: full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Brahma-samhitā distinguishes Kṛṣṇa in His original form from His works of creation, the existence of all the universes within Him, and His expansion in every atom. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says this explanation knocks down the Māyāvāda “and other allied doctrines.”

It was Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī who said, “Don't try to

see Kṛṣṇa, but act in a way that He may see you.” Yet in his purport to text thirty-eight (*premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena*), Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī elaborates on the qualifications of a pure devotee and on how he may one day see Kṛṣṇa face to face. He informs us that there is a stage where one can see Kṛṣṇa in trance, in one’s “pure unalloyed spiritual self.” That is, when a devotee reaches the stage of *bhāva*. Then his eye (the eye of pure self) becomes tinged with the salve of love, by the grace of Kṛṣṇa, and he can see the Lord personally before him.

Scriptures enjoin us never to see the Deity as stone; that is hellish. So we are all face to face with Kṛṣṇa whenever we take *darśana* of His *arcā-vigraha*. But to actually see that the Deity is Kṛṣṇa Himself, is a realization that occurs as our hearts are purified by the practice of devotional service. In the purport to *premāñjana-cchurita*, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura simultaneously encourages us that we may one day see Kṛṣṇa face to face, and yet he makes it clear that this stage may only come when we are true devotees.

Although *Brahma-saṁhitā* is an esoteric Vaiṣṇava text, nevertheless it is also a vitally useful text for the Vaiṣṇava preachers. *Brahma-saṁhitā* conclusively proves the supremacy of Kṛṣṇa in scientific detail, leaving no doubt in the argument. An example of Śrīla Prabhupāda preaching on the basis of *Brahma-saṁhitā* occurred in a conversation he had with an Indology professor during Prabhupāda’s visit to Geneva in June 1974.

The professor spoke of the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* and of Rāmānujācārya, claiming that according to these sources, Viṣṇu was supreme, and Kṛṣṇa was subordinate, an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu. In response, Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted *Brahma-saṁhitā*, text forty-eight, which begins, *yasyaika-niśvasita-kālam athāvalambya*. Taking each Sanskrit word and phrase of the text, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained how Lord Brahmā (*jagat-aṇḍa-nāthāḥ*) appears from the navel lotus of Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, who Himself is an expansion of Mahā-Viṣṇu (*viṣṇuḥ mahān*)—and that Mahā-Viṣṇu is a plenary portion of a portion of Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda then explained that from the Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu a further Viṣṇu expansion is Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, the Supersoul. Whenever an incarnation comes, its source is Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. “In that way,” said Prabhupāda, “Kṛṣṇa comes through

Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. But this Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu is an expansion of the expansion of Kṛṣṇa.”

When the professor raised a doubt whether this Kṛṣṇa was different from the Kṛṣṇa of the Yadu dynasty, Prabhupāda again quoted *Brahma-saṁhitā*: “*advaitam acyutam anādim ananta-rūpam*. ‘Kṛṣṇa is one. Infallible.’ ” Analyzing and relishing the superexcellence of the *advaitam acyutam* verse of *Brahma-saṁhitā*, Prabhupāda established Kṛṣṇa’s glories, and the professor consented on every point. In the same talk, Śrīla Prabhupāda also quoted from the *Brahma-saṁhitā* that Kṛṣṇa is the original candle, and although other candles have the same light power, they are manifestations of the original Kṛṣṇa (text forty-six). “They are not derived from any other power,” said Prabhupāda. “*Govindam ādi-puruṣam*—this is always explained, referred to Govinda. *Govindam ādi-puruṣam*.”

The *Brahma-saṁhitā* is the source of many other verses that Śrīla Prabhupāda used in essential preaching. For example, text thirty-nine establishes that Kṛṣṇa is the source of all the *avatāras*, including Lord Rāma. In text forty, it is established that the *brahmajyoti* is the bodily effulgence of Govinda. Text forty-five confirms that Śiva is a transformation from Kṛṣṇa, just as curds are a transformation from milk. In text forty-nine, Lord Brahmā’s condition is explained. Therefore, we should understand *Brahma-saṁhitā* both as an advanced, esoteric document, as well as a ready manual for daily preaching encounters.

Pictures at Manasagiri

Nārada Ṛṣi dāsa is on coconut juice only; Baladeva is on air only; the rest of us on raw food only. Nārada complains of his neck. The doctor says, “He just wants some attention.” In a white *gamchā*: “Don’t take my picture, they’ll think we are *bābājīs*.” Stiff-bending at exercise time: my pudgy, sunburnt disciples.

Ralph’s assignment is to prepare the clay packs and baths, clean the rooms, arrange flowers on the altar, and note down the names of birds and beasts. He said he joined Kṛṣṇa consciousness for better friendships. “And I was suffering in material life.” He grew up in Brooklyn, but after his college training and work as a speech therapist, he has no more Brooklyn accent.

Dr. Sarma asks me to eat with the group. I prefer to eat alone, and quote Cāṇakya to back me up.

Five of us in a row, submerged in our spinal tubs. With breezes through palm trees, we hear Prabhupāda on tape.

March 5

Whining dog. It's the owner's plan—if he keeps him in a little cage, then the dog will be awake at night to bark at intruders. But the dog cries piteously to be let out. The resident-doctor also picks his bananas while they are green and ripens them in his room, in fear that robbers may pick them yellow from the branches.

The dog's misery is also our distraction. We add it up along with the radio noise and fierce mosquitoes and consider moving to another place, by the oceanside. Baladeva and Dr. S. went there yesterday and liked it. But it has its own obstacles. Besides, we are already used to things here.

Whining mosquito at my ear.
The same question—
should I kill him?

March 6

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

“I offer my obeisances to my spiritual master who is always in blissful Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Let me meditate on him being enthused, just as he enthuses us” (Gāyatrī mantra #3).

1. He receives a newly published book of his own translation and purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. “When I publish a book,” he says, “I feel like I have conquered an empire.”

We share the pleasure
as he turns the pages
of his new book.

2. Prabhupāda liked nicely prepared, pure vegetarian *prasādam*. Even when advised for health to eat raw or steamed food only, he refused to give up rice, *dāl*, and *capātīs*. “To hell with the starvation committee!” he said.

Honoring *prasādam*:
alone with Kṛṣṇa,
he relishes the tastes.

3. He was enthusiastic to travel, even though it caused him much personal inconvenience as an eighty-year-old person. He said it gave him life and gave his disciples life to see him.

Talking with the captain
in the cockpit
to Moscow.

4. "Hearing the book scores gives me new life," he says. "Double it."

At the airport
he fondly watches
his daughters selling books.

5. Hearing from his preachers in the field inspired him. He read news clippings to a group of his disciples gathered in Vṛndāvana at Kārttika: "Kṛṣṇa Message for South Africa," and "Two Goswamis Tour Mid-America."

"This is very encouraging," he says. "All of you should preach."

Before leaving for the airport,
he touches his head
at the feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

Text 51

The verse and purport to text fifty-one declare that the all-inclusive nine elements that make up the three worlds originate in Kṛṣṇa, exist in Him, and enter into Him at the time of universal cataclysm. Some of the *Brahma-samhitā* verses have declared Govinda's unique position as entirely untouched by matter, yet here His connection is stressed. This is the philosophy of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*, inconceivable, simultaneous oneness and difference.

Unless we know Govinda as the controller and emanator of all the worlds, we cannot appreciate the significance of His detached Vṛndāvana *līlā*. He is the universal controller, and He is the carefree, sporting Lord of the *gopīs* and *gopas* in His beloved Vraja. One aspect is higher and more intimate than the other, but He is supreme controller of both His confidential devotees (in love), as well as all the bound *jīvas* and all the planets.

Everything the *jīvas* may desire and earn is conferred on them by Govinda. From Him comes the *varṇāśrama-dharma*, as well as nescience in the *jīva*, as well as the *Vedas* and penances for gradual upliftment. The relative powers of all the living beings in every species of life, from Brahmā down to the fly, all emanate from Kṛṣṇa. Yet He is transcendental to it all.

March 7

The blasting radio is so bad, so loud with Indian Tin Pan Alley, that I cannot concentrate on anything. I think even the coconuts on the trees are disturbed, permeated by cheap sound. But the old man working downhill with his pick doesn't seem disturbed by the free music. Does it mean you have to dull a part of your brain to get used to it? Or do we have to reach some all-inclusive attitude and thus accept radios, crows, mosquitoes as "all-is-One"?

A dog whines,
the radio singer croons—
why should I complain?

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

6. He was enthused if his men secured a good property for Kṛṣṇa. George Harrison's donation of the Bhaktivedanta Manor, and the hard-won Bombay Hare Krishna Land were important landmarks for Prabhupāda. But he said he was prepared to sit down anywhere to talk about Kṛṣṇa.

While it rains he talks
in the servants' attic
with George, John, and Yoko.

His hand luggage—
his farewell glance.

7. Beautiful arrangements for Deity worship impelled him to express his appreciation. Arriving one time in Los Angeles, he said, "They are also worshiping nicely in New York and London. But perhaps you are ahead."

Radhā-Kṛṣṇa mildly smile—
youths by hundreds join him
prostrate on the floor.

8. He was enthusiastic about Kṛṣṇa conscious farms. When he visited the one in Pennsylvania, devotees told him it was a problem to feed the growing cow herd. "Get more land," he said. When they said that was also a problem, he replied, "Don't kill them." Thinking of the plight of the cows in the Age of Kali, he shed tears.

In the barn,
a cat and dog playing
attract his eye.

Drinking fresh milk,
praising it.

9. He walked at sunrise, for health, and usually spoke philosophy, accentuated with the tapping of his cane.

Bombay:
starting out in darkness
past the Śiva temple.

Heads move in closer
as he stops to make a point,
his voice in the surf.

On the way back,
perspiring, but
untiring.

March 8

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

Text 54

Kṛṣṇa awards His devotees by burning up all their *karma*, but to those on the path of work He awards the results. All except the pure devotees are interested in some kind of result, and even *sannyāsīs* are after liberation. But the pure devotees desire only to gratify the senses of Kṛṣṇa. By destroying His devotees' *karma*, Kṛṣṇa treats them with a loving partiality. Yet that partiality is open to all *jīvas* if they will take the opportunity to engage in pure devotional service. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī writes, "It is a great wonder that Kṛṣṇa, being impartial, is fully partial to His devotees."

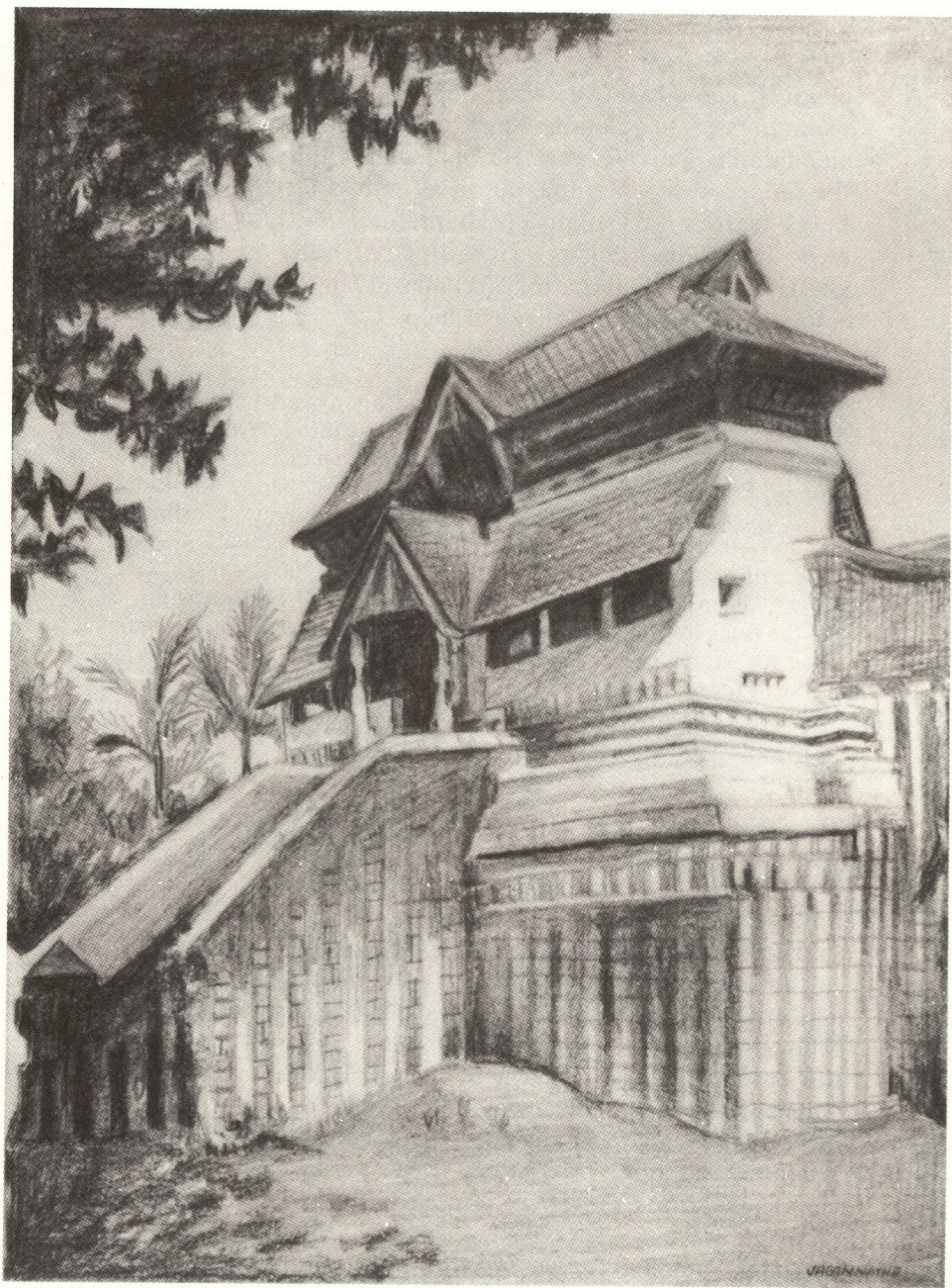
The unequaled opportunity to follow the *bhakti* path was never so easily obtainable as it is now in the era of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and especially since the beginning of ISKCON. That is a great wonder. I have been reading of Lord Buddha's mission—how the people at the beginning of Kali-yuga were so atheistic and violent that Buddha was only able to stop their worst vices and teach them *nirvāṇa*. The people of the present day, however are more degraded and unfortunate than people in Lord Buddha's time, and yet they are given a special dispensation.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

"O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You."

March 9, 4:30 A.M.

We are leaving early this morning for a visit to the Ādi-keśava temple. Lord Caitanya visited the temple on His southern tour, and it was here that He discovered the manuscript of *Brahma-samhitā*. There is a place in the temple where the priests



Front entrance to Ādi-keśava temple in South India.

claim He actually sat and wrote out a copy of *Brahma-saṁhitā*. I cannot expect to go and sit there and feel something very special. I don't qualify for that. It will be mostly the physical travel, the immediate mental life, but because it is directed toward a holy place of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *līlā*, I am very eager to do it. As when taking a few drops of water from Rādhā-kuṇḍa on your head, you may feel no sudden transformation or ecstasy, yet you think, "This will help."

From the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

In the temple of Ādi-keśava, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu discussed spiritual matters among highly advanced devotees. While there, He found a chapter of the *Brahma-saṁhitā*.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was greatly happy to find a chapter of that scripture, and symptoms of ecstatic transformation—trembling, tears, perspiration, trance and jubilation—were manifest in His body.

There is no scripture equal to the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as far as the final spiritual conclusion is concerned. Indeed, that scripture is the supreme revelation of the glories of Lord Govinda, for it reveals the topmost knowledge about Him. Since all conclusions are briefly presented in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, it is essential among all Vaiṣṇava literature.

—Cc. *Madhya* 9.237–240

Text 55

This verse gives the five eternal *rasas* between a devotee and Kṛṣṇa. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī describes the steps prior to reaching *rasa*. To begin, there must be at least "a tinge of faith in the rules of the *śāstras* and instructions of the preceptors." The devotee continues in this way, loyal to scriptural regulations with no real spontaneous tendency to love Kṛṣṇa. When the strong desire to serve is actually attained, this is called *rāga*. This matures into *bhāva*, when the devotee becomes an object of Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī states, "It takes much time to attain this state."

These words seem very appropriate as I sit on the stone platform in the Ādi-keśava temple where Lord Caitanya sat and copied the *Brahma-saṁhitā*. According to tradition, the *Brahma-saṁhitā* was recited daily here on the spot and during one such recitation, He attended and copied it down. The platform is well

within the temple, past Jaya and Vijaya, past the hall filled with beautiful, powerful stone sculptures of divine persons such as Muralīdhara Kṛṣṇa, goddess Kālī, and others—and it is just before the inner sanctum of the main Deity, Ādi-keśava.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī speaks of relating to the Absolute in nonfriendly terms, such as fear, anger, and delusion, which are taken up by demons and pantheists. *Śānta-rasa*, the first valid stage of *bhakti-rasa*, lacks the intensity of the further stages but “is still reckoned as *bhakti* on account of it being a little friendly.”

Dear Lord Ādi-keśava, please banish my indifference, my fear, delusion, and anger—which are due to bodily and material attachments—and make me friendly to You and Your pure devotees, and through them make me friendly to all living beings. I am selfish and not friendly, but You can transform me.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited here, but there is little visible trace of it. Yet the temple routine goes on, a *brāhmaṇa* plays a *khole*, another rings a bell, *pūjārīs* bathe brass *mūrtis* of four-armed Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī, whose graceful forms make you think, “I’d like to worship these Deities.” And it also makes me think of the saintly form of the Prabhupāda *mūrti* waiting back at our room. Even as I left to travel here this morning, I looked upon Śrīla Prabhupāda and thought, “*That’s* the deity.” (That’s the deity for me.)

Text 56

This verse is extra-long and extra-filled with colorful, transcendental descriptions of the pleasing aspects of Goloka—“where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every gait is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant . . .” Time in Goloka doesn’t press on the liberated souls or cause anxiety or destroy or pass away. “That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world.”

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī speaks of the variegated nature of Goloka. It is all-blissful. “The variety in the transcendental world,” he writes, “is fully centralized whereas in the mundane world it is not so and hence productive of weal and woe.” Yes, for example, driving here I perceived so many varieties in the villages and it produces chafing, discontent, boredom, and

fatigue in my own variegated, relative body-mind. Even now in the Ādi-keśava temple I see the crows and they seem intrusive, although I suppose they have their place here. And I hear a radio from outside, and I have my ever-present variegated mind. Weal and woe, passage of time, indifference, fear, anger, delusion . . . where is Śvetadvīpa? Where is Navadvīpa? Where is Goloka? They're in the heart of the pure devotee realized in spontaneous love. And he is very rare in this world.

Text 57

Kṛṣṇa knows Lord Brahmā desired to create the material worlds. But Brahmā also desired to be the eternal servant of Govinda, and he chanted *Brahma-saṁhitā* in great eagerness. In reciprocation, Lord Kṛṣṇa says He will describe to Lord Brahmā how one can practice devotional service even while in the material world engaged in occupational duties.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī states that the nature of the ninefold practice of devotional service, beginning with *śravaṇam kīrtanam*, is identical with “practicing the search for Kṛṣṇa.” By knowledge and practice of the nine items, love for Godhead becomes manifest.

Text 59

“The highest devotion is attained by slow degrees by the method of constant endeavor for self-realization with the help of scriptural evidence, theistic conduct and perseverance and practice.”

What Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī says, in language only slightly different from Śrīla Prabhupāda's, is exactly the same meaning as Prabhupāda's. It is all emphasized for me today—where I am situated on the path of *bhakti*, what I have to do to go onward, and what is the ultimate goal, “attained by slow degrees.” I don't expect a free pass, unearned. Don't expect a cheap entrance. Don't look for some Zen-like zap, *satori*. Stick to it. Don't get distracted.

Now bells ring, drums, *shenai*—it's time for *darśana*.

Friendly *pūjārīs* hold the ghee flame at the head of Ādi-keśava Deity. He lies on three folds of Ādi-śeṣa. The Lord's large head is very, very beautiful. Eyes closed in *yoga-nidrā*, with

nose and mouth of the most beautiful Godhead. Then we move over to the middle altar where we see His middle portion, covered in red silk, and His hand. At the third altar, the *pūjārī*'s flame sheds light on His merciful lotus feet. The *pūjārī* gives us some *prasādam* and *caraṇāmṛta*. We leave and go back up on the stone slab where Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu sat, and there we make prostrated obeisances and I pray, "Prabhupāda, please let me serve you. Give me the courage to overcome all obstacles."

4:00 P.M.

We are leaving the hilltop in favor of the seaside place. It's supposed to be quieter, more air, sunshine, ocean—but not as good in privacy. Only for the next ten days.

We took our breakfast fruit today in a sublime jungle grove on the bank of a river where they say Lord Caitanya bathed when He visited Ādi-keśava temple. Dr. S. was telling stories of miracles in which Kṛṣṇa appeared. He saw it recently on Keralan TV. I said it may or may not be true. He said the essence of it was true but maybe the portions of Kṛṣṇa actually appearing before people was a dramatization. I said Kṛṣṇa can and does appear before devotees, but the narrations have to be authorized. Then he spoke of people who go on pilgrimages to temples and as a result have their maladies cured. We became restless with the talk and tried inducing a silence, eating tangerines, spitting out the pits, and listening to the many songbirds and to the sound of young boys swimming in the river. I mentioned what Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī wrote about pure devotional service, that it is attained by slow degrees and very rare.

Let me prosecute my own duties. While mixing with the friendly *pūjārīs* of Mahā-Viṣṇu at Ādi-keśava temple, I thought: "They have their Kṛṣṇa conscious duties, and I have mine. We will each be tested by how we carry out the orders given to us. I can't assume I am better than they."

Last Night On Manasagiri

Sun lowered below the horizon now, birds quieter, girls singing hymns in the valley. I'm with Prabhupāda *mūrti* in the darkening room.

Glad to leave,
too much noise.
On the other hand . . .
We lived here.

March 11, Varkālā, Seaside

PRABHUPĀDA ON ECUMENISM

I just heard a tape of Śrīla Prabhupāda on a morning walk in Geneva, June 1974. He was speaking favorably of the practice of prayer and worship of God in other religions, provided they actually follow their scriptures. During that whole spring tour—Rome, Geneva, Paris, Germany, Australia—Prabhupāda got quite involved in exchanges with Christian priests, and he expressed ecumenical ideas to his own disciples.

On the Geneva walk, he began by asking whether there were many churches in the city. When he was told, “Not so many,” he replied. “That means godlessness.” He said that when he first went to Butler, Pennsylvania, he saw at least a dozen well-attended churches, although it was a small county. “I very much appreciated,” he said. “Churches mean God consciousness. I never criticize churches or mosques—never. Because whatever it may be, at least there is God consciousness. Then they are good. In details [they may differ], but I only criticize those who don’t follow. Otherwise, we don’t criticize.”

“We’re not sectarian,” said one of the devotees.

“Why?” said Śrīla Prabhupāda. “God is one. Why sectarian? According to circumstances, he’s doing. And that prayer is also *vandanam*. *Śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ-smaraṇam pāda sevnam*. This *vandanam* is prayer. That is *bhakti*, one of the items of *bhakti*.”

Devotee: “Everyone needs to be encouraged in their God consciousness.”

Prabhupāda repeated his point about *vandanam*, offering prayer, and he acknowledged that it also existed, at least in a preliminary stage, in churches of different religions.

Devotee: “Is it required for them to have a spiritual master to guide them?”

Prabhupāda: “Certainly. But these rascals, the priests, they do not guide them. They’re also fallen. Otherwise, Christian re-

ligion is very nice. If they follow. So many times they ask me. I say, 'Yes, if you follow. Your Christian religion will make you perfect.' And Caitanya Mahāprabhu proved devotional service from the Koran. It requires a devotee who can explain from any godly literature about God."

This last statement particularly struck me: "*It requires a devotee who can explain from any godly literature about God.*" I have often been skeptical about ecumenical or inter-faith exchanges. Sometimes ecumenicists seem to be no more than polite sectarian opponents feeling each other out so that they can then go later and preach to members of the opposing religion and be more expert at their conversions. Or else it seems to be quite mundane, an indulgence for religionists who have no conclusive path. But Prabhupāda spoke of a substantial service to be done for religionists, especially by one who knows the science of God. I want to try to understand better what he meant, especially as he expressed it during his tour through Europe and Australia in 1974.

Chanting my rounds in the sandy front yard while *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* is chanted by devotees at the Janārdana temple. I'm awake, alive, and a pleasing cool breeze is encouraging me to go on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I was disappointed in Dale Carnegie's chapter on prayer in *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. His stress is not on pure devotional service. He is very enthusiastic and positive about prayer, and so his words may have some benefit, especially in inducing nonbelievers to try prayer (*vandanam*). But it is all geared toward getting relief from suffering and gaining benefits within the material world. He writes, "I am tremendously interested in what religion does for me." He certainly has an appreciation for the power and vitality of a religious life, but we cannot minimize the highest goal of religious practice—to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead with all our activities.

Carnegie gives us the lowest common denominator. His faith stories tell of those who avoided suicide and insanity by praying to God. He tells of a discouraged book salesman who fell into debt and began to dread his occupation. After finding a

Gideon Bible in his hotel room and praying while at a very low point, the salesman went out the next day and made more sales than he had in weeks. "That evening I proudly returned to my hotel like a conquering hero!" relates the converted salesman. "I felt like a new man. And I *was* a new man, because I had a new and victorious mental attitude. No dinner of hot milk that night. No, sir! I had a steak with all the fixin's. From that day on, my sales zoomed."

Carnegie also turns, almost naively, to the psychologists for support. He quotes many psychologists who speak of the practical mental benefits of belief in God. Religion is good because it's practical. It solves mental problems. He even interprets that Jesus was a revolutionary because "he preached that religion should exist for man—not man for religion . . . He talked more about fear than He did about sin. The *wrong* kind of fear is a sin—a sin against your health, a sin against the richer, fuller, happier, courageous life that Jesus advocated."

Carnegie and the converts who give testimony in his pages are certainly fired-up about their God consciousness. They'll challenge you with their enthusiasm, and they won't be dampened. So rather than debate the issue, we simply have to be more enthusiastic about our own propagation of pure devotional service, which is beyond the realm of fruitive religion. Fruitive religion can also lead to the higher goal. This is what Kṛṣṇa means in the *Bhagavad-gītā* when He says that even those who are in distress, if they come to Him, are *sukṛtinaḥ*, or saintly. But best among them is one who is not seeking a reward from God, but who becomes enamored at some point or other in his devotional service, by the name, form, and activities of Kṛṣṇa, and simply wants to chant and serve the Lord eternally.

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

10. Śrīla Prabhupāda was enthusiastic to smash the scientists. On his morning walks he would inspire his scientist-disciple, Svarūpa Dāmodara dāsa, to express Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the language of science and defeat the theory that life comes from matter.

Bringing down his cane,
on Darwin's theory.

In his hand
proof of God:
a rose.

OLD DIARIES

July 23, 1975

I'm very fortunate as are all devotees. Looking at a letter of three years ago from His Divine Grace, he instructs "you should take your responsibility very, very seriously. Always remember that you are one of the few men I have appointed to carry out my work throughout the world. . . ." Now Srila Prabhupada is calling all U.S. G.B.C. members to him in L.A. to discuss legal organization of our ISKCON. "Get the first plane to L.A." Jayatirtha said on the phone two hours ago, and now I am ready to fly from Houston. The call came at a time my mind was agitated over lack of enthusiastic drive—taste—for my duties.

I mediate disputes and visit and see that things are running smoothly. But at least lately I have been feeling like a desk-chair general, not in the fire of fighting preaching. Surely Krsna is watching me and will do with me as He desires. I am praying to not deviate or be a bad example of restlessness, and therefore pray to be sincere enough to submissively apply myself to spreading Krsna consciousness as I am supposed to with no complaints. I'm somewhat bogged down. Not identified heart and soul with a specific project. Please Prabhupada give me more to do and give me the taste and ability to dive into it. The danger is that although I do have duties I am feeling unattached to my service.

My discontent is that I think I can expand my service and do more for the Krsna consciousness movement. I don't feel inspired or challenged. I don't have a burden of front line work. I don't want to give up duties. I want more duties. Could I ask Srila Prabhupada, "May I have some assignment I can take on suitable to my capacities, for spreading Krsna consciousness?" Of course all this restlessness may be my superficiality, my lack of resolution to do what work I already have.

There are also obvious possibilities: take a sankirtana party around the country preaching in colleges while traveling more or less in the area of your zone. Why disturb Srila Prabhupada by asking for more work? If you want more you can take it.

Prabhupāda's calling U.S. G.B.C. men to join him in Los Angeles was certainly an urgent move. When we got there, we heard this story, but it was still confusing. Jayatīrtha dāsa and Rāmeśvara dāsa had been consulting a lawyer about the best way to organize the ISKCON corporation. Their lawyer advised them that we should go for an "umbrella," in which all the individual city and state centers would be gathered under one legal identity. But Prabhupāda had some serious doubts about it. Jayatīrtha and Rāmeśvara, however, were trying to convince Prabhupāda that this was the best plan.

But it wasn't clear why we were all called just for this. Prabhupāda seemed deeply disturbed. Finally, at one of the meetings in his room, the real anxiety came out. Prabhupāda said that he was very suspicious of this lawyer's intent and of this particular plan. By studying the papers, he saw that the lawyer himself would gain a significant control of ISKCON. Prabhupāda said he preferred the model that we had, with the centers running more autonomously, and he did not want so much entanglement with lawyers, since he did not trust them. At one point, one of the G.B.C. devotees asked Prabhupāda, "What do *you* want, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"

Prabhupāda replied that he wanted to disband the plans for the umbrella corporation, even though some preliminary work had been done.

On hearing this, almost all the G.B.C. men thought or expressed themselves as follows: "Well, if that's what you want, Prabhupāda, then there's no problem. We'll just do what you want."

Prabhupāda said yes, this was what he wanted and so it should be done. But the whole tension was that Prabhupāda had not been able to give this instruction to Jayatīrtha and Rāmeśvara in Los Angeles because they had been too attached to the umbrella corporation. He had raised his objection, but they had repeatedly given the lawyer's viewpoint, even to the point where it seemed they were doubting Prabhupāda. So just to deal with the situation he had called in all his other U.S. G.B.C. men. To this day Rāmeśvara Swami talks of this incident as a proof that one has to surrender to the *guru's* spiritual intelligence and never doubt him in spiritual or material spheres. As Rāmeśvara Swami tells it, when he actually realized

the strength of Prabhupāda's conviction, and that he was opposing him, he completely prostrated himself to Prabhupāda's order and learned a great lesson, never to doubt the spiritual master. Jayatīrtha, however, submitted a resignation, but Prabhupāda didn't accept it.

As a result of this intense emergency meeting, we all became convinced that we had to become Prabhupāda men, and that it was a grave error to doubt or oppose the spiritual master.

The incident also brings out the fact that Prabhupāda had to deal with difficult legal matters and he wanted us to take it up also. He was not training us to be meditators as solitary individuals. We were preachers within an organization which had to keep pace and survive and grow in the material world—and that would be done by following our spiritual master. Specifically, he didn't want us to become too much entangled with lawyers.

This also brings up the question of what it means to be a "Prabhupāda man." One meaning is to be dedicated to ISKCON. We may be in the right in knowing what Śrīla Prabhupāda wants, and sometimes we may be wrong, and then we have to hear his voice through our Godbrothers. We should realize that in the association of the G.B.C. and senior disciples of Prabhupāda we have the best opportunity for consensus as to what Prabhupāda wants. Any one of us may have occasion to call on our Godbrothers and consult when we are doubtful, or even stubborn about Prabhupāda's order.

Being a Prabhupāda man doesn't rule out being a strong individual. But "no man is an island entire to himself." Consultation is another quality of a humble Vaiṣṇava. Mahārāja Parīkṣit, a very strong *kṣatriya* individual, knew what he had to do at the end of his life. When he received word of the curse that he would die in seven days, he made a momentous decision. He gave up his kingdom, although he was a young man, and he went to the bank of the Ganges. Nevertheless, he consulted with the sages there and asked what was best to do. So this is the example as given by a strong-minded individual. Also, authors like Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa did not start on their works until they were requested by the Vaiṣṇavas. Even if we do act on our own, if the Vaiṣṇavas are not pleased by our activities, that should give us second thoughts about our

own decisions. Everyone wants a direct line to his own spiritual master, and that direct line is open. Also, everyone has a direct line to Kṛṣṇa through Supersoul. But surely there will come times when we need some assistance, and no one should be so proud as to deny it. As for the organization of ISKCON, it has to be run by joint consultation.

From the umbrella corporation story, we shouldn't conclude that Prabhupāda was unable to deal with his disciples. But everyone has their free will; the relationship of *guru* and disciple is voluntary. The ideal disciple will surrender his free will to the spiritual master, as Arjuna surrendered to Kṛṣṇa.

READING *BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ*

Text 59

Practice of the chanting of the holy name under instructions of pure devotees will, when done with perseverance, bring about the fruit of the spiritual endeavor—love—in the essence of the soul.

Text 60

From the purport: “He who cultivates the preliminary devotional activities [*sādhana-bhakti*] anxiously keeping in view that realized state of devotion can alone attain to that object of all endeavor. None else can have the same.”

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī gives encouragement for the practitioners of *sādhana-bhakti*. They are at least on the only path that leads to “the final beatitude of *jīvas*.” Anxiously keeping the goal in view has also been described by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura: “When will the day come when by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa tears will come to my eyes? When will I come to relish the literatures of the six Gosvāmīs?” To persevere and keep the goal in view also means “don't jump over like a monkey.” Be aware you have not yet attained it, but be always watchful of your bad tendencies, and always offer worship in service to the Vaiṣṇavas. Know that any deviation toward mental speculation, or work for sense gratification is antagonistic to the goal of *bhakti*. Keep following cheerfully, realizing the good results you have already attained—the great fortune of *hari-nāma* initiation, and service to the pure devotee spiritual master.

Text 61

These are excellent instructions for dovetailing our involvement in bodily, mental, and social activities and purifying them through *bhakti-yoga*. As Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that whatever you do, do it for Me, these acts must be done with pure devotion rooted in faith. “Exclusive faith in Me is trust,” writes Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, on behalf of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. “The more transparent the faith, the greater the degree of realization.”

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī enumerates the types of worldly activities, and he states that the dovetailing of these acts in Kṛṣṇa’s service is known as *jñāna-bhakti-yoga*. But even this stage has to be surpassed. The final stage can be attained even while one lives within the world, but only when one becomes truly God-centered and performs all the duties of the world by the method of *worshipping Godhead through those duties*.

“In such a position,” writes Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, “a *jīva* does not become apathetic to Godhead even by performing those worldly activities. This constitutes the practice of looking inwards, i.e., turning toward one’s real self, vide *Īsopaniṣad—īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ*.” Lord Kṛṣṇa instructed Brahmā in the dovetailing method because Brahmā *had the desire for creation in his heart*. This also was something to be finally overcome. We should understand that much of what we call dovetailing is helpful for our growth, but is not in itself the ultimate stage of pure service, wherein the devotee simply wants to please Kṛṣṇa in whatever He wants.

“It was certainly proper to instruct Brahmā in this manner,” writes Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. “There is no occasion for such instruction in the case of a *jīva* in whom the spontaneous aversion for entities other than Kṛṣṇa manifests itself on his attainment of the substantive entity of spiritual devotion (*bhāva*).”

When will the day come when I will go beyond seeking Kṛṣṇa’s protection and certification for my dovetailing desires, and I will willingly serve Him as He likes—when will my desires become one with His interest?

Sometimes I worry that my writing may be “sinful attachment,” or like Lord Brahmā’s desire for creation. Probably it is tainted. But I’m going ahead, trying to purify through action,

rather than by stopping and declaring it's all *māyā*. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, here are my writing efforts. I have ventured into these *Journal and Poems* intending them to be not my own speculative opinions, but a hundred percent based on *śāstra*.

VISIT TO TEMPLE OF ŚRĪ JANĀRDANA

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu remained for two or three days at Ananta Padmanābha and visited the temple there. Then, with great ecstasy, He went to see the temple of Śrī Janārdana.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu chanted and danced at Śrī Janārdana for two days. He then went to the bank of the Payasvini River and visited the temple of Śaṅkara-nārāyaṇa.

—Cc. *Madhya* 9.242-243

In his purports, Prabhupāda writes, "The temple of Śrī Janārdana is situated twenty-six miles north of Trivandrum near the Varkālā railway station." The temple is not as grand as the Ādi-keśava temple, but it is kept up much better. The local people are quite devoted and regularly attend the *āratis*. They have up-to-date renovations and keep the sculptures and grounds clean and nicely painted. Lord Janārdana was covered with sandalwood tonight. We saw a wonderful tree called Nāga-līṅga, whose flower blooms with an upright Śiva *līṅga* in its center and a *nāga* [snake] hood covering it. I brought one back for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

READING BRAHMA-SAMHITĀ

Text 62

In his purport, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī speaks on behalf of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, paraphrasing Lord Kṛṣṇa's direct words to Brahmā. Summarizing speculative views of Brahman based on interpretations of *Vedānta-sūtra*, he admits that each theory contains "a certain measure of truth," but requests Brahmā to discard all these speculations.

[In effect, Kṛṣṇa says to Brahmā] "... you and your bona fide community should adopt the ultimate principle identical with the doctrine of *acintya-bhedābheda* (inconceivable simultaneous distinction and nondifference). This will make you eligible for being a true devotee."

Out of the almost unlimited number of metaphysical theories, as well as suggestions for practical living, we are bewildered and seek a trusted teacher who can guide us. Should we decide things for ourselves? Should we pick and choose? Even to make these decisions, we turn for guidance. Therefore, finding a teacher in “how-to-live,” a *guru*, is essential. We question him in different ways, closely watch his own example, but finally surrender to him “because he has seen the truth.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original teacher, the most learned person in the universe; He Himself is the goal of knowledge (*Vedānta*). Thus He guides Lord Brahmā:

... I am *pradhāna*, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, yet as the possessor of power I am eternally distinct from all those potencies. This simultaneous distinction and nondifference has also sprung from My inconceivable power. So let the attainment of love for Kṛṣṇa by the practice of pure devotion through the knowledge of their mutual true relationship that subsists between the *jīva*, the *jaḍa* (matter) and Kṛṣṇa based on the principle of inconceivable simultaneous distinction and nondifference, be My instruction for being handed down in the order of spiritual preceptorial succession in your community (Śrī Brahmā-sampradāya).

—*Brahma-samhitā* Text 62, purport

March 12

My eye pain has diminished and I can now read two hours daily. I am thinking of giving more attention to reading Prabhupāda's books. But I'm out of practice.

It will be the greatest gain if I can awaken more my ready appreciation of Prabhupāda's books. And not just for now, but ongoing. Whatever I may encounter reading his books should continue.

I began reading from the Preface of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. At the very least, there is the *safety*. Whatever I gain by reading won't be lost; I won't stray away from the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Reading is a kind of association. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to say if you associate with a drunkard you become like a drunkard, and if you associate with a scholar eventually you become a scholar. Since I read nondevotional works in the course of my preaching-through-literature, I must regularly associate with

Śrīla Prabhupāda (and Kṛṣṇa) through his books, as a corrective measure. But beyond saving oneself from becoming a Mayāvādī, Prabhupāda's books can elevate one to the highest stage. This is certainly the case with *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

As I read, I have to slow myself down. Read that paragraph carefully, or if you gulp it down, then reread it. For example, I just rushed past a paragraph, caught myself, returned to it, and found that it contained the most valuable gem, rarer than anything found in any other literature—a description of Lord Caitanya's greatest gift: His teaching that Kṛṣṇa can be actually treated as one's lover. . . . It was never given by any previous incarnation or *ācārya*. I was about to skip past this without the slightest attention or appreciation, perhaps assuming that I already knew it.

The return to reading also gives me a hint that I have (in common with almost all *jīvas*) a deep ingrained tendency for impersonalism, voidism. We reject the concept of God as a person. In the Preface, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The Lord demands that one surrender unto Him by following these six guidelines [symptoms of surrender], but the unintelligent so-called scholars of the world misunderstand these demands and urge the general mass of people to reject them." We tend to think Kṛṣṇa is a myth, or a sectarian God, or if He's real, then He was a great philosopher, but beyond Him there is something else, something impersonal or void. Reading Prabhupāda's books will regularly deliver me from this defiance and misconception about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So I wish to return, under the direction of the six symptoms of surrender.

March 14

Careful reading brings peace. And we are teachers, so the more we read, the better we can present the philosophy—more precisely, with knowledge of which chapters and scriptures contain the various information. And most importantly, right reading will enable us to speak with conviction.

Who is Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa? What is Their love? When we don't read, then sooner or later the teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness will diminish in our lives. Prabhupāda sometimes said that it was neglect of reading that made his disciples fall down from the principles and give up trying to follow his orders. So many

disciples have gone away! Without reading, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa become less relevant to us, Their supremacy fades from our minds, They are no longer our objects of meditation, our goal of life. Then the seeds of material desire, shrunk but still living, begin to grow again, like bedbugs in spring, and we consider expanding our material propensities.

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

11. Lord Caitanya states, *yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*: “Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Kṛṣṇa as they are given in *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” Prabhupāda personified that ideal. He was always enthusiastic for speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Even when physically tired, he continued strongly, cheerfully speaking, either to a few disciples in his room or to many guests.

Transit in Fiji—
smiling from conversation,
Prabhupāda reboards.

12. Śrīla Prabhupāda worked more than anyone for the fulfillment of Lord Caitanya’s prediction that the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names would spread to every town and village in the world. And he lived to see the prophecy come true.

Athenians at midnight
wave and call to him,
“Hare Kṛṣṇa!”

VAIṢṆAVA SAINTS

I am not able to keep up my entries for the Vaiṣṇava Calendar. Auspicious days slip by, Śiva-rātri, disappearance day of Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī, and today is the appearance day of a prominent devotee of Lord Nityānanda, Puruṣottama Ṭhākura. While traveling in India, I cannot always get biographical data, and in any case I’m not able to make instant, worthwhile homages to all the Vaiṣṇava saints on their calendar days. They are too great and too many. Eventually someone

will compile a handbook, but I may still try to make appreciative statements when I can.

Puruṣottama Ṭhākura appeared in a family of great devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His father was Sadāśiva Kavirāja, and his son was Śrī Kānu Ṭhākura, who was personally favored by Lord Nityānanda. In a former incarnation, Puruṣottama Ṭhākura was “the tenth *gopāla*,” a cowherd boy-friend of Balarāma (Lord Nityānanda). Puruṣottama Ṭhākura’s family worshiped the Deity of Prāṇavallabha (Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa) and several times, due to destruction of the house they lived in, and also due to a Mahārāṣṭrian invasion of Bengal, the Deities were moved. The descendants of the family still worship the Deity and reside in the village named Gadabetā, by the river Śilāvātī in the Midnapore district. Both Puruṣottama Ṭhākura and his son had many disciples from *brāhmaṇa* families.

Prabhupāda urged all devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, especially those in India, to join him in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. This was the direct request of Lord Caitanya, *bhārate-bhūmite haila manuṣya janma yāra . . .* Those born in India have the special privilege to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others and thus benefit the world. Now it remains the work of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples to engage all the devotees of Lord Caitanya in missionary work. Better than discharging one’s own worship is to share it with others if one is able to do so. One doesn’t have to take *sannyāsa* and leave home; even while living at home one can tell everyone he meets about Kṛṣṇa. This was how Lord Caitanya instructed the householder, Kurma *brāhmaṇa*.

This is the divine spark we pray for—spontaneous desire to spread the Lord’s glories. It can be taken up automatically in ISKCON, as part of regular duties; even the beginner can be compassionate. But to sustain it, to actually pray and work for the welfare of others, requires the special mercy of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. I know it is available and I know that when a devotee *tries* to sell a book or tell someone about Kṛṣṇa, he increases his ability and taste to do it more and more. We are living for this. This is the legacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

A READING GURU

Reading *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in the front yard of Kerala bungalow. Under a large tamarind tree, a dense shade-giver that floats its finished flowers down onto me. There are flies and mosquitoes and crows to make it complete. I hear the ocean surf in the breeze, and the rustling of various trees. The composite effect is peaceful for reading.

My reading of the scripture is easy-going but appreciative. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja is discussing the spiritual masters. I cannot understand all of it, the six categorical principles of Absolute Truth as given in the first verse of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Even what I do understand is the understanding of a school student who has learned his lessons “by heart,” but not necessarily by complete realization.

Can I say I know Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya? Do I understand Śrī Nityānanda, the expansion of Saṅkarṣaṇa and the Viṣṇu? Do I know Śrī Advaita Ācārya? And although I myself am an initiating spiritual master with hundreds of disciples, do I thoroughly comprehend what is the spiritual master? To give a positive reply to the last question, I may say that I take shelter of my own spiritual master in disciplic succession. In his purports, Śrīla Prabhupāda also states that a devotee does not approach the Supreme Lord by logic, but by love for Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. I will qualify as spiritual master according to the criteria stated in these purports, as given, for example, from the *Vāyu Purāṇa*: “An *ācārya* is one who knows the import of all Vedic literature, explains the purpose of the *Vedas*, abides by their rules and regulations, and teaches his disciples to act in the same way.” I know the import of all Vedic literature—surrender to Kṛṣṇa. And my spiritual master has given me bona fide transcendental duties, including duties of a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, and a *guru*. I will not falsely renounce these or declare myself a relativist, a non-*guru*. I have the charge, as long as I strictly follow *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas.

March 15

THE SWEET RELATIONSHIP

We went for evening *darśana* to the Janārdana temple. Tomorrow is the beginning of their biggest festival of the year here, commemorating the time when Lord Viṣṇu returns to the



Writer's seat at Manasagiri, Kerala.

Kāraṇa Ocean. The Janārdana Deity was decorated tonight as Lord Kṛṣṇa holding the flute. Usually He manifests in the four-arm Nārāyaṇa pose, but tonight His two arms held the flute and He was covered with sandalwood paste.

While walking around the temple grounds, I mentioned to the devotees how in our ISKCON Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples, the *mādhurya-rasa* pervades all the worship, and even the children and we neophyte devotees share in it. It is a *fact*. For example, at Gītā-nāgarī, everyone partakes of the Rādhā-Dāmodara *rasa*, worshipping Their Lordships along with the two *sakhīs*, Lalitā and Viśākhā. *Mādhurya-rasa* cannot be imitated or cheaply attained, and yet all the followers of Lord Caitanya worship Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as the highest goal. This is particularly noticeable, by contrast, when we visit a temple of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Here, although it is Vaiṣṇavism, there is a different atmosphere. There seems to be more the presence of the many different gods, and Kṛṣṇa is just another stop along the way, another of many statues in the outer hallway. But in the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temples, Rādhārāṇī, the queen of *bhakti*, is present, and therefore everything is focused on the sweet relationship of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. All worshipers of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are invited to approach this sweetness, provided they do so according to the rules and regulations of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

13. Prabhupāda loved Māyāpur. Even in the hot season, the ISKCON Chandrodaya Mandir received “Vaikuṇṭha breezes.” Prabhupāda savored them as he walked the wide verandas, and even as he sat in his room with open doors and windows. He sometimes referred to Māyāpur as ISKCON World Headquarters, and it was to Māyāpur that he called his disciples for the annual festival on Gaura-pūrṇimā.

Against the white bolsters,
he leans back and laughs,
speaking in Bengali.

As Prabhupāda leaves us,
Brahmānanda shouts,
“Śrīla Prabhupāda, *kī jaya!*”

Waiting for him
to come down the marble stairs;
remembering it now.

READING ŚRĪ CAITANYA-CANDRĀMṚTA
BY PRABHODĀNANDA SARASVATĪ

Sitting on the steps of the temple before departing, Dattātreya suggested I consider printing some verses of Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī's *Caitanya-candrāmṛta* in *Journal and Poems*. I agreed that I would like to give regular servings of the highest form of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Part 1

Invoking auspiciousness at the beginning of the work and describing its contents.

Verse 1

"Let us glorify the boundlessly merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Prince of Vrajabhūmi, who has now appeared in the town of Navadvīpa as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in order to taste the intoxicating sweet waves of the nectar of His own transcendental pure love of God, and to distribute that nectar to others."

I cannot know the beauty of this poetry in its original language. Nor can I fully enter the spiritual *rasa*. But I will attempt to accompany Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī's verses, translated by our Godbrother Kuśakratha dāsa, with comments of my appreciation.

At the beginning of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja informs us about invocations: "The invocation involves three processes: defining the objective, offering benedictions and offering obeisances." In his opening verse, Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī immediately states the objective: to glorify the Supreme Personality of Godhead, now appearing as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There is at once no doubt: the subject matter is the highest spiritual truth. It is not a treatise on mundane knowledge. By specifying glorification of Lord Caitanya, the author promises to take us beyond the modes of nature and

even beyond all other realms of transcendental knowledge, to the very summit. Authorized works that identify Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and praise His nature and activities are in the category of most confidential and most beneficial. *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta* is accepted by devotees of the Brahmā-Mādhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* as a bona fide scripture filled with love for Lord Caitanya and conclusive knowledge based on Vedic literature. By hearing *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, we can concentrate our thoughts on Lord Caitanya; therefore, it is the perfection of human hearing, “joyful and easy to perform.”

OLD DIARIES

July 25, 1975, Los Angeles

When I spoke to Godbrother TKG he said I have heard your dissatisfaction before in another condition so I think the trouble is simply that you are dissatisfied.

Dialogue

I'd rather be discontent, always striving, never satisfied with my devotional progress, than complacent.

—But you may worry yourself to an early grave. What good is your discontent? Actually, you raise doubts in others by your doubts.

That's nonsense. I don't doubt Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I do doubt myself. I can't imagine any serious devotee *not* undergoing introspection and seeing himself falling short.

—But you overdo it. A devotee who used to proofread your books has refused to proofread *Journal and Poems* because she says she already has enough doubts in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and it doesn't help to hear someone like you raising the same doubts.

But I raise doubts in order to resolve them. What doubt in Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy have I left hanging in the air, unresolved? Raising doubts is the philosophical method known as *pūrva pakṣa*. One raises the doubt, gives the doubter's best argument, and then defeats it. Śrīla Prabhupāda always raised the doubt—“Mr. Theologian, Mr. Scientist, what do they say?” Sometimes he turned to me for general doubts: “You sometimes take their side,” he said. “What do they say?” Is there a next life?

Is Kṛṣṇa the only God? Doubts, arguments, a resolution.

—All right, but we are talking not just about the philosophy. Why aren't you happier and more positive? You should inspire others with a happy face and positive thoughts. You know, people have you pegged as oversensitive.

No, I'm not sensitive enough. You ask for positive thinking, so I'll give it to you. It's not wrong to constantly refine one's attitude and one's devotional service, to bring it from bad to fair to good to better to best. Prabhupāda also praised this in discussing the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Duryodhana was analyzing the strengths of the two armies. Prabhupāda said it was a sign of intelligence to see the bad side or the weakness, not simply to see one's own strength and to smile about one's good fortune. We should accept Kṛṣṇa and *guru* wholeheartedly—I do—but how can I be always satisfied that I am pleasing them? Even the great *ācāryas* make expressions in their poems, "I've simply wasted my life, I could not attain Kṛṣṇa or Mathurā," etc.

—But there is a neurotic side to this. It can lead to physical illness, headaches. And this sort of thing doesn't inspire others.

It may not inspire you, but it inspires others. You do not seem to understand the purification of spiritual lament. You take it as mundane. But now I've defended myself enough. I admit you're also right. I am a worrier. But overcoming worry and doubt should also be done carefully. Our ultimate goal is not mental peacefulness, but complete surrender to Kṛṣṇa. My problem may be that I worry too much in a selfish way, in a small-time way. I have to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda more and worry over the unfortunate fate of others, worry how to save them, how to give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda gave a nice example of this with mother Yaśodā. He said that she worried about Kṛṣṇa. As an adult, mother Yaśodā was not worried about herself falling into the water, or going without eating, or staying out too late and getting dirty, etc. She remained in her own position as an adult, yet on behalf of her little child, she worried about all these things that might befall her Kṛṣṇa, her son. Similarly, Prahlāda Mahārāja was not afraid for himself, but he was in anxiety for others.

—Yes, but I think actually the great devotees are always very happy. This is a sign of a *guru*; he is always happy. He

makes others around him happy. So these Godbrothers and other devotees have seen you as someone not happy enough, too worrisome.

I say worry must be there, but it's the quality of the discontent that counts; dissatisfaction may be there—"I do not serve my spiritual master nicely"—so it's the quality, and also whether one deals with it for practical rectification. Otherwise, I admit, discontent is egoism. If you want to talk about me, you can judge for yourself, but in general, these are the points to be considered, not whether to worry, but how. And I agree, we have to keep our health for serving Kṛṣṇa, so simplicity and joy in spiritual life should also be enjoyed, and everything should be used for advancement in service to the Lord.

OLD DIARIES

August 12, 1975, Denver

I was with Prabhupada two weeks before he went to India. And before those two weeks in L.A., Denver, and Chicago, another almost three weeks. Now I am in separation service. His Divine Grace told me my main work was with the library party. So I am planning to follow them and do the lecture tour Sept.-Oct.-November. Please give the strength, Prabhupada, Kṛṣṇa, to serve You in this way. Prabhupada also said "the magazine" is very important. So I must write regular essays also.

Srila Prabhupada (in Toronto) was pleased with my chanting the verses of Caitanya-caritamṛta (Adi.1, verses 1-15). He said as long as I was there (in his entourage) I should show the others how to chant. Actually I was not doing it expertly, but he said it was good. Also during his informal talks with guests I was finding the verses he wanted in the Gita, and by Kṛṣṇa's grace I always found the required verse without much delay. I mention these so I will never forget them but treasure them. Moments like those with my spiritual master can be meditated on always. So now I will chant slokas as I know it pleases him.

He said mainly travel to the colleges and libraries with this library mission. You can visit the temple OCCASIONALLY. Jai Srila Prabhupada.

There's a theme (like a motif in music), and whenever I hear it again I feel a yearning that is indescribable. The yearning is more a

shadow of a yearning—I yearn to yearn more and live more and, to yearn more and live more in the life of this theme. The theme? It is like this: “Those who have developed spiritual knowledge can see that the spirit is different from the body and is changing its body and enjoying in different ways. A person in such knowledge can understand how the conditional living entity is suffering in this material existence. Therefore, those who are highly developed in Krsna consciousness try their best to give this knowledge to the people in general, for their conditional life is very troublesome.” (from Gita, 15.10 purport)

It’s preaching. I have to first realize it—that Krsna consciousness is not just another yoga—and our pride that it is topmost is not just our sectarian loyalty. Realization. Everyone is changing their body, and Krsna consciousness can put an end to this otherwise endless suffering.

I am trying to be engaged in it. It is very practical; you have to order books, sell books, collect money, meet with many obstacles (not that preaching all takes place in a romantic setting with the new disciple surrendering and the whole world appreciating Krsna, etc.). But that yearning . . . There has to be bhakti realization in the service—now the conditioned souls are being saved by Krsna consciousness, and it can be proved to be the only authorized movement of love of God.

Preaching in ecstasy is the theme. Being absorbed (the false self consumed) in the act of delivering Krsna consciousness.

The theme is “I want to preach,” as well as “I’m preaching.” The theme is, “I want to always travel, I want to be renounced of material desires and fully serving Krsna.” And the theme is also, “I am traveling, I am renounced, I am fully engaged in serving Krsna.” Yearning and being—in preaching-consciousness.

From his letters:

“Preaching work means increasing the number of our family members.” (Krsna is our head man in the family, etc.)

“Krsna wants every one of the living entities to go back to home, back to Godhead, so if we can induce even one person to understand that this material world is not meant for our living, our real home is in the spiritual world, and if we can convince this philosophy to even a single person, that is the success of our missionary activities.”

"Our life is very short. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not meant for fulfilling one's personal ambition, but it is a serious movement for the whole world."

"But the more you serve Kṛṣṇa the more you become stronger."

"May Kṛṣṇa give you all protection in the discharge of your transcendental duties."

"It is recommended in Srimad-Bhagavatam that simply by engaging your tongue in the service of Kṛṣṇa that He becomes revealed unto you, so in this way we can understand that all of your questions will be answered more and more as the preaching work progresses."

Inside back cover of the 1972-1975 diary:

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not blind religious fanaticism, nor is it a revolt by some recent upstart, but it is an authorized scientific approach to the matter of our eternal necessity in relation with the Absolute Personality of Godhead, the Supreme Enjoyer. Kṛṣṇa consciousness simply deals with our eternal relationship with Him and the process of discharging our relative duties to Him. Thus, Kṛṣṇa consciousness enables us to achieve to highest perfection of life attainable in the present human form of existence.

NOTES FROM KERALA

Janārdana Mandir

Tonight a tusked, blackish elephant appeared, gold-covered, with a silver Deity atop, a *shenai* player and drummer alongside; we followed in circumambulation around Śrī Janārdana. A popular custom here—for a fee they set off a big firecracker in your honor. Workers are setting up a stage—it all makes me want to go north as soon as possible to join the ISKCON festival. Scheduled to fly the twentieth.

A boy cutting grass in the backyard came close to the window while I was writing.

"Śrīla Prabhupāda?" he said, looking at the *mūrti*. When I turned to him, he continued in broken English, "Oxen . . . I danced . . . *sanātana-dharma*."

“*Pada-yātrā*,” I said.

“Yes, *pada-yātrā*!” Another example of the lasting work performed by *pada-yātrā* devotees wherever they have gone. I saw this also at Ādi-keśava temple—the *pūjārī*s proudly showed us the spot where Lord Caitanya sat and heard *Brahma-saṁhitā*, and a homeowner just outside that temple graciously allowed us onto his property for a picnic, all based on their experience of *pada-yātrā* devotees.

Other signs of *pada-yātrā*: When we pass children and teenagers here, they say, “Hello, what’s your name?” in an impish way. But when we return a greeting, they reply with a hearty, “Hare Kṛṣṇa!” The guesthouse manager told Baladeva that he had joined the *pada-yātrā* at Statue Junction in Trivandrum and walked with it for several kilometers. At the Janārdana temple, the almost-blind doorman, after squinting and seeing that we are devotees, straightens up and welcomes us with a, “Hare Kṛṣṇa.” Devotees say the shopkeeper where we buy bananas was quick to pull out a well-used *Kṛṣṇa* book and say, “*pada-yātrā* Caitanya’s.”

Europeans, mostly hippies, are here at Kovalam and Varkālā. They come for the beaches, cheap rates, and nice weather in January, February, and March. Dr. Sarma calls them “eyesores,” but the local people don’t seem to mind. They’re mostly meat-eaters, fish-eaters. “They don’t know anything about our culture,” said Dr. Sarma, referring to their sex conduct as he looked at a scraggly couple sitting together on the beach. Baladeva asked one blond-bearded man what time the milkman passes by, and the man began to discourse about timelessness: “Time isn’t important.” When we spoke to a girl in another place, she made the same reference to time. Apparently, they come here to escape Him, but Time has His eye on them.

From Baladeva:

The state of Kerala is a thin strip of land along the Arabian Sea “like one continuous village.” You can’t get away from the music. The ISKCON devotees say the way to preach is village to village. Everyone knows you are coming because the word spreads so fast, and they all like to chant with the devotees.

Kerala is one of the poorer states—this seems to be why the religious conversion rate is so high. Christian money builds big churches and takes the beggars off the streets. Oil money from the gulf builds big mosques. It is one of the two states in India that allows cow slaughter (Bengal is the other). Hardly any milksweet shops here. Milk is hard to get. They use coconut oil instead of ghee. We saw skinny cows bound together at the neck and being driven to slaughterhouses, some from hundreds of miles away.

Another difficulty in preaching—the local language, Malayalam, is “ninety percent Sanskrit,” so even the taxi-*wāllas* and young boys know *śloka*s. The ISKCON devotees have to be very expert with fine-tuned śāstric knowledge to discuss with these people, who like to argue. Fortunately, the local people love to read, and so Prabhupāda’s books are sold profusely in Trivandrum from a popular Hare Kṛṣṇa bookstand right on the main shopping street.

From Dattātreyā:

“This morning a middle-aged Muslim man came up to me and stood by while I chanted my rounds. He told me his name was Abdul Kareem, and that he was unemployed. I shrugged and said, ‘So you can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.’

“He asked me if I was Rāma. I did not understand what he meant, and I looked at him in a questioning way. He pointed to the morning sky and said, ‘You are God?’

“‘Dāsa,’ I answered

“‘Oh! Dāsa! Hare Kṛṣṇa!’ he said, and he shook my hand.”

Birds I’ve seen here:

Again, the crows in two varieties, Ceylon house (gray neck) and Jungle (all-black and bigger). They are like the cinema songs, inescapable throughout India. Wherever we go, crows will be there, asserting.

Also saw white cattle egrets, energetically striding beside the oxen in a rice paddy. Down at the beach there is a solitary reef heron who stands at the surf’s edge, facing toward the sea, looking like a grandfather fisherman. Often beside him is a small, white-brown plover who runs in short spurts on little legs.

One living entity is food for another—the plover gets the tiny crabs, the heron stabs at fish. And high above the shore, we saw a buzzard cruising and soaring, occasionally pouncing down for a lizard or a mouse. But if a human being wants to conclude that because nature and *śāstra* dictate one living being is food for another—“So what’s wrong with meat-eating?”—he is checked by Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I heard yesterday in a lecture. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that *jīvo jīvasya jīvanam* refers to animals but doesn’t apply to civilized human beings. If the verse applied to humans, then why not eat our little children or parents? For humans, there is a different standard, and not merely vegetarian but *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*; only then, is there no violence and killing.

Other birds I’ve seen: owlet, myna (reminds me of Māyāpur), some nice parakeets, and other singers who come and go so fast you only see them flash.

From “Sunrise” notebook:

Finishing my thirteenth round—
above the cloud bank,
first sun rays.

Today the ball of fire
rises unimpeded—
green eyes.

Worshiping Kṛṣṇa
through the sun,
chanting while viewing.

Early arrival—
the golden rim
above the blue bank.

With my little grasp
I cannot describe it—
blazing morning sun.

Brāhma-muhūrta Poem

1

On his knees before his master,
he waves the ghee wick flame,
before the smooth tan body
of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Passing the flame
before the Lord in five features
the offering ascending
to the feet of Lord Caitanya,
upward to His calves, hips, chest,
His face, and upraised hands.

To Lord Nityānanda, Advaita Ācārya,
Śrīvasa, and Gadādhara.
To Lord Jagannātha, Subhadra,
and beaming, red-lipped Balarāma,
and to his traveling photo of Rādhā-Dāmodara.

Before the sunrise,
in the best time of the day,
sometimes he thinks of service to be done,
directions so urgent he wants
to put down the *cāmara* and rush
to the worktable to note them down.
But sometimes everything is satisfied
in worship, no thoughts of salvation—
simply to be the worshiper on knees
before Śrīla Prabhupāda.

2

Indian whippoorwill begins.
Sometimes we say the birds are also chanting.
He admits to himself
his devotion to Kṛṣṇa while chanting the names
is as unconscious as the birds'.

Kerala predawn is a good place for *japa*,
in the sandy front yard,

pacing before the tamarind tree,
 while from the nearby Janārdana temple
 a *brāhmaṇa* chants *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*.
 Freshly bathed, marked with Vaiṣṇava *tilaka*,
 he picks up his beadbag and begins.
 This is the sound that will save him.

3

Some nights are sleepless,
 bugs or heat, or the mind is rankling,
 like last night he kept thinking over
 criticism by a demigod worshiper
 who takes Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary god:
 “He is your favorite, but mine is Gaṇeśa.”
 Head tossing on a damp pillow, then dreaming
 that nuclear annihilation was on the way,
 he took up the chanting, finally!

Such nights leave him drained
 but *brāhma-muhūrta* waits.
 Brushing his teeth he plays a tape
 of a *Bhagavad-gītā* reading:
avajānanti mām mūḍhā—
 only fools think Kṛṣṇa is a man.
 Jīva and Viśvanātha give evidence:
 He is the supreme controller
 and the Brahman is His effulgence.

4

How rare in this world
 is knowledge of Kṛṣṇa!
 Only *bhaktas* know the secret,
 as they rise, bathe, and dress for Him,
 rewarder of the early riser,
 giving *darśana* of Himself.

From the hand of the Lord
 comes wealth and power,
 and from His hand comes liberation,

but the devotee simply wants the touch
 as when the Lord brushed away fatigue
 from the *gopīs'* faces in the *rasa* dance.
 "I want the touch of Kṛṣṇa
 early in the morning."

READING ŚRĪ CAITANYA-CANDRĀMṚTA

Verse 2

"One untouched by any piety, completely absorbed in irreligion, who has never received the merciful glance of the devotees or been to any holy places sanctified by them, will still ecstatically dance, loudly sing, and even roll about on the ground when he becomes intoxicated by tasting the nectarean beverage of the transcendental mellows of pure love of God given by Lord Caitanya. Let us therefore glorify that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

The first phrase of this verse starts out with descriptions of a most unqualified person, a Kali-yuga unfortunate. As I read it, I anticipated it would be followed by a phrase that such a person could not appreciate Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I thought it would be similar to the Tenth Canto verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.1.4): *nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād . . .* where the unqualified *paśu-ghnāt* (killer of self and animals) is unable to relish hearing about Kṛṣṇa. But in *Caitanya-candrāmṛta*, the wretch is described—and then we hear that even *he* is ecstatically dancing and chanting in Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

This is the miracle that Prabhupāda's movement performs in the name of Gaura-Nitāi. Let us, therefore, glorify that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who gave out love of God freely without considering who was deserving.

Verse 3

"The most elevated platform of pure love of God is a great mystery which cannot be understood by those attached to fruitive activities, austerities, meditation, mystic yogic performances, renunciation, giving up the results of work, attainment of knowledge, offering prayers to the Lord, or even by those

absorbed in devotional service to Lord Govinda in love of God. By the agency of the chanting of Lord Hari's holy names, that secret of the greatest love of God has now personally appeared on this earth following the appearance of Lord Gaurasundara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Let me glorify that Lord Gaurasundara."

The opening phrase of this verse is filled with the characteristics of religious practices, some of them excellent, such as, "absorbed in devotional service to Lord Govinda in love of God." Yet, the puzzle is that all these good practices cannot reveal the mystery of the most elevated platform of pure love of God. What more is needed?

The special agency not directly mentioned in the opening list of good practices is the chanting of Lord Hari's holy names. The names must be directly mentioned: there is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way (*Bṛhan-nāradya Purāṇa*). Consider any religious practices *without* chanting the holy name—they fall short. Now it is an open secret—following the appearance of Lord Gaurasundara, no sincere devotee will forget the importance of chanting.

Verse 4

"Lord Caitanya is perfectly able to grant the nectar of pure love of Godhead to those who see, touch, glorify, remember, offer respectful obeisances or worship Him, even from a great distance. Let me glorify that merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Is the poet referring to that time of forty-nine years duration when Lord Caitanya walked the earth in His manifested pastimes? Even though he speaks of worshipping Lord Caitanya by seeing, touching, and offering *daṇḍavats*, I don't think he is restricting the Lord's mercy to a brief time period. "Even from a great distance" may also be taken as time—now five hundred years since He manifested His pastimes on earth.

Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself; He appears in His name and pastimes, even today, whenever His pure devotees gather in His service. Even in the days of His manifested pastimes He

used to expand Himself for the pleasure of His devotees. When He stayed in Pūrī, He traveled daily to Bengal to eat the offerings prepared for Him by His mother, Śacīdevī. He would dance in the *kīrtanas* held by Lord Nityānanda, and during Ratha-yātrā He joined seven different *kīrtana* parties at once. He is still perfectly able to grant the nectar of love of God to those who worship Him, despite the distance of time and place.

The living quality of devotion transcends time. Even when He was present, some people failed to appreciate Him. The real question is, Do you want Him? Do you want to serve Him? Do you chant His name like a child crying for its mother? Do you dedicate yourself to take all risks in serving His *saṅkīrtana* movement? If you do, He can grant you love of God any time, anywhere, any place.

March 18

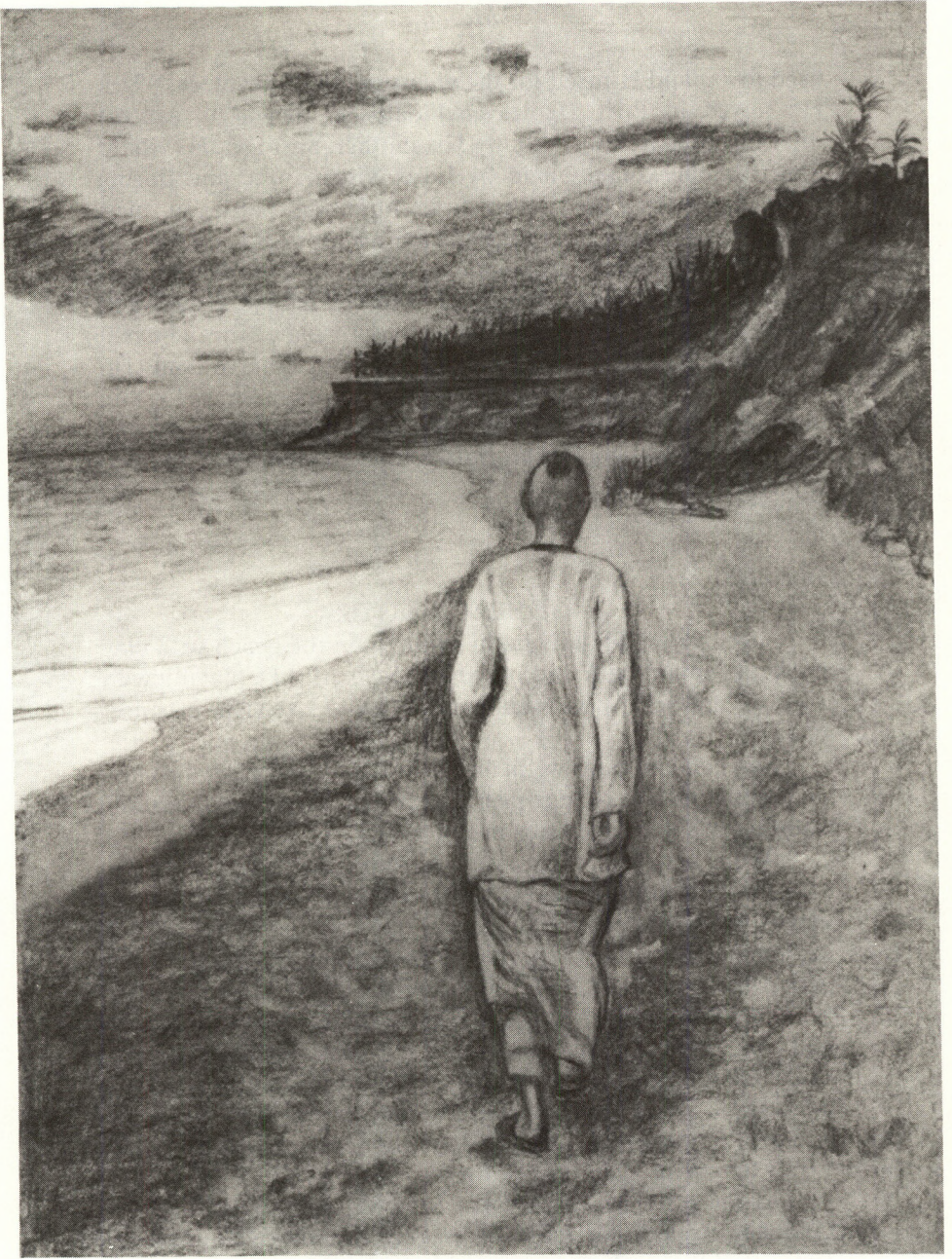
LAST BEACH NOTES

After a week of daily noon sunbath on the beach with clay pack and spinal bath and playing in the surf (like playing with a giant, the ocean) we went tonight for a last visit, a sunset picnic.

Sun ball lowers, as we sit on the beach, honoring *prasādam*—plantains and hot orange-peel nectar—in the peaceful sea-air, and talk of God and birds and flowers.

As the sun sits on the water and sinks, devotees begin talking about primitive religions, ancient Greek and native American—"Are their gods the demigods of Vedic literature?" Yes, I said, but I didn't want to pursue it in detail. I like to repeat exactly what I've heard, and that is also the qualification of *guru*. So I mentioned Lord Brahmā, who is the creator, the highest god conceivable by many religions. One time Brahmā was approached by his son Nārada, who praised him as the creator. Nārada said, Sometimes you are in meditation, so is there any god greater than you? Lord Brahmā immediately admitted yes, I only act as an agent to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

As the sun goes down, talk of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I said, No religious teacher, whether Mohammed, Jesus, Buddha, or Kṛṣṇa, ever said we should stay here in this world and try to be happy. Some of the weak followers of these



Varkālā, South India.

teachers minimize the “back to Godhead” aspect of their founders’ teachings—but this is actually the main instruction: Renounce this world and follow the Prophet or Son or *Tathagata*. And this instruction is easily available in the highest theistic science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Rosy horizon, soft sandy ground, infinite-like expanse of sky and sea, breeze on our bodies. The sunset beach is a good place to appreciate Kṛṣṇa in everything, and especially in our utterance.

Now the half moon is straight overhead in light blue sky. That moon is daily waxing, and will be full in a week.

Brāhma-muhūrta Poem

5

He is leaving this place,
yet wherever he goes
he can find a flower,
there will always be a leaf,
at least water,
and a predawn hour.

The next place? Maybe quieter,
no radio at two A.M.,
maybe more temperate,
but no place is all-pleasing to the body;
he tries not to look for it.

Suitcases 'round the altar,
a silver briefcase for Prabhupāda.
Maybe he'll be stopped
going through security,
like in Washington, D.C., she
glanced at her x-ray and exclaimed,
“There's a person in there!”

Thoughts on a travel day
tend toward the end:
he'll try that backyard again,
one more time to give to Him.

THINGS THAT ENTHUSED ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

14. Prabhupāda saw the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement fighting a war against *māyā*. On the one hand, he envisioned great victories and was confident that it could transform whole nations on the basis of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Yet because *māyā* has such a strong grip on the foolish *jīvas*, Prabhupāda was also gratified to make even small battle-gains. He was happy to recover a single soul. And he could appreciate the inconceivable powerful gain in distributing even a single copy of *Back to Godhead* magazine, or the mere mention in a city newspaper of the names, “Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Evicted—
he explains Kṛṣṇaloka
in neighbor's garage.

Sick in the morning
he travels anyway.

At the airport
he looks around—
“Where is Aniruddha dāsa?”

Vṛndāvana sunrise,
walking on the road—
Prabhupāda's *sādhū* beard.

READING

Important proofs for the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavān, are contained in the second chapter of *Ādi-līlā*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Jīva Gosvāmī has described the three features of the Absolute in his *Bhagavata-sandarbhā*, with special attention given to Bhagavān. Bhagavān is the highest concept and includes *ānanda*, or full bliss, which is lacking in Paramātmā and Brahman. If you want “proof” of God for your own satisfaction and for explaining to others, this is it. Study it and accept it. If you want something else, then there are other philosophies on the market.

I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda on a tape (town hall lecture, Melbourne, July 1974) stating that the preliminary requirement

in spiritual life is to have some anxiety to know God. That's all that is needed in the beginning. That faith brings us to hear from the bona fide theistic source, and to avoid other atheistic or mixed explanations.

Other explanations are incomplete. For example, to understand the oneness of the individual soul and the supreme spirit, Brahman, is correct transcendental knowledge, but it *omits* important information about the relationship of the Supreme and the individual soul. When we choose Bhagavān realization as our goal, it is not choosing the propaganda of one sect as opposed to many other sects—but it is the fullest acceptance of the Absolute Truth.

If one says, "But Bhagavān realization is *theistic*," that can hardly be an objection. We want theism—we need pure theism *if we want to know transcendental knowledge*. If we prefer atheism or agnosticism, then we choose to remain in the darkness of material life. Choosing to stay with a speculative, nontheistic philosophy, or choosing to stay on the lower platform of Brahman and Paramātmā realization, is like choosing darkness. Therefore, our motive for desiring to go all the way in Bhagavān realization is the motivation of truth seeking, which remains unsatisfied until we reach the ultimate goal.

OLD DIARIES

The diary I just completed commenting on covers the years 1972–1975. But now I find a separate notebook containing entries for one month, June–July, 1973.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's system was to call a different G.B.C. man to be with him for one month. In addition to his regular traveling staff of servant and secretary and Sanskrit editor, there was always a visiting G.B.C. guest who came for direct training and association with Śrīla Prabhupāda. This June–July 1973 book (fifty-seven pages) is my record of that time.

Being a "guest" to the traveling party was a special treat and did not produce such a crisis for me as when I was Prabhupāda's direct and permanent servant. I knew I would go back to my U.S. zonal duties after the month, and I simply soaked up as much philosophy and inspiration as I could in Prabhupāda's personal presence.

The diary is mostly a close report of Prabhupāda's words from personal conversations and morning walks. I joined him while he was in Mayāpur. After a few days he was scheduled to go to Calcutta, and then maybe to England.

June 18, 1973

If you preach to the materialistic class of men but after preaching you cannot draw something tangible from them, then your preaching is half-successful. They should give money or become a member. Materialistic men are not interested in Kṛṣṇa or Bhagavatam but in family comforts—nice apartment, beautiful wife, children, etc. So if they can give some of their hard-earned money . .

Preach. If you can't preach go on chanting. (Prabhupada said) at least in his books the word Kṛṣṇa appears about 4 times on each page. So even if the rest is rubbish, at least the name Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa is there.

He observed hundreds of flies buzzing around the light. The pilot and the machine are one. There are no collisions although hundreds are flying together—that is God's arrangement. When man flies and there are even 2 planes they have to be very careful. They are flying to the light means they are attracted to death. Just like materialistic building skyscraper, etc. But he doesn't know what will happen at death. Henry Ford, etc., had to die and yet they all want to become like Henry Ford.

There is no literature like Bhagwatam. Someone was surprised to hear that there are 60 volumes about Kṛṣṇa.

We cannot glorify Kṛṣṇa. He is already glorified by Ananta—thousands of heads for thousands of years. We are tiny, we cannot glorify, but that sincere attempt to glorify is pleasing to Kṛṣṇa. He sees, "Oh, he's trying to do something." Like Hanuman and the spider. Hanuman was throwing in big stones. The spider was only flicking dust. But Ram said he is doing all he can. Not that "he is not doing anything to help construct the bridge"—but "he is doing what he can. He is a Vaiṣṇava." Don't think you can become a great devotee like Rādhārāṇī or Lord Caitanya. They are His personal expansions. That is not possible. But this sincere attempt is appreciated.

Proverb: If you are thinking whether I shall eat or not today,

then don't eat. But if you eat, eat in the winter season.

*If you are thinking whether or not to go or not, then don't go.
But when evacuating, when you must go you go.*

Calcutta used to be a very attractive city, aristocratic, attracting Europeans, but since British have left Indians have mismanaged it.

I was in Dallas *gurukula* when I received the telegram to join Śrīla Prabhupāda in Māyāpur. Jagadīśa dāsa, Prabhupāda's G.B.C. secretary for the previous month, had signed the telegram stating that I should come as soon as possible. Within a few hours I was on a plane to New York. In New York I obtained my first U.S. passport. Viṣṇujana Swami went with me to the Manhattan passport office and vouched that he personally knew me as a U.S. citizen for the last five years. But when they asked him my name, he didn't know! "His spiritual name is Satsvarūpa, that's all I know." We all laughed at the joke and they granted me the passport.

I flew alone to India. On the plane I met an Indian man with a Ph.D. in chemistry and when we arrived in Calcutta we shared a cab. Seeing the squalor and congestion of the city, intensified by night with candles in the outdoor street shops, animals and people in moving shadows, threw me into a first-class culture shock.

I arrived at ISKCON, 3 Albert Road, about one in the morning and lay down on the floor next to Pañcadraviḍa Swami. Soon it was time to rise, and I was out for the first morning train to Krishnanagar. I crossed on a boat to Māyāpur holding my *daṇḍa* wrapped in a pink carrying case. At Māyāpur, Bhavānanda Goswami escorted me before Prabhupāda, who seemed pleased that I had come quickly at his request to be with him in his beloved Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. He said that with me there, now there were five *sannyāsīs* present. He asked me what I thought of Calcutta. When I told him, he replied with the statement I recorded in the diary, "Used to be an attractive city."

And so I settled in the room next to his, official secretary for the month, learning for the first time how to take his dictation and type his correspondence, how to take the heat of the Bengal summer, and very much enlivened by the direct association of my spiritual master.

As for the diary notes, starting June eighteen, they are immediate, written just after being with him. I would go from his room to mine and jot down what I could remember, or sometimes I would make a few notes in his presence. Usually his words appear without quotes or a "Prabhupāda said," but they are the direct words of His Divine Grace.

*Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is**
His Divine Grace

Starting with His Divine Grace,
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
sitting under a picture of Govinda.
Prabhupāda's knee is bare, like Govinda's,
both persons wear flower garlands,
Kṛṣṇa the Lord, speaker of the *Gītā*,
and Prabhupāda, "the greatest exponent
of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world."

The photo was taken at Laguna Beach,
where he stayed for only one day.
He was always traveling:
The Preface written in Australia,
the purports written mostly in New York,
and now he has gone back to Govinda,
leaving us the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Dear Prabhupāda, let us read His book,
with your exact translations,
your personal ecstasies
of *Śrī Gītāpaniṣad*.
This is the way to Gopāla Kṛṣṇa:
The only way to freedom
from birth and death.

Śrī Pañca-tattva

He brought this picture to America,
placed it on his table,

*These poems correspond to the illustrations in the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust's unabridged edition of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (second printing).

offered Them incense,
 guided his artists, "Paint
 Lord Caitanya for the storefront."
 As soon as it was framed,
 he placed it on the wall and said,
 "No more nonsense in this room—
 Lord Caitanya is here."
 As we study the *Gītā*
 chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa
 with Śrīla Prabhupāda,
 we are with Lord Caitanya,
 surrounded by His principal associates.

Plate #1

For blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra,
 Sañjaya, with mystic vision,
 sees and retells
 what's happening on the battlefield.

He points to his seeing-heart
 and we also can see
 Kṛṣṇa driving the horses,
 Arjuna on the chariot.
 But how can he see from so far away?
 And why is the other man blind?

The *Gītā* is like that—
 some see clearly, by the grace of Vyāsa,
 and some are so blind
 they think of Kurukṣetra
 as a symbol for the body,
 and when Sañjaya points out warriors
 they think he means the senses.

The blind king frets
 in fearful opposition:
 "Will the influence
 of the holy place defeat me?
 Can I actually hope to win
 with Kṛṣṇa against me?"

To be in his shoes,
even while grasping the royal scepter
who could be peaceful?

Plate #2

Enemies of Kṛṣṇa,
Duryodhana and Droṇa.
Both are strong men,
heavy swords,
and they fight with honor.

Droṇa, you have erred,
said Duryodhana—you should not
have taught secrets
to the son of Drupada
who opposes us today.
So don't make more mistakes—
like your biggest blunder—
teaching Arjuna,
and don't be soft with the Pāṇḍavas.

Droṇācārya heard with tolerance.
He won't be soft,
but neither does he regret—
teaching those who now oppose him.
Life is meant for fighting—
for teaching fighting—
& for dying in fighting—
and this is the place for it
against Lord Kṛṣṇa
at Kurukṣetra.

March 19

The hotel manager's voice echoing in the hallway. He is eager to get us out and anxious whether we have damaged anything. Dr. S. is catching a plane tonight to Madras. We go tomorrow to Bombay, and then in a day or two to Calcutta, then Māyāpur by the twenty-third or possibly the twenty-second.

I stayed a half-hour in noon sunlight—feeling some pressure now in the head from that. All the men in our party are well-tanned. Now we have a one-and-a-half-hour car ride to Trivandrum through the villages. Splash head with water one more time. Baladeva comes in: “They are just tying down the trunk.” He takes Prabhupāda *mūrti* out. Jagannātha Svāmī is already in the pen box. Goodbye, Varkālā, I was just getting to know your bashful, spotted owletes, your mynas with their white-patch wings. We are moving back into the ISKCON orbit where there are also birds and flowers. Let’s see if this bird can fly. Drop him from the nest and see. At least he’s in better shape than last year.

Trivandrum

The ISKCON temple building is like our temple in Santo Domingo, humble on a standard with the city, but with quite a few rooms. They have published twelve small books. Mahāsundara dāsa, the vice-president, told me they have a book club and the members like to see lots of books coming out. They have published *Teachings of Queen Kuntī* in several paperback volumes, and *Science of Self-realization* in several volumes. They had to reduce the size of the kitchen to accommodate for more book storage—exciting BBT spirit. Now a famous Malayalam poetess Balamani Amma is translating Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into Malayalam.

A DREAM

I had a dream that miscreants were exploiting innocent people in society. In one part of the dream, the society was ISKCON—three demons were misrepresenting the philosophy and violently attacking devotees. I watched from a hill, and the challenge was whether I could do anything about it. At one point, in a public gathering of devotees the three *asuras* tore apart some stairs and threw them onto devotees, but then they immediately mingled among the devotees in an imitation of blissful friendliness, shaking hands and trying to act like they were innocent of what they had just done. They assumed that the devotees were so naive and spaced-out in their blissful devotional service that they wouldn’t even notice that these rogues



A Kṛṣṇa Deity in Trivandrum.

were tearing apart ISKCON and committing violence on its members.

Then I saw abuse on a wider scale. A college campus town was going crazy in a spirit of “do your own thing.” I could see from an elevated place like a hilltop as the madness reached an intense point. I saw a young man walk off a cliff to suicide. A loud noise was rising louder and louder, and we discovered it was a number of cars racing madly toward collision. Here also, demons were stirring things up to the highest pitch, “preaching” that nothing had any meaning and one could do whatever one wanted. In the colleges all classes had stopped and people were just wandering around spaced-out on drugs. Anyone could have sex with anyone and anyone could do anything he or she liked. Some of the more passive people just sat around in a daze, watched television or did nothing. But others were indulging in violence and destruction. And some were making the active propaganda that nothing had any meaning and anything could be done.

Thinking about the dream

By the end of this dream the real challenge to me was whether I could do anything about it. I could see through the dangerous voidism propaganda, and so I was obliged to go and speak against it, even though it was dangerous for me to do so. I woke feeling the challenge. I know the answer—I cannot abandon society, whether it is ISKCON Society or a town or city where I am assigned to preach, or the world. Prabhupāda did not teach us to escape from human society.

Of course, I have not discovered anything new in this dream. But I don’t think ISKCON Society is so badly affected as I dreamt. There are in the world, however, such demons who would certainly like to attack and dismantle ISKCON. Even in Kṛṣṇa’s time, sometimes a demon entered among the cowherd boys dressed as one of them, or the demon assumed the form of a cow to get among the devotees. This was the case, for example, of Pralambhāsura, who disguised himself as a devotee, and Vatsāsura, who disguised himself as a calf. In both cases Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma immediately understood who they were. So I have to do my bit in ISKCON, not thinking that I am a great

reformer, the only one who sees danger, but I have to do my best. It is healthy that in ISKCON there is a pluralistic element, a feeling that even the top leadership may be reformed, a feeling for responsibility by all the devotees of Prabhupāda. This pluralism has already been established, and I have to take my particular place in it, seeking for balance in ISKCON by representing what I think is best, and yet accepting the final direction of the designated authority, the G.B.C.

In the larger society, I also have to do my bit, although I cannot expect to change the main force of Kali-yuga. But any foothold, even against the big demons, is appreciated by Prabhupāda. Moreover, that is also the path of one's best interest: Work for Kṛṣṇa and take on risks and troubles. I must not forget that this is the goal of my physical recovery and rejuvenation, to get better and reenter my *prabhu-datta-deśa*. I plan to do it gradually, so that I can have long-term effectiveness, but I cannot wait too long. It is good to have some of the anxieties that Kṛṣṇa's son Pradyumna had when he left the battlefield. He was afraid people would call him a eunuch or a coward, and he himself out of self-respect was intensely anxious. But in his case, the charioteer explained to him that it was not wrong, according to the etiquette of a *kṣatriya*, that the charioteer remove the wounded warrior from the battlefield, as long as both charioteer and warrior would reenter. In the case of Pradyumna, the charioteer spoke rightly, but Pradyumna was also right in that they had to return as soon as they were fit.

Everything I saw in the dream is already happening much worse than I saw it. Suicides occur every minute, people commit the worst excesses of animalism, and the demons murder each other in the name of different ideologies. Nor do the people have faith that a strong government can protect them, because the governments are going their own mad way. And neither do the people have faith that strong religious authority can guide them, because the religions have also been implicated in hypocrisy and in quest for worldly powers. So the demons are having a field day in Kali-yuga. As Prabhupāda has written, a ten percent of aggressive demons are misleading the ninety percent. A devotee cannot stand by but has to act on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and *guru*. Even if one thinks oneself tiny, he should engage himself in the battle to save souls. If he can convince even one person to become a pure devotee, that is a worthwhile gain.

Brāhma-muhūrta Poem

6

Sages at Naimiṣāraṇya began this early,
and Lord Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā
rose from His royal bed
to meditate upon Himself
in *brāhma-muhūrta*.

The whole day is what counts,
not just a single morning prayer:
Chanting, and then out for business,
like today, flying to Bombay.
But it all starts early,
even before the sun mounts,
we place our arrow in the bow
with pure morning strength
we aim our shot to last
until nightfall.
Tomorrow, again
the auspicious chance renewed.

March 20, Padmānabha Svāmī Mandir

Grand, ancient Viṣṇuism, South India. Into the sanctum sanctorum, same as other South Indian temples. We bought “*ārcana* tickets” and got to view the main Deity closely while a *pūjārī* chanted one hundred eight names of Viṣṇu on our behalf. We got the privileges we paid for, but they were less friendly than at Ādi-keśava.

At the first altar: Mahā-Viṣṇu in dim light, His right hand protecting the Śiva-*liṅga*; His profile. Second altar: Brahmā on the top of the lotus. Third altar: His lotus feet.

We saw wonderful old paintings, many of them depicting *kṛṣṇa-līlā*—one of Kṛṣṇa lying on top of Balarāma (Viṣṇu and Śeṣa, but as playful young boys), with mother Yaśodā looking down on Them with motherly tolerance and amazement.

A Nṛsiṃha Deity is worshiped in a separate little temple, and Kṛṣṇa also in a small temple of His own, as Pārtha-sārathi.

They have guards with sticks and yellow belts. “The king is coming,” they say, and hurry us along. The Mahārāja of Trivandrum is due here in half an hour for his daily morning

darśana. The temple is his private property, a leftover from the Rāja period. Now the guard claps his hands. He wants us to move along, no more writing.

From the official booklet of Anantasayanam (Śrī Padma-nābha Svāmī temple):

There is mention in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (Canto 10, Chapter 79) that Bala Rama visited "Syandoorapuram" in the course of His pilgrimage and the belief is that this refers to the shrine of Anantasayanam in "Tiru Anantapuram" (Trivandrum). Similarly in the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* also there is a reference to "Syandoorapura." All these lend considerable weight to the widespread belief that this temple is of great age and has been held in veneration over the centuries as an important shrine of Mahā-Viṣṇu.

A Trivandrum newspaper, *The Hindu*, has a TV listing for 10:45 P.M., "Chaitanya Mahaprabhu," a broadcast from New Delhi. On the next page of the same newspaper are two different articles written in the spirit that "all saints are the same." One article has the headline, "Saints Belong to All Religions: President." While inaugurating the Guru Nanak Deva Chair of comparative religion and philosophy at the Guwahati University, the President of India, Mr. Zail Singh, said, "The great saints, *gurus*, and *ācāryas*, including Guru Nanak and Saint Sankara Dev, had left us the message of universal brotherhood in their teachings." Well said. The president, of course, is looking for unity among Sikhs and Hindus, and that is also his duty. Another article, entitled, "Spiritual Teachings are Immortal," reports on a lecture given in Madras by a *paṇḍita* praising the *Peria Purāṇam*, a collection of biographical poems of sixty-three Śaivite saints. It's nice to see that talks about "saints" appear in the newspaper as regular items, but I sense the typical Indian mentality, "All paths are the same." For them, Lord Caitanya is just another saint.

March 21, Bombay

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. I am writing this letter as an attempt to speak before you, since I

am now seated before you in your quarters at Bombay. Your *mūrti* is mostly in silhouette as I look up to you, the morning sky brightening behind you.

You know everything about me, so I won't try to make a big report or explanation. I also know what you want me to do, so I won't ask many questions. I will be going today to join with my Godbrothers at your Māyāpur, for the five-hundredth anniversary celebration of Lord Caitanya. The devotees are making great strides in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India and elsewhere, and I think you are pleased to hear it. But also there is—as one G.B.C. Godbrother expressed it today—“going to be a real battle at the G.B.C. meetings this year.” The “battle” is disturbing, but also, I think, it is a sign of health. Everyone is concerned that your wishes for a strong ISKCON be carried out far into the future. But since they have different opinions how it best can be done, there are political debates.

The Hindi translation of the one-volume *Prabhupāda* biography has just been published. I am fortunate that you have used me as the instrument to make the *Prabhupāda* biography, and we all hope you will gradually be widely recognized as one of the truly great saints of India.

Now I am writing this journal. I hope it pleases you.

And now, I have to enter more into the battle of preaching and personal relationships. I request you to give me the courage to carry out my duties and not be attached to bodily pain, mental worry, or too much inclination for what *I* want to do in your service. Please let me play my part in upholding your instructions.

Your eternal servant,
Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

P.S. Seems like I'm determined to go on writing, so let it be always about you personally and your teachings. I am no poet-scholar; I am *Prabhupāda dāsa*. Let me not forget. Just as your presence is strong here in your Bombay quarters, reminding me that I am *yours*, so I hope I'll always be close and never try to imitate you or to jump over like a monkey. Even if the rest of what I write is rubbish, at least the name Śrīla *Prabhupāda* appears four times on a page.

6:00 P.M., Calcutta

On getting off the airplane, the devotee before me touched the cement ground with his right hand and then touched his head. I thought of doing it, but didn't—I should have. So I spoke it to Dāmodara, "This is Bengal, Lord Caitanya's land."

Bursts of "Hare Kṛṣṇa" from the taxi drivers. The one we picked wants to take us straight to Māyāpur: "Why waste money in a hotel?"

"But one of us has to rest," I tell him, and he wants to argue about it.

Brāhma-muhūrta Poem

7

Time, place, and person
determine how to act
even for an *avatāra*.

The place molds him:
three floors above Calcutta car noise,
sitting on a broken chair—
before a painting of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

As a person, he is conditioned:
gripes of a sleepless night;
where is the eternal realm?

Tinkling bell in left hand,
flame held to incense
singing in a soft voice,
looking on the forms
of Prabhupāda & Jagannātha:
by worship he transcends.

He doesn't offer *pūjā* to Lord Buddha
'tho his ivory *mūrti* is in the shop below,
nor does he go directly
to Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana
or Hayagrīva *avatāra*.
But he worships Prabhupāda,
killer of the miseries

protector of the *Vedas* from the flood,
giver of his *līlā* for remembrance.

While I took a spinal bath in the sunshine on the roof of the hotel, Dattātreya read aloud from *Audarya Dhāma*. It is a booklet about Navadvīpa, based on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Navadvīpa Mahātmya*. I became blissful hearing the nectar of Lord Caitanya, His associates, and His holy places. Yoga Pīṭha, Srivāsāṅgam, Advaita Ācārya Bhavan, Gadādhara Aṅgam, Braja Patan, where Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī stayed—one after another I relished the descriptions of these *dhāmas*. I hope I will be able to go there with devotees in a few days. But even if one can't make the journey, hearing is very effective.

Our plan is to start tomorrow morning about five A.M. for the most vital *tīrtha*, ISKCON's Mayapur Chandrodaya Mandir. Over a thousand devotees have already gathered there, and many more are arriving daily. Calcuttans are impressed. Mrs. Bannerjee, a switchboard operator at the hotel, said that maybe in her next life she'll be fortunate enough to go to Māyāpur for such a big festival, but this year, there just wasn't enough room.

March 23, 12:30 A.M.

ISKCON may be compared to a river; although there are different, minor tributaries and even countercurrents, I should try to describe its depth and direction as a whole. The river of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is heading back to Godhead: it is purifying itself; it is directed by God Himself; and it is flowing with inevitable power.

I am going to the festival as a pilgrim, an ISKCON devotee. I'm duty-bound to make my contribution, and attend the meetings for working out ISKCON's problems, to share my realizations. But what usually happens to me when I attend such functions is my sense of self becomes imperiled. I sometimes think I am drowning in terms of my own individuality when I am surrounded by so many other powerful individuals. Also I tend to become in anxiety about the physical situation, when there are many people demanding to see me, and when my health breaks down. So it is a challenge. There is also always the hope that at an important spiritual function one can gain

some purification by going through it in an introspective way. This may also be sometimes harrowing, a process of austerity and purification. I hope to look within myself, see what faults are there, and make the most of this spiritual pilgrimage.

Calcutta

Woke with headache, but a car ride in fresh morning air has improved my condition. I very much wish I could be better. Anxiety comes not from the meetings or from crowds at the festival—it's the headache itself. I think, "Why is it here? Why does it keep coming?" I have to try my various health tricks to curb it, and if they fail, then surrender and don't attempt full-time participation. Accept it and adjust.

Māyāpur

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Ācāryadeva, Tridaṇḍipāda, and I gathered together to talk about writing. TKG's play, *The Drama of Lord Jagannātha*, is a great success. It was performed last night by a professional Bengali troupe; tomorrow night an English-speaking production. These Godbrothers also encouraged me about *Journal and Poems*. (If they didn't like it, it might give me doubts, and yet I have to have my own deep conviction.) Each Kṛṣṇa conscious writer is expressing himself in a particular form; we are each virtually first-time pioneers in our areas. TKG has written the first devotional play in the English language following all the strict rules of Sanskrit drama as given by Rūpa Gosvāmī. Ācāryadeva's field is philosophy and literature. He says he wants to root out the deepest misconceptions in the Western mind that prevent intelligent people from taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He's preparing a book on Western philosophy.

Ācāryadeva gave some constructive criticism of *Journal and Poems*, Book One. He said he thought there was a little too much worry expressed about what Godbrothers would think of my writing. Another criticism: too much of yourself. Ācāryadeva gave an example of this in my poem where I said, "And if you don't like/ a journal and poems unrhymed,/ then pass me by." Somehow he thought that was too much talking of one's own self, not Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This borders on what he calls a "jazzy" tone.

He also had some comments about the confessional tone of the writing, admitting weaknesses and difficulties. He brought it up as a question more than as a definite criticism. He said, Is there a point where as *gurus* we will lack dignity and create doubts if we present ourselves in this way? He acknowledged that great *ācāryas* have done this, but he says their presentation is very conclusive and universal. He knows that my own disciples will of course accept that I am making these statements in the mood of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. But he thinks in general that I should be careful not to establish that kind of relationship with my disciples or to preach in general like that. Again, he asks, To what extent is it a disciplined art form, and to what extent am I just coming out with what I want to say? He said that the tendency to confess is a good one and can be powerfully used, but it should be compressed and worked into an art form.

He also said that art tends to elevate and universalize the humble expression. Without discipline in the writing and without art, the humility does not come through properly.

After the meeting I became thoughtful about these things. As is natural, I rationalized to defend my own position. However, I think these criticisms will set in in a deeper way and in an abiding way within my thought process, which will be helpful. They did encourage me to go on and develop more in the journal form.

March 24

I noticed that *guru-pūjā* was being held on the roof of the opposite building for Jayapatāka Swami and also for Harikeśa Swami, so we had a version of *guru-pūjā* here. Disciples of mine from different countries gathered, I led a small *kīrtana* and then spoke. I asked them to get the full benefit of the festival by imbibing the inspiration and also preparing themselves to return to regular duty in their *prabhu-datta-deśa*. While I was speaking, I noticed different disciples and thought of their problems and their individual natures. It inspired in me a yearning to be fully fit physically to be able to deal with all my different services. I made a prayer for health, for that *desire* to return to full service. Kṛṣṇa can do as He pleases, grant me ability to show some other direction.

A meeting with Gaura-govinda Swami of Orissa. He has translated the one-volume *Prabhupāda* biography into Oṛiyā, and he presented me with a copy of the book. He is a wonderful example of a steady BBT worker, translating and printing Prabhupāda's books and a monthly magazine. He has a vow not to eat each day until he first finishes a certain amount of translation.

Just before the *maṅgala-ārati* in the temple, I noticed Nirañjana Prabhu. I turned to him and said, "I wasn't sure whether you would be able to come. I was just thinking of you and the legal case." He smiled and said that they recently had two good decisions in their favor. It was a lift to hear this just before the curtains opened, and we saw the Deities. Either way, in happiness or distress, we surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

A meeting with Pṛthu Prabhu. He told me about his wonderful experience with the Irish devotees in Jagannātha Purī, where they stayed for a week.

After lunch Brahmānanda dropped in, and we spoke about nature cure and about his taking on a teaching position in Africa. He said that we should do more than teach cooking classes in universities, and so he is eager to do that.

One of the devotees gave his opinion that there was too much commercialism on the *dhāma*. He referred to the selling of different kinds of foods, like veggie-burgers, pizzas, ice cream, sodas, all of which are selling for what he thought were high prices. He also complained that there weren't enough spiritual programs for the devotees. I reminded him that devotees had already gone on *parikrama* and now they were just spending rest days, but that there were also seminars. Today, for example, at four o'clock there are two simultaneous seminars, one on college preaching and one on Deity worship.

When I think of "the main river of ISKCON," I certainly don't think of it as being commercial sales of veggie-burgers. There are impurities, but there are also impurities in the Ganges, and yet it remains pure. Prabhupāda said that Ganges's worshipers simply push aside the impure things like stool, industrial waste, or even dead bodies, and they bathe in the Gan-

ges and get the purification. ISKCON's mainstream is pure because it follows Prabhupāda's basic instructions—chanting the holy name, following the four rules, following the G.B.C., following the temple program, preaching, book distribution, worshiping Kṛṣṇa. These elements are intact. One can be sarcastic or bitter about the wrong things or see it as corruption, or see it from a historical point of view, as professors do, and see inevitable corruption entering new religions. But we are within this movement, and our responsibility is to have faith and also to work to purify it. Despite commercialism and complaints, a thousand devotees are gathering from countries around the world, from faraway places like Australia, Europe, South and North America, and throughout India. This is certainly a testimony to the potency and vitality of ISKCON. The devotees have not come here for commercial reasons or for sense gratification, even if they are indulging in it somewhat once they're here. We can look at the bright side. As when Prabhupāda wrote his letter to Lynne Ludwig, "They have given everything, even their lives to Kṛṣṇa—and that is never a mistake" (SSR, "Protecting Oneself From Illusion").

In the holy *dhāma*,
 one summons up energies
 beyond pain and pleasure.
 Don't stand dumb,
 focus on the Deity
 you're in the *kīrtana* of His name!
 Go to the life beyond
 bones, flesh, and the wavering mind.
 Use more heart.

March 25

Last night I attended the full performance of TKG's play. It is a very Kṛṣṇa conscious contribution to the festival.

Another meeting with about fifty of my disciples. I spoke about positive thinking and told them that they should see the mainstream of ISKCON as deep and pure, moved by Lord Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa. They should represent their *guru* by being positive in their own devotional service.

Another thing about the oncoming G.B.C. meeting is that one is ultimately very much surrendered to this group. For example, Prabhupāda had the power to change one's life, to send one to a different part of the world, to give one a different work assignment. We did as he said, like soldiers before a general.

One may have a certain position, inhabit a certain building in a certain country, and yet all that could be subject to change by the *guru's* order, sending one off on a different mission. Similarly, the G.B.C. holds this authority. They may possibly change the structure of the Society, which may personally affect me and my occupation and whole outlook on life. On one hand it seems threatening, but it's also an opportunity to surrender. I feel an anticipation—anything is possible. Just as when one went before Prabhupāda, so any service instruction might be given after consultation with all my G.B.C. Godbrothers.

Sat together with Lokanātha Swami. He showed me photos and we spoke of *pada-yātrā*. He seemed really inspired and happy to traverse over India to all the holy places. He mentioned the places they were visiting, and just to hear them—Allahabad, Hardwar, Jārikhaṇḍa Forest—was inspiring.

Lokanātha Mahārāja also asked my advice on how to conduct himself as a *guru*. I offered him the suggestion that we have to be careful not to become too proud. We can't think that we are so absolute that *whatever* occurs to us is perfect and directly coming from Kṛṣṇa. Rather, we should consider ourselves ordinary devotees and consult with others. I hope someday that I can also go on tour in India and write about it.

8:30 P.M.

It's the night before the five-hundredth anniversary. The loudspeakers from the nearby *maṭhas* are rattling off in Bengali, sounds like announcements or lectures. Every once in awhile I recognize a word like "Caitanya Mahāprabhu." Our Māyāpur ISKCON campus is filled with thousands of guests and devotees. At this moment, Gurudeva's play is being performed, and there's plenty of other activity in other places. Colored lights draped against the building flash out the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. In all directions you can hear sounds like bicycle horns, recorded music, speeches, and announcements, and you can see different

lighting effects like running neon lights and circular lights. It's no Times Square, New York City, because if you look in another direction you can see darkness and the agricultural plain. But still, for this normally quiet area, right now the air is filled with celebrative vibrations and many thousands of pilgrims are walking on Bhaktisiddhānta Road.

The clouds are covering the moon. It's like the moon is waiting for an appearance.

March 26, Gaura-pūrṇimā

I wake at 3:00 A.M. and sit up thinking, "Who am I on Gaura-pūrṇimā day?" I can recite the answer, that I'm spirit soul, eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa. But as a *realization*, it's something I'm still approaching.

The day begins in relative quietness. I can hear crickets, whose chirps were obliterated last night by greater sounds. The electric fan running in the room is distinct. And now I hear the rustle of a devotee's sleeping bag in the next room. But as yet, no *kīrtanas* and car honks. There is an engine running somewhere over in the plains, maybe something for irrigation. There are shocking-bright fluorescent green lights of a nearby temple ground. It's time for me to get up.

Chanting *japa* on the roof:
Full moon.

By 5:00 A.M. the moon is still bright in the sky. This isn't the Gaura-pūrṇimā moon. That will appear tonight. Yet it looks like a perfectly round moon this morning. We are not glorifying or celebrating the moon itself, but the moon is the bright symbol noting the celebration of Lord Caitanya's appearance. The moon is beaming on this occasion. And the moon is also symbolic, as used in Lord Caitanya's own metaphor—the waxing moon of the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Although this 1986 moon will start to wane after tomorrow and the momentous noting of the five-hundredth anniversary will change into the five hundredth and first year of the Caitanya era, nevertheless, the transcendental moon that Lord Caitanya described will continue to wax throughout ten thousand years of Kali-yuga darkness.

Brāhma-muhūrta Poem

8

“I don’t understand”
 the astrologer said
 “Why you live so poor—
 you are the son of the richest man.”

He knows where to dig
 for the hidden wealth;
 avoiding the demons of three directions,
 he digs in the East.

But his shovel
 is scraping rock.
 He needs the help
 of Viṣṇu, or Garuḍa.

“Will I find the treasure
 in this lifetime?
 How many mornings remain?”
 He prays for the taste;
 he prays for a future state.

But the day is with us,
 dawn has begun—
 500th anniversary
 of Gaura-pūrṇimā.

Prepare to take part—
 give out six Gāyatrī *mantras*
 meet a few Godbrothers
 work, rest, and chant.
 He prays for a future state,
 but this day is with us.

The crowds are so great that I feel content to stay in my room and do duties from here. No need to be guilty that I’m not plunged into a crowd and pushed here and there. Now the moon has faded and the sky brightens with the rising sun. It’s a bright, fresh orange, rising in front of cloud banks. Sparrows are gathering on the roof in front of my room. Yesterday after

the meeting I distributed some cake *prasādam*, and these little wrens and sparrows drop by now and then for some crumbs. They also are observing the Quincentennial.

By morning time the sky is filled with blazing sunlight. Yamarāja dāsa has taken a group photo of the large congregation of devotees.

I like the Vaikuṇṭha breezes going through the room. I like being on the rooftop and sharing it with Ācāryadeva so that we're able to have some peace and isolation here, although we are part of the festival.

I like thinking about the mainstream of ISKCON. For example, we're about to hold the Gaura-pūrṇimā temple *yajña*, where initiations are awarded, and there's the usual delay in its starting. I'm thinking the delay is not important, or other discrepancies, but rather the main flow of the celebration and its significance.

While waiting for this *yajña* to begin, I very much like worshiping my Prabhupāda *mūrti*. His fine silk cloth is pleasing to see and touch and place on his body. As I begin to take off his clothes and then massage him, the scent of the mustard oil reminds me more directly of what this worship is. This is Prabhupāda's place, Māyāpur, and it is nice to think of him and massage him. It also reminds me how we are struggling and trying to worship him now in separation. Sometimes the association seems to thin out when we have to remember him in different ways, but actually it is not a thinning out or a fading. We are coming to awareness of Prabhupāda's greatness gradually and are developing the Vaiṣṇava techniques of *līlā-smaraṇam*. Certainly after Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the surface of the earth it was a great shock for His devotees. Even while He was on the earth, when He left Vṛndāvana it was a great shock for the devotees of Vṛndāvana, but they developed the techniques of *līlā-smaraṇam*. So this is the method of gaining solace, and it is desired by Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda.

The altar here is a table covered with a yellow silk cloth, and today's batch of flowers is fresh and bright. Even simple elements like clear water, when poured on Prabhupāda, along with gentle, shaded sunlight coming into the room and the

breezes, these all take on a quality of great opulence and pleasure. To be involved in such worship is very sublime.

I have a scheduled meeting with Bhakti-cāru Swami, and I was hoping that he might come even as I was doing the worship. Partly I wanted to show off my devotion to Prabhupāda, but more than that it would be nice to share with a Godbrother these sublime moments so that we can see how Prabhupāda is present in simple activities like worship of his *mūrti*. Together we can remember the hue of his form and the pleasures of serving him. Thus it is said about Deity worship that it is something like decorating yourself while looking in the mirror. When a person looks in the mirror and decorates his body, the mirror image also becomes beautified. Similarly, when you decorate the Deity, you become decorated. In this case, when we decorate Prabhupāda, we enhance our devotion, and that is the real beautification of a devotee.

I like the auspiciousness of this occasion and the fact that I can perceive it to some degree. Our own ISKCON Māyāpur activities, as well as the sounds of the *kīrtanas* and activities of the nearby temples produce an accumulative vibration that is not only readily perceivable but also seems to transform all the heavens and earth on this day. The blue sky and the green land of Lord Caitanya's Bengal.

By 12:30 it has become very hot. The blazing sun. I just attended the *yajña* arena and awarded the *sannyāsa daṇḍa* to Nirañjana Swami. Now I'm back up in my room sitting somewhat dazed in thoughts about what a fertile preaching field Nirañjana Swami has in New England and how I hope to assist him there. Other G.B.C. men also awarded *sannyāsa* to devotees working in places around the world. The events of spiritual history are greater than one's own self. All the great *ācāryas* from the past are moving us along, tiny as we may be. And yet out of free will we raise our own voices and use our own limbs to work within Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thus Prabhupāda has written in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that one day the world will record the history of Vaiṣṇavas from around the world. Just as Lord Caitanya's devotees from Bengal and Orissa are recorded in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the world will one day record the history of all-world

devotees. And so we see *sannyāsīs* coming from China, Brazil, Canada, Sweden, and New England, U.S.A.

Gaura-pūrṇimā doesn't mean we avoid business and management. I'll be meeting with devotees this afternoon to answer some of their personal problems and demands. One devotee has written to me asking why the G.B.C. members don't attend the full morning program in the temple. He wants a resolution put before the G.B.C. that G.B.C. men themselves must attend the morning program or else they're disqualified. My other meeting will involve a disciple of mine who is dissatisfied at one center and wants to move to another. Time is short, people are ready to leave India, so I cannot avoid such talks just because it's the five-hundredth anniversary of Gaura-pūrṇimā. Rather, it's significant that we should observe even great holidays and holy days with business as usual.

Hari Kṛṣṇa dāsa and Makhanlal, devotees who hold two different opinions as to how ISKCON should be run, stand on the steps of the temple entrance exchanging their views. Someone has to do it, and it is reassuring that one balances the other. They are both in agreement that the issues of ISKCON management are vital and worth their full energy. They are convinced it is service to Prabhupāda, to protect and guide ISKCON.

I keep taking showers. Drums like thunder from different directions. The temperature is probably at the high point of the day, maybe 100 degrees in the sunshine. Bengali speeches and announcements.

I'm aware of my limits and it doesn't please me. Can't sleep or write or read or do too much. Mostly I relax in between exertions, planning to make a greater effort despite pain, when the meetings start. At least daily I will try to spend a good part of the day at the meetings.

Looked at the empty spaces where my teeth used to be. Looked at the yellow Gaura-Nitāi Deities on the *yajña* stage, copies of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* at Their feet. I rise and fall through the day.

The preaching advantages of the Quincentennial have pro-

duced meetings with top government leaders in India. Today, Ācāryapāda goes to Calcutta to join in a commemorative ceremony along with the president of India. Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa Goswami attended a program in New Delhi, in which Prime Minister Gandhi took part.

The moon should rise in an hour, beginning the five hundred and first year since Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance.

Sparrows
hear the chanting
flying from spire to spire.

Holiest day—
one side of their hats turned up,
policemen move the crowds.

Gaura-pūrṇimā moon—
waiting for the cooling rays
of the night.

Walking on the road,
pilgrims in white
in the sunlight.

With drums and cymbals,
hour by hour,
sun moves westward.

The shape of a lotus—
iron-wrought window grill
frames the sky of Māyāpur.

Installation of the *mūrtis* of four *sakhīs*, or *gopī* friends. They are Lalitā-*gopī*, Citrā-*gopī*, Raṅgā-devī, and Sudevī. Yesterday morning I saw them during *maṅgala-ārati*, their eyes bandaged in silk. Today the bandages came off and they became installed *arcā-vigrahas* surrounding Rādhā-Mādhava.

In the fields of flowers
devotees walk the rows—
garlands for the *gopīs*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that when Kṛṣṇa wanted to enjoy the experience of Rādhārāṇī in *rasa* dance, He took the combined form of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. That is Lord Caitanya.

Another special moon:
in my room,
a painting of *rasa* dance.

Ācāryadeva joked, “Today everyone is a devotee of the moon.” Devotees are waiting to break their fast and relish *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. According to the planets, the moon has already risen at four P.M., but now it’s six-thirty and still it’s not perceivable in the sky. The evening sky is light, and the darkness is also punctuated by many electric lamps from the nearby temples. The air is filled with vibrations. Over one loudspeaker a devotee is announcing first in Bengali and then in English that “Gaura *līlā*, the pastimes of Lord Caitanya, have already begun at the pavilion.” Guests are filing in and out for *darśana*, associating with the auspicious moment.

6:35 P.M.

Now I see it from the roof—a perfectly round but hazy, yellow-colored moon. What does it mean? It’s the planet of Candraloka, a heavenly abode. The astronauts didn’t go there. It’s a material place. And from here, it’s the familiar but mysterious moon planet: influencer of ocean tides; giver of tastes to vegetables; appearing sometimes pockmarked but beautiful; sending cool rays to end the day’s heat.

On Gaura-pūrṇimā, this moon is more than that. It’s a wonderful way the Lord signals His advent. When Lord Caitanya appeared, the moon was covered by eclipse, yet everyone chanted the holy name. Now we look to the moon, which is golden like Gaurāṅga, and it helps us understand somehow or other the blessings of Lord Caitanya and His *saṅkīrtana*.

It feels good to be here at Māyāpur. It’s hard to imagine that any other place on earth feels as good for intimate touch with Gaura-pūrṇimā. The pavement is still warm to the bare feet after the day’s blaze. There’s a sweet smell in the air from

the earth and sky, and absence of industrial enterprise. We're out in the country, Bengal farmland, in the heartbeat of Lord Caitanya's advent celebration. Even when the whole world will have celebrations like this one, even at that time, Māyāpur *dhāma* will be the capital for celebrating Gaura-pūrṇimā. Therefore, whoever is here at this time is very fortunate. Something is happening, and even we who cannot fully appreciate it accept the benefit, just as when the rain pours down generously on the land and sea.

Gaura-pūrṇimā:
now you can indulge
in moon viewing.

Full moon:
the *avatāra* appears
in a golden form.

It's a blessed land where almost everyone knows "Gaur-āṅga," "Mahāprabhu," "Nītāi-Gaura." Thousands of devotees of Lord Caitanya break their fasts, clapping hands, reciting prayers, chanting His names, honoring Bengali-style *prasādam*.

At 7:20 P.M. the Gaura moon is higher and whiter, brighter. I just spoke with Nirañjana Swami and handed him the *sannyāsa mantra*. He had also collected *dakṣiṇā* which he presented to me, over six hundred rupees. We spoke about the auspiciousness of this five-hundredth anniversary. He said that he has never seen so many people gathered at one place except Jagannātha Purī at Ratha-yātrā time. The whole road all the way down to the Yoga Pīṭha in one direction and in the other direction as far as you can go to the Ganges is simply covered with pilgrims. The wonderful thing about India is that these people have gathered just for the simple purpose of walking from temple to temple to take *darśana* of Deities and to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. We can hardly imagine that in America so many people would gather for what appears to be no external reason. Dressed simply and mostly on foot, they are going from place to place peacefully and happily. If you look carefully at the pilgrims, many of them are materially poor, and some are crip-

pled, and very old, but still they are pushing along, going about their Gaura-pūrṇimā pilgrimage.

“You want to see something wonderful?” said Ācāryadeva, striding across the roof. “Look!” he said, “Kṛṣṇa has put a rabbit in the moon!” I looked up and for the first time saw a rabbit in the moon—he faces left, in a sitting position, his long ears sticking up rightward. He takes up the entire length of the moon. I had heard about the rabbit in the moon as part of Buddhist stories, but Ācāryadeva began to explain how the moon is actually described in *Bhagavad-gītā* as rabbit-marked. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Chapter Seven, verse eight, when Kṛṣṇa says, “I am the light of the sun and the moon,” the word for moon is *śaśi*. Ācāryadeva said that this literally means “rabbit-mark.” Then again in the fifteenth chapter where Kṛṣṇa says that in His supreme abode there is no need of illumination by sun or moon, the word for moon is *śaśāṅkaḥ*, which means “marked with a rabbit.” Ācāryadeva then began to glorify the Personality of Godhead, who is so playful that He has marked up the moon with a big figure of the rabbit. He derided the impersonalists who do not appreciate the artistic and playful Supreme Lord, who has done such things as place a rabbit in the moon. I especially appreciated the fact that the “rabbit in the moon,” which I had seen in Buddhist stories, as well as in a haiku collection by Raymond Roseliep, *Rabbit in the Moon*, does not belong to those cultures, but like everything else comes originally from Kṛṣṇa. If we simply researched enough and realized enough, we would see how everything specifically comes from Kṛṣṇa, and is revealed in some pastime or teaching of His.

After this observation by Ācāryadeva, we continued to discuss about the universal form and the structure of the universe as described in the Fifth Canto.

It is Kṛṣṇa
who placed the rabbit
on the moon.

Tonight
you can be moon-mad
for Gaurāṅga.

March 27

In that cool air just before dawn,
the haze lifts.
Night of Gaurāṅga moon is gone.
But dawn brings more Caitanya *līlā*:
wake up sleeping souls!

My turn to give *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class today. In former years I used to worry what special thing I could say before the international gathering. I realize more the special thing is in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I'll trust to speak as I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda speak in his classes. My brain is small; I can repeat, appreciate, make a purport.

Giving the class was very special, and it gave no head pressure. After my lecture, the questions were loaded. Some devotees said later the continuous questions were like bombs fired at me, and my success was in defusing them.

I have just received some interesting news. According to Bhakti-cāru Swami, who quotes as his source Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the Lord Buddha who is mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* is not Gautama Buddha. Apparently, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī has stated that the Lord Buddha of the *Bhāgavatam* was actually born in the Gayā area, but Gautama Buddha was a prince from Nepal who came to Gayā for his enlightenment. If this is true, it means that the accounts given in the Pali texts are about a different person, not Lord Buddha. I did not speak directly to Bhakti-cāru Swami, and I will find out more about Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's statement and about the activities of the Vedic Lord Buddha. I suspect that the evidence will be strong enough to abruptly end my research into the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

This also makes me doubtful about the attempt to connect Lord Buddha to Buddhism as it is practiced in places like Japan, and makes me doubtful about making a pilgrimage in Japan to places connected with Japanese poet-priests. If Gautama Buddha himself is not connected to the *Bhāgavatam*, then what to speak of the later disciples of Gautama and Buddhism as it's practiced now. I can still sympathize with the Buddhist poets of recent centuries and how they expressed their monastic life, but

it dampens my enthusiasm to pursue it too far. It seems we have made a mistake in the identity of Lord Buddha. This also implies a mistake in being so interested in a path outside Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It makes me also think that I should be very cautious about researching Christianity for its similarities to Vaiṣṇavism. And it makes me reconsider how far Prabhupāda was really interested in an ecumenical exchange with these religions. He was certainly interested in informing them that they should chant the names of God, but would he approve of research into the different saints of the various religions and attempts to glorify them in terms of their nearness to Vaiṣṇavism? Other questions arise also. What about haiku? Why visit Japan at length?

I'm actually enlivened by this revolutionary news. One expects such jolts at the annual Māyāpur pilgrimage. If it means that I am adjusted back into a more straight and narrow path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then that is my gain.

Here we go—meetings have begun. Today, the five-man Judicial Committee. This committee handles complaints of misbehavior by devotees. They have to judge.

We tried to improve our procedures so that there will be a local court system and then a higher court system to which devotees can bring their complaints. Sometimes we follow models of jurisdiction from the material world, but we are a religious body. We deal not so much with criminal offenses but offenses in honor to the religion. The present members of the Judicial Committee have served for three years and will retire this year. New members will be elected this year. I put in about two and a half hours, got some headache, but I think I can handle it now with natural therapy techniques. Another judicial meeting this afternoon from three to six.

I spoke with Bhakti-cāru Swami. The evidence seems quite conclusive that Gautama Buddha is not the Lord Buddha described as an *avātara* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Bhakti-cāru Mahārāja acknowledged that most people think that the Lord Buddha described in the *Daśāvātara* song by Jayadeva and in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Gautama, but he is not. Scholars say that Gautama Buddha was born a prince in Nepal. When he decided to give up his material life, he journeyed to Gayā in

India and there he had his enlightenment. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* states that Lord Buddha was *born* in Gayā. Also, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* gives the name of Lord Buddha's mother as Anjanā, whereas Gautama Buddha's mother, according to the *Sutta-pitaka*, is Maya-devī. I asked Bhakti-cāru Mahārāja why there is no existence of the teachings of the original Lord Buddha. He said it was not surprising, since He presented a perverted form of Vedic knowledge in order to deal with the atheists. Therefore there is no need to preserve His "*śāstras*." This, of course, does not negate any of Prabhupāda's statements that Lord Buddha delivered persons by teaching them to be devoted unto Him, and He was the incarnation of God. He was very compassionate on the poor animals, therefore He stopped the Vedic *yajña*. But it may not be possible for us to take excerpts of the teachings of Gautama Buddha from the Pali texts and demonstrate how *he* was following the Vedic conclusions, since Gautama actually makes no reference to connection to Lord Viṣṇu, and the facts bear out that he has no connection.

I think one of the main themes of the G.B.C. meetings this year will be that the top leaders have to observe basic *sādhana*, chanting sixteen rounds, and attending the full morning program in the temple. I wasn't able to attend the full program last year due to my health, but as my health returns, this should be a priority. I should demonstrate full attendance and chanting before others so the devotees feel no doubt as to its importance.

March 28

Inside the meeting hall
he'll see
the heart and soul
blood and flesh
of the G.B.C. body.

Full G.B.C. meetings are supposed to start today, but we may not have a quorum. I have enough time to attend *maṅgala-ārati* and chant sixteen rounds before entering.

The doves on my porch go through a mating ritual. They stand next to each other and dance in intricate ways. Then sud-

denly the male flies up, flaps his wings, comes down, then she flies up, comes down. There's a lot of loud clacking and flapping of wings. Prabhupāda says, "Study nature." The lesson from the birds is that sex is freely available; there's no difficulty, she's always ready. Humans shouldn't consider that sex is a special human act, or highly significant—even birds do it all the time. Human life has a different, higher prerogative.

While chanting *japa* on the roof, I looked over at the garden area and saw Narahari Swami talking with a Bengali gardener. My first reaction was amused pleasure, recognizing Narahari's inclination for gardening. Wherever he has been in ISKCON, he has developed wonderful gardens, both in Miami and now in Hawaii. It is deeply satisfying to see a devotee who has a particular interest which he cultivates in a serious way for Kṛṣṇa.

When I look in the other direction I can see the next rooftop over, Śrīla Harikeśa Swami and Hari-śauri Prabhu, facing each other and talking. They have been the main directors of the festival activities. Today the festival is over and a thousand devotees are returning to their countries. The directors have been working for this festival for months, and they have the deep satisfaction of serving Prabhupāda and taking on troubles. To get fully engaged in some service is the remedy to *prajalpa* and fault-finding. If you stand on the sidelines, then the tendency will be to talk about the faults, but those who are working are trying to improve things.

A feature article appeared in the Calcutta newspaper *Amṛta Bazaar*. Written by the Minister of Parliament Tarun Kanti Ghosh, "The Person Whom I Miss Most," contains a nice picture of Prabhupāda. He writes:

When we are all engaged in the stupendous task of making the 500th anniversary of the advent of Lord Gauranga a grand success, the person whom I miss every moment is none other than Prabhupada A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, the Founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. His presence amidst us today could have helped us fulfill our task a hundred times better by virtue of his deep devotion, sincerity and tremendous organizing capability. He was a host in himself.

Tarun Kanti Ghosh goes on to give a little history of Prabhupāda's wonderful achievements, starting with his going to America in 1965. "It was really a miracle of this century," he writes, "a poor man going to the U.S.A. at the age of 70 could create all these in only twelve years by sheer virtue of his love and devotion to God and dedication to His principles. . . . Such an example of a new wave of religious consciousness growing entirely on the basis of devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Gaurāṅga can rarely be seen in the history of civilization. . . . I repeat that the void created by his demise is being greatly felt when we are celebrating the 500th anniversary of the advent of Śrī Caitanya. Were Prabhupāda among us today, the celebration could have gained in spiritual magnitude and the dream of legions of devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga will come true."

From meeting room notes

Rūpānuga reads the Introduction of *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* out loud. Noise from outside, Bengali pilgrims to the *dhāma*.

Balavanta begins with statements as outgoing chairman: Don't be dismayed by controversy and conflicts in our society. There are qualified, dedicated devotees on both sides of the controversies. Conflict is healthy.

While raising my hand on the first vote, the feeling, "Is my choice right?" Hard to be sure.

Before we elect officers, Hṛdayānanda Goswami says whoever is elected chairman should travel around the world. Whoever is nominated for this office should not refuse it, thinking his own work is more important than the world's.

Rūpānuga also said the chairman should travel. Maybe he said others should travel. I couldn't hear because of the overhead fans, drums, voices. But I took it that way and thought of my own travel.

At this point Bhagavān Goswami came over to where I was seated and gave me the French edition of the just-published *Prabhupāda*. He wrote in it, "To my very dear Godbrother Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami—Thank you for bringing us all closer to Śrīla Prabhupāda—please forgive any misunderstandings or offenses. Your servant always, Bhagavān dāsa

Goswami.” I wrote a note back: “If possible, I would like to someday travel to some countries in your zone to preach and write, if it would please you.”

Let’s overcome differences and prejudices. Imagine myself on a train en route to Rome. What about Libyan anti-American terrorists? Don’t be afraid. But can your preaching help?

Election of officers.

Chairman: Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami elected with strong majority.

Vice-chairman: Balavanta Prabhu.

Secretary: Bhagavān Goswami.

We have an ornate wooden gavel table with a wooden hammer. On it, a plaque reads, “Order in this room means order in the world.”

During a technical parliamentary discussion I feel a lack of responsibility to pay complete attention at every moment. Partly it is for health reasons. I think of Śrīla Prabhupāda and what he wants from me.

Garuḍa *mūrti* in one corner, TV video in another, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books in another.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Senior devotees pleased by simple majority ruling of G.B.C. from the morning session.

Balavanta says he will discuss organization and structure of G.B.C., such as forming a judicial system, an executive committee, and how they can keep tabs on the resolutions, to see they are being followed. We have to pass relevant legislation, effective follow-up (executive), and wise judicial system.

The big painting of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the G.B.C. meeting hall is really special. Grave, down-turning mouth, reminding us we are accountable. Chanting his beads.

Rūpānuga: The main thing is loving relationships among G.B.C. members. “That’s the cement.” He gestures holding it together. We should see each other and preach in other zones.

(If I don't talk, it may seem—to whom?—that I think I'm superior. No. I'm inferior. I can't even talk like them.)

Inconceivable one and difference. G.B.C. can control and yet act in an advisory capacity, says Sundararūpa Mahārāja.

G.B.C. individuals also can be governed.

Travel advocated.

Zones are the stepping stones to world cooperation because they have structure and unity. They can be used like modules and connected then to the world picture. Zones when built and put together form world unity.

A G.B.C. minister concentrates full-time in some area of work on a worldwide basis.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's bare feet. We are his great-great grandchildren struggling our best to understand.

It's taking time to understand there *is* structure. We need an entire government with ministers.

REFLECTIONS

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami wanted to talk about the fact that he has become chairman of the G.B.C. When he heard that a lot of people were thinking he should be the chairman, he became apprehensive. He thought it might interfere with his writing, or it might even hamper his spiritual strength, which he had derived from writing and from the peaceful, detached attitude he had developed. But people very much wanted him to be the chairman, and so he surrendered. Now he is seeing that the chairman service will be very helpful, even for the writing. The next drama he wants to write is a play about Prabhupāda's disappearance. In order to write it, he needs inspiration from Prabhupāda. So Ācāryadeva assured Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami that being G.B.C. chairman is such a personal service and surrender to Prabhupāda that certainly he will get Prabhupāda's blessings to write the drama. That is a positive way to look at surrender: what the G.B.C. wants you to do will help you achieve your personal goals.

The G.B.C. has resolved that except for a few specific decisions, they will now resolve all matters by a simple majority vote. The previous rule was that important matters had to be decided by a two-thirds vote. The new ruling comes as a great relief to many senior devotees. There had been dissatisfaction over the fact that the G.B.C. could not decide on something that a majority of the G.B.C. men wanted, just because a few held back.

The enthusiasm for this resolution implies an almost benevolent recognition that it is possible for the G.B.C. to make a mistake. Usually, if someone says the G.B.C. may be wrong, it sounds like offensive criticism. But now we may admit that there is a possibility of anyone making a mistake, but it may be corrected. At least the G.B.C. and the devotees should get together behind these decisions. Prabhupāda used to say, "Make decisions on a yearly basis and then carry them out for the year." Next year we can meet again and consider what is best. Even if we make a mistake, we can get together and correct it.

The G.B.C. form of government may resemble democratic politics, but it is spiritual. It is what Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us because he said none of us are intelligent enough on our own. While Prabhupāda was present he trained us in democratic G.B.C. voting, yet the ultimate rule was always with Prabhupāda, one person. Prabhupāda called the material democracy a "demon-crazy" form of rule. First of all, the *asuras* are disqualified to elect their leader. Therefore they elect the person who gives them the most sense gratification. So what kind of government can come from such disqualifications? Therefore, Prabhupāda sometimes said autocratic rule is better, meaning a qualified Kṛṣṇa conscious king. But in the absence of Śrīla Prabhupāda or anyone whom we can recognize as the single *ācārya* above all others, we have the G.B.C. vote by majority. Neither should this be taken as a second or inferior choice. Śrīla Prabhupāda specifically said that none of us is the single *ācārya*. Majority rule means many good Vaiṣṇavas coming together, hearing each other out, and voting. We submit to that majority. It may resemble American or other democracies, but it is based on the spiritual principle.

One of the devotees told a story at the G.B.C. meeting about majority rule. In the early 1970s, Prabhupāda's secretary, Śyāmasundara dāsa, was not doing his job well. This was reported to Prabhupāda by a number of devotees, including G.B.C. members and *sannyāsīs* in India. Śyāmasundara objected that they were just trying to force him out and that he was right. Finally, all the devotees were sitting before Prabhupāda. Śyāmasundara made his strong objection to the criticisms, but Prabhupāda said, "There are ten of them and there's only one of you. So they out-vote you." And Prabhupāda decided that Śyāmasundara should resign as secretary. This is an example of Prabhupāda's taking seriously a majority rule of senior devotees.

The absolute standard in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*. Everyone consults these sources, but they often come up with different viewpoints. If I think that only my viewpoint is *guru-śāstra-sādhū* and others are illusion, that may be my arrogance. Each of us is sincerely trying to apply the concept of *guru-śāstra-sādhū*. How can I say, therefore, that only I am in touch with *guru-śāstra-sādhū* and you either agree with me or you are nonsense and you are relative?

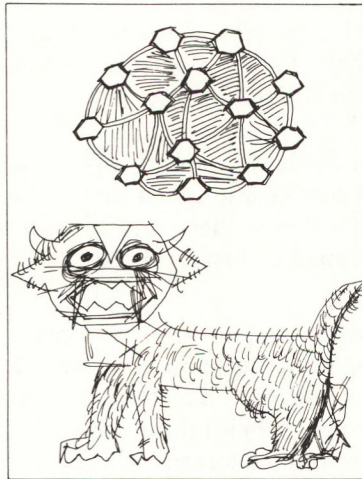
Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy does not prohibit devotees from holding different viewpoints. Unanimity is desirable, but it is utopian to expect it. It is even impersonal to expect complete unanimity. So there are differences, but we must also try to find the oneness. One year Prabhupāda said the theme of our Māyāpur festival should be to see the unity in the variety and the variety in the unity. Variety is the more obvious feature—differing viewpoints, different ways of pursuing *saṅkīrtana*. But now let us see the unity. Let us see whether the G.B.C. can muster its self-respect and solidarity, and lead all ISKCON devotees by good example and good spiritual management.

March 29

Is my pure self so buried
that my piling up of words
is like the work of an animal
building, sleeping, and fearing
how to survive the day?
Where is wholeness?

Where is sureness of self?
 However little the self may be,
 if he can only start—
 an honest surrender:
 regret last night's dreams,
 regret yesterday's failures,
 now offer yourself in peace today.

The word “module” was brought up yesterday at the meeting. It's used to explain how different units can connect to form a strong whole. Each zone should develop itself in such a way that it can connect as a modular unit to world ISKCON. After this word was introduced, I began drawing modular units, like geodesic domes. On one page, I drew a rather developed one with hexangles and connecting, curving rods. But on the same page I made an elaborate drawing of a wildcat with horns and fangs. He seemed to represent the maverick independence of a devotee. As I look at the drawings, I admit I have some liking for this little wildcat. But he has to be cleaned up and turned into some kind of contributing creature. And modules have to become personal—not hexangles but people joining hand in hand in Vaiṣṇava relationships.



ISKCON images—modular unity, independent wildcat.

Meeting room notes, morning session

Today we'll first talk about the agenda, says Balavanta. We started late.

(As an individual, I try to stay serious about what I may be asked to do. Avoid taking it relatively. That means although I see my Godbrothers sometimes joking and as ordinary persons, I should understand that they have the collective will of Prabhupāda and so I have to be very serious about what they may suddenly say to me as a G.B.C.)

Judicial committees.

Today good breeze from fans and open windows.

Set of courts, method to review decisions. I'm tired but I feel no pain.

Drawing on the page: At first it looked like a man on his four haunches, then I turned it into a bull with a humped back. I began to draw looking at some cement gratings on the upper wall, which were in the shape of crosses, then I turned it into a kind of coat of arms or shield made of four crosses. Beside me, Jagadīśa Goswami is drawing a very intricate design.

More talk of ministers. Rūpānuga says, "I just want to make devotees." Should he become the minister? Lots of differing opinions. Justice functions.

At this point the best I can do is pay attention and follow the course of the conversation. I cannot add to it. I drew a picture of one of the water pitchers, and I surrounded it with lines like lights and framed it. Just a portrait.

Harikeśa Swami talks of fundamentals, a plan for justice. Before appointing someone to be Minister of Justice, we have to talk over the concepts. For education, justice, *saṅkīrtana*, court cases, we need concepts behind the ministers. Shall we discuss the concepts now? But we have to select persons.

Guru-Gaurāṅga dāsa is selected Minister of Justice; he will form other courts.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Direct expansion of movement through expansion of ministers.

(Afternoon is supposed to be lighter topics than mornings.)

Jagadīśa Goswami is reporting. I'm deep-breathing.

Śrīla Bhagavān asks me, "Are you getting headaches?" I say I don't want to talk about it. "Autosuggestion," I say. "If I say I do have a headache, then . . ." Gurupāda and his head.

REFLECTIONS

After Jagadīśa Mahārāja's refreshing report, the legal minister was asked to speak. In his wry way, he said, "I can speak, but this might give you nightmares." Paramānanda was saying that thinking of a legal case is like preparing yourself for the time of death. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we don't shy from anything. We have to depend on Kṛṣṇa and expect anything. We remain Kṛṣṇa conscious. But I also thought of some of the suggestions that Dale Carnegie gives about worry. One tactic was to try to accept the worst, and then act to make up your losses. In this case, the worst is loss of properties. We don't even want to think about it. Let us just say that there is the possibility that in the battle with the demons, we may lose properties. We read in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that the Raṅga-kṣetra temple was once attacked and hundreds of Śrī Vaiṣṇavas were killed. So it's possible also in this day of the law court that we could lose properties. Something that had taken ten or twenty years to develop could be taken away and a temple reduced to finding a new place to operate. So as dreadful as that is, if you think of it, it doesn't really take away any of the essential items of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The devotees will still be there, the Deity will be there, and the preaching mission is there. Somehow or other a means of generating income will be there. All the essential items would remain even if the property were lost. That doesn't mean we're going to be passive or defeatist. We have to think of different tactics. Facing the worst shouldn't be a cause of nightmares. Even if it is a cause of nightmares, it needn't cause our Kṛṣṇa consciousness to be stopped.

I hesitate to give details too much because I think that

borders on breach of confidentiality. To tell things realistically, you can't tell them in a rosy way. You have to say things like somebody spoke and then somebody else spoke and went 180 degrees the opposite way and it's going very slowly because of these differences and it's actually a little excruciating. One wishes the meetings could be conducted more efficiently but there are so many different, intelligent minds.

The fact that they are analyzing things fairly from so many different points of view gives me confidence that everything is being done very thoroughly and it's a spiritual thing. They're all very sincere devotees of Prabhupāda and they know the books; the differences are in spiritual personality, spiritual democracy. This is the direction given by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One shouldn't think disagreement is a sign of quarrel-someness or even spiritual weakness. Rather, the G.B.C. members grind the wheels of justice very finely and analytically by discussing things on different levels and from their different realizations and viewpoints. Everything is based on *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*, and it is finally tested and accepted by democratic vote.

I attended the meetings for two hours this morning and got through the discussions, but just before it was time to vote, my physical condition got too difficult. I tried taking a shower, but after I came back into the room pressure continued to build in my head. I took part in one important vote, but I could not vote for the members of the G.B.C. Judicial Committee. Now I'm repairing myself by nature cure methods and readying myself for participation in the evening session. My Godbrothers are being very tolerant and kind, just as Trivikrama Mahārāja remarked to me this morning, "Everyone is glad to see how much you are participating."

According to nature cure, a person is born with a certain constitutional health bequeathed to him based on the health of his parents. Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy would define this more as *karma*. This *karma* can also be changed by coming to the transcendental platform. But sometimes Prabhupāda

makes reference to statements that one is born with a certain amount of breaths and so he should use it carefully in Kṛṣṇa's service. He has said, in fact, that *yogīs* by holding their breath, can increase their life duration. Anyway, I can speak of a kind of vital economy of my energies here at Māyāpur. Since I'm still recovering from the illness, each day I have a certain amount of energy and I have to conserve it as best I can.

So far I have been able to attend about five hours of intense meetings in the meeting room, in addition to some meetings outside. But there's definitely a limit, and one spends it one way or another. Today, even before the meetings began, Bhavānanda Goswami came to my room and we had an important personal discussion that took place for an hour. I was grateful that he came and it helped my understanding of his situation, but nevertheless, it was like the ticking off of my "time bomb," or the ticking off of the meter. This ticking off makes me anxious, because I have limited funds. Therefore this morning I entered the meeting hall with an edge of energy already reduced from my quota.

Usually the G.B.C. meeting begins later than the scheduled time. The morning meetings are scheduled for nine, the afternoon for four-thirty. I'm usually ready on time, but I start a period of anxious waiting. Baladeva posts himself in the next building outside the meeting room to wait and see when a significant amount of members toward a quorum are gathered. I wait in my room rather than go and start ticking off the meter of my energy. But even that waiting is a kind of energy use. In this way, we are passing the days, trying to use the utmost energy to attend Prabhupāda's meetings.

March 30

I Imagined

Some of us ascended,
called by Prabhupāda,
we floated up to join him.
The devotees remaining
who still had to struggle
wondered aloud, "Why
have they been called?"
"They were the purest," came the reply.

But others said, "They were disrupters."
And the struggle went on.

It is better to remain here:
"Tho working is *tapasya*,
and the demons are attacking,
we cannot simply float up.

Attendance

I went to Sunday Mass—
because my mother sent me,
sullen in the pews
my thoughts flew out the window
to the world beyond the church.

This is different—
he who has sent me
is a true teacher.
And the temple is for knowledge,
life for serving God.
Beyond Him, all is *māyā*,
of this I am convinced;
the temple is devotion
if I can only join the dance.

5:30 A.M.

Reddish sunrise, doves and storks are calling. Recorded chanting of *Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma* from the temple. My chair is soaked with dew. I use my time in the best way, chanting *japa*, praying for as full a day as possible.

7:00 A.M.

I just gave the *Gāyatrī mantras* to my disciple Vṇḍāvana-bihari. He is eighteen years old, from Guyana. A few years ago devotees found him in Guyana, son of a wealthy cattle-raiser. His name then was Omesh, and he liked to drive the devotees around in his sports car. He had all kinds of gadgets on his bright yellow car, but he also had a strong inclination for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So with his father's permission and financial

support, he went to India and began *gurukula*. Now three years have passed, he has been first initiated and completed the exams for *bhakti-śāstri*. At his own desire he has transferred now to Mayāpur *dhāma*, where he is learning different Vedic arts like how to play *mṛdāṅga*, how to perform fire sacrifices, and further academic studies of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. After a few years more, he plans to return to Guyana, a country much like India.

Although there are many unfortunate examples of the offspring of Kṛṣṇa conscious parents—young babies who look like angels but grow up to be restless adolescents, disinclined—Vṛndāvana-bihari is so far an ideal example, happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and with a very practical vision—to return to his native land and give the people there full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Meeting room notes, morning session

Guru expansion resolution.

TKG refers to big brains of members present, asks them to work.

(Personally I am involved. I asked people to initiate. Doctor says don't get so involved; be apart and look upon action with the real self. But this is a heated issue. Air-conditioning on, door shut.)

HDG—Śrīla Prabhupāda's will is subordinated either by a single *ācārya* or by a predominance of a grassroots force.

TKG—accept the truth. We are all ready to do that.

“What's the crisis!”

To ask this question is like Nero fiddling while Rome burns.

Nature of the causes of crisis.

Note exchange—HDG: “How can I become purified and self-controlled like you?”

SDG: “How can I become intelligent and powerful like you? I guess we're stuck with what we are.”

Truth on both sides. We have to have a house in which both can live.

(Strong objections, strong positions, shouting out—TKG calls for rational talk.)

11:45 A.M.

I'm back into the meeting room after a shower. Every hour I leave the room for ten minutes and take a shower in the bathroom next door; it's my own instinct as to how to best relieve head pressure.

TKG asks for discussion to stop and we will vote by ballot.

Took shower a second time. Spoke with Baladeva on the balcony. My desire to go back to America.

(I feel just by being present I'm contributing. Imbibing the G.B.C. spirit so I can represent the body, and especially their conclusion. And I will appreciate also the different parties.)

Vote.

12:10. We now discuss for voting on the expansion of the *gurus*.

Selecting a *guru* shouldn't be easier than selecting a *sannyāsī*.

(I could formulate proposals and voice opinions more, but I don't. My view is tentative and I hesitate to bring it out. Anyway, careful listeners are also required. In a smaller group I do express even tentative ideas.)

Drawings: picture of a revolving fan, boy on a motorcycle, stick figures in the Māyāpur building, and an arrow shot through a piece of wood.

1:00 P.M., *Back in the meeting after the third shower*

We have a need to know what Śrīla Prabhupāda wants, a need to hear from others rather than a need to ward off attacks from our conclusions.

TKG—realizations will come regarding humility, and the need to know Prabhupāda. To stress the lack of this doesn't bring us together.

Compromise. Getting close to a vote. I drew a picture of some fish in the water; one fish jumping out.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Gurus—list made of those already initiating and those who are taking that stance.

Take break at 5:30—bathe? Yes, one more time.

Head pressure—don't be so afraid of it. It gets to a certain pitch but doesn't get so much beyond it. Like when I went to the drama, headache came but didn't get worse till 11:30 P.M. and then went away overnight.

G.B.C. supported my choices for initiating *gurus*. I am responsible that the devotees I work with be members in support of ISKCON. This is another reason to go back soon and travel in the mid-Atlantic zone.

I had another interesting talk with Ācāryadeva about writing poetry and philosophy. I told him I sometimes wonder why the great Vaiṣṇava poets of the past did not write in a more personal style and about everyday life. He said he also sometimes wondered why the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scriptures do not present a more systematic presentation of our philosophy, as is generally done in the West. Together we made some conclusions why this is so, and how we may try to make our own humble contributions.

Ācāryadeva gave the example how sometimes our own disciples may do a great deal of initial preaching to newcomers. They may have to thoroughly involve themselves in talking to that person's particular *māyā*, to disengage a person from family illusion, and help him to give up his material occupation, and guide him in the first steps in the philosophy, etc. After some initial groundwork has been done in preaching, then a new candidate may come before a more advanced devotee whom he may consider his spiritual master, and then the *guru* may present to him the philosophy on a more elevated level. So the *ācāryas* of Vaiṣṇava poetry and philosophy have presented Kṛṣṇa consciousness beyond a particular millennium or temporary style of presentation. Therefore, their works are not only exalted but they will last through different millennia. They will not become unfashionable in a later time.

This realization should make us humble when we try to present works according to temporary cultural fashion, such as modern poetry or systematic philosophy. We should not think of ourselves as elevated as these *ācāryas* whose works are eternal. Because of our birth and attachment to our culture, and

also because of the desire to preach to our contemporaries, we write in a way they can readily understand. But this may also date our contribution in the future. By this way of thinking we will not become arrogant toward the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* in poetry and philosophy, but realize our own position as humble, and yet we will work with enthusiasm. Some works that we may do may also last for many centuries, such as biographies of Śrīla Prabhupāda or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* translations as Ācāryadeva has done. But when we work more on our own personal contribution, we have to realize that it is not automatically to be considered on the level of the great *ācāryas*, and that accounts for some of the differences.

REFLECTIONS

The G.B.C. is responsible for all the devotees in the movement. Devotees are like the dependent citizens, and the G.B.C. has to actually provide them leadership. We need structure and an organized government. At the same time, there must be personal relationships. *The leaders have to set good examples.* Those who are not on the Governing Body Commission shouldn't simply attack the Governing Body for their failures. And the Governing Body has to respond by supplying evidence of leadership. But the G.B.C. will be grateful if the Godbrothers also show recognition: "Yes, you G.B.C. men are responding to us. We know it is very hard to manage in Kali-yuga, and you are giving us more shared leadership. We appreciate it." To be successful it has to be like that: reciprocation between these two groups.

Proponents of the different ideologies have to hear each other out and recognize that differences shouldn't be a cause for real bitterness and fighting. Differences in thinking are part of the G.B.C. itself. Some stress the strength that is found in hierarchy, and some stress the strength in democratic association. There has to be some peace, instead of these viewpoints being warring camps.

March 31

Coming from Darśana

I was there looking up

to His threefold-bending form.
 He was surrounded by four maidens
 who were dressed in green and blue.
 One especially attractive *gopī*
 was closest at His side,
 and She wore pink, and so did He.
 He had a peacock feather in His hair,
 and He was shining black,
 very strong,
 yet graceful and tall,
 He smiled while His devotees sang His names.

If you like, you can go also;
 I think you'll like to see Him;
 as we walk there I'll explain.

Two concepts came to my mind this morning: loyalty, and full use of energy in the service of Kṛṣṇa. These are abstract terms, but I know what I mean.

Loyalty means not to be cynical about ISKCON, despite its faults. When I speak to others, I try to elevate the conversation from doom-talk or too much criticism. I am a member, not simply an individual free thinker to do and act as I like. Loyalty also means I maintain these attitudes not out of pressure or to please a particular person or group, but because it is my actual conviction. Prabhupāda wants me to be loyal. Although loyalty may be expressed in many different ways, including criticism (the politicians call it "the loyal opposition"), nevertheless, more simply, loyalty means being loyal.

As for using full energies in Kṛṣṇa's service, that means to work each day by applying ourselves to devotional service. It means exertion for the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, by travel, brain-tax, multitudines, meetings, writings, etc. Work and work hard.

Meeting room notes, morning session

After Māyāpur, I plan to return to attending the full morning program, including giving regular classes.

I spoke!

Air-conditioning, low lights, head pressure. It doesn't go beyond a certain point. This means, I believe, I'm really near normal. I *can* act, can work.

Garuḍa, what do you think of this? Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, how are we doing? Gavel hammer and flowers. The gavel is hard, firm authority. The flowers are soft, ornamental. There is a full vase of flowers on each desk, and water.

The extremes are easy—all compassion without consideration of standard. Or simply getting heavy and enforcing discipline without compassion. But the difficult path, for which Prabhupāda stayed up at night and worried, is the difficult task we have to do.

✓ Do your duty wholeheartedly, taking ISKCON's problems seriously. Then poems and illuminating Kṛṣṇa conscious paragraphs will spring forth.

Be as sure as you can that Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda are pleased by your vote. It is they you have to please.

It will take years to understand in retrospect and by history's judgement.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Devotees fanning themselves with cardboard folders.

Cranes screeching, other birds whistling away. Also a distant drum . . .

(I have to care more—but head pressure limits my performance and ability.)

REFLECTIONS

While we were in the meeting hall, a storm arose. We went out on the balcony and watched it coming.

In Māyāpur, storms always approach from the North. You can tell when they are coming because the wind (which prevails from the West) starts shifting clockwise to the North.

A large black cloud was rising from the ground to great heights, full of electricity. In front of that was a hazy, still zone.

It looked like all living entities had stopped breathing out of fear. (Prior to the whole incident the heat built up and the regular *Vaikuṇṭha* breezes stopped.)

Preceding the rain, large winds arrived, filled with gritty dust. The lungs sting while breathing. Regular *Māyāpur* residents covered their mouths and noses with damp cloths. Windows and doors started banging. The sound of breaking glass. Sounds of pandemonium. Bengalis shouting while directing workers to secure things. New devotees shouting in apprehension, excitement, and delight. Resident devotees stand and watch, passively chanting. They had closed their windows a half hour earlier in anticipation of the storm.

Swirling mini-cyclones of dust and debris. An empty bucket rolling back and forth on the roof amidst paper. Fallen clotheslines with clothes still attached.

The storm came from one general direction, but when it hit it seems to come from every direction. The trees and flowers shake. Wet birds share the balcony with devotees, patiently waiting for the rain and wind to pass. Lightning struck one palm tree, which seemed to explode, and then the lightning traveled across the ground for another thirty feet.

The G.B.C. meetings are purification for the members who take part. It increases your dedication and reminds you that the G.B.C. is *Prabhupāda*'s method of directing the movement and that you're part of it. In the G.B.C. meeting room there's a big painting of *Prabhupāda* and he soberly overlooks the proceedings. He used to be here in *Māyāpur* when we held them, and he's still here. During the year we get more involved only in our own activities. But here, sometimes a particular member will be reprimanded for his misbehavior; or there will be resolutions and reminders that he has to behave, or his zone has to perform better; indirect or direct public recognition that he didn't do well; he's not an all-perfect individual, but his performance is judged.

A G.B.C. man has to give up any false conceptions that have occurred during the year, get straightened out. That's the effect *Prabhupāda*'s personal association would have. One might deviate in subtle ways, and then by meeting with him personally you would be straightened out. So the G.B.C. is like

that. Just by working hard to solve the problems of the Society, you become purified. And when you get purified, then you're prepared after the meetings to explain the position of the G.B.C. and ISKCON and uphold its principles; the purification readies you for your preaching on behalf of ISKCON.

The gathering of the G.B.C. members at their annual meeting in Māyāpur is a kind of *sat-saṅga*. It's a little unusual in that we don't hear only one speaker, like Sūta Gosvāmī or Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and neither does the exchange center exclusively on the speaking of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The G.B.C. meeting is actually a managerial conference for setting preaching goals and organizing a very big worldwide movement. You can't expect it to be exactly like the *Bhāgavatam* class. The *Bhāgavatam* classes go on every day while the G.B.C. men are present and they also speak in that way. But the management is also spiritual as long as the persons are following the *sādhana* and thinking of Prabhupāda's movement when they meet. So it is a gathering of sages in the modern era for sharing their different ideas and working it out. It's not a meeting of *kṣatriyas*, it's not exactly a meeting of *brāhmaṇas*. It's a meeting of devotees who all consider themselves servants of the great Vaiṣṇavas and who try to honestly work out their differences and help guide the destiny of ISKCON.

It's not only the G.B.C. but other senior devotees, the temple presidents, who gather. They hear the resolutions of the G.B.C. and then vote, and the G.B.C. considers their opinion.

It's intense, difficult work. Prabhupāda said that if you take headaches for Kṛṣṇa, He will be pleased with you. It's work that can't be neglected. And the nature of the work is that it has to be done very, very carefully, painstakingly. It can't be done in a hurried way, making laws and decisions that involve individuals' lives and standards of our movement and preaching results of whole countries. It has to be done carefully.

APRIL

April 1

Questions in Māyāpur

(First day of temple presidents' meeting)

How shall we deal with disciples?
How shall we deal with Godbrothers?
How shall we deal with people, each other?
How shall we be loyal to our *guru*?
How shall we be loyal to his movement?
What is the best course of action?

How shall we improve our knowledge?
How shall we improve our chanting?
What service is best for each of us?
How shall we increase our preaching?

What will happen in the war against us?
What will happen in the war against them?
Isn't Kṛṣṇa in control of all these things?

What about the promises we made to Prabhupāda?
What about the promise he made to us—
will we deserve to join him?

What was the meaning of the cyclone?
When should mercy be applied?
When should we give a good man another chance?
When should love be expressed by withholding?
How will history judge us?
What would Prabhupāda have done?

When I heard Prabhupāda say, "Mango is the king of fruit," I doubted. But nowadays in Māyāpur I'm savoring mangoes for breakfast and gradually coming to appreciate that Prabhupāda was right, even about fruit.

Bright blue sky, full of sunshine, Māyāpur breezes. The temple presidents are starting their meeting with *kīrtana*, and the singing drifts in the air from the next building. Soon I'll get

the call to attend our G.B.C. meeting. I forget whether it's the fourth or fifth day of meetings.

Meeting room notes, morning session

When a mood or attitude prevails, rules are sometimes interpreted to suit it.

Who shall attend the ISKCON world managers' meeting? Who can vote? "This is the hottest topic this morning."

Took two showers so far this morning, head is not bad. Baladeva suggested my head pains are like a broken bone now mended. It hurts, but it is good to use it anyway. That's how it will be further cured. Interesting angle. It seems I am not only maintaining, but getting stronger.

Discussion about a lack of more friendly, intimate relationships among G.B.C. Godbrothers. There should be more *saṅga*. "Your love for me will be tested by how well you cooperate among yourselves."

Jagadīśa Goswami—save unique place in our hearts for other G.B.C. members. Overcome hard feelings.

With this in mind I start to think how I can travel to visit other G.B.C. men's zones during the year. But it shouldn't be artificially orchestrated.

We should be meeting how to fight back Kali-yuga, says Bhagavān Goswami. We shouldn't be *blasé*. If someone achieves a victory, we don't seem to care; and if someone doesn't do well, we also don't seem to care.

How to deal favorably with each other, not just in words but in practical service.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Before meeting, some of us talked about material proofs of reincarnation, like hypnosis. Some devotees said it was convincing to nondevotee audiences.

Long haul afternoon, breathe your way through it.

Narahari Swami's photos of his farm in Hawaii—white swan with black neck—nature, waterfalls . . .

Our return tickets are eastward. Maybe stop in Japan on

way back, see haiku editor.

I don't talk much at the big meeting.

Concern for loss of money to the BBT.

I like the natural way: diet, raw or boiled, not too much grain, one fasting day a week.

Tense moments when devotees can't work together. Yet they behave civilly.

REFLECTIONS

I feel inspired that some of the principles we talk about are really working—Kṛṣṇa is in control and the movement has a destiny to fulfill. As Kṛṣṇa said to Arjuna, "I've already decided that the demons are going to be killed, so now you fight for Me and take the credit." I think we have a wonderful destiny. In our lifetime we may not see Kṛṣṇa consciousness take significant material power. That may have to come later. If in our time we get even more besieged by the demons (like we are in America), still the destiny is that this is the movement to save mankind—and Prabhupāda is the one. History will prove us, and it takes time.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not something that's going to be overturned by some of its members misdirecting it. It has a kind of self-purifying mechanism, and we have to have faith about that.

There are good signs that this is so, that it is happening, even though you can see the signs of imperfection.

At Māyāpur, some of the basic truths become more manifest. The movement is being carried on by Lord Caitanya and will be successful.

If you have a strong conviction that a particular G.B.C. decision wasn't right, then still you have an obligation—the higher principle of the unity of ISKCON—not to blaspheme the decision or to defy it or work against it. You still have to prosecute the orders. There are boundaries to free thinking and boundaries to the disagreement. That doesn't mean there isn't free thinking or reform, but you have to admit there are definitely boundaries.

To go around Māyāpur with a long face because you don't like some of the decisions, and to look at the oncoming storm

and say that this is a sign that the decisions are wrong, is to be under the modes of material nature. There are always storms in Māyāpur. They are part of the atmosphere here. So there will always be some storms in ISKCON. We can weather them.

April 2

The session seems to be heading toward an end and there's a kind of group exhaustion. No time in the day for writing.

Meeting room notes, morning session

Two more days of meetings.

Ministers gave reports—book distribution, finance, public affairs, education, architecture, justice, legal, higher ed., culture, health, Deity.

Goals of year. It just occurred to me this is the beginning of the year.

Goals and objectives to be accomplished by G.B.C. men are given by the G.B.C. body.

My goals: 1. Visit all temples; 2. Push book distribution to realize quota to BBT; 3. Maintain and improve BTG; 4. etc.; 5. Write.

While discussing the formation of an office staff for executive officers of G.B.C., Harikeśa Swami turned to me and said, "It used to be so simple. Just go out and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and give out BTGs."

Pañcadraviḍa Mahārāja was appointed sergeant-of-arms today. He was about to read something out loud and he said, "This may be boring, but please keep awake." One of the G.B.C. members corrected him and said, "Don't say it's boring." So he said, "This is very interesting, but please keep awake."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said carry out the goals established at Māyāpur.

Drawing of a devotee raising his hand at a G.B.C. meeting. Also a little fish tank with fish in it, and another attempt to draw the lotus pattern of the metal grate in the window.

April 3

Don't be weary,
don't be anarchist,
do what you can.
With a desire to return West
where I am administrator, preacher
to the land of heavy antagonism
back to Reagan's America,
where a devotee's appearance on the street
catches catcalls,
where they don't welcome him home
with elephants and band party
nor meet him with young village girls
bearing coconut and banana leaf on their heads.

Yet it's the land
where I serve Prabhupāda,
where a few souls come forward
agreeing to *tapasya*.
It's where Prabhupāda told us
to distribute his books,
where I write in their language, for them.

5:00 A.M., *Last day of meetings, and last day of stay in Māyāpur*

I got as close as I liked to the bird on the wall. He was singing the several-part melody I heard a hidden bird sing in Trivandrum. It is a myna, this one rather small, with the white patches of his wings quite visible. Open-beaked, dark body in the dawn.

Meetings, and the association of Godbrothers is strengthening. Yet after eight all-day sessions, one wants to get away from the differing interpretations of duty by strong individuals; one wants the right to separate from the debate—not for going separate from ISKCON, but for thinking about one's own contribution.

Meeting room notes, morning session

I got fired up. Last day arguing. Now I'll restrain myself and sit back.

Things are done fairly.
I can't be afraid of discussions or against them.

I pray I'll be able to constantly serve in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. I pray for physical strength to do this and spiritual and mental strength. In the past year I have retreated from preaching and personal exchanges because of physical illness. I now am overcoming that illness.

I will closely follow the healthiest diet and natural care regimens so that I can do duty. I won't remain in a seclusive mode as long as I get strength. I pray for strength to use in Prabhupāda's service.

War or coexistence?

Try to relate in a friendly, appreciative way to each G.B.C. man.

Meeting room notes, afternoon session

Oneness and differences. Oneness is in global unity. When there is oneness, we will be able to build Mayāpur. Accountability.

8:00 P.M.

Parts of the meeting may be tedious but that's *tapasya*; it shows our love for Prabhupāda's movement. Paying attention even when it's tedious is a sign of love.

Health—I'm better. That means keep up the best health conditions. It also means I should take on more meetings and travel. I won't say take on more stress because I should learn to do it without adding stress.

Drawings on this page: *loṭa*, bird, revolving fan, books, a rhinoceros, a clock saying a quarter to eight, the floral pattern again.

Resolution about book distribution.

Also a drawing of two flags on a flagstaff. The top flag has the quote, "How will you write your journal, sir, now that you have gone through changes at the G.B.C. meetings?" Lower

down the flagstaff, another smaller flag has the quote, "What are the changes? *How* does it affect me?"

I haven't been out of the room in over an hour. Sticking it out.

April 4, 4:00 A.M.

My attendance at the G.B.C. meetings was a success and a personal milestone for me. All year I worked toward this important service, and by Kṛṣṇa's grace, my health held out long enough to attend most of the meetings.

Now it seems I've gotten a bug many devotees caught in Māyāpur. For several days, chills, constant headache, diarrhea. It's a temporary thing, so even though it hurts, we've decided to go on this morning to Calcutta and then to Vṛndāvana. Sometimes you have to go ahead with your service and not baby yourself, even when there are maladies. I'm eager to join with the devotees at Krishna-Balaram Mandir.

April 5, Calcutta

Baladeva went to the Calcutta temple to try to find out more about the identity of Lord Buddha. The first person he talked to was Tapomāya dāsa, a senior Bengali disciple of Prabhupāda. When Baladeva asked him, Tapomāya replied with confidence that everyone knows that Gautama Buddha is the same as Buddhadeva, the incarnation spoken about in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Tapomāya became animated and excited, and as each Bengali devotee passed by, he inquired from them, and they all agreed. They had all learned from "history" that Gautama Buddha and Buddhadeva were the same personality.

Baladeva then spoke with Sarvabhāvana dāsa, who is in charge of the Bengali BBT. He had the impression, as Bhakti-cāru Swami had stated, that Gautama Buddha and Buddhadeva were different personalities. He was very interested in the question, and said that we should try to approach Purī Mahārāja (not the Purī Mahārāja of Visakhapatnam), who is one of the senior Gaudiya Math *sannyāsīs* still living in Calcutta. He is a Godbrother of Prabhupāda's and resides at the Mādhava Math. As Baladeva and Sarvabhāvana were talking, one of Mādhava Mahārāja's disciples walked in to take *prasādam* at the temple. Seeing this as an auspicious sign, Sarvabhāvana

spoke with him and he agreed to take them directly to see Purī Mahārāja, who is very old and not very accessible.

At the Gauḍīya Math, they were taken in to see Purī Mahārāja, who became very interested in the question and immediately began calling for different books for consultation. He and Sarvabhāvana spoke back and forth in Bengali, pouring over the Sanskrit and Bengali scriptures that the Swami had in his collections.

Purī Mahārāja could not find any direct references in his books, but he gave two very good leads. He said that Keśava Mahārāja, Prabhupāda's *sannyāsa-guru*, had written a conclusive Vaiṣṇava text on Lord Buddha, drawing on all scriptural evidence. He also said that he remembered that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had printed an article in the *Gauḍīya Patrikā* called "Buddha."

Sarvabhāvana dāsa, therefore, is going to the Devānanda Math in Māyāpur to look for the book by Keśava Mahārāja and translate it for us. We are also trying to find the copy of the *Gauḍīya Patrikā* for Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's article.

A MORNING VISIT TO RĀDHĀ-GOVINDA MANDIR, CALCUTTA

As a child, Śrīla Prabhupāda used to think, "When will I be able to worship Kṛṣṇa like this?" Almost a hundred years ago. Of course, Prabhupāda lives on in more than this old, sacred memory. ISKCON is building a large temple in Calcutta; and in Calcutta they hold a Ratha-yātrā that rivals the one held at Purī; and Calcuttans have seen, or at least heard, that Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples are building a transcendental city in Māyāpur.

But the century-old memories of his childhood are also inspiration, a chance to think of him in the presence of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities he worshiped as a child.

Garuḍa's beak is repaired—
an old man
eyes my formal reverence.

In the *mandira* courtyard—
well-kept cows,
clothes on the line.

Photos near the altar—
none of Prabhupāda
who worshiped here.

As he watched Him for hours,
I see Him now—
Kṛṣṇa with His slanty eyes.

Thin, old *pūjārī*
rubs Them shiny,
“Just like in ISKCON.”

With water and Bengali book,
a worshiper sits down,
praising Bhagavān.

Dressing Rādhārāṇī—
the chatter of sparrows.

Lily in Her hand—
I think of the garden
in Gītā-nāgarī.

Kṛṣṇa is crowned—
the outside hammering increases.

Applying Her red dot,
placing His silver flute—
the morning is complete.

Departing—
sign in a parked car:
“Hare Kṛṣṇa Ratha-yātrā.”

April 6, Aboard Indian Airlines

After three days fasting and recuperating in Calcutta, we are now seated on the 5:45 A.M. flight to Delhi. But, “We regret . . . delay . . . technical difficulties . . .” Officials, laborers, and

half the passengers are outside the plane watching repair work on the engine. Sometimes soldiers chase the passengers back onto the plane, but a few minutes later they are all out again, to watch. Hour delay so far. Canceled flight? "Since we do not know how long the delay . . . you may smoke." The sound system is playing the same melody I've heard on all Indian flights. Although Indians seem to imitate Western music and musical instruments, they have a special proclivity for the flute; it is not just a jazz flute but something that reminds one of Kṛṣṇa.

Indian airplane
delayed for repair—
sound of the flute.

Delhi-Vṛndāvana, early morning drive

Asoka pillars mark the way. Women with clay pots balanced on their heads, coming from the well. We pass overloaded trucks in the dark: "Sound Horn." This part of Uttar Pradesh looks more like desert culture, whereas West Bengal was lush, more green and water. Yet along the route to Vṛndāvana there is also considerable farming, irrigated wheat crop harvested by hand.

These ordinary thoughts about India lead me to think, "Is mine a private life or a public life?" Actually, I lead a public life, servant of ISKCON. This has become more impressed on me since the G.B.C. meetings. Private life sounds like whimsical sense gratification. Even if private life is taken spiritually, it implies seclusion. Prabhupāda said, "Don't think, 'I have become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, let everyone else go to hell.'"

Last year I hardly moved at all, but now my travel schedule is restored. Plans for Vancouver, New Vrindaban, the mid-Atlantic temples one after another, then Ireland, Caribbean . . .

April 7

On arriving in Vṛndāvana, we were stopped along Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg by the local tax men. They occupy a small building and flag down cars to collect money for the Vṛndāvana municipality. In a semiofficial and whimsical way, they harass travelers, sometimes asking to inspect a trunk and then walking

away without even inspecting it, sometimes trying to deny entrance into Vṛndāvana, and always asking for a fee. The fee itself varies, perhaps according to how much they think they can get. When they stopped our car today, the man who approached our driver was a young man, wearing tight, western-style slacks and a sports shirt. He had a laughing wiseguy expression as he spoke. Somehow, he particularly angered our driver, who jumped out of the car and began arguing with him. Our driver refused to give this particular man money and went inside the tax house to ascertain what was the actual fee and who was the official person we had to pay it to. It turned out that the fee was considerably less than the first man asked for. Riotous shouting occurred between our driver and the tax man before we finally were permitted to go on.

At first, this led me to think how degraded things have become in Vṛndāvana since Kṛṣṇa's time. I began to notice other signs of degradation, especially in the present-day residents of Vṛndāvana. But then I checked myself, remembering that it is an offense to the holy *dhāma* to criticize its residents. Even these present-day *karmīs*, or even the animals of Vṛndāvana, are very special, just by the fact that they were born and live in Kṛṣṇa's abode. Also, the *ācāryas* have given their opinion that the apparent degradation or materialism present in the *dhāma* is a deliberate covering by Māyā to keep insincere persons from entering the sacred precinct. Seeing it from this point of view, I reasoned that we should not be upset to pay an extra three rupees just for the privilege of entering the "city" of Vṛndāvana. Both Uddhava and Lord Brahmā aspired to be born in their next lives as the grass or creepers on the outskirts of Vṛndāvana, so that they might have the privilege of being stepped on by the lotus feet of the *gopīs*.

Entering the *dhāma*:
paying the road tax,
a peacock on the wall.

We arrived exactly on time for the greeting of the Deities, 7:15 A.M. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma looked deliciously cool, with short *dhotīs*, legs bare. "Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are real brothers, being sons of Devakī."

Once in my room I didn't get to leave all day, busy either with meetings or rest.

Talking with Godbrothers,
looking out the window—
the temple domes.

April 9

Vṛndāvana morning worship: attendance at Prabhupāda āraṭi in the *samādhi*, then āraṭi before Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, then *japa* in Prabhupāda's room. Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami asked me if I thought this room was my favorite in the world. I stopped to think, but he said for him this was definitely the best place. He's writing a play about Prabhupāda's disappearance time, which is set mostly in this room. He said this is the room in which Prabhupāda most freely gave himself to us during those last pastimes.

Walked on Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg with TKG. He is very straightforward in wanting to get something out of our relationship. At the same time, he is willing and able to give something. We discussed our ideals and struggles to write Kṛṣṇa conscious literature. TKG gave me a book of Korean poetry, ancient and modern. Like me, he has been reading a range of different literature, in connection with his drama-writing. We discussed the possible taints, as well as usefulness of exploring cultures outside of straight *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. We both admitted that whatever we finally write is the expression of our own state of—or lack of—Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Walking on Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg

Why do they still call it
Chhatikara Road?
Flies, too much dust,
a man with shotgun on bicycle—
walking, I pray:
Prabhupāda, be with us.
Tho we follow you
in separation

we sometimes think, "I'm on my own."
Please keep us in line.

Taking up my promise to attend the full morning program, I sat in on Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami's *Bhāgavatam* class. He spoke on a verse about Mahārāja Priyavrata, who gave up a more renounced style of life in order to take up more service for Kṛṣṇa. TKG said we have a tendency to be irresponsible and avoid more work. But Prabhupāda was the greatest propounder of *yukta-vairāgya* who ever tread the earth. We can increase service unlimitedly if we maintain our strict *sādhana*.

(During the lecture, I was very attracted to look up at Śrīla Prabhupāda and the bright colors decorating the flowers and lions on his *vyāsāsana*. TKG's talk also made me look up to Prabhupāda.)

Don't be afraid to do more service. Advancement is measured by ability to take on more service without succumbing to sense gratification. Dhanurdhara Swami asked how do we know when to take on more service, or when not to? We should listen to higher authorities.

ART OF VṚNDĀVANA

The parrot's flight is an art. Man can appreciate it as an artistic act, but man has not created it. Similarly, the art of the bougainvillea blooming bright maroon and saffron along the walls of Prabhupāda's courtyard. But even these pretty flowers have to be connected to Kṛṣṇa in order to become real objects of art. Prabhupāda defined art as the utility of things in their right place—things engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa. For example, the art of worship of the Deity, the art of lecturing, the art of writing, the art of combating—all in service to Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise, "art" is decoration of a dead body.

For me, the monkey climbing around the temple domes is ugly and some of his acts are abominable. He also appears to be an avowed enemy of the temple, a pilferer and harasser. But everything has to be seen in connection to Kṛṣṇa. Apart from Kṛṣṇa, the loveliness of the swooping parrots or the bright bougainvillea flowers are illusion. The beauty of Vṛndāvana is that here one can easily see all these things in connection with Kṛṣṇa.

Everything in Vṇdāvana has been eternally connected to Kṛṣṇa by His *līlā* here. As described in *Brahma-saṁhitā*, here all the walking is dance, all talking is song, and the flute is the dearest friend. So the monkeys of Vṇdāvana are established as playmates of Kṛṣṇa, to whom He gave stolen butter. Also the parrots are the descendants of those *śukas* who talked eloquently about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and the flowers are the same varieties used by the *gopīs* to make into garlands to decorate Kṛṣṇa's body. Vṇdāvana is the ideal place for the artist. Here everything is already perfectly in place: an artist is one who sees it. And such vision is endowed by *guru* and Kṛṣṇa.

Yoga and Health

Walking on the road is good for health
and so is looking at the rising sun.
And if you chant while you walk
like the walk of Ambarīṣa—
and if you walk to the temple,
then your *yoga* is complete.

Kṛṣṇa Tape

Prabhupāda speaks
on behalf of the *gopīs*
criticizing Kṛṣṇa:
“You are a cheating messenger
from a cheating master.”

When they regretted their anger:
they spoke in that mood:
“Don't tell Him that we were angry.
Whatever He wants is our desire.
He is our worshipable Lord.”

April 10

Today Śrīla Bhagavān Goswami and Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami left the *dhāma*. But at the Prabhupāda *ārati*, just before leaving, Bhagavān Mahārāja asked me whether it was true that I wanted to worship Lord Nṛsiṁha. I replied yes. He said, “I'll see what I can do.”

After the *maṅgala-ārati*, when I was seeing them off, Śrīla Bhagavān handed me a cloth bundle and said, "This is to make up for any misunderstandings." In the presence of a number of Godbrothers, I unfolded the bundle and uncovered a three-inch-tall brass *mūrti* of Nṛsiṃhadeva. He is one of two Deities Bhagavān Mahārāja's men discovered in South India after sending devotees on a two-week-long search to all the antique shops. He is well-constructed and appears quite old; His foot is even worn smooth, perhaps by the touch of worshipers. I assured them that I would accept this Deity and begin to worship Him. They say He is worshiped by adorning with crowns and jewels. Lakṣmīdevī is seated on His left thigh.



Śrī Śrī Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃha.

RETURNING FROM A MORNING WALK

The donkeys staggering under the loads. I looked at their faces and felt sympathy, but there is nothing I can do. I thought of Issa, who felt deeply for such suffering creatures and wrote poems of commiseration:

Spare the fly!
Wringing his hands, wringing his feet,
he implores your mercy!

Cry not, insects,
for that is a way
we all must go.

Prabhupāda said the donkey is a *mūḍha* for laboring under a human master, since the donkey can get the same grass to eat without working. Yet, what can the donkey do once he is under the grip of such a master? And what can I do for them? It is their *karma*. Only after looking at each donkey did I look up at the drivers walking behind them, switching the donkeys with sticks. The men had the look of Indian desert culture, dark, good-looking faces, but with wild, bold eyes—not gentle, housebroken types. You couldn't tell these men not to be so cruel. For generations they have carefully calculated exactly how much a donkey can carry without collapsing or breaking its back, and they load them up just to that point with bags of grain so wide they block the road.

Everybody suffers, and the only remedy is to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and go back to Godhead, taking as many with us as possible. The world is no fit place for the pure spirit soul who may very likely wind up under the donkey's load, bearing the cruel stick.

Staggering by
with white faces,
the donkeys bear their loads.

I gave class today; the purport stressed *varṇāśrama-dharma*, and I spoke about cow protection and agriculture at Gītā-nāgarī.

Then Vipramukhya Swami asked this question: "One could say if we are actually interested in cow protection, then the best thing to do is to increase book distribution, because that way you'll save more cows." I replied that Prabhupāda did not think that preaching about cow protection should be limited to writing about it and distributing books. Prabhupāda has written that reading books is theoretical. So to actually protect the cow is to get off the theoretical platform.

We really mean it: "Stop the slaughterhouses." Stop killing the cows. It is a great crime. Prabhupāda said that because of Lyndon Johnson's slaughtering cows, he had to send the American boys to Vietnam. It's the greatest crime. It's one of our main complaints with the whole Christian culture—that they're not following their commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." We have to support our own doctrine to not kill animals, and especially to not kill the cow. Distribute the books, *and* protect the cows.

Kṛṣṇa Tape

The mind of mother Yaśodā
is revealed by Prabhupāda
in his spoken words:
"If the child is too much frightened
I do not know what will become of Him."
So she desisted in her plan,
and threw away her stick.
"She was the topmost well-wisher
of her child."

A group of monkeys sits on branches of the *nīm* tree, eating up the leaves. They think it's their right. The tree simply tolerates. The parrots are alarmed by the monkeys' proximity.

April 11

Back from the walk.

As soon as I began my walk, we saw Prabhupāda's old friend Bhagatji walking ahead of us. At first he didn't recognize me, but then was very friendly, asking about my health. He said that I looked too thin. I was surprised that he remembered me

so well from the old days when I was with Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana. Bhagatjī walks slowly because of age and his troubled leg, so we slowed down to walk with him.

After the opening greetings, Bhagatjī started right in with a Prabhupāda story. He said that he once asked Prabhupāda the meaning of the verse *ananyāś cintayanto mām*. Prabhupāda used the example of a warrior and how he is supported by the government. Because the warrior is on the front lines, the government supplies him whatever is necessary, even if they neglect to supply others. At the same time, the warrior is not supplied anything unnecessary. Prabhupāda said that he himself was like a warrior for Kṛṣṇa and that is why he had so many facilities, supplied as needed for the fight.

Bhagatjī then told a story about Prabhupāda in his very last days. One time Bhagatjī entered Prabhupāda's room and saw that Prabhupāda was lying on his back but trying to dictate a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport. Bhagatjī pleaded with Prabhupāda, "Why are you writing in this condition? It is not necessary anymore." But Prabhupāda replied by saying that he was a warrior of his Guru Mahārāja and so he must fight to the end. Prabhupāda said that even if a warrior is cut in the neck and bleeding to death, still he swings his arm with the sword.

(I consider Bhagatjī's stories reliable, and this one about the warrior swinging the sword with his last breath was very impressive. It made me desire to *use* regained health in Prabhupāda's service, and not just simply nurse health for all of one's days.)

Just to check on a Bhagatjī story I had heard before, I asked him about the incident of Prabhupāda looking closely at the insects. He retold it in much the same way. One time he walked in on Prabhupāda, and Prabhupāda did not notice him for half an hour. Prabhupāda was carefully watching the flies on his desk. When he looked up and saw Bhagatjī there, he then explained how he was noticing that each fly is constructed in the same way by Kṛṣṇa—each a pilot and plane in itself.

Bhagatjī says he remembers these stories of Prabhupāda every day and this is how he enjoys life. Bhagatjī has a nice new service on behalf of Prabhupāda, and on behalf of Abhirāma dāsa, who is supplying money for daily *prasādam* distribution at the gate of Bhaktivedanta Swami Gurukula. Abhirāma supplies

the money, and Bhagatjī sees that the food is cooked and distributed to local people and beggars.

At his request, I accompanied Bhagatjī to his home and saw his Deity. The Deity was asleep in a bed, but he opened the temple room and also uncovered the bedding so that I could see. The Deity is actually a framed painting of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, and he also has a framed painting of Gaura-Nitāi and two little *śilās*, one a black Govardhana, which is Kṛṣṇa, and another white one, which is Rādhā. He also has a picture of his initiating spiritual master. Bhagatjī considers Prabhupāda his *śikṣā-guru*. It was all very pleasant, and he gave Baladeva and me big cups of *nimbu-pāni* and an orange each. As we were departing, Bhagatjī said he wished that I would live a hundred years and write many books about Prabhupāda.

Ravindra-svarūpa dāsa gave class today. A verse about King Priyavrata, who created a better sun than that of the sun-god, but who never tried to supersede other devotees. Ravindra said that if you are thinking of Kṛṣṇa, you can become humble. A great soul compares himself to all-powerful Kṛṣṇa and thus feels very small. But the tiny soul has access to the Supersoul when he becomes His devotee.

In the question and answer period after class, there were inquiries about humility. Some of the questioners became quite cerebral. But Ravindra kept sticking to his simple premise—forget Kṛṣṇa and you become puffed-up; remember Kṛṣṇa and you have access to the greatest and you remain humble.

Kṛṣṇa Tape

In the voice of Upananda
Prabhupāda lectured
to the cowherdsmen:
“Let us immediately leave for Vṛndāvana.
There are too many demons coming here.”
The cowherdsmen agreed,
and as Prabhupāda narrates,
they hooked up their carts,
with *gopīs* on board, cows in the lead,
and they moved to Vṛndāvana.

But it wasn't long
 before Vatsāsura appeared
 in the shape of a calf.
 Kṛṣṇa saw through him
 and killed that demon
 by throwing him into a tree.
 Prabhupāda said,
 "The boys congratulated,
 'Well done! Well done!'
 And the demigods threw flowers
 in great satisfaction."

We went out in a ricksha last night to shop for Deity paraphernalia. Darkness softening the appearance of cows' ribs and other stark sights of Vṛndāvana. Bankibihari Way lit up like Broadway. We wheel quickly past shops and shoppers—pictures of Hanumān, an orange *mūrti* of Gaṇeśa. Here, a shop selling radios seems odd—Kṛṣṇa *pūjā* items are the main.

The man at Shriji Jewelers fits the heads of my Nṛsiṃha and Lakṣmī, measuring with a metal band. We order silver crowns and helmets. I decide to decorate Them only with crowns and a belt. Otherwise, let Their unique beauty show. He looks dark, like an ancient Deity in a dimly lit inner sanctum.

Riding back to Ramaṇa-retī, soft breeze, air thick with dung smoke from several fires. This neighborhood is peaceful, with more peacocks. Today, when I praised Ramaṇa-retī this way to Bhagatjī, he replied, "Yes. And out here more transcendental things happen."

Tonight we had a swimming party in the Yamunā, about fifteen *gurukula* boys and some teachers. The water was pleasantly warm, very gentle and deep enough in some parts for swimming. The boys kept up rumors of turtles with huge heads. I saw an old-time ISKCON devotee, Nara-Nārāyaṇa dāsa, and remarked that he looked well. "How could I not feel well," he replied, "bathing up to my neck in the Yamunā!"

We are supposed to go tomorrow afternoon to Rādhā-Dāmodara temple, but the swimming was so pleasurable maybe we will just repeat it. I didn't see the big snapping turtles, but I did see a few birds dive for fish. And everywhere I looked,

young boys, *gurukulis* with brilliant futures.

A boy from Bulgaria wrestles with a boy from Pennsylvania, and they fall together into the Yamunā. A tan and white dog sleeps nearby our clothes on the beach. While swimming, the clothes on the beach are a bright array—schoolboy-yellow, *brahmacārī*-saffron, *grhastha*-white, and plaid *gamchās*.

In the water, I had small conversations with whoever swam near. With a teacher Śāstra dāsa from Vancouver, I spoke about his upcoming marriage; with eight-year-old Madana-mohana, Pṛthu's son, I promised to meet up with him in Ireland in early June; with Viśāla, some persistent questions he had about rules and regulations; a few words with Mahā-Hari, "When will you return to Baltimore?"; and swimming strokes back and forth toward the other shore where birds build nests in the side of the riverbank. This is the river where one loses his sins while bathing.

April 12

Dark arm of Indian woman and her wooden stick, like another arm, both sprawled forward, in her full *daṇḍavats* at entrance of Rādhā-Dāmodara courtyard.

I was writing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* notes in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room when time came for greeting the Deities. We went up near the altar to view. Looked in and to the left to see the very large and tall Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, and next to Them, Rādhā-Dāmodara of Jīva Gosvāmī. We were surrounded by elderly ladies, mostly widows with sticks, who were making cries, "Rādhā-Dāmodara! Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra!"

From inside,
candlelight and singing—
Jīva's *samādhī*.

Prabhupāda's kitchen:
a private view
Vaiṣṇava *samādhī*.

We returned to Krishna-Balaram Mandir in time for *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class. Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma were dressed in especially bright splurges of color, with ornate patterned

neckbeads. Fountains of color—and They at the center, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Kṛṣṇa Tape

Prabhupāda is all the boys
sizing up the Aghāsura:
“My dear friends,
it appears to be ready
to swallow us up.
Is he not a big snake?”

And Prabhupāda is Kṛṣṇa,
“Don’t be afraid of . . .
Don’t be afraid of . . .”
As Prabhupāda narrates,
the *līlā* manifests—
jolly boys entering the serpent,
Kṛṣṇa pausing, then entering too.
And the voice of the serpent:
“He has killed all my brothers
and now I’ll kill Him.”

He is Śukadeva speaking
and he is Māhārāja Parīkṣit,
eager to hear.

Evening

Storm. Flag on spire blowing out. Over in *gurukula* I see
boys standing in shadow. Go on the roof and feel the wind
blow? No, I think I’ll take rest. Tomorrow last day here. It’s like
being away from the world.

Foreigners have to leave India. They can’t get their visas
renewed.

April 13

Prahlādānanda Swami said always think you are the ser-
vant of the Vaiṣṇavas and the G.B.C., then you won’t be in an-
xiety. You simply serve on their behalf and the results are up to
Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will reciprocate especially when you face

difficulties and surrender to Him. He said this was his experience in Chile and Peru.

Back from morning walk

I didn't want to talk. I wanted to chant only. I thought of different important things in ISKCON, as I usually do, but at the bottom, I wanted to only chant while walking. There should be time for that daily, not commenting on the events or speaking of another angle—although there is another case to deal with—let it go for a while.

Even nature, the morning cuckoos, sound of running water in a trough . . . and human nature—the men who play volleyball in a walled-in courtyard, the house with reindeer decorated on the outside, the old soldier with white moustache and World War II rifle, shoes but no socks as he walks to work—don't make wry comments about these things, just notice; notice more, but speak less. Chant and walk on the road where Prabhupāda did.

When I meet a Godbrother on the temple grounds and he starts to bow down, I become annoyed that he is forcing me to also bow down. Where is my willingness and desire to bow down? I should worship the example of Rūpa Gosvāmī, who bowed down a thousand times to Vaiṣṇavas every day. I seem to be annoyed with everyone, find some defect in each meeting.

All devotees in ISKCON who are chanting and following the rules are great souls—whoever once chants Hare Kṛṣṇa is beyond all religion—and yet I am annoyed with them and see defects. People ask me why I am humble. Because I sometimes see what a fool I am. But I am more tired than humble, more reclusive than free of material aggressiveness. Why note it down? Because I have hopes that these are all petty mental distractions; I will overcome them; and express good feelings in place of my present annoyances.

I spoke with Dhanurdhara Swami, principal of Vṛndāvana Gurukula. He assured me that the *gurukula* will go on, despite visa trouble or diminishing enrollment. We also spoke about his concepts of *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā-guru*. *Gurukula* teachers here feel it is necessary for them to be able to directly work with students

in something more like a *guru*-disciple relationship. In order to do this, they would like to emphasize the importance of the *śikṣā-guru*. This comes just at a time when ISKCON is expanding the *dikṣā-gurus*, and brings up different practical and philosophical problems and controversial doctrines.

I would like to be part of a forum to exchange ideas on this with them, although they don't plan to make radical changes in the present situation. My tendency is to want things simple and easy, but so often the reality is complex and difficult. I also would like things to stay the way they are, but things are always changing. A healthy person is able to move with the changes. He is also capable of taking part in complex situations; he does not drop out as soon as something becomes a little difficult.

April 14, Delhi

Bhūrījāna gave me a study outline for carefully reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I want to improve my reading, but I don't think I can afford much extra daily time. Methodical note-taking seems difficult with my full schedule and with my diary-writing.

Bhūrījāna's guide contains compelling premises:

Premise 1: The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Kṛṣṇa.

Many *Bhāgavatam* verses proclaim the glories and liberating effects of hearing the *Bhāgavatam*, and verses even state the *Bhāgavatam* is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Nevertheless, I find it almost impossible to maintain my devotional attitude, concentration, and faith when I actually read. I often find it difficult to even begin to read, for as soon as I have the inclination, so many things need tending to. Rather than perceiving the *Bhāgavatam* as the all-attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead, it usually seems dry, repetitive, and quaintly written. But I know Kṛṣṇa is there, despite my inabilities to crack through the superficial. If He was not personally available through the *Bhāgavatam*, why did Prabhupāda spend so much time translating it? Why did he so strongly emphasize distributing it? Exciting, all-attractive Kṛṣṇa must be there, and I must find Him.

Baladeva and Dattātreya went to the Delhi temple and met with Sarvabhāvana. Now the evidence about Lord Buddha and Gautama is conclusive. Sarvabhāvana found the book by His Holiness Keśava Swami and has translated the relevant portions.

In his book, *Life of the Māyāvādīs*, His Holiness Keśava Swami quotes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura as saying that Śakyasīmha (Gautama) Buddha and the Lord Buddha mentioned in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as an *avatāra* of Lord Viṣṇu are actually two different personalities. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī said that Gautama Buddha was a very great and wise person, but that he was only a *jīva*, not Viṣṇu *tattva*, and that he was not the Lord Buddha of the *Bhāgavatam*.

Keśava Mahārāja cites various evidence that Lord Buddha and Gautama Buddha are different personalities. One famous Buddhist named Amarasiṃha, who lived one hundred fifty years before Śaṅkarācārya's time, wrote in a book entitled *Amar Khoṣa* that Lord Buddha and Gautama Buddha were different. Raghunātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has commented upon and confirmed this statement of Amarasiṃha. Keśava Mahārāja also cites different Buddhist literatures, such as the *Prajñā Paramita Sūtras* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, as well as the *Lālita-vistara*, as providing further evidence of the difference.

Keśava Mahārāja says that Śaṅkarācārya falsely preached that Gautama Buddha was the *avatāra* described in the *Bhāgavatam*. Presumably, he did this in order to advance his own preaching mission.

April 15

MORNING VISIT TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S CHIPPIWADA ROOM, NEW DELHI

Prabhupāda kept this room in the city so that he could co-ordinate the different aspects of printing the *Bhāgavatam*. He translated and wrote purports here, and also went to the paper sellers and printers and did proofreading at Chippiwada. He had faith that his presentation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was his life's work, but since he was almost seventy years old when he began it, he worked intensely. His plan was to print at least a few volumes and then go to America to present them; but his time was short.

Bowing to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa:
let me find him
in the books.

Empty cupboards now;
the son tells us
what we already know.

Empty now—
but millions of volumes
all over the world.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Paṇḍita died last December. Prabhupāda used to call him Hari-bhakti dāsa anudāsa, servant of the servant of the Vaiṣṇava, because he helped Śrīla Prabhupāda. His son, thirty-seven years old, cordially allows us in and asks us to take *darśana* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Then he speaks a few words as if we knew nothing at all of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission. I assume a silent, know-it-all air. But the irony is that I also don't know.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were alone here burning with intense inner flame—desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The *paṇḍita's* son said that he was only a young boy at that time, but that you seemed to him a crazy man—in the sense that he did not know how someone could work so many hours, day and night. I'm protected and insulated compared to you; I am nothing compared to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but my mission is to serve in your ISKCON.

The room is completely empty, dust in the air. The *paṇḍita's* son said, "It was like this when he was here." He typed here, he slept here, he wrote here.

As soon as they leave me alone in the room, I search quickly through the cupboards for signs of an old book cover, or maybe even a Volume One. Empty. The life-spark is absent from this room, Prabhupāda himself. I'm carrying a BBT volume, 1978 printing, "990,000 copies in print." I'm sorry I don't read Prabhupāda's books more carefully. If I did, I wouldn't find things empty and dusty. This room is external—yet it is a *tīrtha*. But such places are hard to appreciate. The room is now as it was then. In those days it was difficult to know that Prabhupāda would expand his mission so successfully. No one here knew it.

Out of neglect they have kept it unattended, dirty, empty. Not the slightest comfort here, just as when he resided here. They could have at least restored some items, the light from the

ceiling, the trunk he typed on, the typewriter—at least something signifying that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was prepared here by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami—a work of greatest importance for the next ten thousand years of human life.

Best use I can make of my visit here is to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* deeply and carefully.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.1.1

This verse establishes that praise of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the entire subject matter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and He is the source of everything. The verse is a full philosophical presentation of the Absolute Truth, who is revealed as Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa, son of Devakī and Vasudeva. This one verse can be discussed infinitely. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī spoke on it for three months at Dacca.

Purport

This is Śrīla Prabhupāda's first *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purport, unusually long, filled with important introductory subject matter. He quotes scriptural authority to prove that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person. Prabhupāda is also aware that many atheists will not accept it, and he uses reason against them and their "poor fund of knowledge." Thus we see that Prabhupāda employs both śāstric proof, as well as logic and reason in his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Chippiwada. Śrīla Prabhupāda combined methodical preparation of the text with work at a rapid pace. He did this by minimizing eating and sleeping. All energy was spent for this. This is a symptom of *bhāva*. There is nothing in this room, no decoration, and Prabhupāda did not have to work to pay rent for it—except to work at *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There is nothing here because he put everything into the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. If you come to this empty room and you want to appreciate it, then sit and read his *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The mind and a devotional care of Prabhupāda then fills the room. Read as he wrote—methodically, carefully, but with devotion, putting aside all comforts. Don't choke on the empty-room dust, but breathe in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. There is little fresh air here, so in order to breathe, you have to transcend and breathe in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* commentaries.

A prayer: I am small, but integrated into your ISKCON. Let me work and contribute to your institution. One important way to do this is to regularly study your books. I pray for your blessing to do this. From this Chippiwada place I beg this benediction—a tiny fraction of your devotion. As you wrote here, let me read what you wrote. Then I may qualify as one of your sons.

6:00 P.M., Delhi

We will be traveling by jet eastward. If we make it, the first stop is Bangkok, there a layover for two hours and then on to Tokyo.

Thai Airlines
all-night flight—
who knows what will happen?

Trying to recall
my original taste,
reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Delhi airport, 11:00 P.M.

Anticipating Japan—we hope to see some literary people, haiku editors and writers, from the names Hal Roth gave me. We will show them *Under the Banyan Tree*. Maybe someone will be willing to write a review of my book in their magazine. Maybe someone will be interested in the fact that an American monk is writing in haiku. And maybe I may ask their opinion whether they think devotional themes have a place in haiku. In other words, there may be a preaching field for me to cultivate writers in Japan. We will give it a try and see if something happens within a few days.

On board Thai Airlines, I slept and tried to shape my mind in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Praises to Vāsudeva
the source of everything
in Prabhupāda's book.

April 16, 6:00 A.M.

Bangkok transit—
reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,
the rising sun.

Surrounded by plastic chairs, tax-free cigarettes . . . You don't have to notice it so much. Our men with their golf caps, beadbags. Half-incognito *jīvas*. We were advised that it's not forbidden to enter Japan as a devotee, but it's better to be discrete. Therefore, slacks, caps—but anyone can see that these *japa* chanters and *Bhāgavatam* readers are in a different consciousness.

On board United Airlines at Bangkok, we read the latest newspapers—U.S. jets bomb Libya. Americans interviewed say they'd never travel abroad nowadays, it's too dangerous. More reason to chant with attention; it may be the last time. And don't write in a way to dilute Kṛṣṇa consciousness—give all you can while you can.

Tapei transit

Walking long terminal halls, Dattātreya and Ralph look like taxi drivers in their caps—my slacks are oversized—talking of terrorism, thinking of *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā gurus* in ISKCON, recalling Śrīla Prabhupāda's visits to Tokyo.

More Oriental people, but they are dressed in Western style, and even elderly folks are smoking cigarettes and buying liquor and other items from the duty-free shops. No sign of the austerity or loneliness of Tufu or Basho. And even the best Orientals did not know Kṛṣṇa. But now, like us Western *mlecchas*, they have the chance.

"Once in a holy place in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya, great sages headed by Śaunaka assembled to perform a great thousand-year sacrifice for the satisfaction of the Lord and His devotees."

Approaching Japan at six hundred miles per hour. It shouldn't be hard to enter through immigration. But can I do something worthy there? At least I can pray constantly to Lord Kṛṣṇa in His holy names—"Please let me serve You." And I will

worship His form as Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead.

Everything rests on Him—
jet power,
the silver wing.

Immigration queue:
He will never fail me
if I say His names.

In these places devoid of a direct spiritual connection—unlike Vṛndāvana, India—I have to more deliberately realize transcendence. In Vṛndāvana, swimming means bathing in the Yamunā, walking on the road means hearing, “Jaya Rādhē!” But a place like Japan is all *māyā* unless you deliberately engage yourself in devotional service.

“O Sūta Gosvāmī, you are acquainted with the knowledge of Vyāsadeva, who is the incarnation of Godhead, and you also know other sages who are fully versed in all kinds of physical and metaphysical knowledge” (*Bhāg.* 1.1.7).

Tokyo, Airport Hotel

It is quite a contrast to return to “civilization” after two months in India. We were whizzed through immigration, luggage return, and customs at Tokyo without delay. In India, the same procedures turn into tortures, such as last night, when they threatened not to let us travel because of a missing form, which was actually the fault of Indian Customs, and we were also almost late for our plane because they could not maintain a proper queue or deal efficiently with the passengers. Here the hotel is very quiet, clean, and sealed in, and a whole rush of material amenities are available, like phones that work, warm showers, and better vegetables.

Nevertheless, it’s with regret that we leave India. I’m already calculating when I can return to Vṛndāvana, perhaps at Kārttika. There is no place like India; even a remnant of Vedic culture is better than all the efficiency and politeness of Tokyo.

Walking to the airport hotel
in cold, gray dusk,

over a barbed wire fence
I saw my first
Japanese cherry blossoms.

April 17

Hare Kṛṣṇa temple—
“Changing Bodies”
in Japanese script.

Baladeva will try to phone the haiku editors. There is a protocol here, and we don't know much of it. Jagadvīra dāsa, an English-speaking devotee, says Japanese people don't rush their business or human relations. Maybe a few days is not enough to ask someone to write a review of my book. You're also supposed to have business cards, but we don't have any.

Under the direction of Rāmeśvara Swami, ISKCON Japan has recently produced an edition of the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. They distribute it regularly in the streets. A sign on the wall of the room where I am staying contains quotes from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* about the Pañca-tattva's merciful distribution of love of God. This seems like a symbol of Rāmeśvara Swami's emphasis on preaching. I hope I can also do it, in my own way.

The temple is a small room with Gaura-Nitāi Deities and Lord Nṛsimha and Prahlāda. I gave class, and it was translated sentence by sentence by Jagadvīra's Japanese wife. About eight devotees attended, including some Japanese *brahmacārīs*. The verse was on the ladies of Hastināpura and how their spontaneous prayers pleased the Lord more than Vedic hymns.

I shared some recollections about Prabhupāda's visit to Japan, and his attraction for Japanese culture. Prabhupāda gave the Japanese verses describing Vṛndāvana (*Light of the Bhāgavata*), because he knew of the Japanese peoples' love for nature, as expressed in haiku and painting. Prabhupāda also appreciated the Japanese customs of giving honor to saintly persons.

In the question period, a girl who is the leading book

distributor asked several questions. She had heard that Prabhupāda once said that the Japanese will be the last people to take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but if they become devotees, they'll become very good devotees. Then she asked me to tell some activities of Prabhupāda that demonstrated how he considered book distribution very important. I said the fact that he rose so early every morning to write the books was an important proof, the fact that Prabhupāda said a temple should spend fifty percent of their earnings for book distribution, and also the fact that Prabhupāda became personally enthused when he heard the results of book distribution. If I can encourage these stalwart devotees in their difficult tasks, then that is the success of my own preaching. It is a high point in our travels, to stop in this little building and preach *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the assembled devotees of ISKCON Japan.

3:00 PM, Tokyo

So far, no contacts. Dāmodara and I have come to a park for a walk. A young guy and his dungaree girl come to the Shinto shrine, toss some coins in the box, and then they clap their hands. These sounds echo throughout the empty wooden temple. The girl giggles and then they leave, arm in arm.

Two large stone lions stand on guard at the temple entrance. In the distance I hear men shouting and a ball pounding, like at a noisy basketball game. A cawing crow reminds me that we have left India. Yes, even the Indian crow has a connection to Vedic antiquity—the crow who was pardoned by Lord Rāma, the crow who revealed the identity of Indradyumna—but Japanese crows are unconnected, or less connected, to Kṛṣṇa. Of course, everything is connected to Lord Kṛṣṇa, but in India, the spiritual link is direct.

I asked Dāmodara dāsa of his first experience in a Japanese kitchen. He replied, "It's better than India." Almost any place is better than India for material amenities. And yet no place is as good for direct spiritual connection. Best of all is the Kṛṣṇa conscious temple, wherever that may be.

The wind rattles a black garbage bag wrapped inside a metal pail. The shrine grounds are covered with gray pebbles, and a young priest in white robes sweeps the cement with a long straw broom.

In a Shinto shrine
I think of India
and regret my leaving.

Why am I viewing
these white-robed priests
so far away from Bharata?

Dozo, Hare Kṛṣṇa, kuri kaishite, kudasai:
“Please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

An old man in a sweater and knit cap looks up at the cherry trees in bloom. Seeing him reminds me that the air is cool and I put on my own knit cap. Once outside the Shinto shrine, we haven't been able to find a peaceful place. Next to a park path is a baseball field, a band playing, runners practicing, then a roadway, bike path, another patch of woods park, etc., and everything laid out in close strips of land.

They say the cherry blossoms only last for a week and are viewed, at least by poets, as a symbol of the unreal, “floating world.” We may be near the end of that week, with lots of white petals on the ground. I remember cherry trees from my boyhood. Their bark has a distinct horizontal striping—the trunk and arms are easy to climb up.

The old man who was
viewing cherry petals
buys a Coke from the machine.

Insistent crows
change my blossom-thoughts
to something else.

Like Kṛṣṇa's friends,
boys with sticks
run through the park.

Lost and Found

Guided only by the map
on the Hare Kṛṣṇa pamphlet,

we stop at shops
and wave down cars
till finally we find
a cabbie who smiles
and brings us home
to Gaura-Nitāi.

April 18, Lord Rāmacandra's appearance day

In class I discussed *bhāgavata-dharma* as beyond religion for material gains. I mentioned visiting the Shinto shrine, and I asked the devotees what the ritual meant—the dropping of coins, clapping of hands, and the illustrated wooden plaques. The devotees laughed, and Mahātmā dāsa explained that it is all materialistic. People go to pray, “Let me pass my examination.” The wooden plaques represent specific boons they pray for. It was very satisfying seeing the smiling faces of these Japanese devotees who have become transcendental to native religions.

Met today with Nobuo Hirasawa, as recommended by Hal Roth. He was very kind and open, took us up to his apartment, gave us back issues of his now-discontinued magazine, *Outch*. He knows almost all the American haikuists, considers them his good friends.

I asked him my question—whether one can express his spiritual views in haiku. He said yes. In Japan, those poets who remove themselves from their haiku are called landscape poets, and those who keep the self in the poem are called imagists. He himself follows the philosophy of Chuang-tzu, Chinese precursor to Zen.

We sat around his table, me, Baladeva, Phāni-bhūṣana dāsa (an American devotee who speaks fluent Japanese), Nobuo, and his wife. I gave him the Japanese edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and *Under the Banyan Tree*. We exchanged books and talk, and now that we are parted, I don't know what will be the result of it. At least I can say I met a very friendly Japanese writer-editor who has a fondness for American haiku writers. But will he appreciate or learn more about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and does he actually think my Kṛṣṇa conscious haiku has any literary importance?

Nobuo Hirasawa

Japanese haiku-man,
 in "Jazz Gallery" sweatshirt,
 running up five flights;
 exchanging gifts
 with a Hare Kṛṣṇa monk.

We went to a haiku museum, a disappointment, all in Japanese language, except a very small section in the library. An unfriendly old man there watched over us as we looked at the books. I gave him a Japanese *Bhagavad-gītā* *As It Is*. He had never heard of Vedic culture, or of *Bhagavad-gītā*, and hardly even knew of India. But he accepted the Japanese *Gītā* and a copy of *Under the Banyan Tree* for his museum collection of English-speaking books.

April 19

Rainy day. I spoke on the phone with Śeṣa Prabhu in Philadelphia. I'm eager to return to work there, and he wants me.

Sounds on this street: rain on the roof; electric tools; cars with small-engine whine; loud, small motorcycles; hawkers with loudspeakers magnifying their sales pitch; sometimes little children playing; sometimes silence. Finally, "Hare Kṛṣṇa!"—from schoolboys wearing black uniforms with black Mao caps. Oriental smiles: "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare . . ."

Met with Sakuzo Takada, an eighty-year-old gentleman, and his wife. He wore a black kimono and advised that I write strictly five-seven-five syllables and include a season-word if I want to call my poems haiku. I asked him if there was a continuing tradition of poet-priests in Japan. He said everyone writes haiku, and so monks also, but he doesn't like religion. He thinks poems without religion are "more pure." But he admitted it could be done—spiritual haiku, provided the five-seven-five and season-word was maintained.

Mr. Takada and his wife wanted to give us tea, but we accepted grapefruit juice instead. We explained our rules and regulations, showed him a picture of Prabhupāda, and gave him a

Japanese *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. He became very interested in it and quoted a little Sanskrit (*dharma-kṣetre kuru-kṣetre*), which he said he learned in his youth.

I showed him my poem in *Modern Haiku* about red *japa* beads, and then showed my actual beads. This prompted Mrs. Takada to go into the other room and come back with several sets of artistically carved Buddhist beads. Mr. Takada laughed and said he's not a good Buddhist and hardly ever goes to a temple.

He and his wife became increasingly casual with us, joking about our *śikhās* and *tilaka*, which he said was like what hippies in America wear. He also laughed when we told of our restrictions: no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication. "How do you enjoy?" he said, and "*This* is why I don't like religion!" They were very pleasant and hospitable old folks, but it became long-drawn.

We made an exchange of books, his haiku and translations of others' haiku, for our *Gītā*, *Light of the Bhāgavata*, and *Back to Godhead* magazines.

On the way back, Phāni-bhūṣana described how the Japanese are extremely materialistic, and how difficult it is to preach here.

Obligation

Mr. Takada said,
 "If I am out walking
 and a flower speaks to me,
 then I may write it down.
 But I have no obligation
 to write poems."

I have an obligation
 to turn to Kṛṣṇa
 even if my poems
 are imperfectly composed.
 I am the small bird in the tree,
 tasting the bitter and sweet,
 and beside me is the Lord.
 He wants me to turn to Him

to free myself from birth and death—
and so I am obliged.

Another obligation:
I bow to the Takadas:
“You are very learned,
handsome and youthful,
but please put this aside
& listen to the message
of Lord Caitanya.”

April 21, 6:30 A.M., last day in Japan

Ten minutes from the airport is Naritasan, a Shingon sect Buddhist temple. It contains many shrines and we are going there this morning to visit some of them.

At Shaka-do, Buddha's temple

Here is enshrined a statue of Śākyamuni Gautama, “The founder of Buddhism.” We know Gautama is not the Lord Buddha of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī described Gautama as a very wise person. His doctrines of renunciation and nonviolence are similar to what we know as Lord Buddha's teachings. When Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of Lord Buddha, he seemed to tell the life stories and teachings of Gautama. Also, when I spoke with Kavicandra Swami, who is the regional secretary for ISKCON in Japan, he said that devotees tell people that “Buddha” is in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So most people will continue to think like that.

This cold morning,
I'm seated at the feet
of Śākyamuni Buddha
while a brown-robed priest
watches over me.

By Prabhupāda's grace,
'tho I am no wise one,
I'm well within the shelter
of the Supreme Lord's lotus feet:
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam.



Buddha in Japan.

O golden Śakyamuni,
 you cut off the bonds
 of material desire,
 taught a doctrine
 for the atheists
 just to bring them
 closer to God.

Where is the spirit of Śakyamuni's renunciation in current Japan? When we asked the man at the hotel if the Buddha's hall was open early, he said, "I don't know. I'm not religious." That's the typical Japanese. Where is the spirit of Jesus Christ in the Christian world? Where is surrender to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa in India, or in the world? Everywhere is Kali-yuga.

Policeman salutes
 Lord Buddha's temple
 near the pansy garden.

Two wrestlers guard the gate
 in karate poses:
 Japanese versions of Jaya-Vijaya.

I put aside my *japa* beads—
 but not for long—
 while writing in the Buddha's hall.

Do people pray here for material desires? But Gautama came to teach how to cut the bonds!

I cannot presume to know Gautama's renounced stature and power of intellectual discrimination, yet somehow he taught a very limited doctrine. And somehow we are now given the fullest doctrine of *acintya-bhedābheda-tattva* by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And somehow, from Kṛṣṇaloka, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to do the work of Lord Caitanya. And somehow, I am a saffron-robed follower of Prabhupāda's, sitting in Lord Buddha's hall preparing myself to fly back to North America, where I will act as an instrument of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*.

Peaceful hall,
 clock ticking,
 tourists' file-in not yet begun,
 just me and the monk,
 with our separate thoughts
 both silent and peaceful
 before the image of Śakyamuni.

Clapping of hands,
 dropping of coins,
 odor of greenstick-incense—
 fifteen minutes I've been here,
 enough. Let me pick up my beads
 and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Obeisances to the wise teachers
 who distributed a *dharma*
 of renunciation!
 All glories to my Guru Mahārāja
 who teaches how to renounce
 even in the Kali age,
 chanting and acting
 in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Outside the Shaka-do, there is a delightful, masterful depiction in wood carving of the five hundred disciples of Lord Buddha who attained *nirvāṇa*. The carvings show the fraternal order of Gautama's monks in every conceivable situation of monk life. We see them shaving up the heads of monks, chanting on their beads, cooking, eating, affectionately feeding and petting a cow. One old monk is writing with an amused, wise look. There are monks giving blessings to worldly people, washing clothes in the river, holding up a deity. And one teacher reveals Buddha in his heart, much like Hanumān shows Rāma in his heart. The sculptor spent ten years to complete this work. How effective is art in making a doctrine appealing!

At the Komyo-do, where a statue of Dainichi Buddha, the central deity of Shingon Buddhism, is enshrined.

If the Buddha's followers actually believe that nothing really

exists, why do they enshrine and worship Dainichi? Worship is certainly going on. Rice cakes are piled up before the image, many wrapped bottles of *saki* line the altar, and much *pūjā* paraphernalia is reverently arranged. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to point this out about Buddhist practices, and now I see it: Despite themselves, the voidists take up practices of *bhakti*, bowing and offering before their Buddhas. They may explain why they are doing it—as aids to meditation, etc.—but they cannot avoid personal worship and service.

Naritasam park

Oriental nature spot on a promontory over a lake with geese and goldfish. Pines, last cherry blossoms of the year, winding narrow paths, ornamental pagodas, willows dripping into the lake, a gray, chilly sky. Overhead, sounds of big jet planes and nearby calls of the geese and ducks and the chirping of sparrows. A group of tourists is approaching. We are also tourists, but sitting up here chanting *japa*. I'm thinking how New Vrindaban could develop their gardens and shrines like these.

5:15 P.M., Airport Hotel, Narita, Japan

In a few minutes we leave for the airport. We will “gain” a day flying East. I am reading *Bhāgavatam* and editing my own writing. In Prabhupāda's purport he says that reading and writing should only be about the Personality of Godhead—other literature is in darkness. In the First Canto the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya praise *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Śrīla Prabhupāda states that those who have developed a taste for transcendental literature never tire of hearing. *Svādu svādu pade pade*: “They relish it palatably at every step of life.” The study program that I have recently embarked on—taking summary notes—is helping. I may travel East or West, but *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the constant companion to keep me free of bewilderment.

Los Angeles, 24-hour lay over en route to Vancouver

“Welcome home, Sir,” said the lady at Immigration, returning my passport.

"Thank you," I replied, and passed under the American flags and photo of Ronald Reagan. Then the man at U.S. Customs asked me why I went to India.

"To visit temples in connection with our religion," I replied.

He glanced into my eyes. Should I have made a more straightforward reply? "Śrīla Prabhupāda wants us to go. Māyāpur and Vṇḍāvana are the two holiest places on earth. We go for purification."

Our traveling deity worship has expanded over the months: Śrīla Prabhupāda is the main large deity, along with Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā, Balarāma, Lakṣmī-Nṛsimha, a framed photo of Pañca-tattva, and a photo of Rādhā-Dāmodara. Each deity has its own dresses, cups, plates, and beds. We have to always think how to care for them. For example, after our nine hour flight from Japan I bathed all the deities and gave them fresh clothing.

Eating purple grapes,
sitting at the lotus feet
of Śrīla Prabhupāda,
just as I did
back in 1966,
as reward for my typing.

He is still pulling me
by the rope of *guru-bhakti*,
and I am somehow hanging on
as he feeds me from his hand,
purple grapes,
his causeless mercy.

April 22, In flight to Vancouver

We don't have a return air ticket to the U.S., which is usually required for a devotee entering Canada. But we have decided not to go incognito. If at all possible I like to avoid describing myself as something I am not—"a teacher in a boys' school," "a tourist," or "going to visit a friend in Vancouver." We will see

how prejudiced they are in detaining us simply because we are Kṛṣṇa bhaktas.

The airline's magazine, "Western's World," has an article, "60 Winners" with photos and biographical sketches of successful *karmīs*. Mostly they are entrepreneurs, selling land, music, wine, cookies. One pretty lady, Debbi Fields, opened a cookie store in 1977 and now runs three hundred "Mrs. Fields' Cookies" outlets, earning sixty-five million dollars in 1985. She is described as having "a normal state of locomotion akin to that of a whirling top." They all appear to have a voracious taste for work and success. As Prabhupāda writes in a First Canto purport, "The people are so busy with sense gratification that they completely forget about self-realization. Out of madness they frankly say that there is no need for self-realization because they do not realize that this brief life is but a moment on our great journey toward self-realization" (*Bhāg.* 1.1.22, purport).

Vancouver

Delayed at Immigration. But they finally let us in for a week, as "guest speaker."

A box full of mail awaited us; over one hundred pieces accumulated from the time that I was in India. A Mr. Alvaro Cardona-Hine, author of an acclaimed haibun, *When I Was a Father*, had received a copy of *Under the Banyan Tree*. He wrote me an interesting letter:

Many thanks for the little book which both my wife and I enjoyed. The fervor of your belief comes through. This is its strength and its weakness, for, ultimately, the poet best serves the hidden purposes of the Universe by remaining free, by not assigning his authority to anyone else. As you can see, I can't discuss the poetry separate from its content; the two things are always one. My path led me to look to myself for the authority. You openly assign yours to someone else, and this gives voice to a devotion that colors the entire book. I am not trying to dissuade you from doing what you are doing. However, many people won't take it seriously as poetry because to them poetry is a voice that comes from within before it has been tethered to an extraneous service.

Of course, I don't like being described as "tethered to an extraneous service." Sounds like a calf tied by a rope to a peg.

I don't intend to argue with Mr. Hine, but I will at least

quote for him Śrī Uddhava's statement about the two spiritual masters (the Lord in the heart, and the pure devotee), and how they are appreciated by "transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science." It is interesting that he has not criticized my writing style but gone right to the heart of the content.

April 23

I was speaking with Bahūḍaka about my somewhat reluctant attitude toward taking more disciples. He said, "Maybe this is in part because you have not been traveling." He's right.

On the desk before me are pink and yellow tulips. Spring is coming to the West, and I am waking up to my duties.

A painting in the room: The cowherd boys are chasing after Kṛṣṇa to see who will be the first to touch Him. The *gopīs* are gathered outside their Vṛndāvana houses, watching Kṛṣṇa, His friends and cows departing for the fields. He'll be gone all day and they are already feeling pangs of separation. One *gopī* places her hand over her heart. Kṛṣṇa's feet are raising dust. The trees are a greenish-brown, just as I have seen in Kārttika at Vṛndāvana.

Yamala-arjuna dāsa tells me that he is determined this year to make new devotees. This means by our preaching someone reads the books, becomes serious, and considers devoting his life to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It happens rarely, but a determined preacher keeps trying. Tonight I will go to their city "Yoga Center" and give a talk.

Whatever enthusiasm I have is a low flame—partly due to my age and condition? But Prabhupāda was much older and much more enthusiastic. He desired to start a world religion and by Kṛṣṇa's grace he did it. I prosecute my duties, try to direct others, but so often it is heavy going. There is so much to do. I think, "One can't be light-hearted about it." My basic commitment is there, but one doesn't always show extra cheerfulness. One is sober, grave. Ah, but there is no excuse for the lack of spontaneous, joyful attraction to Kṛṣṇa. Either one has it or lacks it: Spiritual enthusiasm, deep conviction about the uselessness of material life, as well as the other Vaiṣṇava qualities and convictions.

I just saw a play put on by the *gurukula* students, "Lord Kṛṣṇa's Return to Dvārakā." Amateur, charming children's theater, with brilliant costumes. Kṛṣṇa wore shiny pants and a skirt, and looked like Lord Kṛṣṇa in the paintings. In another play I liked the scene of Vālmīki as a plunderer. Nārada converted him by tricking him to chant Mara (the name of death). The hunter chanted so fast that it finally came out "Ma-rā, Ma-rā, Ma-Rā-ma, Rā-ma, Rā-ma, Rā-ma. . . ."

Alvaro Cardona-Hine says that I can't think for myself as real poets do—who don't have *gurus*. I admit there is some difference between us. They don't accept scriptures. Yet everyone accepts some form of authority beyond himself. Someone is pushed by the masters, mind and senses. Alvaro Cardona-Hine cannot be his own lord as he claims; everyone is serving.

Also, a devotee who follows his spiritual master may be as much an individualist as anyone else. He can see the stars in the sky as directly as the person who claims, "I am my own authority."

The pure devotee loves Kṛṣṇa, the nondevotee denies Him, but the nondevotee also sees Him at the end of life, as death. They say, "I am my own authority"—but why do they bow to old age and death? Where is independence if you cannot be free of misery?

Eating oranges,
thinking of my evening talk—
"True *Yoga* is Renunciation."

April 25, Śaraṇāgati Farm ("Visitors Welcome. No Hunting")

Rode with Rājarṣi in his red Mercury four hours out of Vancouver, by the Fraser River, Caribou, to the pine woods and mountains of British Columbia. Almost the whole way out here I worked with the dictating machine, answering letters, looking up only occasionally at the surroundings.

Then suddenly we are here, up a dirt road into seventeen hundred acres of undeveloped land. A group of devotees waiting, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in the rain.

The devotees here are trying to implement *varṇāśrama-dharma*, Kṛṣṇa's division of occupational and spiritual orders. I

spoke based on my association with Gītā-nāgarī and the devotees there, especially Paramānanda.

My role here is to encourage my initiated disciples, to emphasize simple life, following the morning program, chanting and hearing, dedicating one's life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At Śaraṇāgati, nothing is developed yet, just a few horses and cows, and much rugged Canadian land.

In the last light of day,
right outside my tent—
two horses grazing.

Evening class at Śaraṇāgati. In kerosene lamplight, the forms of devotees are shadowy. I read and commented on the different aspects of *varṇāśrama* from Prabhupāda's conversation with Hari-śauri and myself in Māyāpur, 1977.

Not everyone is a Vaiṣṇava, Prabhupāda said, or why do some fall down even after they take to *sannyāsa*? But we are aiming to gradually come to the Vaiṣṇava platform. At one point in the Māyāpur talks it became clear that Prabhupāda said we should implement *varṇāśrama* in ISKCON.

Hari-śauri then commented, "So we will have to completely revise the system we have now."

Prabhupāda replied, "No, whatever we have, that is all right. But we see by experience that they are falling down. Then let's be systematic."

I mentioned to Prabhupāda that Lord Caitanya had said that it was not possible to introduce *varṇāśrama* in the present age.

"Our position is different," said Prabhupāda. "We are trying to implement Kṛṣṇa consciousness in everything. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally took *sannyāsa* He rejected. Completely spiritual. *Niṣkiñcana*. But we are not going to be *niṣkiñcana*. We are trying to cement the troubled position—that is also the prescription of *Bhagavad-gītā*. We are not rejecting the whole society. Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected everything. . . . He was simply interested in the internal, the spiritual. But, our duty is that we shall arrange the external affairs also, so nicely that one day they will come to the spiritual platform very easily, paving the way."

I gave out cookies, then retired to my tent thinking of Prabhupāda's movement and instructions. In this quiet country there is no need for earplugs. I go to sleep hearing the sounds of the logs in the stove.

The farm is named after Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's long poem about self-surrender.

"The ways of *śaraṇāgati* are humility, dedication of the self, acceptance of the Lord as one's only maintainer, faith that Kṛṣṇa will surely protect, execution of only those acts favorable to pure devotion, and renunciation of acts averse to pure conduct."

Austerities at *Śaraṇāgati* include paying the high mortgage, living with only a few persons in an isolated place, trying to construct buildings, and trying to build a community of souls.

At 4 A.M., sky lightens,
bathing outdoors—
the puddles have frozen.

Black Labrador,
wags at my approach—
"he chases the bears."

I drove around with Bahūḍaka and Dyutidhāra Mahārāja to see the land. Their plan is to sell parts of it to Kṛṣṇa conscious householders. Otherwise, they can't afford the payments. They want me to visit more. We saw a black bear who ran away from us. We walked up the hill where they plan to build a temple and houses, saw the two lakes, heard the history of how the Canadian Indians and gold-seekers used this valley as a trail. The land suits the Canadian devotees' attraction for rugged landscape and pioneering. Logging rights are owned by a timber company, but we can buy them back.

My disciples say they will build me a little house. I agree to visit three times a year. It just depends on my health. Bahūḍaka says, "You understand projects like this." I don't know much, but it is a fact, Prabhupāda wanted to see farms. So if I can encourage the householders to follow, that is my service.

Black bear running,
looks back from the hill—
sign of spring.

Here is a picture,
Prabhupāda smelling a rose—
and wind in the pines.

April 27

A LAST MORNING WALK AT ŚARAṆĀGATI

Getting away from Baladeva's last minute packing scene, I went out alone, down the path where we had seen the bear. I noticed the robins, and began to think in a solitary way, when suddenly three devotees joined me. We chanted *japa* awhile but then we talked about Śaraṇāgati. We all admitted it would take long, hard work. "But as soon as you are living here," I said, "and attending a morning program and doing a day's work, then you have already succeeded."

We also talked of the difficulty of keeping a high standard. Who should be allowed to live here? Should it be required that a person be spiritually strict, or would it be enough if he were willing to work hard? If people buy their own land, then they cannot be told to leave. But what kind of government can manage the affairs? Won't it be mostly by inspiration and voluntary spirit? Should there be a system, however, by which the inevitable differences are settled, and should there be a way of distinguishing devotees who are of different standards?

So we talked, and we will be dealing with these realities in an ongoing way.

Sārvabhauma dāsa pointed out a nearby hill and said they call it Govardhana Hill. I had just been hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda on a tape describing Kṛṣṇa as Giridhāra-hari, lifter of Govardhana. Prabhupāda said Kṛṣṇa is the supreme physicist and therefore He knows how to bring about weightlessness, not only of Govardhana, but for all the mountains so that they float in outer space—entire planets float as light as cotton swabs.

"But this Govardhana Hill has rattlesnakes," said Sārvabhauma dāsa.

Vancouver

Tonight I am holding a first initiation for Bahūḍaka's fifteen-year-old daughter, Devakī. She has been a devotee in ISKCON her whole life. Her brother, Gurupada dāsa, sixteen, will receive second initiation. Both are enthusiastic and pure-hearted for serving in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Choosing the verse, *gurur na sa syāt*. No one should become a parent unless they can free their offspring from death. I'll praise their parents for raising children in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Use the human form of life for going back to Godhead. Initiation means birth into spiritual life, connection with Kṛṣṇa through the *guru*.

April 28, United Airlines over western U.S.A.

We plan to take one day off in Philadelphia. Answer more mail, write, read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Philadelphia means return to the area where I have direct G.B.C. responsibility.

At Vancouver airport with Bahūḍaka and the devotees—more talk of building me a little house at Śaraṇāgati. I say I'll try to come back for their Ratha-yātrā, August third. Feeling fit. Easy passage through U.S. Customs.

Transit, O'Hare Airport

A young boy with braces on his teeth approaches and asks me if he can take my photo. Baladeva asks him to first chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. The boy is with a group of kids, wild, but wealthy-looking. He says, "I am from Los Angeles." He says "Hare Kṛṣṇa," and takes two pictures, coaxing, "Smile! Smile pretty!"

O'Hare is the same old scene, gray, cloudy sky, the United Airlines terminal filled with the "many-footed man-swarm." Not so many ISKCON book distributors as in previous days. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the only solution to this trap.

MAY

May 1, Philadelphia, spring comes to Mt. Airy

When we first arrived and drove into the neighborhood, it was almost like we were landing on another planet—from Vancouver, Japan, India. Yet, it also felt like spring again.

The odor of lilacs. An old lady picking through curb-side garbage. On every street, pink and white dogwood. The faint smell of chestnut and maple pollen. Other peoples' music from a passing car. A sign on a tree, "Yard Sale."

Śeṣa met us at the airport, and as we drove through Mt. Airy, he told us that the temple grounds were filled with blooming tulips and daffodils. In the front yard we saw the pink-red azalea bush and new black awnings where the temple restaurant is being constructed. They are also constructing offices for *Back to Godhead* magazine. Devotees are increasing their distribution of books and magazines, and we will all go out Friday night for *hari-nāma kīrtana* in the streets.

OLD DIARIES

June 19, 1973

Went to Calcutta. Had jeep accident, Bhavananda hurt his legs. In the evening kirtan at Calcutta temple, led by Dinanath. Anxious to get back to Mayapur.

June 20

Return to Mayapur. Prabhupada chastized me—"should have common sense"—for not insisting that the bank accept our checks. They should have written their refusal to us, stating why. Prabhupada decided definitely not to go to Australia for Ratha-yatra.

Shyamasundar & Mukunda visit. Prabhupada plays George Harrison's new album & said: "Any intelligent person will be able to see he has been infected" (with Kṛṣṇa consciousness). Wonderful, menial service as secretary to His Divine Grace.

When he heard George Harrison's record, "Living in the Material World," Srila Prabhupada asked to see a copy of Brahma Samhita. He had the verse read: "Lowest of all is located Devī dhama (mundane world); next above it is the Maheshā dhama

(abode of Mahesha); above Mahesha-dhama is placed Hari-dhama (abode of Hari), and above them all is located Krishna's Own Realm named Goloka. I adore the Primeval Lord Govinda, Who has allotted their respective authorities to those rulers of those graded realms."

Bhavānanda Goswami behaved bravely during the accident. It was pouring rain and our jeep was pulling a trailer. We skidded off the road down a steep embankment, and when the jeep turned over, Bhavānanda's leg was caught underneath. He cried out, "Kṛṣṇa!" Jagadīśa and I were helpless beside the overturned jeep. A truck full of Indian army men suddenly pulled up, and the soldiers jumped out and pushed the jeep up off Bhavānanda's leg. He had to go to the hospital, and he used crutches that day, but no bones were broken. When we returned to Māyāpur, Prabhupāda said, "Kṛṣṇa has saved him." I told Bhavānanda Mahārāja that I envied him because he had responded in such a Kṛṣṇa conscious way in a time of great distress. He replied that he called out for Kṛṣṇa because he was afraid that he would forget Him.

I was anxious to return to Māyāpur, because Prabhupāda was there, seated peacefully and sublimely. I had not come to India intending to do bank business in Calcutta. But personal secretary to the spiritual master also means that you sometimes have to go to the city to do business. But in separation from Prabhupāda, I felt uncomfortable in chaotic Calcutta.

What happened at the bank: I wasn't forceful enough. When the clerks would not accept the checks, I thought it sufficient to go back to Prabhupāda and tell him that. He said I should have pressed the point and made the bank men seriously consider their refusal by insisting they put it in writing. Then we would have evidence for presenting the case to higher authorities. In my naiveté, I had not thought of such a thing.

I remember how strange it sounded to hear George Harrison's music coming from Prabhupāda's room. Prabhupāda made the occasion completely transcendental. Who else but he could jump in one bound from the music of George Harrison to *Brahma-saṁhitā*?

May 2

I am feeling happy to be attending the Zonal Committee

Meeting. Responsible joy—had I forgotten it?

Talked with senior devotees responding to their questions about the G.B.C. meetings. On some issues they were not satisfied, but I responded on behalf of the G.B.C. body.

On Receiving Newly Published Bhāgavatams

In the backyard today
amid yellow tulips
I've just received
two Tenth Canto volumes.
Let me savor, dear Lord,
this feast of Your words;
let me read with attention.

May 3, Hari-nāma on South Street

Hare Kṛṣṇa chanting party: over thirty devotees, with pennants, walking down the city sidewalk, pounding drums, and clashing *karatālas*. Muralī-vādaka dāsa was there with a dozen *gurukula* children. Teenage boys and mothers with nursery tots were also there.

South Street punk rockers: shaven heads with “*śikhās*.” One young man in a black jacket, “The Damned.” Stores—jazz club, dance club, tarot readings, “Soma,” steak house, “Om,” “Almost Everything,” “New York Shoes,” “Wa-Wa . . .”

It was cold weather. A policeman drank hot coffee from a cardboard cup. A black saxophone player stood outside a book store playing jazz, looking very hip, but when a Hare Kṛṣṇa child approached him with a BTG, he didn't know how to act, and finally refused the magazine. The owner of a wallpaper store refused BTGs from several children, and blocked the doorway to his store. A man operating a horse-and-buggy at first refused Rohiṇī-sūta, an Indian devotee, but then reconsidered and accepted a magazine in his free left hand while holding the reins in his right hand.

Many people walked past us with a magazine in their hands. Devotees were distributing an old issue, “Tenth Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Arrival in America,” with a color photo of Prabhupāda on the cover.

Haryāśva waved to a group of sailors in navy blue across the street, “Go give them magazines!”

OLD DIARIES

June 21, 1973

Re a plan to send 2 men to villages: "But where are such expert men? If you send an ordinary man what can he do? He will, after a few months, close it. But development is to send sankirtan party. That was a proposal (2 men to villages), but it takes a very expert man. I was just one man & I opened 100 centers."

If we forget Krsna, Maya is already there. Just as when the sun goes away darkness is immediately there. You don't have to call for it. Similarly, you don't have to call for Maya.

He spoke of Gaudiya Math. Translated verse for Devananda Maharaj: "For those who have decided to continue their existence in this material world for sense gratification, there is no chance of becoming Krsna conscious, either by personal endeavor, instruction from others, or by joint conference."

Described materialists, scientists, nationalists, humanitarians—they are trying to improve conditions, but they are like the man in the story of the anchor (wedding procession). No matter how hard they rowed the anchor was in. One man commented on his book, Easy Journey to Other Planets. "If you go to the planets, can you come back?" But why should you want to come back. Such people attached to nation, maya, sense gratification, can never become Krsna conscious. The Russian astronaut went out in space and was looking, "Where is my Russia?" So it is very hard to find out a person who is actually Krsna conscious & not attached to sense gratification. If you are attached (to nation, family, humanitarianism) you cannot become Krsna conscious.

Talked of Gaudiya Math men who are outwardly sannyasis and yet going to the courts to get protection of the high court for possession of properties. They are supposed to be sannyasis. One Godbrother was loitering in the street for many years before he got possession of the holy places. If he could have done anything he could have done it then. But, although other Godbrothers did something, he did not. Then by the kindness of the Godbrother Vasudeva, he was given possession of some part of the properties, rather than go on and on in litigation. And he became "Acarya." By decision of high court he became "Acarya of Gaudiya Math," not by the blessings of Lord Caitanya and Prabhupada (Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati).

We can acquire buildings, but then we have to work harder. He said he never dreamed he would have a building like this in Mayapur. But if on getting the building we tried to enjoy it for eating & sleeping then we go to hell. The boys described Bon Maharaj's university that there was no librarian & the books were all mixed up and rotting & not used. Prabhupad said if there is no spiritual activity, then the next thing we must do is material activity—eating, mating, sleeping, defending. We are expanding now, but if we are not careful we can become like them. Preaching is our life. (Get a building but work harder.)

Prabhupada was talking about so many things: How Air India is not reputable, always crashing, how politicians are rascals & he never approached them in U.S.A. for their picture beside himself. His picture, rather, is sitting beneath a tree chanting. He said a woman as a national leader is unheard of in Vedic history. Question: "What about the Queen?" Answer: "What 'Queen'? She is a woman." Concluding: "It is a very precarious position (this material world) so always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa & seek Kṛṣṇa's protection."

Prabhupāda was talking of so many things! No one can converse on *kṛṣṇa-kathā* and expansive preaching and personal revelation and reminiscence as spontaneously as he did. As he spoke in Mayāpur he was seated in his small, austere room—cement walls and marble floor. His low seat was backed with a white bolster pillow, and the devotees sat facing Śrīla Prabhupāda on the sheet-covered mattress. It was hot summer, but Prabhupāda was cooled by breezes.

Sitting with him and listening, we became earnest and lively. At least I had enough presence of mind to copy notes of the flowing Ganges of Prabhupāda's speech immediately after each meeting. Such talk of a pure Vaiṣṇava is described in *Kṛṣṇa* book:

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, great personalities and devotees in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness always think of Your lotus feet and remain fully satisfied by drinking the nectar of transcendental bliss. The nectar which they constantly drink sometimes comes out of their mouths and is sprinkled on others as the narration of Your transcendental activities. This nectar coming from the mouth of a devotee is so powerful that if one is fortunate enough to have the

opportunity to drink it, he immediately becomes freed from the continuous journey of birth and death.

Why did Śrīla Prabhupāda speak at length even when only a few men were present? To train us, but also because he spontaneously loved Kṛṣṇa and did not like to be silent about the Lord's glories. As stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the symptoms of pure devotional service are *ahaituky apratihātā*, without interruption and without motivation.

Prabhupāda's speech moved along in pleasing varieties. He made an impromptu translation from Sanskrit of a verse by Prahlaḍa Mahārāja, and then he pointed out misbehavior in a few of his Godbrothers—all within the spiritual range. Nothing was frivolous or wasted. He spoke of his contemporaries' wrongdoings so that we could avoid the mistakes and not be naive in the presence of those who might mislead us. As I had displayed "no common sense" in worldly dealings, so I might also fall foolishly in spiritual dealings. Śrīla Prabhupāda was guiding us to be faithful to him and to ISKCON.

In Prabhupāda's presence it was all very clear, and we felt inspired and determined to work. He made us confident that Kṛṣṇa would actually give us all facilities for His service, but we must never be lazy after receiving His gifts.

May 4, Gītā-nāgarī

I feel like a stranger walking on the back path of Gītā-nāgarī. It is dark twilight and I can't really see what trees may be beginning to grow new leaves. I can spot some white blooming that appears to be my old friend the viburnum blossoms. It may be that this year spring is starting more slowly. The road is lined with many ruts from the ox cart and the dirt is hard. I don't know whether that means it's frozen, or whether the dirt road is always like this and I just don't remember it. I don't feel very willing to enter an intimacy either. I almost feel like it would be going back to the period when I was sick. It would be going back to a consciousness of intimacy with nature I am reluctant to reenter. Perhaps I connect the two things too closely, invalid life and nature-communing, as something I don't have to do now because I am going outward.

This walk should just be a pleasant break for me. I've had my full taste of solitude at Gītā-nāgarī. Kṛṣṇa gives you what you want, in reciprocation. I promised Him I would come out if I got health, and now I'm starting to fulfill that promise. Philadelphia was a wonderful return to action, dancing every morning back and forth in the temple room before Lord Jagannātha and Prabhupāda with enlivened devotees, hearing the plans for expansion of the preaching there, and going out on *hari-nāma* downtown. So I want to continue that wave; therefore, at Gītā-nāgarī I should also enter the preaching spirit, the *varṇāśrama*, the village, the cow and ox development. My last year's stay here was more removed and alone, and I hope to break out of that. I had my fill of it. Life is short, and according to our philosophy we're meant to serve all living entities, especially human beings, by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So I don't want to enter too much a solitary spirit and neither am I inclined to detailed descriptions of the forest.

After he returned from his world travels with us, Bhakta Ralph decided to leave. He didn't tell any of us. Dāmodara drove him into Lewistown "for a doctor's appointment," he got out of the car, and that was it—gone to us. He was with me in so many places, and as soon as he left my immediate company he left Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Maybe he saw something about me that disillusioned him. When I mentioned this to Paramānanda, he laughed and said, "I don't think that way."

And now Dattātreya doesn't want to travel with us from place to place typing up my diaries. "The last thing I want to do is edit more journal manuscripts." I sympathize with him. I'll help him to find a new, more satisfying service, and find myself another typist.

"Some things he writes he later changes,
and some things he just lets go.
In either case, I wonder,
'Is this journal absolute?'
I know he's trying,
but I need more than that."

I cannot leave,
 I have no choice,
 nor can I suddenly transform.

Back to spring at Gītā-nāgarī. But I am different this year. Not confined, just visiting for a week. I will not spend day after day by the creek watching the chipmunk. It takes time, patience, and humility to make friends with the wildflowers. But I am moving through it too fast to notice the little things. Now my energies must go in other ways. What I prayed for all year, I now have: health enough to travel and work.

Surely Ralph will surface, alive,
 back with his wife,
 but I can't be sorry
 that he saw my smallness
 or that he served me meals
 and saw how much I ate,
 or that I was silent,
 and did not reveal great secrets.
 All I asked him for
 was the names of birds of Kerala;
 I could have done more.

For Dattā dāsa
 our travel is too hectic,
 too much "nature cure"
 and not enough brain work.
 All I asked him
 was to edit
 a caterpillar's journal.

QUOTES

From a letter by Pat Jenkins of the Bronx:

"One of the BTG articles you wrote that really inspired me made reference to a line from a poem by Robert Frost:

Two roads diverged in the wood and I—
 I took the one less traveled by and
 that has made all the difference.

"That article helped me understand that I wasn't the only one *struggling* with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It helped me realize that when trying to grasp something this important, the obstacles we meet can be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it's our choice."

From Thoreau's journal, October 21, 1856:

"Is not the poet bound to write his own biography? Is there any other work for him but a good journal? We do not wish to know his imaginary hero, but how he, the actual hero, lived from day to day."

From a lecture by Śrīla Prabhupāda in London July 26, 1973:

Everyone should think, "What is my value?" That is really learned, humble and meek. Nobody should think, "Now I have learned everything, I can surpass anyone. I have become above all rules and regulations. Now I have become *paramahansa*." This is rascaldom. Everyone should always think, "I am fool number one." Therefore the endeavor will go on, to become perfect. If we think that now I have become perfect, I am *paramahansa*, then the spiritual regulative principles will never be followed. He will fall down.

May 5, 5:00 A.M.

Returned to the assembly of devotees at Gītā-nāgarī after three months. We arrived a few minutes late for *maṅgala-ārati*. The temple room was cold. There were some changes on the altar, a new *śimhāsana* for Gaura-Nitāi, Rādhā-Kālachandajī have been moved over to the left, and new cherry wood doors. Also a *guru* photo of Paramānanda Prabhu is on the small table next to the *vyāsāsana*. Other than that, most things are the same: The teenage boys are still not chanting, although they are taller and bigger. Jatayu dāsa presented me with a handlettered book he made of quotes by Lord Caitanya, and "A poem about Jatayu dāsa," which contained the lines, "He takes pride in being *māyā's* host, but it's he who suffers the most."

While I was away, Paramahansa dāsa and his wife went to visit their homeland, Costa Rica. Before they left I had told

them to be sure to return to Gītā-nāgarī. He said he would, but now everyone says he is leaving. After the class, he asked me a question. He said the devotees seem to want him to leave. I said no they don't; they want you to stay and surrender.

The *Bhāgavatam* verse I spoke on stated that a king should be tolerant with his subjects even if they don't always follow. So I talked about community life in ISKCON. The leaders should be tolerant of devotees who don't follow, and all devotees should be tolerant of the austerity of community life. Or else, how can we qualify for going back to Godhead?

From behind the movie camera, Paramānanda asked a question. He said we each have our subjective viewpoint. "You have been speaking from the viewpoint of a *guru* about a disciple's surrender, but a disciple has his own emotions. So isn't it intellectually difficult to accept another's viewpoint about us even if it's our *guru*?" I replied that when we surrender to the spiritual master we accept that he knows how to direct our lives. We may say this is the austerity of being a disciple, but it is for our own happiness. Our *guru* is he who is leading us back to Godhead.

I don't know how all this will sit with Paramahansa and his wife. I glanced at them several times while making these points. She looked downward, embarrassed. He was sometimes smiling, pleased with me for making strong and proper replies as his spiritual master. Now let us see how each of us lives up to his words.

Red-and-green Dāmodara,
on this chilly spring day,
I've broken the ice,
coming close to You,
I am singing too,
'tho something blocks me.

Most of the Gītā-nāgarī men, women, and children were gathered by the barn to see the cows let out for the first time into the pastures. Suddenly, a cow gave premature birth to a female calf. Everyone stood around Damayantī, who maintained a peaceful disposition steadily licking her new calf, massaging it with the tongue, trying to bring it to life. But the calf couldn't

drink and had trouble breathing. Śrī Kṛṣṇa dāsa said the conditions were ideal—a fresh green pasture, cool breeze, mother and calf surrounded by devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. But after less than half an hour the calf died.

“She came for a little while, heard Hare Kṛṣṇa, and left,” said Paramānanda.

“Did the calf die?” a five-year-old boy asked, as they carried the calf’s body away.

Then we went ahead with the festival of letting out the cows. They had been in the barn all winter eating silage. But now it’s spring, the pasture is thick with fresh grass and tufts of dandelions. The excited cows galloped past us through the entrance to the field where they jumped and ran. Some stopped short to butt each others’ heads. Then a few stampeded right through the wire fence and had to be retrieved—Kṛṣṇa’s dearest animals and pets.

Going fast downhill I braked, locked the front wheel, and suddenly fell forward under the bicycle, smashing into a rain puddle. I felt no bone-breaks, just bruises. Did I think of Kṛṣṇa? Mostly I thought, “I’ve been trying so long to get good health. I hope this doesn’t ruin things.”

I give a prayer of thanks that I’m not broken or confined to bed again, although I know that such accidents may happen at any moment.

At the orchard

Prabhānu planted these fruit trees on a hill over nine years ago. Only in recent years have they begun to produce. Last year two hundred twenty-five bushels of apples, half a bushel of pears but none from the peach or plum trees. When he gives *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes, Prabhānu sometimes makes analogies comparing the steadiness of a devotee to the duration required before the trees on the hill will bear fruit. He speaks of a devotee setting in his roots and steadily developing the Vaiṣṇava qualities. His favorite examples are about weeds or bugs that attack plants and trees and how we have to vigilantly protect our growing tree of love of God. These are homely examples, but not mere sentiments or empty rhetoric. They are

based on actual realizations and are appealing and absorbing to the Gītā-nāgarī audience, just as seamen-preachers hold an audience of sailors with examples of ships, anchors, storms, and ocean crossings.

Two hundred fifty trees on an incline, in between an agricultural field and the outer road. They have already produced their flower blossoms, and now tiny fruit buds appear. Prabhānu has been coming at night recently on hearing that frost might occur, as it did last year, ruining much of the fruit production. But this year looks better so far.

Green hills distant,
flies on top of me,
cows moo a mile away
breezes ripple my *dhotī*.
Some things are important, like
my promises to Prabhupāda,
and some things I ignore
like an ache in the knee.

To adjust all these
takes a human brain, training
guidance of the *guru*.
I am satisfied to follow
the *ācāryas* of life,
who know what to do
and what to renounce.

Skies unreachable,
clouds unfathomable,
dandelions at my feet,
also inconceivable as
spunky yellow flowers.
Who can understand
the meaning to existence,
and who can control
the passage of time?
As a tiny soul,
I am satisfied to know
from the servants of Kṛṣṇa
from whom all things flow.

Did I think the seasons were of interest because I stayed close and observed them for one year? Did I think the May-apples would bloom any differently whether I wrote about them? Do the flowers need names to describe them? No, they are growing again, in obedience to their master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and they need no other poets, or naturalists to give them attention.

OLD DIARIES

June 22, 1973

Took dictation of verse & purport from *Upadesamṛta*, now being translated by His Divine Grace. Wrote it down as he spoke it. There are 6 obstacles to devotional service. One who can control the urge to speak, the mind's demands, the urge of anger and the urges of tongue, belly, and genitals is fit to make disciples all over the world. Six disqualifications are eating or collecting too much, endeavoring too much for unnecessary things, following the rules and regulations of devotional service just to follow them or refusing to follow them, talking of mundane, ordinary things, associating with persons outside the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, greedily wanting to possess things—these things spoil devotional service.

June 23

Two shotguns purchased to guard the temple. Śrīla Prabhupada inspected one, held it in firing position and took aim. He said, "heavy man" should use the gun otherwise they would be knocked over.

There was a letter written by an ISKCON pujari telling a different version of how Lord Jagannatha was manifested. Godsisters Rukmini & Srimati were agitating that I find out if it was bona fide. I read it to His Divine Grace. He said yes, it is true, but what is the difference? "Worship Lord Jagannath properly; that is our business." It may be that Queen Rukmini never heard of Radharani but that does not mean that Radharani is false, he said. There are so many things we may not know about Kṛṣṇa or Radharani, but our business is to worship Him.

Śrīla Prabhupada has eye trouble, eyes always weeping. He was applying something to one eye & then the other. Devananda Maharaja advised him not to do it, because it would spread from one eye to another. Prabhupada replied, "Well, everything depends on Kṛṣṇa."

Gargamuni Swami talking of big protest meeting of Muslims and Hindus all against the action by Bombay municipality to tear down our temple. Srila Prabhupad's eyes flashing, very enlivened. If you have such a meeting, I will come and address the crowd, he said, and tell them there is no Muslim or Hindu, there is only one God. He said, we are the only movement against atheism. All others are hodgepodge.

Serving feast to life members and brahmacaris from Sridhar Maharaj. I was serving out puris and stopped for a few seconds in some kind of thoughtful daze. "Why have you stopped?" he yelled at me. "Keep giving them out." But later when I was giving puris to those who already had, he said, "No only give to those who have none. Don't waste."

Everyone will be pleased by this movement. Because we don't bluff. We say worship Kṛṣṇa and we collect money & (do as we preach)—worship Kṛṣṇa.

He cited Bon Maharaj's institute starting out calling itself Vaisnava Theological & then changing to college. But we are not interested in such so-called education process.

From here Bhaktisiddhanta Road is a show of silhouettes in hot haze: rickshaw men pedaling bicycle carriage, cows and a buffalo or two being herded along the road by a boy in a big straw-umbrella hat. Nearby fields, jute, rice, vegetables.

If we don't enjoy in spiritual activity, cleaning, chanting, the arts, editing—then we fall into sense gratification waiting for prasada, suffering in the stomach and headaches, etc. Either-or choice is very prominent here; mayā or Kṛṣṇa.

Some of the devotees had asked Prabhupāda to translate the *Upadeśāmṛta*. He said it was an important book, and for me, it was an exciting engagement. I sat on the floor before Prabhupāda, writing on a pad as he dictated. There was something special in working for Prabhupāda's book production. He sometimes said that he could give us all the Vedic literatures with Bhaktivedanta purports, such as *Padma Purāṇa*, *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Rāmāyana*, and *Mahābhārata*, but there was not enough time. So at least there was time to produce this instructional book by Rūpa Gosvāmī, during a few weeks in the summer at Māyāpur.

As for the guns, they were purchased after we heard of an attack on New Vrindaban, where the Deities had been broken and devotees' lives threatened. Some may be surprised to hear of a *sādhū* getting guns and picking one up to take aim. But the same people will sometimes also question why a devotee wears a watch or rides in a car. By the principle of *yukta-vairāgya*, material things may be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa. The world is such a dangerous place, even in Māyāpur, that the shotguns have been used twice since then to protect the temple from thieves. Even with guns, a Deity was stolen, and devotees badly injured by bands of armed dacoits. In such cases, when dacoits use explosives and fatal weapons against the *arcā-vigraha* and the devotees, nonviolence has to be abandoned in favor of defense.

The esoteric story about Lord Jagannātha, based on a pastime of Queen Rukmiṇī, shows how Prabhupāda guided us through a maze of spiritual standards. Especially in India there are always differing versions of *śāstra* and differing sources of knowledge. There are also many rituals and intricate methods of *pūjā*. But Prabhupāda kept the worship simple and in accordance with the standards of pure devotional service: "Worship Lord Jagannātha properly; that is our business."

During this time in Māyāpur Prabhupāda's eye was red and swollen. But when Devānanda referred to "the infection," Prabhupāda objected to the word and said the spiritual master is never infected.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions to me about serving *purīṣ* are more than fine-tuning in the art of *prasādam* service. They show the importance of always thinking oneself the menial servant of the *guru*. Usually younger devotees did menial services and we *sannyāsīs* tended to the preaching. But that day Prabhupāda showed us that we were all his menial servants, and neither were we expert. The basic expertise of a disciple is to be very receptive to whatever his spiritual master orders. If the *guru* says a rope is a snake and if he then changes his mind and says that a snake is a rope—we should follow him in each instance. Serving *purīṣ* under Prabhupāda's direction while being told repeatedly that you are doing it wrong was a good exercise in crushing the false ego.

May 7

Sitting my way
in the rubber canoe,
along the maple banks.
It's not all silent,
there's pure bird song
and we talk as we paddle:
Why is one man leaving us?
Is it the work of his wife?
What to do when a mad person wants to join?
How to speak next week to the elite?
A pollynose floats by,
the gnats bother us
but not too much,
& the sky's a nice blue.

Paramānanda talked of some devotees who don't show up at the temple for a week and when you see them again they say they had a cold and so stayed home. Or someone says he missed the class because, "I was flat on my back." But for himself, Paramānanda says that when he is expected to be in a certain place at a certain time, he goes there, even if he's got a cold or a headache.

May 8

COW PROTECTION

Every morning the boys are in the barn no later than 1:40 A.M. Jñāna-śaktī washes the equipment in hot water, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa puts grains before each cow. It's like Deity worship; the barn is like a temple. The cows aren't God, but Kṛṣṇa wants them protected. *Go brāhmaṇa hitāya ca.*

At this time throughout the whole farm the land and sky are quiet and dark; the only lights on are at the barn. Manu dāsa is outside chanting *japa*. Cats are prowling. The action is inside the barn.

Three buckets in the center aisle. Sixty cows and oxen are in their stalls, but eighteen are milking now, about eighty-five pounds of milk a day.

Śrīla Prabhupāda sings, "Prayers to the Six Gosvāmīs," the

Swiss bells are chiming, and I hear the rhythm of the individual milking machines.

One cow pours out a thick arching stream of urine. Others drop their dung.

The cats are here,
hay in each stall,
swishing of cows' tails,
the plump pink nipples,
the cows stand content,
while the boys do their duty.

Big men quietly working,
in overalls, and baseball caps;
soon they'll change into *dhotis*,
appearing clean and eager
at the *maṅgala-ārati*:
from the *sevā* of milking,
to the *sevā* of chanting.

The plop of the cow dung. The barn men patting the cows, sometimes talking to them. Those of atheistic mentality scorn this *go-pūjā*. But we know it pleases Śrīla Prabhupāda; he said it enough times in his books and talks. If a devotee thinks badly of milking cows, he is just like one who sees the Deity as an idol or the *guru* as an ordinary man. If this is mundane, so is guruship and chanting and the *śāstra*.

A dog and cat meet in the barn,
they walk in peace.
The medium is milk,
white liquid buckets full,
ready for the kitchen.

More Prabhupāda *bhajan*as, more arches of urine into the trough, here and there a stiffening tail. Whoever sincerely performs this work stays clean, protected, and honest.

After an hour Jñāna-śakti flushes out the equipment with water and disinfectant. Milk swirls in the tank. Today, for the first time this year, Śrī Kṛṣṇa will let the milkers go out for

pre-dawn pasturing. He gathers them in the yard and observes who is in heat. He removes those cows from the others, for breeding. Then he opens the gate and they push out like a crowd breaking queue. Running in the darkness, to the grazing fields.

Everything is done carefully; a little mistake may injure these innocent, dependent creatures. It's a skillful job like others, but unlike most occupations, this work has no material reaction.

I wish I could see more that the Deity is actually Kṛṣṇa. When you are in the presence of Kṛṣṇa, you should feel awe, prayer, and of course, love—at least awe and reverence.

I feel the presence of Kṛṣṇa when I feel gratitude. And when I feel that things are not happening under my control, then I sense the control of Kṛṣṇa.

We hear from *śāstra* how Kṛṣṇa acts in different pastimes with His devotees and in His creative acts as Viṣṇu within the universe. But it's also important to be aware of your connection with Kṛṣṇa in an individual life. Now that I am returning to normal health, I am aware that I'm not in control of that. So I sense a relationship with Kṛṣṇa as the controller. He can put me again into physical distress, or continue to allow me good health. Whatever he does is for my good; it's a way for me to show my devotion. If under Kṛṣṇa's control I seem to suffer, that is a way for Him to convince me that I don't want to live in this material world. And by giving me a taste of bliss, He convinces me I want to serve Him in the spiritual world.

I also feel Kṛṣṇa in my own life in the sense of opportunity. Kṛṣṇa is opportunity. And Kṛṣṇa is time. We hear from *śāstra* that Kṛṣṇa is time; but also individually, personally, I can feel He's the time of my own life. Within the span of my life there's an opportunity—it's existing now. That opportunity is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. I can surrender to an unlimited degree, and that's my choice. He offers it to me. So Kṛṣṇa is present, and I can sense it—He is giving me a chance to surrender.

OLD DIARIES

June 24, 1973

"Pandiṭji has become a problem." As an ass carries great bur-

den, he carries his books everywhere, big dictionaries and reference books which he does not even use.

4 P.M.—Srla Prabhupada walks to the window of our room, sees three of us lying down taking rest. Mortified being caught sleeping by the spiritual master. He is the most beautiful, the most in knowledge. He is without fault, and any way in which we think ourselves superior to him means we are immediately fallen. Maya or Krsna.

In western countries they advertise "Coppertone" for women with tan. In India, they have white women-hunters. The rascals do not know the pleasure of sex is the same, the same as with hogs and with other animals. Animals sleep on the street, man in bedstead. But when sleeping, perhaps the animal is even more comfortable as the man dreams something horrible while lying in nice bed.

Warned Panditji in no uncertain terms, "Don't waste your time going to pandits." If you want to spend 10 years and get scholarly title "Tirtha" then present that to Krsna. But if you want to help me in my translating work, what little you know is sufficient.

You went to my Godbrothers' maths & invited them and they refused, so that is an insult. Now to go back again to ask some questions about Sanskrit is an insult. You are the greatest fool. They have insulted me, but you have gone back. That is like the boy who was with his father & his father was beat on the head with a shoe. When they returned home the boy said, "Father was hit but I was not." And he was pleased. First offense in chanting.

Lights went out. Incense billowing in room. Ghee lamps lit before wooden carving of Radha-Krsna. He asked how long was electricity in U.S. and what kind of lighting was there before that?

Prabhupada said to Panditji, "Why do you go to other pandits to ask questions? Whatever you have to ask you can ask me. I know everything."

Recalling how he gained immigration status in Canada and United States. Wasted hundreds of dollars on lawyers in U.S. & then got it done in Canada for \$30 in fees. Advised boys here to get Indian citizenship.

He said we have only done 1% of our work. It is all in Srimad Bhagwatam. Now we have to demonstrate it. ISKCON is like appearance of Varaha incarnation, who sprung from Brahma's nostril in small size and suddenly grew half the size of the universe. Brahman means bigger than the biggest and still becoming bigger.

In every one of our centers there must be arotik and sankirtan going on, or else Kṛṣṇa Consciousness becomes slack. We have to keep alive. Thus, daytime sleep should be avoided. You can take a little rest but otherwise, if tired chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Our centers are there to invite people to keep alive.

Discussing book in Bengali about assembly of sinners who were amazed at the appearance of Lord Caitanya & were lamenting now that Lord Caitanya is appearing there will be no more illicit sex & other sinful activities. Said people in West think like that about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement—shocked that we intend to end meat-eating, illicit sex.

Note on opposite page:

Mental strain—being criticized by His Divine Grace. If I resist or counter-criticize, I am immediately fallen. Also heavy-eyed. Wanting more sleep.

Paṇḍitajī kept stacks of books in his room. Some of the stacks collapsed onto others. You would go into his room and find him sleeping on the floor behind stacks of books. Often he would be behind in the work of preparing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verses for Prabhupāda, or in editing after the English editors had done their work. He was a bottleneck in the book production, although he was expert in Sanskrit. In addition to the stacks of books on the floor, there were stacks on his cot. Sometimes he would push books aside and sleep in the midst of them on his bed, or if the bed was overcrowded, he would sleep on the floor, also near the stacks. When it was time to travel with Prabhupāda, Paṇḍitajī would load up his sidebags with as many books as he could carry, and with the straps straining against his thin shoulders and neck he would stagger forward, resembling an overloaded donkey. He had so many books that he had to leave them behind in different rooms in India. And he carried so many that often the airline authorities tried to restrict him. He would argue with them and usually manage to carry his treasures with him on the plane.

In his purports, Prabhupāda makes several references to someone resembling Paṇḍitajī. He said sometimes devotees read obscure books and take to austere forms of private worship

(Paṇḍitajī did private *śīla* worship with many rituals), and yet such devotees don't even chant their rounds. One time Paṇḍitajī fasted all day, but didn't attend the *guru-pūjā* because he was resting. Prabhupāda noted it and said that if we fast then we have to also continue our work; fasting and sleeping all day was not genuine spiritual fasting. Prabhupāda noted Paṇḍitajī's odd mannerisms such as wearing wooden slippers and tying his *dhori* in a special way, and he pointed it out as something artificial.

But there was another side to Paṇḍitajī. He was very dear to Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda appreciated his assistance, and in the concluding remarks of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Prabhupāda said, "Now, by the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, it is finished. In this connection I have to thank my American disciples, especially Śrīman Pradyumna dāsa Adhikārī. . . ." Also, in a lecture in England, when the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* had just been published, Prabhupāda praised Paṇḍitajī calling him "my beloved disciple, Pradyumna," and Prabhupāda also praised Paṇḍitajī's wife as a scholarly assistant. Prabhupāda acknowledged that Paṇḍitajī's work was trustworthy and of high quality. Nevertheless, when Prabhupāda saw unchastity and foolishness in a disciple, he spoke out to correct it. He warned Paṇḍitajī of the danger in becoming more interested in grammar and language than in devotion.

In Māyāpur, Paṇḍitajī had committed a blunder in etiquette. Prabhupāda had sent him as a messenger to invite some of Prabhupāda's Godbrothers to visit ISKCON Māyāpur. But they had refused to come. Then, without Prabhupāda's permission, Paṇḍitajī went back to the same Godbrothers, but this time he asked for Sanskrit instruction. This was an insult to Prabhupāda and caused him to call Paṇḍitajī "the greatest fool." Why should a disciple be interested in taking instructions from persons who insult his spiritual master? Besides that, what was the importance of whatever Sanskrit instruction they could give? Prabhupāda condemned this. Better Paṇḍitajī stay as the competent Sanskrit assistant and help Prabhupāda with his books than dream of some higher learning in language. Prabhupāda said that if he insisted on such aspirations, Paṇḍitajī could obtain the scholarly title, "Tīrtha." But when that

“Tirtha” title would be presented to Kṛṣṇa, He would not be pleased.

Prabhupāda brought up the incident intermittently for a day or so, with a high pitch of instructive anger. Some of the devotees said they had never seen Prabhupāda so angry.

May 9

To Baltimore–Washington, staying overnight at Howard Johnson’s Motel. Tomorrow a big program at Henry’s house. It will be attended by ambassadors’ sons, legislators, professors, etc. I am being introduced as an author, so I will speak about the greatest literary personality, Śrīla Vyāsadeva. He was despondent even after writing many books, because he did not concentrate on glorifying Kṛṣṇa. As Nārada said to Vyāsa, “Are you satisfied by identifying with the body or the mind as objects of self-realization?” Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the purport, “One cannot be cheerful by nature unless one is factually seated in self-realization, which is transcendental to the material body and mind.” I have lecture notes, but too much preparation may take away from inspiration. Let me just talk to them, even if I’m afraid.

On the motel desk is a booklet, “May We Have Your Comments Please?” A young blonde, blue-eyed woman is pictured on the cover. Inside is a photo of J. M. Hostage, president and chairman of Howard Johnson Company. He asks me to please fill out the response card. Rate from excellent to poor. “How is your room?” Television—*Poor: There is nothing to revive my God consciousness.* “How were you treated by our front-desk personnel?” *Very good, as long as we have cash.* “What is the purpose of your trip?” *To rest inbetween temples.* “How would you rate our restaurant?”—(Breast of turkey, quarter-pound hamburger, chopped beefsteak) *Murderers.*

Front page story in today’s Washington Post

“The Reagan administration, which five years ago proposed massive evacuations from cities in the event of nuclear attack, is considering a revised plan that would shelter state and local officials while encouraging the rest of the population to rely on ‘self-help.’ ”

War-threat is another good reason not to slacken on book distribution in favor of other long-term developments. But Śrīla Prabhupāda also wanted temples. Do both. And especially, with all urgency, chant and hear and tell everyone you meet about Kṛṣṇa.

May 10, In car returning from Henry's house

One questioner, who said he was a fine artist, asked, "Isn't the pleasure felt when experiencing nature sufficient God consciousness?" I said there is much more to the kingdom of God than that.

Another questioner asked if we thought ours was the only way. I said love of God is the only way to approach the Supreme, but it may be done in different religions.

About thirty people gathered, gentle, well-bred, also well-placed in the world, and not narrow-minded. But after a few questions they asked no more. I tend to doubt if anyone very seriously considered taking up the practices. But I can never tell for sure what may be the outcome.

The fine artist said, "We are so much out of it!" I said, "Yes, anyone who has been born in this world is certified a fool."

In the back yard, we sat at tables under a tent. An elderly gentleman, the father of Kim Murray, remarked to Baladeva that he was surprised people didn't ask more questions. He said I had explained the subject matter simply and it was a very serious subject matter and the people gathered were young, so why didn't they ask more questions?

A nice evening, reentry into the preaching in Washington.

May 11, Potomac

Sixty Baptist seminarians attended the Sunday program. I read from the twelfth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, God is a person. One man asked, "I am a Christian and I read the Bible. There it says that God is a spirit, but you seem to be saying God has a form. How do I relate to that?" I replied, God is both spirit and person. Jesus Christ is a person, but not limited, or how did he arise from the dead? Don't think spirit is invisible like air or a ghost. The best loving relationships are with God.

An Indian man challenged, "The relationships you are speaking of are derived from human." No, I said, it is the other

way around. Everything comes from God.

It was not “I” who was speaking, who championed love of God. It was Prabhupāda and the *paramparā*.

Another man asked, “You said devotees are worshipable. Does that mean it is possible that they may become God and be worshiped just as God?” “They are God-like,” I said. “They never think that they have become God. But only by worshiping the pure devotee can you become a devotee of God and please Him.”

When a devotee is speaking in *paramparā* he realizes that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the cream of all religious knowledge. This is one reason why ecumenical exchanges usually bring us to the point of advocating Kṛṣṇa consciousness as the best and purest expression. Yes, you can chant any name of God, but when we analyze different concepts of God, Kṛṣṇa is the sweetest. He is the Godhead—He is not the Hindu God, or the impersonal void. Spontaneous praise of God is the reward of following the rules and regulations.

All afternoon, I felt physically unsteady, with pressure in the head, but now after speaking on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, I have forgotten the body, and I cannot say for sure whether I am weak or strong, or whether I have pressure in the head. The remedy for bodily ills is to go on chanting and speaking about Kṛṣṇa. This is what Prabhupāda recommended and what he meant when he said tolerate the body and give attention to the soul.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa,
 subduer of Kālīya,
 I did not get to speak of Your *līlā* today.
 All I said was preliminary
 to Your great acts.
 I could not describe them,
 yet I said You are approached
 in five basic *rasas*.
 I did not feel fit
 to tell of Kālīya
 & the *gopīs* falling in grief
 when the snake held You in its coils.

I thought, “The audience will not comprehend.”

Perhaps that was right,
 but I desire to hear
 with love and conviction
 Your blessed pastimes,
 until I feel no need
 for others' poems
 and I never think
 I've heard it enough.

I love how You danced
 upon the hoods of the snake,
 and forced him to bow to You.
 Your dance was triumphant,
 accompanied by the music of the demigods.
 You caused the snake to vomit and bleed,
 and his wives came forward and prayed to You;
 You released him
 and returned to Your friends
 on the bank of the Yamunā.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa,
 subduer of Kāliya,
 You are the source of impersonal light,
 & Your *līlā* is immortal.
 Please allow me to say it
 from *Bhagavad-gītā*
 and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*
 in the footsteps of my master,
 who knows You,
 subduer of Kāliya.

UNCERTAINTY

Yesterday in his class, while discussing the asuric civilization, Agrāṇī Swami said, "The bombs can drop at any moment." Everyone is threatened and in anxiety. Everything external can be destroyed, including much that we now use and depend on for our spiritual life. A time of disruption will test whether we are able to wholly depend on Kṛṣṇa.

Any day now I might have to leave on an emergency

mission on behalf of the G.B.C., and so I have been unable to make my own schedule. This has made me anxious, but today while taking *darśana* of the Lord, I realized that the same uncertainty can help me to taste Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Uncertainty drives me to the certainty that I can count only on *kīrtana* and hearing and serving. It is uncertain how long I may be able to stay in Potomac; it is uncertain even whether I will get my next meal, and yet devotional service is guaranteed, as long as I desire to serve Him.

The hedonist says, "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may die." But Prabhupāda also ended one lecture by saying, "Eat, drink, and be merry in Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Let us enjoy serving our temple Deity, because we may be called away from Him at any moment.

During *kīrtana* I pulled Kṛṣṇa Bhakta dāsa into the dancers' circle and twirled him around. He mostly travels away from the temples, sometimes with just one other devotee, or sometimes he goes alone. His service is fund-raising among the *karmīs*, and he himself is rough and independent. So I thought, "Make him twirl and dance before Rādhā-Madana-mohana! See the contaminations washing clear!"

Dancing and playing *karatālas*, Mahānidhi Swami leaps, a saffron *sannyāsī* and *guru*. We all praise Madana-mohana, the Black Treasure. And we praise Lord Rāma and His associates as we circle around the temple, stopping to dance before Gaura-Nitāi.

Walking back to your house in spring morning air, give them last encouragement at your door: "Use your youth for Kṛṣṇa," and then into your house, uncertain what will come next.

May 13

The Baptist professor remarked that scholars and writers studying ISKCON see the movement in a struggle for top leadership. I said perhaps they don't know the shared leadership that Prabhupāda has set up, the G.B.C. We have to follow that. He did not say there should be one world leader. Give us time.

Backyard Thoughts

Where I used to sit last autumn,

my notebook lies faded and bent:
 "Oct. 26—saw Rāvaṇa tonight,
 poplar leaves; soon it will be cold."

It will change:
 now the wild green covers
 then thickens through August,
 reddens in October,
 freezes overnight,
 until it's spring again.

In this changeable world
 he gave us a charge
 and we cannot give it up.
 Even if only a dozen stand,
paramparā will carry on,
 ripening into the Golden Age.

May 14, 3:00 A.M.

DREAM

Prabhupāda was giving his association to devotees in an extended way. But I sensed it was a dream-Prabhupāda, and therefore a kind of illusion. At one point I was holding him in my arms and his body was a baby's. I was swinging him back and forth in my arms, and other devotees were taking *darśana* of this form, something like the Jhulana-yātrā. Everyone stayed with him as much as they liked. He praised different disciples including Ācāryadeva, and by this we could understand that Prabhupāda knew and remembered the specific acts his devotees did, especially those that pleased him. After awhile, devotees departed from Prabhupāda and he was driving in a car with only one or two others.

In some ways, my dream-Prabhupāda appeared out of character from the real Prabhupāda, and yet in some ways it was significantly like Prabhupāda. It was not a direct visitation by Prabhupāda; I don't say he was talking to me in a dream. But at least I dreamt about him, and desired to love and serve him.

The rainy day inclines me to the modes of nature. I feel pressure from the duties I have to perform: "Why do I have to act as others want me to?" Do I write in the diary to find myself as a private person, to escape from being a public or political or institutional person? But why should I try to escape? I am a servant. That is personal also. Being a servant is not less personal than what I call a private person.

May 15

WHERE'S THE DIRT ?

I am involved with some intense ISKCON G.B.C. affairs, disputes among leaders, and sometimes scandals. I have to worry about them, travel, and talk with persons involved. But usually I omit it from my journal; it seems too temporary or controversial for publishing. Should I at least allude to these things or bring out the themes and principles? If it occupies me as important duty, even temporarily, how can I honestly omit it? Can I say that I am concerned with something deeper and therefore I don't mention scandals and disputes? But then I have to go deeper. Yes, there has to be life other than this gossip, strife in ISKCON. I have to find that life, like locating a clear artesian spring. The deeper concerns are not less vital than the latest controversies and scandals. What is more endurable is also more interesting, and more Kṛṣṇa conscious.

But people want to hear, "Who fell down? What are the gory details? What are the signs of doomsday?"

Attending class this morning, I asked Kṛpārāma dāsa how a devotee could increase his renunciation. He quoted Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's verse, *ṭṭṇād api . . .* One should think, "I am insignificant among the devotees. And my own service is insignificant; I am not a great devotee." That is advancement and renunciation beyond the external giving-up of possessions.

Tonight I am going to the home of my disciples, Mukunda Datta dāsa and Kṛṣṇā dāsi. They are opening a "preaching center," which means they are getting an apartment near the

University of Maryland and inviting people for evening feasts and classes in *Bhagavad-gītā*. They have just begun and don't have much of a following yet, but it is promising; they are enthusiastic.

I have chosen some śāstric passages about preaching. Prahllāda Mahārāja at the age of five took the opportunity to speak to his class fellows when the teacher was out of the room. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu told the Kūrma *brāhmaṇa* to inform everyone he met about Kṛṣṇa. Prabhodānanda Sarasvatī said that a devotee-preacher should humbly ask the nondevotee to put aside his great learning and hear about Lord Caitanya. And Arjuna showed the topmost qualifications of a preacher when he said, “Kṛṣṇa, I totally believe all that You have said.”

Mukunda Datta's preaching center: austere apartment, not much furniture, but plenty of room for guests to sit. They made a loud *kīrtana*, but neighbors didn't complain. Shoes piled up in the hallway. Tonight it was mostly devotees, but one newcomer, a young black man came forward and asked questions.

“Is there something in the *Bhagavad-gītā* like the ‘Book of Revelations’ that tells of the end of the world?” Yes, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* there is prediction of nuclear destruction. It is more elaborately told in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, about the coming of Kali-yuga and the final annihilation by flood and fire.

“Is there a sanctuary against this destruction?” Yes, the eternal soul cannot be destroyed by any weapon.

“Is Godhead achieved just by devotion or do you have to do daily practices like no meat-eating and a certain number of prayers each day?” Only by devotion is He reached; but it has to be practiced. For example, if you say you are devoted to music, that means you have practices and devotional activities of music in your life; or else, what is the meaning of your saying you are devoted to music?

Mother Kṛṣṇā dāsi cooked a feast on one little stove in an efficiency kitchen. The plate of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* is pleasing, with hot, cooked aromas—yellow rice with peas and fried cheese balls, cauliflower, *baḍas*, green bean-tomato-eggplant *sabji*, *purīs*, *brāhmaṇa* spaghetti, *halavā*, sweetrice, and nectar drink.

May 16, Negatives

An anticult magazine, *Update*, arrived. It puts me in anxiety as I read how lawyers and vociferous parents' groups are working against us, with the possibility that we may lose great amounts of assets. People may come to hate us by their propaganda. They lump us in with other new religions as devious cults. It's true we make mistakes, and there are things wrong within ISKCON, and that complicates the issue. But when we point out our faults and our struggles it is to improve and rectify them. When our enemies point out the same discrepancies, it is to undermine and destroy us. *Update* doesn't help, but I should know some of the propaganda.

Then I heard of another arch-rival who is trying to turn the devotees in a temple against the G.B.C.

No sunshine for three days.

I am getting a little tired of my salads and strict diet, but I need it.

Crabby nerves, too many duties—I see no break ahead, pushed by the clock, no peaceful writing time. And yet I am doing very little of the same duties I complain about. Sleep isn't the answer. Get strength and resolve to go on.

I want to *steer* into direct Kṛṣṇa consciousness; otherwise, it is all trash.

I am just repeating what I have heard,
but I mean it:
The truth of *śāstra*
is better than my own.

This world is misery
and temporary;
those who are *yogīs*
in devotion
go to Kṛṣṇa
and never come back.

Aside from Kṛṣṇa-thought,
what else have I got?
Flesh and bones, pleasure-aches,

a mind that digs up
 ravings and speculation.
 And the most amazing thing—
 I don't think "I will die."

Better to repeat
 what I've heard
 from the perfect source,
 and learn how to mean it.

O Street Preaching center

Around thirty guests. Lectured against material happiness. "After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogīs* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection" (Bg. 8.15). Hardly any questions afterwards. One old-time comedian used to say, "Is *everybody* happy?" But we challenge, "Is anybody happy?" Give up your material attachments. Don't ruin the sweetrice by throwing in sand. As lecturer, I gently broke all illusions, and offered instead the infallible happiness of spirit soul in union with Lord Kṛṣṇa, from whom radiates infinite bliss.

Now we are driving home, our car surrounded by intense seekers of material happiness in Friday-night Georgetown. Someone sees us and waves, "Hadi! Hadi!" Young and old gals and guys stroll together past Hot Bagels, Adidas, Eagle Liquor—tomorrow night, *hari-nāma* here.

OLD DIARIES

June 26, 27, 28, 1973

Stayed one day at his Godbrother's Sridhar Maharaj. Now Calcutta. Keeping people from disturbing him unnecessarily. Watchdog.

Crossing the Ganges in an old wooden boat. He sat. People calling out to us, "Hare Kṛṣṇa." He said wherever we go & people see us they say Hare Kṛṣṇa. Even he arrived in plane stop over at night they chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Calcutta—went to the Kaviraja's house. He felt Srila Prabhupada's pulse. Then he went to another room and everyone in the house came to receive darsana and offered fruit. Then we held Hare Kṛṣṇa kirtan. Riding in the car we said hardly anything. Then this

morning visited another man's home, a modest apartment, he offered prasadam, Prabhupada asked him many questions about the apartment, seeming mundane things (talking in Bengali) & finally told them to chant Hare Krsna.

Note on opposite page:

Me, terrible headache, weak from cholera shot, leading chanting in Kaviraj's, Prabhupad pleased. Big basket of fruit.

I was 2 days very sick, now returned to life, eating, digesting, working. Srila Prabhupad ate something, a kichori yesterday, cooked by his sister, & now he has become sick again. Plans uncertain now about going to London. Think to ask him how I can expand my activities in the zone. I am so saturated with self-interest—if I could only think, "What is best for Krsna," then I would get direction how to do big things for the zone. Festivals coming together, parades in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland.

Srila Prabhupad ill. His sister coming to see him, not helping. Took picture of Nrsimhadeva from altar.

Note on opposite page:

Srila Prabhupad subdues us. He called in his big G.B.C. & sannyasi leaders—their consensus was to go to good climate, L.A., to rest. No, he wanted to preach in West. All leaders subdued by his calm forceful statement of "strength of mind."

He said strike while the iron is hot. I think that is an English maxim. Then you can keep it in shape. *

In West they are fed up. I want to give spiritual enlightenment. Two very misleading theories: 1. Life comes from matter; 2. there is no life after death (so enjoy). Everything is matter. As this movement grows, Communists will be curbed down.

They try for unity, but this simply means our Rathayatra festival. They have no brain to see. By complicated League of Nations & United Nations they fail. This simple method all over the world. Gandhi's method cut up India into India and Pakistan & now who cares for noncooperation, nonviolence? But by our movement this culture is spread all over the world. Jagannatha means Lord of Universe. "International God" thanx to ISKCON.

Here is a glimpse of Prabhupāda's hope for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and how he carried it out. He continued to go forward all his days. He sprang up from his bed in Calcutta to attend the London Ratha-yātrā. He was enthusiastic to spread Kṛṣṇa's glories.

No one can grasp his plans and expectations by material calculation. For example, Prabhupāda saw the Ratha-yātrā festival as very potent for bringing unity in human society, yet Ratha-yātrā appears to be a sectarian festival. Even in India it's mostly known only in Orissa where Lord Kṛṣṇa is worshiped as Lord Jagannātha. To the first Britishers who saw Ratha-yātrā it seemed to be the epitome of idol worship. But Prabhupāda saw that the Ratha-yātrā could widely distribute the ecstasy of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. The colorful chariots, and the *prasādam* distribution of a mass festival could bring together people of all religions. So he was eager to go from India to England to perform the Ratha-yātrā.

In one Calcutta home where Śrīla Prabhupāda visited, he saw a doll on a shelf. I think it was the Air India man, bowing from the waist, a small, rotund Mahārāja with a turban. Seeing the doll Prabhupāda asked his host, "Who is that, Vivekananda?" I didn't know (and I still don't know) if Prabhupāda was just teasing or serious, or both.

May 18

Highway I-95 to Philadelphia, for two days of BTG meetings.

Baladeva, Kṛṣṇa Bhakta, and I were talking about the time of death. I brought it up when I saw men laughing at us in a passing car. I imagined they were joking about bald heads and *śikhās*, and maybe about the fact that we have a luxury Oldsmobile. I felt a little hurt that we were being derided. But then I remembered Śrīla Prabhupāda's faith in the power of the holy name. If these deriders said the name of Kṛṣṇa it might save them at the time of death.

Almost no one else actually tells people what they should do at the time of death, and so if a person has had any contact with devotees, he may remember it and chant at the end. I told the story from the life of Leo Tolstoy. He died while traveling in a train and was calling out, "What am I supposed to do now?"

Kṛṣṇa Bhakta told how he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa to his one-hundred-one-year-old Irish grandfather just before he passed away. And I told of an American devotee's grandmother who asked her son, "Is Kṛṣṇa here now?" and then she passed away. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard that account, he said she had made great spiritual advancement.

So I should not be thin-skinned when people see us and laugh, as long as they think "Kṛṣṇa." It will give them transcendental life, and I will have served my purpose.

May 19, Philadelphia, Drumila dāsa's house

Letter arrived from a Godbrother. He's very involved in himself, and using psychological analysis, including visits to a psychologist to help himself. A Godsister complained that the psychological approach tends toward false ego and overconcern for one's own *needs*; not enough surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Her remarks were good, but then she had a nervous breakdown. So her behavior gives the argument in favor of his honestly attacking his problems. He claims that if the problems are too hampering, it may require self-analytical work. Nevertheless, her point stands, despite her fall: "All this emphasis on our needs, but the soul is only happy when that kind of selfish consideration is pushed aside for the pleasure of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa. We have to be careful to give the pure thing, or else how will depression go away?"

Outside looking at rising sun; an eye exercise. It's also an exercise in feeling happy, being one with the elements that are themselves close to Kṛṣṇa. The sun in particular is the eye of God. I felt the sky all around me, its blueness, and the pure power of the blazing sun. You cannot look at it more than ten minutes. And all this is a small spark of Kṛṣṇa in His original form and abode.

They say believe in what makes you happy. Other abstractions about happiness don't count. Discover happiness inductively; draw evidence directly from your feelings and experiences. However, there is a higher wisdom than this to guide us in happiness.

Kṛṣṇa says the happiness that appears like nectar in the beginning (like sex pleasure), but becomes poison later, is happiness in the mode of passion. And happiness in ignorance, from drugs or sleep, is a mere illusion of happiness. So how can we claim direct evidence from the senses? Yet I appreciate the points about directly experiencing happiness. We all know when we feel surges of well-being. I feel happy when I see the white mailbox, and when I see the flower bush.

The *śāstra* informs us of happiness in the mode of goodness: It's like poison at first but later it's nectar. So we attempt the austerities, restrain our senses from wrong acts and engage fully in practical devotional service—and then we can confirm it, “Yes, I'm happy.” That is realization. Otherwise, we may call it directly confirmed joy, but later it will go sour.

Poems

“Just make your poem,”
said the teacher,
“like a ripe fruit
to offer to Kṛṣṇa.”

The child asked,
“Does the apple have to *say*
‘Hare Kṛṣṇa’?”

“No, the apple doesn't have to speak.
But *you* say Hare Kṛṣṇa, in your poem.
Say, ‘Here Lord Kṛṣṇa, it's for You.’
If you say His name in love
then He will be pleased with you.”

“But will that be a good poem?” asked the child.
“Well,” the teacher smiled,
“why are you so attached
to writing a poem?
Do you want to win a prize?
Poem or not, offer Him your love.”

Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is
Plate #3

These are windows
 to the spiritual world,
 if you have transcendental eyes.
 But if you see mundane,
 it's just lumps and forms,
 not as real as what is happening
 in your room.

How to bring it close?
 Read the *Gītā*
 and think in terms of *bhakti*:

*The sounds of the conches of the Pāṇḍavas
 shattered the hearts
 of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra.*

Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna stand
 with mighty right arms upraised,
 conch-horns to their lips,
 under the yellow, war-cloud sky.

The golden-wheeled chariot,
 the arrow-filled quiver,
 his Gāṇḍiva bow,
 their armor pieces—
 when seen with devotion,
 this is enough
 to bring a man back to Godhead.

OLD DIARIES

July 4, 1973

*There was a young lizard on his desk. He said just see he is only
 born & yet he is looking for food on his own—not that his mother &
 father are providing. So who shall provide? He quoted Prahlād Ma-
 harāj as saying it is not the mother and father who keep the child
 alive or the stout rope that saves the man at sea.*

Story of Sridhar Swami taking sannyas. His wife had just be-

come pregnant so he thought, what will people think if I left? Then when the child would be born he planned to leave. But when the child was born the mother died, so he thought, I was planning to leave when she had a child, now the child has no mother, what shall I do? And just then a lizard dropped down & snatched a bug in his mouth & Sridhar Swami understood & immediately left to take sannyas. (He understood I am not the provider for the lizard nor for the child—Krsna is providing.)

He criticized Western civilization for ruination of human living. By thinking there is no time for self-realization. They think not only they must work 8 hours a day, but they try to save time to spend more time at naked dancing, vacations, intoxication. Our movement is fighting this. It is not religious sentiment but trying to save humanity from ruin. I asked if we must defeat the theories of "life comes from matter, and no life after death"? Not just defeat he said, but present very strongly—

G.B.C. has to be trained up. It is a huge worldwide organization.

To Tamal Krsna Goswami: We do not let our grhastha bhaktas live in the temples with the sannyasis, but we allow the sannyasis to live at the home of a grhastha? Is this a good example? (Acyutananda Swami had fallen ill & was staying at householder's place.) Sannyasi is supposed to undergo all tribulation & be the highest example, & if it is seen he is living comfortably at a grhastha's home, what will people think? They already criticize us for mixing boys & girls. So sannyasi should be exemplary for others. "Caesar's wife should be above suspicion."

From Lord Caitanya's sankirtan movement, old manuscript (after he took sannyas):

"In that transcendental state of mind, Lord Chaitanya constantly chanting the holy name of Krsna, everyone who passed Him was attracted and they also began to cry with the Name of Hari. The cow boys who happened to meet Him on the field also began to say Hari Hari. The Lord was very much pleased with the behavior of the cowboys & went nearer to them & encouraged them in such acts of theirs by touching the heads of the boys. He excited them to go on saying in that way. He addressed them to be very fortunate beings & thought Himself obliged by their behavior."

"But we are so unfortunate that we refuse to accept the very simple method of invoking the pleasure and blessings of God in the midst of the hundreds of curses offered by Kali Yuga as mentioned herein before."

From same book: perverted shape of Varnashram Dharma today are politicians in the position of Brahmin, military in the position of kshatriyas, industrial capitalists in the place of vaisyas & ordinary laboring masses in position of sudras.

Quoted karmi saying "Middle Ages was Age of Faith & beautiful mosques & churches no longer exist. Now is an age of question and search." Śrīla Prabhupāda comments it is still an age of blind faith, now in Marx, etc. and if people are really interested in inquiry & search they should read the discussions of Ramananda Raya & Lord Caitanya.

The special thing about this 1973 diary is that it was written while I was living with Śrīla Prabhupāda. I can hardly dream now of such wealth. Yet, even in 1973 I had to perceive it through my own self. According to how receptive and submissive I was, to that degree only I appreciated Śrīla Prabhupāda while living with him as a personal servant.

The story of Śrīdhara Svāmī and the lizard is difficult for the moralist to swallow. But Kṛṣṇa is the perfect moralist. So no matter how it appears to the world's morality, any service that is actually pleasing to Kṛṣṇa is true morality, and anything that doesn't please Kṛṣṇa is immoral. There are many examples of apparently immoral behavior that actually pleased Kṛṣṇa: The *gopīs* left their families at night to go and dance with Kṛṣṇa; Arjuna killed his relatives; Prahlaḍa Mahārāja offered a garland to Nṛsiṃhadeva after He had killed his father. And there are examples of apparently moral behavior that displeased Kṛṣṇa, such as Yudhiṣṭhira's hesitation to tell a lie on the order of Kṛṣṇa.

The moralists, however, think that their so-called good behavior is more important than worship of God. When Prabhupāda was mailing out his *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1956, he conversed with the postmaster about this. The man saw the title of Prabhupāda's newspaper and commented, "Isn't it

enough if we just behave without hurting others and do our own work? What is the need to worship God?" Prabhupāda replied that you cannot do any of those good moral acts, such as honesty, nonviolence, duty, etc., *unless* you worship God.

The lizard story shows us that we have to learn sooner or later to get out of family life—and God will take care of us, especially when we serve Him. A man may ask, "But who will take care of my family?" But if he admits that after his death, God will take care, then why not let God take care now? Save yourself and take *sannyāsa*. This instruction, of course, is for someone who is actually renounced. Otherwise, if someone accepts *sannyāsa* artificially, he will again develop a "family."

Sādhu means "to cut." He has to speak sharp words to cut the illusion of the moralists and sense gratifiers. Whoever remains attached to any manifestation of material life will be sure to come back in his next life through the cycle of birth and death. Whoever helps us cut these attachments is our true friend.

May 21

I feel that every day isn't as important in my service as are certain days. But the quiet days may be even more important in other ways. Now I am preparing for a special service of going to New Vrindaban. It will demand extra energy and concentration, and even now I am thinking about it.

To the extent that certain future events are more important, we live in the here-and-now by preparing for those events. Ultimately, we prepare for death, and we are preparing to go to the spiritual world.

Return to Potomac

Rain spouting outside, full-blown peonies in a jar of water on my desk.

I didn't pay much attention when D. read to me the pastimes of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva. But I heard, when Hiraṇyakaśipu challenged Prahlāda: "You have always spoken of a Supreme Being who is beyond everyone and is everywhere. So let Him save you now. If He is everywhere, is He in the pillar?" Prahlāda said yes and saw Him there. Śrīla Prabhupāda notes that the pure devotee sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere.

Day after tomorrow is Śrī Nṛsimha-caturdaśī. Tomorrow is the disappearance day of Jayānanda dāsa. He was a friend to the nondevotees. He used to make a route with plates of *prasādam* to gas station mechanics and others around San Francisco. And he was a silent worker, didn't push himself forward to get Prabhupāda's attention. Prabhupāda would ask to see him, "Where is Jayānanda?" He was always working hard in devotional service, even with a terminal disease.

Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Plate #4

It is an immense plain,
imminent war.
On the field of Kurukṣetra
the soldiers have to fight to death.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's whip is raised,
as He looks back to His friend.
Arjuna's arm is raised,
ordering Acyuta:

O infallible one,
please draw my chariot
between the two armies.
Let me see who has come here to fight.

May 22

There are demons within us, and demons around us. Some we meet face to face and some work behind the scenes trying to destroy us.

Each day we meet
Both demons and buddhas.

—Santoka Taneda

Kṛṣṇa protects us from all calamities and demons: "O Arjuna, declare it boldly. My devotee will never be vanquished."

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Nṛsimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord who possesses nails and teeth just

like thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demonlike desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world.

—*Bhāg.* 5.18.8

We have material desires like Hiraṇyakaśipu, for gold and soft bed. And those desires are like demons; they make us fearful. To become free of them we need the Lord's protection. Only when we vanquish the demons within will we be able to withstand the attacks of the outer demons.

If all devotees were solidly together, we could accomplish much more, even though we live amid the demons. Our demoniac desires are actually torturing us, although we may appear to be sometimes enjoying them. The uncontrolled tongue and the other senses and attachments are keeping us bound up.

These inner demons are described in a symbolic way, but the fact is that they are the greatest enemies. The outer demons are formidable, but despite them we can somehow or other distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Young Prahlāda wasn't stopped even by the biggest demon. But Prahlāda had no demons within. So how to kill these demons? By *sādhana*, by chanting and hearing, we will diminish their power, and not allow them to get the upper hand.

It's very pleasant outside, hearing *Bhāgavatam* and watching birds. Some small ones with red coloring on their heads flit in and out of the pine trees. D. says they look like they just were in India for Holi.

He is reading from the prayers of the demigods to Lord Nṛsiṃha after He killed Hiraṇyakaśipu. Indra says the *yajñas* had been stopped during the reign of Hiraṇyakaśipu, but now demigods are relieved and can resume their religious duties. D. and I discussed this in terms of the present situation. He said Lord Kṛṣṇa is setting up the demons and may destroy them in a moment by nuclear holocaust. But I asked, won't the devotees also be killed? He said a devotee's death is glorious and those who live will stay to preach. We also both admitted devotees are stifled by demons nowadays, even though there is no *mahā-asura* like Hiraṇyakaśipu. Now all are tiny demons, and even

within ourselves there are demoniac tendencies for sense gratification. We read and hear peacefully while the purple-headed finches flit into the pine tree. No one knows exactly how the Lord is working and what He plans for the world.

Meeting with new devotees

A boy had a good question, but at first he couldn't find the paper he had it written on. He said, "Sometimes I get good realizations, but later I get depressed again—how to deal with this?" A mustached man from El Salvador said he was very interested in chanting *japa*. I gave long answers, elaborating, thinking out loud, trying to help them create faith. I said I'm the *guru*, have faith in what I say. Have faith in my representatives in the temple, and dedicate yourselves.

After they left, I looked at Rilke's *Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. But there is something stale about all nondevotional works. In the introduction Stephen Spender speaks of the poet as a healer. High-flown words:

... Keats felt that in the face of human suffering, poetry was only saved from the vanity and triviality which he found in the characters of poets, like Byron and Shelley, who were his contemporaries, if the poet had an imagination which rose to heights corresponding to that suffering. . . . The poet, to justify his existence as equaling that of the healer, must be one of "those to whom the miseries of the world/ Are misery and will not let them rest."

But where is the teacher to heal the sufferings? He is a spiritual master who knows the techniques of the healing science. He who teaches what Kṛṣṇa teaches is a healer. But they want the poets' "healing by imagination."

I dip into this book and into that book until I recall it's not really what I want. Their poems and prose, while better than mine, convey no direct healing. And if I get caught up in their web, how does it benefit me? Let me return to hearing prayers of the demigods after the killing of Hiraṇyakaśipu by Lord Nṛsimhadeva. I will speak on that tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, a talk about book distribution: give people Prabhupāda's books.

May 23

Nṛsimha-caturdaśī

Pointy-bearded
 Lord Nṛsimha,
 Your antique glow
 makes me think
 You used to be worshiped
 in a South Indian sanctorum.

Was it a grand Viṣṇu temple
 in Kerala or Tamil Nadu,
 or were You a household *mūrti*,
 and brothers and sisters so often
 touched Your right foot
 that now it is worn down?

Your past remains a mystery.
 But last month
 Bhagavān Goswami handed You to me:
 "Will you worship Him?"
 "Yes," I replied, "but
 not with all rituals—
 just in a simple way
 along with my other Deities."

On Your appearance day,
 Nṛsimha-caturdāśī,
 I behold You
 in Your red and silver crown,
 & I think, "Mysterious One,
 only I can see You now."
 Yet I cannot see far
 into Your inner sanctum
 of wisdom and protection.

Please don't leave us.
 Accept our offerings, direct us
 how to bow and pray to You.
 Please inspire us
 to be brave.

O half-lion, half-man,
 please bless us and stay.
 Please mold us!
 Glories to Thee,
 Nṛsiṃhadeva and Lakṣmīdevī.
 All glories to Your *līlā*
 of killing the demon!
 All glories to Prahāda!

May 24, 3:00 A.M.

Kīrtana dāsa is one of the most inspired workers here, but now he feels despondent. He criticizes temple authorities and seeks friendships with outsiders. Yesterday he wrote me a letter listing "obstacles to my service." The first three items listed were his own shortcomings like, "too much interest in sense gratification; poor *sādhana*." But he seemed to list them as a formality only. He said it is not his fault that he is waning in his desire to stay and work in Potomac; it's the leaders who don't give him support. He complains that he has no intimate relationships here and that is why he seeks friendship elsewhere.

Kīrtana has come to this point before and some of it, I think, is his ambition to be the person in control; he doesn't like to be subordinate. But in my reply letter I pointed out another problem which others also see in him—he's too attached to his wife. Devotees joke that you never see him five minutes apart from her. Bhadrā dāsī is young, jealous of his attention, and now it seems that she has his ear. She criticizes others because they don't look up to her, even though she's working herself to exhaustion.

In reply to mine, Kīrtana wrote me another letter saying that I had hit the nail on the head. The problem is his wife. But now that he has allowed her to get out of hand, what can he do? She has become further disturbed by my references to her in my letter. I wrote that she was "not an important voice" and "just a child." She threatens to leave Kṛṣṇa consciousness or at least move away from the temple community. He told her that he couldn't leave; he would do what his spiritual master asks. But he fears that she could possibly go away anyway, and become another degraded teenager.

Last time they came to a similar impasse, Kīrtana, Bhadrā and I went on a walk. I asked her to be humble and to concentrate on attending the morning program and the chanting of her rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. We don't give material solutions, only the basic spiritual ones, but with faith that they will bring about the best material results also. (I cannot become a mundane psychiatrist, although I admit it is usable in extreme cases if one is depressed to the point of suicide, or has a history of mental disease. But this is not a case like that.) She is a young girl with growing material desires, and her husband has become henpecked. He is also envious of the devotees who have been placed as his superiors. When they are in their normal mood, both K. and B. are very fine devotees and very qualified, especially in working with the Indian community.

8:00 A.M.

Now I just heard that B. took an overdose of some allergy pills and had to go to the hospital. She recovered and is all right and has written a letter from there apologizing. She analyzed her trouble as overwork and poor health, deterioration of her own spiritual practices, such as attendance at the morning program and chanting rounds. The main hopeful sign is that she feels contrite. She was hurt that I made references in a *Bhāgavatam* class to women who overcontrol their husbands. She took it personally. But she is basically a surrendered soul. So this morning B., K., and I will take a walk together at Great Falls park. But I can see that she has already become surrendered in attitude and will give it another try. If a devotee is soft-hearted in that way, then she or he will be successful, no doubt. We just have to keep trying and not resent it when the spiritual master asks us to surrender or when he criticizes us.

I keep thinking as I write this, that nondevotees will see it and criticize me for daring to direct peoples' lives. I want to give realistic sketches of devotional life, but I cannot censor myself by thinking that at any moment I may be criticized by someone who does not understand the function of the spiritual master. Also, if I admit that devotees have trouble, as Bhadrā did, this may also be held against us. Sometimes they even quote from my books in courtrooms and anticult magazine articles, trying

to screw out a bad impression of ISKCON. My request to a nondevotee reader, therefore, is that if you tell this story, tell the whole story. Let us explain the full philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We admit it is a struggle to work for spiritual perfection, but it should not be misrepresented by those who do not even know the goal of human life.

9:00 A.M.

Everything seems clear and resolved as to what K. and B. should do. We walked together, they on either side of me, down the canal bank where flowers from the tulip poplar trees were strewn on the ground, amid joggers out with their dogs, and men fishing.

She is going to try again. He is going to try again. I have faith that they will, and even if they fail again, they will come to me for right instruction. They are soft-hearted. A critic may say, "soft-headed," but I say that their submission is a sign of good intelligence. They are not hard-hearted. They are intelligent enough to be led in spiritual life and to desire spiritual goals. They have also made my own faith stronger in my ability to help them. But all I did was to ask them to stay within our community and continue to work for our goals.

They are a young couple, and have to work out married life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How to have an intimate relationship without being mundane? She admits that she complains to him about other women who disturb her, and he admits that he is too impressionable and becomes sour toward others when he hears her complaints. Remedies: he should act as her *guru* and correct her; he should spend time with her, but she should allow him to be a real worker for Kṛṣṇa, and not complain when he spends time with others. They have to learn such basic things, and they have to learn it for themselves. I simply pointed out what is obvious from an objective standpoint. It is especially obvious what to do if you want spiritual life: be satisfied with humble service, not proud and trying to outdo others.

The Evening Program

After the lecture this morning, Janmāṣṭamī dāsa raised his hand and asked, "Why don't we have an evening program any more in the temple? Didn't Prabhupāda say there should be a

class in the morning and the evening?” I replied that devotees stay out to distribute books or do business, but those that are in the temple should revive the evening program, *Bhagavad-gītā* class and evening *ārati*. These remarks received an enthusiastic response. Devotees then raised their hands, each giving some testimony as to why they thought the evening program was important.

Nowadays in ISKCON, even devotees with impressive preaching records sometimes have a resurgence of material desires. There seems to be a special need now to return to basics of spiritual life. I have always accepted this principle, at least in a theoretical way. But seeing the devotees’ enthusiasm at the mere mention of reinstating an evening program makes me think we can actually revive it. Can I go myself?

Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Plate #5

Great sages pray:

“Lord Kṛṣṇa was going to the battlefield
not to fight but to grace all the devotees
with His transcendental presence.”

Now the Lord takes His place
as spiritual master;
His hand is raised in the *jñāna-mūdra*
and with His reddish palm He blesses us.

The expert warrior sits,
limp right hand on his knee,
and he looks up bewildered:
“How can I kill them?
Kṛṣṇa, tell me what to do.”

The Lord wastes no time,
in offering benediction
and gentle reprimand.

Now *Bhagavad-gītā* will begin:
As Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks

even the armies hold off,
 and the demigods gather in the sky
 to see the radiant form,
 of Śrī Kṛṣṇa dressed in gold—
 He has come to teach us all.

Hari-nāma in Georgetown

The last time I went to Georgetown, a tall, powerfully-built man stood in front of us, glowered, denounced us, tore up BTG magazines, and seemed about to attack us. I was singing and my mouth dried up and heart was thumping. It's not uncommon that there's some harassment and sometimes a physical attack. But we have our own fighters, and I'm not expected to make a great defense performance if that happens. But I have to conduct myself as a surrendered devotee. You have to expect bombardment of the senses, glaring displays of sense gratification by the *karmīs*—so many of them roaming the streets and regarding us as laughable or even obnoxious. Hoots and calls, etc. We disrupt their illusory flow. So it is good for me to go; devotees appreciate it. Get out there, Gurujī. They like to see you walk with two feet on the ground and do what they do—sing, dance, and be tolerant.

When we go into Georgetown Saturday night, Memorial Day weekend, it's early for full night life, but still many are out. Devotees were at the golden-domed bank on the corner of M Street and Wisconsin. I got out of the car and sang into the Mouse microphone with loudspeaker. It didn't take long to loosen up in the company of eyes-shining Rāya Kṛṣṇa dāsa and twenty others. These are my friends, well-wishers, in melodious distribution of the holy name. Most passersby seemed to like it, except for a few sour, disturbed faces. One man came up to me and wanted to take my *karatālas*. Just to see the cigarette pack in his breast pocket seemed highly unusual to me. He swayed in rhythm with us—making fun of us or joining the fun, which is it? We are jumping up and down, and that is what everyone is seeking in Georgetown.

"Is this like Dublin a little?" I said to Irish Nanda Mahārāja dāsa.

People on the streets like to see his four-year-old son with Hare Kṛṣṇa *śikhā* and *dhotī*. A man rushes out of a restaurant

and tries to play both ends of the *mṛdaṅga* held by Kṛṣṇa-nāmānanda dāsa, whose long Indian *śikhā* and bare shoulders give our party a Bengali flair. Aside from Kṛṣṇa-nāmānanda, the first five men in our procession are American blacks. I feel proud to be among them and raise my hands, watching the reactions of the nondevotees. A store flag overhead, "The Irish Corner;" another, "Three-penny Bit;" and "Players of Georgetown." Sports clothes, shirts two for \$25.00—Banana Republic, travel and safari clothes. It's impossible not to see them, though sometimes we turn away from young flesh. Look! Punks! Each person is trying to find it in a group or in a partner, and some are walking alone looking for that someone or something else.

Now Bhaktivinoda dāsa leads the singing—he can go on like this for hours with his strong melodies and supple-armed drumming. But I have to bow out, leaving the party on the street corner, looking back to German-born Kṛpārāma's beaming, healthy face and form as he waves me good-bye. I take a last look out the back car window—the ladies in saris with folded palms, and saffron-dressed men waving and handing out *Back to Godhead*. Now we have an hour drive to Baltimore.

OLD DIARIES

July, 1973

Regarding Midwest zone he said since centers are established there then go into interior—come & go, come & go, some go south, some go north, in this way (cover all towns & villages) if we make some devotees we can open centers. Centers should not be opened whimsical, open one day and closed the next.

Note on opposite page:

So I can go with my party and encourage the centers also to send parties, not just to do hard core books. Give them direction—but to preach, meet people, hold feasts in cities—go to interior, chanting in Kansas City, Topeka, Minneapolis, etc.

Riding home in taxi from pandal. Question asked by Jayapataka Swami. Asked if we gain political power will we follow Manu Samhita?

First gain power, he said. Then, yes, Manu Samhita. Actually everything in gist is there in Gita & Bhagwatam. Samhita is based on Varnashram & that is in Gita, "I created the 4 orders." So first we would divide society into orders by quality and work, not birth. Someone made a Brahmin would have to act like a Brahmin or else he would be punished, like a doctor.

Instead of taking this order we have our present society (gestures to streets of Calcutta as we drive in car) where the trucks are crying for blood & the goats have to give their lives, they cannot live. And for this there will be reaction. And so men have to work like asses pulling loads like this thela puller working all day like an animal. That is the result.

He told Pancha Dravida Swami on being asked how to preach to smartas in South India who may know Sanskrit:

Learn 5 slokas a month; in 6 months you'll know 30 slokas, that should be enough to present Bhagavad Gita. P.D.S. said Hrisikeshananda was going to help him with pronunciation. Prabhupada said, This-ananda, that-ananda, be your own person, do not be dependent on someone else to learn your work for you. On being asked how to preach to Shaivites, he said, ask them, My dear sir, do you accept Bhagavad Gita and they will all say yes. Then quote "Those whose intelligence is maddened worship the demi-gods." So come to understand Bhagavad Gita well, even in English, and you can preach.

About me and getting through international airlines, customs entanglement, "He is doing his best. But he does not have experience. If every month a new man, then I have to suffer." TKG said, "But we suffer when you get angry upon us." He said, "But your suffering is secondary." He was detained 3 hours in Paris and practically jailed 4 days from Africa to Australia. I am coming and going so much I am a little bit known. I should not have to wait on lines. That is the job of the secretary. He should be so expert that these rascals with all their rules are answered & Prabhupada not detained as an ordinary person.

I would say, "It is all right. I have checked everything." And, Prabhupada said, "You say that. But then I will be stopped at the airport." If everything is not cleared, he is detained.

You have to have a brain, always alert. One who has a brain has strength.

It took me more than a week to find the appropriate moment to ask Prabhupāda how to preach in my own zone, Mid-U.S.A. A few words from him would direct my activities for at least a year. Simply to be able to know what he wanted fixed my determination. How could I now be unsuccessful?

The Calcutta *paṇḍāl* was not a tent, but someone's second-floor temple given for ISKCON's use. It continued for several days and nights and then they asked the devotees to stay on longer. The floor was covered with white sheets, and there was a white-sheeted stage with bright lights. Prabhupāda's disciples could have spoken to the large, noisy crowds, but the people wanted Prabhupāda and he also wanted to speak. Sometimes his disciples were skeptical about the Hindus, but although Prabhupāda was aware of the crowds' lack of surrender, he enthusiastically spoke *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

He was dramatic while riding home, pointing to the trucks and goats in the street, delivering his memorable points by giving his example, the chaotic city of Calcutta: "If you don't take to *varṇāśrama*, you will get this."

"Be your own person." He meant we should not unnecessarily attach ourselves to a Godbrother or depend on another devotee-scholar if it means that we ourselves don't become a scholar. Be self-sufficient; whatever you know, even if you are not the best, make due and use it; learn some verses from the *Gītā*, *speak them*, actively preach.

When the immigration agents held up Prabhupāda from entering countries or detained him, he sometimes appeared upset at being thwarted, but when he saw there was no alternative, he accepted it, and applied his time fully in Kṛṣṇa's service. During the Bombay quarantine, Prabhupāda discussed and recorded conversations on Western philosophers for his book, *Dialectic Spiritualism*. Sometimes he became silent and chanted or silently meditated on his purpose. He had the power to withdraw at any moment from active events and be with Kṛṣṇa. He was like the *yogī* described in the *Gītā*, who withdraws his senses within, just like a tortoise. When up against inevitable material obstacles, a favorite expression of Prabhupāda's: "What can be done?" With sudden gravity, he cut off all superficial exchanges, no matter who was present. He withdrew by his own determination, as he saw fit. But mostly he was engaged in the

scene at hand. As the light-show artist, Roger Hillyard said of Prabhupāda, "He was totally right there, right there with everybody."

When Prabhupāda said, "Your suffering is secondary," we all shared a laugh with him. He was serious, but he had said it humorously. His humor was often like that—sudden, spontaneous, almost unintentional, and yet urbane. He exposed the limits of our empathy with his suffering: No one knows the mind of the *ācārya*.

He was aware that his foolish secretary could not convince worldly people to treat Śrīla Prabhupāda as a VIP. That means his followers were mostly not expert or influential men. When I assured him that everything would go all right at the airport, he didn't believe me. And he was right.

Nowadays I still remember his remark, "One who has a brain has strength." As he said it I was convinced that an alert, intelligent person like Śrīla Prabhupāda could always manage himself confidently, even in worldly situations. Even when confronting more physically powerful men, the sharp, fearless intelligence of the liberated soul would win out.

May 25

If a family member acts strangely, threatening the family unit, naturally other family members will become disturbed. Because they have a group purpose, and each has a part to fulfill. Or a body: if one part acts independent of the body, if the arms claim their right to act independently, rejecting the whole body's concerns, then the whole body is disturbed. We live in such human bondage, and it is our strength as *satsaṅga*, but it can become painful when there are extremes of disagreement.

Baltimore, Indoors at Jaya Gaurasundara's house

I can do my work in this suburban house if I keep busy, but when I stop, I can't go anywhere. I mean, the streets seem filled with eyes, although the eyes are actually behind the windows. I may be wrong, but I figure they don't like to see such an unusual sight as a bright saffron-dressed Hare Kṛṣṇa monk. And since everything here is enforced by law and order, a cruising police car may come at any moment on the call of a neighbor.

I remember going into neighborhoods like this in Dallas and many other places. Outside any U.S. city it's practically the same. Often we would get a hostile reception at the door. In Abilene they called the police because they were frightened by our appearance and they figured we must be illegal. The policeman decided we *were* illegal and told us to get out of town. We reminded him of the Supreme Court decisions given by Justice Douglas and others in favor of Jehovah's Witnesses but he didn't want to hear about it, just, "Get out of town."

In Boston also a policeman told me he didn't care about the Supreme Court. And even if we went to the police station to tell the captain or attorney and show them xeroxes of the Supreme Court decisions, they would of course agree, and sometimes say yes, and they would inform the policeman on the beat, but somehow the word didn't get down to the patrolman, and it was the same thing, get off the street or we will arrest you. And then we lost a decision in a local court. But then we won and got a letter of permission but then again the patrolmen didn't honor it.

Therefore, a devotee has to be humble and determined. He is like a guerilla fighter, moving on to new places, always trying to work peacefully and legally, but when it is the police themselves who are illegal and unconstitutional, then what do you do?

Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled when His cowherd friends came back to Him and reported how the yajñic *brāhmaṇas* had ignored them when they begged food on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma. Śrī Kṛṣṇa said you have to expect being ignored or turned away when you beg on My behalf. There are so many puffed-up and ignorant persons in the world; if you make your occupation that of a spiritual mendicant, and if you go door to door to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness and beg people to hear you or take a book, then be prepared for rejection and be tolerant, or else how can you preach?

It's like prison in these suburban streets. While the TVs play technicolor in closed-off rooms and the cow-slaughterer dads and moms sit in the yard, and while hefty young boys and girls roam around in the latest sport clothes—all in the myth of "I am this body"—I who know better have a duty to go to them again and again, one way or another.

Now Dāmodara and Jaya Gaurasundara's family have returned from the Sunday feast at the Baltimore temple. D. said Mahānidhi Swami gave the lecture and spoke on fearlessness. "He told about Lord Nṛsiṃha and discussed fearlessness from every conceivable angle."

May 26

EARLY AMERICAN RELIGIOUS DIARIES

Śubhānanda dāsa thought I might be interested in early American religious diaries, and so he loaned me a book, *Spiritual Autobiography in Early America*. But there are natural connections. I'm American, religious, and a diarist.

Professor Daniel Shea has analyzed the autobiographies and diaries of early American Quakers and Puritans and assessed them as proselytizing instruments, and also as literary and human documents. He was particularly interested whether a diarist wrote honestly about his life and conversion to religion, or whether he was bending facts for the purposes of teaching the religious doctrine. His conclusion was that most autobiographers were preoccupied with trying to teach their doctrines, and so their selections from life seemed more motivated than true.

It's interesting to think how a scholar might view my own approach in the diary. Seeing from his critical point of view, I might avoid some of the pitfalls of previous diarists of spiritual life. When one claims he is on the true path, people become suspicious that you are programming your life experiences to demonstrate the preconceived truth as given in your religion. While the scholar of *Spiritual Autobiography* exposed these weaknesses, he also appreciated those writers whom he felt made a more truthful combination of religious doctrine, interesting literature, and true-to-life depiction.

Aside from the academic point of view, I also want to see if reading the confessions and strivings of the early Americans would help me to learn more about this genre—Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the diary of a practicing devotee. At least in some external ways, the early Americans appear to be doing the same thing that I am attempting. Like them, I also use the journal to deepen my own commitment and to help me on the spiritual path. And through the descriptions of my endeavors, I

hope to attract others to this path.

From what I understand so far of the early American Christians, they appear to be very primitive and narrow. But I will see if I can glean some friendly advice from like-minded spirits, and also comment on their spiritual efforts by the addition of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I talked with a Godbrother who suggested that if I speak from the bottom of my heart then I could change another's views, if not immediately, maybe in time. But is the bottom of my heart sufficiently deep? It seems to depend on how much I really do care for Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement. I know I don't like to feel pain, don't like to be inconvenienced in my daily routine, want to go on with my personal writing and zonal projects, travel as scheduled, nice eating and sleeping, etc. But how much am I willing to sacrifice for his worldwide unified movement? I don't offer resistance to the G.B.C., but how much do I contribute? Here is a chance to do something.

May 27

Send-Off Poem to Myself

The cardinals' slingshot leads the way
with others in the chorus,
bluejays, robins, orioles,
singing in the predawn
Baltimore backyard.
The ego-centered "I" wants to say
they are bidding me Godspeed
but they are not,
they are crying,
where is food? Where is sex?
And the Lord is supplying.

Mine also is a shadow-*kīrtana*
reciting over the knots and beads.

Now go forth under His command,
and don't slough off,
and not for gain,
but going forth—
for my master.

Just the thought of him saves me
 from ordinary bird cries.
 Some say we can surpass him
 tho' I know that's not for me.
 But let me refrain from
 posing as the most loyal.
 I'll recognize
 my brothers' work,
 but I save the special place
 for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Don't defend the G.B.C. as faultless. But hold the line, Mr. Softy. But don't be envious, don't get angry; accept it when you are laughable, or mistaken, but keep to the points which you are representing; G.B.C. unity and obedience despite their imperfections—world unity of ISKCON is Śrīla Prabhupāda's will. It is voluntary, but maintained by law, as well as love and trust.

Airport Hotel, Pittsburg

"JESUS IS COMING. ARE YOU READY?"

While waiting for Baladeva to register, I sat off by myself in an open lounge area. I was looking out at the rain and the planes, and at an interesting close-up photo of a motor-prop plane. Suddenly I saw a young man coming toward me. He said, pleasantly, "Hello, how are you?" And for an instant I thought he was going to inquire about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But he gave me a pamphlet—"Jesus is Coming. Are You Ready?"—and asked if I had ever heard of Jesus Christ. I said, of course, everyone has. He said yes, but some people don't obey Jesus. That was my cue to bring up the Christians' disobedience of "thou shalt not kill," but I let it pass. I didn't have the killer instinct for the debate. So he kept going and said Jesus is the only son of God. That was another cue, but one that would require contradicting him strongly. I tried politely to get rid of him, "I prefer to read the pamphlet."

He said, "You don't want to talk?" I said, "Talking with you means just listening." He didn't smile or anything to recognize my remark, but kept on talking: "Jesus says, we are all sinners, right? He says if we surrender with our heart and with our mouth then we will be forgiven."

Okay, I thought. Finally, he relented. But then he took it up again. He asked where I was going, and then he said he worked at the airport with USAir. I looked on his shirt and saw "USAir." I was surprised that they allowed him to preach like that. Then as if to explain or clear himself he said, "I just like to talk about the Lord."

"Nothing wrong with that," I said, but I thought his presentation was so dogmatic, so sectarian, and without any lead-in or gradual agreement—just leap into the assumption that Jesus is the only Lord. Even when it's obvious the person he is talking to is a priest in another religion. He just jumped right past it and hoped that maybe I was doubtful or fed-up with Kṛṣṇa and would take the leap with him. Presentation should be more reasonable. But maybe he's had good luck with wayward Christians or persons who don't think. Of course, he thinks everyone is a wayward Christian. Anyway, it is done and over. Now I have to do physical exercise and offer *prasādam*, read a little, then on to New Vrindaban.

9:15 P.M., New Vrindaban

On behalf of the G.B.C., I conducted a one-hour interview with Śrīla Bhaktipāda. Time will tell; Kṛṣṇa will tell.

May 28

Breakfast and talk with Śrīla Bhaktipāda: his beautiful house, amazing potency of land and development, buildings, visions of a tower of one hundred and eight bells, the world's largest bells, and most bells, Bach-like music from the world's largest organ, tourists walking to the Temple of Understanding to see the revival of Western culture with Kṛṣṇa in the center.

Back in my room. Leaving tonight. I wonder how long the world will last. But that shouldn't hold a preacher back from trying to make himself personally felt on behalf of the *paramparā*.

I am looking for poems the way a pure devotee looks for Kṛṣṇa. The Gosvāmīs were looking for Kṛṣṇa but never said they found Him. A *pure* devotee? Who's that?

6:00 P.M.

About to pull out from New Vrindaban in our rented car.

This afternoon, Bhaktipāda personally took me driving in his Toyota jeep on a tour of recent developments in New Vrindaban. I have been going on these tours with Bhaktipāda over the years, and always New Vrindaban is expanding. Its development can be likened to the expansion of spiritual bliss, or the infinite advancing-potency of a pure devotee's realization.

On parting, Bhaktipāda said, "I hope I was not offensive."

"I hope *I* was not offensive," I replied. "Personal association and mutual appreciation will surpass these differences."

Bhaktipāda: "Jaya!"

Talked with Devāmṛta Swami about writing. He thought *Journal and Poems* and *Worshipable Deity* were the beginning of a line of pastoral books. But I said, How can I justify staying in the country just to write these books?

He also advised me to write more "commercially," meaning books that ISKCON temples would want to sell to the public. He suggested a series of books on different places. Just as *Journal and Poems* was about Gītā-nāgarī, so there could be books on cities, like Philadelphia, Boston, D.C., Baltimore, and countries like Ireland, Trinidad, with physical descriptions. For example, there could be a slim volume of poetry about Ireland, and it could be sold or given out by the *saṅkīrtana* devotees.

After Devāmṛta Swami left, it occurred to me that it's for medical reasons that I have refrained from trying to do more books. At present, I can only write as I go along in *Journal and Poems*. I should not abandon it, or even reduce it. But as I gain strength I can try for the others.

6:20 P.M., *Return to Baltimore*

Tonight's visit to the dentist may include another tooth pulled, impressions for a partial denture, plus scaling. I just enjoyed eating strawberries and now I suffer with the same mouth.

JUNE

June 1

Jaya Gaurasundara is in his backyard
watering *tulasīs*,
while a robin chirps at five P.M.
on the first warm day.

I see a birdbath down the hill,
and a garden sprinkler spurts,
but the houses are packed together;
this is no *Gītā-nāgarī*.

There is a willow tree,
and wet grass,
saris on the clothesline,
but where is the Lord of the heart?
Is He in these words—
“How do you keep those
tulasīs in the winter?”

What about the neighbors' shouts?
At least I find Him here
in Jaya Gaurasundara's family.
Worshiping their Govinda—
singing His holy names,
with drums and *karatālas*
they draw me in
to join with them
for *sundara-ārati*.

June 2, Dream of Śrīla Prabhupāda speaking

After *maṅgala-ārati* I fell asleep, and dreamt of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the form of a small, mechanized bas-relief in brown wood, I think in India. Śrīla Prabhupāda was moving back and forth, talking. It was a profile, full figure, crudely made. A recorded voice of a devotee spoke and then Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke. He said the word “health” and then another word, “difficulty,” and then the dream was interrupted.

"Baltimore temple is not a good location," a Godbrother says. Like last night at one A.M. ("it always happens") drunkards went by, yelling and cursing and waking up devotees. "And no one comes to the temple. And Hindus don't give money but prefer to stay at home." So who will take it up? *It can be sweet.*

OLD DIARIES

July 7, 1973

At airport, delays. I asked him when we go to Vaikuntha there is none of this? He quoted Bhagavad-gita. No, Krsna says, "he comes to Me" immediately. There is no question of passports. He said, "This is a nonsense place. It is not fit for a gentleman." Then seeing family, he commented, they think wife, family, & friends will protect me. Just as king feels he is protected by soldiers. (All this while sitting in an airport in Calcutta.) When there is danger one thinks, "I have my wife, family, they will protect me." Remembered when he was a child there were so many relatives, where are they now? All dead. "Now I am in a different atmosphere." Chastised Sruta-kirti for pointing his foot at his spiritual master. He said there are so many Vedic rules. One shouldn't hand anything with his left hand.

Women, even when he was child, would never take employment, that was insult to the family. And one would never go to the hospital—would rather die at home. And even a poor man would starve rather than ask for anything. His mother wouldn't even go next door but would take a coach. If one invited a woman it was understood, "a coach will be sent." If no coach was sent, no one would go. So even to go next door to the Mulliks she would take a coach. They wouldn't even hook up horses it was so close but a man would pull the coach—only next door.

Car not ready to take him 'cause Madhavananda took it. He called him "an obstinate rascal" (he had done it before).

Chastised Sruta-kirti for baring leg, pointing foot at spiritual master.

Calcutta: I used to drive down this street on a bicycle. It is now not much different than it was then except for the skyscrapers.

The Maidan (park) was there & he first encountered it when he was two years old and can remember.

Giriraj on India:

Giriraj dasa said Prabhupad said 6 months in India is equal to 2 years in U.S. They (devotees) were comfortable in Akash Ganga flat and didn't want to move to ashrama at Juhu which had far less amenities. Srila Prabhupada said to Tamala Krsna Goswami: "Don't you want to be purified?" Dravida dasa Swami [Panchadravida] said Juhu ashrama had rats & was run-down. His Divine Grace said, "Many people in India live in very simple houses & they keep them clean but you Americans eat something & throw the dish in the corner for 6 months—that's why you have rats."

Tribulation is good for advancement. The pain the devotees suffered while Mrs. Nair sometimes turned off electricity & 11 days without water, blasphemed, tore down the temple—that pain is austerity & makes for advancement. So the difficulty of India makes one turn to Krsna (if he is intelligent) as the only shelter. Buying soda may be a necessity sometimes when water is bad but it has to be done in service to Krsna. U.S. plush facilities may not be so beneficial. It depends on the attitude of the devotee.

Calcutta: Said private house in which pandal was held was "a dungeon."

Giriraj said Prabhupad was discussing how Sanatan Goswami offered a bribe to get out of prison to go to Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He said he offered black money. The purport is one should hold the satisfaction of Krsna as the only morality, above all other codes. When Krsna asked Yudhisthir to tell Dronacarya his son had died, Yudhisthir said, "I cannot tell a lie." So that is his defect; he is not as great a devotee as Arjuna.

Prabhupāda's conversation took place while sitting in the public lounge at the airport. He had displayed fiery anger when he was at the temple because the car was not ready. It was Mādhavānanda's fault—using the temple car in the morning for some householder purposes. Prabhupāda saw it as sense gratification. At first he called him a fool and then he added, "obstinate fool." It was a glaring exposure—because of Mādhavānanda's personal concerns, his spiritual master was inconvenienced. Prabhupāda finally walked out of his room ready to go to the airport even though there was no car. He walked out to

the street and demanded that his disciples do something immediately. So we arranged for another car, but Prabhupāda remained in a chastising mood toward Mādhavānanda.

Sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda at the airport was a blissful intimate exchange, full of instructions. When he noticed Kauśalyā dāsī, Mādhavānanda's wife, among the devotees, Prabhupāda said to her that she did not appear well. He said her pale complexion was a sign of ill health. She then informed him that she was actually feeling badly, and he suggested the possibility of her leaving India to regain her health.

Although I was supposed to be Prabhupāda's secretary for the month—and thus I would continue with him for a few weeks in England—I was left behind in Calcutta. Śyāmasundara dāsa had sent Prabhupāda two tickets but did not send one for me. My own return ticket could not be used directly from Calcutta to England. So the same day Prabhupāda left, I went on to Bombay and tried to arrange a plane connection to join him again.

There I met with Girirāja and also with Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami. Associating with these intimate devotees of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I heard more of Prabhupāda's activities and teachings, and I saw with awe the austerities of the devotees in India. These devotees supplied me with many direct quotes from Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that my diary for those days was just as filled as if I were directly with Prabhupāda. They were particularly experienced with Prabhupāda's instructions for living in India. When I asked Girirāja what was the proper mentality about buying bottled soda in India, I trusted his reply.

June 3

The summer issue of *Modern Haiku* arrived today with a favorable review of *Under the Banyan Tree*:

Steve recounts his journey in spiritual awareness through a meeting with Swami Prabhupada and becoming his disciple—receiving the name Satsvarupa dasa Goswami upon his initiation. However, the author very seldom presents any strictly religious-philosophic statements in connection with his journey. Rather, he concentrates on presenting actions that reveal his progression on the spiritual path. We must remember that although enlightened masters may give talks and lectures, write discourses and books,

the profoundest effect is manifested when one simply is quiet in their silent presence.

I do not know for certainty if this is the first English-language book in extended *haibun* form on the theme of gaining spiritual awareness, but I suspect it is—and feel that it can be used as an exemplar. . . .

The book is exceptionally well produced. . . . The outer cover having an artistically rendered banyan tree embossed on it. The last page contains a finely executed painting of Swami Prabhupada.

We advertised the book as “five dollars or trade for an author’s signed book of haiku.” One request has already come in from an author, and I expect we will get many. Just today I was thinking that my haiku phase had ended. But when I think of how these people will get a copy of *Under the Banyan Tree* and read the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* on the last page, it seems I may get new encouragement to continue with the haiku form. It is specifically an impersonalist’s form of expression, but somehow or other Prabhupāda has allowed me to transform it, at least in *Under the Banyan Tree*.

In the same mail I received a copy of the Portugese edition of *Readings in Vedic Literature*. Īśvara Swami of Brazil wants to translate other books of mine and writes, “We are just eagerly awaiting for the day you can come and deliver this nectar by your personal presence in this faraway country of Brazil.” As I read this letter aloud to Baladeva, he immediately began scheduling in a visit to Brazil.

Also today we talked about the possibility of going to Poland. Devāmṛta Swami presented me with a first copy of *Readings in Vedic Literature* published in Polish and printed by the Polish government.

So by Kṛṣṇa’s grace the fruits of writing are ripening. And this is just a little inkling of what Kṛṣṇa could do to increase preaching if I become His completely surrendered instrument.

Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Plate #6

He couldn’t die at home,
but his wife and children are on hand,

and that makes it worse.
Everyone is crying and thinking,
"At least it didn't happen to me."
It's not funny, but neither is it sad,
if at that time you have the presence of mind:
I am not this body,
I am spirit soul.

The sage looks on;
but he is not crying
because he understands
no one is dying.
He alone sees the spirit soul,
and the Lord in the heart.

Plate #7

This is a picture of a man running.
It is one continuous image,
but at each step he is growing older,
although you cannot see it
unless you watch a long time.
He knows he is growing tired,
but he doesn't think he will die.
Gradually his steps falter,
and he talks about it with his wife.
"I am getting older."
He laughs about it,
"Some day I will die."
He slows down,
but he keeps moving forward
in darkness.
And he—
Let us not look.

Plate #8

This is the "Changing Bodies" display,
something instructive about mankind.
Let's watch it.
Can you see down there on the left?
It's a human skull!

Beside it is an embryo—
it's definitely symbolic, because
you would never find an embryo
lying on the ground
unless maybe some clinic threw it out.

See above the embryo?
There is a chubby baby
lying in clover.
Now see a continuous stream
of light,
the soul is transferring
from the baby on his back
to a baby that crawls,
then a baby that walks,
playing with a hoop,
then a stick (his legs are getting stronger),
now he's an athlete,
then an almost grown-up schoolboy,
and there in the center of the page—
the perfection!
A broad-chested man with a red toga . . .

The rest is not so interesting,
but I get the idea, one grows older,
but does it mean
we have to go exactly like that,
with a white beard?
Of course, when you get *that* old,
then you are talking of death . . .

In the distance
see the light-stream is carrying the spark,
to another young body, and far off,
another growing older, a death again,
then you can't see it any more;
there is just a shining sun
over a dark plain, and nothing else,
it is all over.

It's interesting, but what
does it have to do with me?

APPRECIATION OF VEDIC LITERATURE

So many theories are put forth, why do we accept the *Bhāgavatam* as absolute? How can we dedicate our lives to this as the ultimate knowledge? Is it just that we consider Śrīla Prabhupāda as a pure devotee and therefore we feel obliged to accept the version that he accepts? My doubts go often unvoiced and even unthought, but this morning as I began to address them by speaking in the *Bhāgavatam* class, I felt upliftment. By supplying answers from the *paramparā* my intellect was satisfied and speculations were defeated. At least I became convinced, and I was happy to hear the Vedic reasons.

If people ask, "Why, out of so many religions, this one?" The answer is that the *Bhagavad-gītā* gives the fullest explanation. It covers the same topics that are found in other scriptures, but also more, and more thoroughly.

Familiarity breeds contempt. We are daily studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but we should not think it is a tiring routine like seeing the same faces, the same building, or the same congregation. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the cream of all the Vedic knowledge, and it is everfresh for those with transcendental eagerness. What is knowledge of the self? Almost every other philosophy answers, "You are this body," or "You are this mind," but the *Gītā* informs of the transcendental self. So we are interested in *Bhagavad-gītā* because nowhere in the world is there such complete instruction.

THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WOOLMAN

John Woolman (1720–1772) was a Quaker minister who traveled throughout Colonial America and recorded his experiences in his *Journal*. He is considered outstanding among numerous Quaker journalists because of his purity of expression and character. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote of Woolman's *Journal*, "I find more wisdom in these pages than in any other book written since the days of the apostles. There is a true philosophy—a clear insight—a right estimate of things."

Woolman's journals are considered particularly applicable to the late twentieth century. In the introduction to the *Journal*, Philips P. Moulton writes, "Especially in our day, his ethical convictions, rooted in religious experience, speak directly to the

major issues of racial equality, economic justice, and the responsibility of the individual toward military and political authority.

In *Spiritual Autobiographies*, Daniel Shea also reserves highest praise for John Woolman. He states that for Woolman writing itself was a spiritual act in which he strove to express the will of God and avoid his own false ego. Says Shea, "Lucid prose becomes a moral and spiritual achievement."

I began to read Woolman's journal to see what kind of a spiritual man he was, and with the idea that I could perhaps learn something about presenting spiritual truth through a diary. I was not looking forward to long gospel exhortations, but was eager to learn about Woolman's conscientious behavior. But as I began to read Woolman's life, I became aware that I was unfamiliar with the basic tenets of his theology. For example, in one of the formative experiences of Woolman's youth, he described how he communed with God in order to correct his egoistic speaking. Young John had stood up at a meeting of Friends and spoken, but, "not keeping close to the divine opening, I said more than what was required of me; and being aware of my error, I was afflicted in mind some weeks without any light or comfort." I appreciated Woolman's sensitivity in distinguishing between a surrendered speech that tries to glorify God and an egoistic speech by which the preacher goes on his own strength. But I did not understand exactly how Woolman corrected himself of this by his prayer to God who then "had pity upon me and sent the Comforter." Woolman reported that after his prayers, "The spring of divine love opened," and he was able to say a few proper words at a meeting and he thereby found peace.

From further reading about the Friends, I have learned that trust in the "Inward Light" is the distinctive theme of their religion. Although they are Christians, they stress more the harkening to the Inner Guide than they do to priests or teachers, and even the study of the Bible is subordinate to God's living testimony given directly as the inward seed. At meetings of Friends, a person who experiences a direct, inward apprehension of God will speak out his realization and share it with others. The individual testimonies are weighed by other Friends, and therefore consultation of experienced Friends is also a part of

the process. But the mystical “experimental” discovery of the Inward Light reigns supreme.

Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy certainly acknowledges the presence of the Supreme Lord in the heart, as well as the process of receiving direction from Him. In fact, the Supersoul (Paramātmā) directs *every* living entity, be he pious or impious. As stated by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “I am seated in everyone’s heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness” (Bg. 15.15).

As the Inner Guide, however, Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself personally only to those who approach Him with love.

To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me. To show them special mercy I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.

—Bg. 10.10–11

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains further the compassionate nature of the inner light.

A person may have a bona fide spiritual master and may be attached to a spiritual organization, but still, if he is not intelligent enough to make progress, then Kṛṣṇa from within gives him instructions so that he may ultimately come to Him without difficulty. The qualification is that a person always engage himself in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and with love and devotion render all kinds of services.

—Bg. 10.10, purport

But to a degree not found in Quakers or other Christian evangelistic sects, Kṛṣṇa consciousness gives equal importance to the guides of *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū* for helping a devotee confirm his connection to Kṛṣṇa. As the Inner Guide, the Lord in the heart is called the *caitya-guru*, or God as the spiritual master within. The *dikṣā* and *śikṣā gurus*, or qualified devotees who teach relevant scriptures and guide disciples, are known as bona fide spiritual masters, and their direction is no less important or direct than that given by the Paramātmā.

O my Lord! Transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science could not fully express their indebtedness to You, even if they were endowed with the prolonged lifetime of Brahmā, for You ap-

pear in two features—externally as the *ācārya* and internally as the Supersoul—to deliver the embodied living being by directing him how to come to You.

—*Bhāg.* 11.29.6, quoted in *Cc.*, *Ādi* 1.48

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in his purport, “There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between them, he commits an offense in the discharge of devotional service” (*Cc.*, *Ādi* 1.47, purport).

How often we have seen a neophyte spiritualist proclaim that “God is talking to me,” or “God told me to do this.” And yet the result is something obviously contrary to God conscious principles. Even an experienced devotee suffers from pride if he abandons serious consultation with other devotees (*sādhus*), or if he fails to personally worship and follow the specific instructions given to him by his spiritual master.

Therefore, the science of God taught in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, where one is guided by all three—*guru* (meaning both Kṛṣṇa as *caitya-guru*, as well as the pure devotee spiritual master), *sādhū* (previous and contemporary devotees), and *śāstra* (authorized scriptures)—is the most consistent and complete for guiding a sincere servitor to walk in the ways of God.

As I continue to read John Woolman’s journal, I’m interested to see how he conscientiously molded his behavior so that it conformed to the will of God. Good examples are instructive to devotees of all genuine spiritual paths. But how are we to know that Woolman, or any devotee, is always being guided by the highest authority? What are the checks and balances? How is one to know for sure? And where does one seek help in these most serious deliberations?

June 4

The most important thing is to be a devotee and not to be led astray from that. Other accomplishments are secondary.

Prabhupāda advised we read only Vedic books. Then why am I reading outside? Is it a kind of sense gratification? Perhaps, but I don’t think so. As I study the journals of spiritual men, I am trying to develop a Kṛṣṇa conscious commentary. And by seeing how others express themselves I look to improve

myself. There are human motives also for reading (out of curiosity), but that doesn't shake my faith and conviction.

All right, but as Śrīla Prabhupāda advised Ravīndra-svarūpa in his reading of Śaṅkara, "Be careful."

Reading the notebooks of Brigge. It is a fictional diary, but autobiographical also. He spins a web. Spender says it could be called, "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Neurotic" or "as a Young Existentialist."

I just read a section where Brigge muses that it is possible that no one throughout history has really understood the meaning of existence. He speculates in poetic language that "despite our culture, religion and world-wisdom, we still remain on the surface of life." He concludes that something must be done about this and whoever has these disturbing thoughts, even if he is an unsuitable person, "must begin to do some of the neglected things." So he himself, five flights up in a cheap Paris lodging, "will have to write, day and night."

It's romantic stuff, the solitary sensitive poet, himself rejected and unhappy, but trying to be healer and seer for the whole world by dint of pure insight and submission to a spiritual truth that moves him.

I used to be attracted to this because of its seeking nature. Glory to the seeker. But the speculation involved—"Is it possible? Yes, it is possible"—is enormous and polluting. Such a person wanders, along with everyone else, through different species of life, birth after birth. He is like a boat without a rudder. He dies unhappily and mostly blind. But if a seeker is actually truthful, then he can give up the part of himself that is his literary pose and greatly unhappy—and he can surrender to Kṛṣṇa, if he is fortunate to meet Him through the spiritual master. But what would Brigge do, so possessed by his own conceits and fancies and memories and solitude and word-mongering—what would he do, if in Paris, he got the chance?

And why am I trying to commune again with this fictional poet of the early twentieth century? Because I, who have been recently saved from the garret hermitage, have been asked by Śrīla Prabhupāda to seek out Brigge's followers. Hoping not to scare them with the wrong first words or an indelicate ap-

proach, hoping to enter their hearts and minds with the practice of the holy name.

June 5

A PURITAN JOURNAL

Looking at the *Journal* of Puritan minister Thomas Shepard (1605–1649). I am interested when a diarist writes, “Today, I—” even if he follows it with abstractions. Shepard’s looks like a real journal, “on this morning,” “As I was walking.” He gives place and time, but mostly he goes within himself, concerning his surrender to Christ, or his lack of it.

The big question for Shepard, according to his editor, Michael McGiffert, is “How may I know if I am saved?” What is the distinguishing question of *my* journal? I think it is: “When will I go beyond the practice of rules and regulations and reach the spontaneous stage of love of God?”

According to McGiffert, the Puritans were often in mortal doubt of God’s love. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness this isn’t something to agonize over. Our spiritual master has fully engaged us in devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and we try to become His worthy instruments. We understand that if we don’t perfectly develop love of God by the end of this lifetime, then we will not be able to enter the blissful spiritual world. But even in that case we are assured of being born in a next life with an opportunity to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. We will not be condemned to eternal hell because we lack one hundred percent surrender to God. Bhakti-vinoda Ṭhākura states that if he has to be born next life in a less-than-human species, he prays that he may be able to remember Kṛṣṇa and associate with devotees.

According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, each soul is eternal and devotional service is also eternal:

*nehābhikrama-nāśo ’sti
pratyavāyo na vidyate
sv-alpam apy asya dharmasya
trāyate mahato bhayāt*

“In this endeavor there is no loss or diminution, and little advancement on this path can protect one from the most dangerous type of fear” (Bg. 2.40).

But how anxious am I to attain to pure love of Kṛṣṇa? Rūpa Gosvāmī says the price to purchase the commodity of love of God is *laulyam*, intense desire. I therefore should lament my lack of desire to render loving service to Kṛṣṇa.

This lamentation is quite different than the Puritan's doubt and anxiety whether God shall award him salvation. And yet the *bhakta* should be as intense and anxious—not for salvation, but for reaching the stage beyond liberation, *prema-bhakti*.

O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them. . . . When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your holy name? . . . I am feeling all vacant in the world in the Your absence.

—*Śikṣāṣṭaka*, verses 2, 6, 7

The Puritans' anxiety over salvation reminds me that I am lethargic regarding the goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I should be struggling more to attain it and not complacently thinking, "I am in a topmost situation; I have the best *guru*, best philosophy, whereas even the most advanced Christian, such as the Pope, is a meat-eater. I am doing fine!" That complacency will deter a devotee from advancement. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "An easy-going life and Kṛṣṇa consciousness do not go well together." The examples of anxiety and concern over spiritual improvement (as seen in the Puritans) and the example of conscientious behavior in carrying out religious principles (as seen in the Quakers) may inspire us to improve our own Kṛṣṇa conscious ways.

6:00 A.M., Baltimore

Awake all night with ache from pulled tooth. When a remaining tooth began to give new pain I found myself on the verge of praying to God, "Let this pain be temporary; let it not be that still another tooth is infected and I am not able to chew on that side." What a petty prayer! I retracted the "prayer," and I hope to remain Kṛṣṇa conscious through inevitable calamities.

On the way to Boston we are going to stop in Concord to rest for a day and a half. While there, we may visit the places of Emerson and Thoreau.

The two sages of Concord rejected orthodox Christianity and went for a kind of transcendental vision of their own. For Thoreau, nature was his vision of the divine. Emerson also worshiped nature and spoke of the innate moral nature of man as his idea of divinity. Thoreau and Emerson concocted, but part of their eclecticism was to pick up translations of the *Vedas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Upaniṣads*, and *Hari-vamśa*.

Concord, Howard Johnson's Motel

I was reading Emerson's *Journal* on the plane, and it's all speculation. I don't want to be like him. I want to be a devotee, convinced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I don't want people to become ultimately depressed or hopeless after reading me. These transcendentalists with their half-truths, lack of absolute, lack of vision of the divine form of the Supreme Person—what is the use? But what use is it to speak against them? I like them, in a way. But I want to plunge into the ocean of love of Kṛṣṇa in the association of pure devotees and the holy name. I want to break up my own dullness and short attention span, my restlessness—and be able to hear by the hours the verses of *śāstra* and purports of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Won't that be the best thing I can share with others, myself coming up from full bathing in the hearing of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*? But until I can do that, I can only speak of striving and trying for it.

Emerson on diaries

"These novels will give way, by and by, to diaries or autobiographies—captivating books, if only a man knows how to choose among what he calls his experience, that which is really his experience and how to record truth truly" (Emerson's *Journal*, January 31, 1841, p. 158).

This is encouragement for diary reading, and the challenge is also good—one has to select from his experiences and record truth truly. Truth is Kṛṣṇa, and we are all His eternal servants. But even among those who know of Kṛṣṇa, some know it but barely. The diary of one who is close to Kṛṣṇa and has a loving relationship with Him will give us not only a captivating book but one that we can follow as lost ships follow the lighthouse beacon.

But Emerson records of his own life, "If I should write an

honest diary, what should I say? Alas, that life has halfness, shallowness . . . I do not justify myself; how can I satisfy others?"

He was depending on himself, in self-sufficiency, and he accepted the ascending process for reaching God. Therefore he would have to despair. As a disciple in *paramparā*, I can give the nectarean truth and beauty of Kṛṣṇa, but I am also compelled to record my own poorness. That may be my fault, to be so concerned about myself. I used to be content to write for *Back to Godhead*, mere paraphrases of stories from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Why now so obsessed with my own self? But support for self-analysis is given in the *Vedas*, and also by the editor of Shepard's *Journal* who writes, "The secret of his accomplishment will be found in his journal . . . knowing himself so well, he knew how to minister to others whose spiritual problems resembled his." And Shepard writes, "I knew it was my duty to examine myself . . . that the saving knowledge of Christ is dependent on the sensible knowledge of a man's self."

Motel room altar: two coffee tables, stacked one on top of the other, make an elegant two-tiered altar. But who can understand Lord Jagannātha the Deity, or Śrīla Prabhupāda the Vaiṣṇava except one who is a devotee? At least to that degree I can assert it definitely—I am their worshiper, I understand.

Baladeva phoned the Thoreau Lyceum and asked what's there. The elderly lady replied, "We are mostly interested in ideas." He also phoned the Emerson House. They have guided tours only. We started joking about it, and so we are not exactly in the mood of awe and reverence as we head out on our tour.

4:30 P.M.

Sitting writing this in the replica of the house Thoreau lived in during the time he wrote *Walden*. It is in the backyard of the Thoreau Lyceum where they have books, surveying maps, pencils, and ideas by Thoreau. This house is *sādhū*-like, only one austere room with a cot like those in India, open stove, little writing table, three chairs, etc. The clear-eyed young man who took us around is a dedicated Thoreauvian, and he sold us a full set of the *Journals* and some other books.

What was Thoreau's connection to the *Vedas*? The Lyceum caretaker said that Thoreau was fascinated by the *Bhagavad-gītā*, read it every day during his stay at Walden. But he was an eclectic, so he mixed Vedic knowledge in with Greek and European thought. (Who would even think of confining oneself to one tradition only or suspect that one book literally had the truth lacking in all others? I also, in New York City when I first met Śrīla Prabhupāda, thought he would teach other books such as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. But he said everything was in the *Gītā*.)

A potbellied man and two old ladies just stopped in to Thoreau's cabin. They look around the room, saying "very simple," and leave. This is an American pilgrimage spot, but of a different sort than the national monuments in Washington. Thoreau was a mystic, the Lyceum man said, who had transcendental experiences even in his boyhood. Nature was his greatest teacher as well as the spirit within.

All I can think right now is that it's a shame he didn't become a devotee. Baladeva said, "It's too bad people don't come from all over to see Prabhupāda's place and ask about his books." People do come to hear about Prabhupāda to some degree, and they will do more so in the future.

We will go tomorrow to the woods and Walden Pond. Sixty percent of Concord is still forest as it was in Thoreau's time.

8:00 P.M.

For the past few days I have been experiencing ill health bordering on a relapse. But I know I have to rise to the occasion as far as possible and head into Boston and then Trinidad. Not that I should retreat all summer to *Gītā-nāgarī* and read Thoreau and do extended communing with nature there. It's time to keep traveling.

June 6, Concord

I admit I am not as excited to read Prabhupāda's books as I am to write or even to pick up some new book of poetry or a published journal that I think may help in my own journal writing. One reason is that the diary has novelty whereas I have

read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books repeatedly. Also, the subject matter by repetition . . . the mind rebels.

It takes a high quality of hearing. Emerson wrote that he tried reading Plato one morning and realized that *he* wasn't up to it; it wasn't Plato's fault. When the author is giving a great deal, then it requires a more qualified reader. I know that this is true about Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. There is no other defect, except in the reader. The demand for novelty is superficial. Also sometimes I am physically or mentally weak, and his books require a receptive power I lack. At such times I become drowsy. Above all, one needs eagerness to improve spiritual life. At best, one appreciates that every line in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports is perfectly capable of lifting one to the highest platform, *far* beyond what any mundane writer can do. They cannot do anything except *suggest* that there is something more than mundane. And to remain mundane means we live or die like a cat or a dog. So Prabhupāda's books are essential and I should hear and appreciate them regularly.

I am living to serve him. But how to come to this higher enlivened state of hearing from him?

Jagadīśa Goswami and Bhūrijana advocate surrender to a methodical program of study. They acknowledge that it may be hard work, but because it is so important one should surrender to the austerity and spend several hours daily (or at least one hour) taking notes and thinking with effort and creativity. For example, Bhūrijana tries to connect the development of Śrīla Prabhupāda's thoughts as they occur in succeeding paragraphs and purports.

This becomes tedious sometimes, I find, and to spend joyless or drudging hours with such study seems wrong. Better to do some direct engagement for Prabhupāda as long as it is devotional service in his mission. For some this may mean building houses or field work, plowing with oxen or battling with demons in legal cases—all very needful. For me, I turn to writing of my life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a service to my disciples and to persons who are just beginning to become convinced of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

But all devotees, regardless of their engagement, should spend time with Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. Those who spend little or no time reading daily (outside of attending *Śrīmad-*

Bhāgavatam class) should recognize that their lack of taste for the books indicates a lack of taste in spiritual life. And there should be an attempt to improve it. That attempt may include reading on a regular basis even when one is not spontaneously inclined. Appreciation will grow with practice when we make the effort.

Noon, Concord

We went this morning to Emerson House. Two elderly ladies took us on a formal tour through the rooms for \$2.50. I said polite things like, "I have become attached to this house," and we bought a couple of books. It wasn't as interesting as the Thoreau Lyceum. This afternoon we may go to Walden Pond, although it is raining. But we are not that much interested in the philosophies of these gentlemen. We want to be Kṛṣṇa conscious because there is no other way to solve the problems of life.

4:00 P.M., At Walden Pond

When I stayed at Gītā-nāgarī last year, I kept asking myself how seeing Kṛṣṇa through nature was justified. Sometimes I admitted it wasn't the highest form of God consciousness, and sometimes I gave evidence that it was recommended by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thoreau had his own justifications, and they satisfied him. But I take it as a premise in my approach to him that he failed to reach *bhakti* unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He saw God in His material manifestations, and he went very purely and deeply in his own nature realizations. But his friends, Alcott, Channing, and Emerson couldn't help him further, nor could he help himself, nor could the birds, beasts, and the vegetation of Concord enable him to hear and chant directly the glories of the name and form of the Supreme Person.

On his deathbed Thoreau refused to speculate on the after-life and said, "one world at a time." He related intensely to this one world, and claimed he could see the whole universe within Concord, and yet he did not speak much at all of the Lord of the universe.

It seems that Thoreau considered more explicit knowledge of God to be part of Churchianity. He said he preferred the

sound of the chickadee, to the D.D. (Doctor of Divinity) and neither could the Doctors of Divinity inspire him or link him in devotional service. But direct linking with God *is* possible. There are more knowledgeable devotees than the chickadees and the D.D.s.

But why am I here at Walden Pond, especially in a down-pour of rain? First, I can think of reasons *not* to approach Thoreau. If I approach him thinking to capitalize on the interest of Thoreauvians and then criticize their idol and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that would be cheap exploitation. On the other hand, if I think I'll gain spiritual nourishment from him, that is a great mistake. He is unfinished in his spiritual realizations and in his communion with nature.

Then how to rightly evaluate Thoreau? I think a devotee of Kṛṣṇa may simultaneously appreciate Thoreau's genius and yet be aware of his lackings, and make up for them by adding Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I may receive initial inspiration from Thoreau and then go on to identify more specifically the Personality of Godhead whom Thoreau actually missed. We can also appreciate that Kṛṣṇa is present as the *śakti* in Thoreau's abilities. We can see him as *vibhūti*, a spark of wonderful Kṛṣṇa in this world.

I am inspired by Thoreau as an individualist and a poet, but I have to go beyond him. I cannot simply idolize him, and neither should I attempt to cheaply imitate him. But if I go to the same sources that he went to, to life and nature, and to the divine source, and if I go with the guidance of *guru*, Kṛṣṇa, and *sādhū*, then I may simultaneously appreciate Thoreau and go beyond him.

For example, he states his purpose in going to live at Walden: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

Without again making the obvious points about Thoreau's lacking, may we not be inspired by this statement of his and yet go beyond it? Let us hear from him, awed in the presence of a thoughtful poet, but let us state further that *one has to seek out a bona fide spiritual master if he wants to know the meaning of life before his death comes.*

And if nowadays one wants to take on a Thoreauvian individualism, then how can that practically be done? Is it not done by seeking out clear and conclusive information about spiritual life? And if there is a better way to do that than going within oneself or speculating from the range of Western literature (along with a scanty reserve of Oriental literature, as was available to Thoreau), then shouldn't one do that? Similarly, can't we see along with Thoreau the beauty and infinity of nature, yet in a friendly way point out that this is but a spark of God's splendor? Can we not read Thoreau with appreciation for the light that he has shed, and yet point out that this light ultimately prevents us from seeing the personal form of Kṛṣṇa? Let us appreciate Thoreau's contribution, but let us acknowledge that history has improved the situation since his time. Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee arrived in America in 1965, and now we can go all the way.*

One of my Godbrothers recently quoted to me Śrīla Prabhupāda's comment that we will make Kṛṣṇa consciousness spread worldwide by "cultural conquest." But I differed with my Godbrother's interpretation of this. He said that we should take Western art, such as music or drama and literature, and simply insert the name and form of Kṛṣṇa where they now have mortal beings and thoughts. But I think if we do that it will be seen by lovers of the arts as a desecration of their Michelangelo or Bach or Thoreau. It seems to me there is no alternative (if we are to make conquest by culture) except to make our own Kṛṣṇa conscious cultural achievements, which lovers of art and life will appreciate.

When the Batteries Ran Out

Pouring rain only heightened the effect,
alone with nature
on the banks of Walden Pond.

Around the old Indian path,
we headed on a walk
to give me room to talk alone.

*See Appendix 4, "More on Thoreau."

The pond was gray-splashing,
low hills and trees beyond.
Eroding banks, and the whole pond and walkway
were ours alone,
except for one fisherman
canoeing in the middle of the lake.

I began to talk out loud,
Why did we come here?
How to justify attraction to Thoreau?

I wanted to speak
of nature's details
as I did at Gītā-nāgarī
while walking and talking,
but when I checked the recorder
for my first words coming out
I discovered the batteries had gone dead.

So we walked on in silence,
and found out Thoreau's cove,
where his house once stood,
with quotes on a sign
from the opening of *Walden*:
"I went to the woods because . . . "

And there is cairn there,
an ancient form of tribute,
started by Bronson Alcott,
where even today admirers of Thoreau
pile stones in honor
of the poet and individualist.

Further into the woods,
with heavy rain
pelting on our umbrellas,
I sat on a branch
and wrote down my thoughts
on scraps of wet paper.
Why write of Thoreau?

Because I had to justify
why I was there—
as I did at Gītā-nāgarī
by assuring myself
it was a holy place
and I saw Kṛṣṇa in nature.

If I go tomorrow
to Walden Pond,
will I write Kṛṣṇa conscious
or again will I criticize-and-praise
the spirit of Thoreau?



A replica of Thoreau's cabin at Walden Pond.

June 7, 2:00 A.M., Notes before walking at Walden Pond

I want to claim this place for Kṛṣṇa. I want to offer it to Him, but this is Thoreau's place, not associated with direct praises to Kṛṣṇa. They may think that I am cheating when I claim this. It may come off like putting the picture of John Lennon on the cover of a book that is actually mostly Prabhupāda speaking about Kṛṣṇa. Some John Lennon friends and followers became annoyed when they saw that.

Yet this is a natural setting. Thoreau did not own it. He came here and deeply appreciated nature, but now he is gone. We may say that he has merged into the elements here, or that his genius still exists here. And at least the remains of his house are here, and certainly his spirit lives on in his literature and is associated with this place he has made internationally famous. Yes, he and Walden have gained "immortality," at least for a hundred fifty years.

But I am not desecrating his memory by walking here. As it is a spiritual place dear to those who appreciate great thoughts and who aspire for transcendental life, so I also am inspired to be here. But each person is entitled to be inspired by his own thoughts. Thoreau himself, like Emerson, said each person had to find out God for himself. So they would not want me to slavishly follow their own examples. I have a right to come to Walden Pond and think my own thoughts.

One writer criticized my poem *Under the Banyan Tree*. He said its strength, as well as its weakness, was that it was permeated with devotion to the spiritual master. He said that most people would not take seriously any poet who is "tethered to an extraneous service." One is not supposed to follow anyone else other than one's own self. But, who has imposed this idea of lonely self-sufficiency? If we go deep enough within ourself, the result will be to find another—to understand our personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And in almost all cases we will need help to go further in this personal relationship.

If by living away from a draining, soul-killing civilization, we come to appreciate the pure self, that is a great gain. But, by our further deliberation we will seek help from persons who have also come to this conclusion and who have gone even further than we. It would be false pride to think that only we can discover the Lord of the universe, and the meaning of existence.

With our own mind and senses we are too limited to approach the transcendental world. Thoreau said, "one world at a time," but actually we can understand the eternal world even while in this world. The process involves hearing from the Lord of both the eternal and the temporary worlds. There *is* the Personality of Godhead from whom everything has come. He is the final proprietor and intelligent creator of all that we see in nature. But to approach Him, we have to do it His way.

Like Thoreau, our spiritual master sometimes keenly watched the movements of nature, appreciated the construction of the insects (how each was different), and he appreciated the beauty of small flowers. But his beatitude over these wondrous things was to appreciate the intelligence and order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Some may say that it is an artificial intrusion, to bring the Personality of Godhead into the process of natural observation. But the pure devotee actually sees the presence of the Supreme in all of nature's manifestations. Only when one has received this higher knowledge is he fully equipped to appreciate and analyze nature.

As described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, everyone has their own system of worship according to the modes of nature. Even those who reject theological systems or the worship of the Personality of Godhead as recognized through scriptures—they also eventually evolve their own "system." Even if they say there is no absolute system, and even if they say they have no *guru*, yet there is a method to their madness, a general direction and organization of their thought. And that is their religion. Everyone renders a kind of service. No one is independent of worship and no one is the supreme master.

Another criticism of discipleship of a spiritual master and of scriptures such as *Bhagavad-gītā* is that one does not think things out for himself. But a genuine disciple is someone who has tried to think for himself very thoroughly in this lifetime and previous lifetimes, but has become frustrated. This frustration is a sign of intelligence; it is time to transfer to higher authority, for further help. That seeking of further help from the Godhead is not weakness but a sign of determination for realizing the vision of God for which we yearn.

God consciousness takes more than native intelligence: One reaches Him only by getting His direct mercy. Hearing the

science of God from a spiritual master is not a sectarian dogma. Skeptics may think this, but the genuine disciple is overwhelmed with gratitude to his spiritual master and to the scriptures for supplying him the topmost knowledge that he has long aspired to.

Both Emerson and Thoreau were deeply appreciative of the *Bhagavad-gītā*: It is natural that Americans after them will also be inspired by the *Gītā*. But now the pure devotee who understands *Bhagavad-gītā* has come to our midst. Now the inquisitive mind and appreciator of the mysticism of *Bhagavad-gītā* can seek out the association of one who has become self-realized in love of Kṛṣṇa. It is a fact that ultimately we have to go on our own strength, but our strength is greatly increased and rightly directed when we receive guidance from the perfect sources.

5:00 A.M., Walk around Walden Pond

As we arrive we hear mourning doves in the distance and nearby the chirps of robins. Maybe some thrushes. After two days of heavy rains, this morning is gray, but at least it's not raining. The pond is mirrorlike; one half reflects the sky and the other half reflects the trees on the opposite bank. A misty dawn. Into this atmosphere we are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

The Park Department is worried about the erosion, as many tall trees lean forward toward the pond.

The titmouse is sounding his two-note song.

Thoughts come to mind about *Gītā-nāgarī*, and also *Vṛndāvana* and the old *parikrama* trail. We are circumambulating the "holy place" of America's great nature-poet, but we bring to it our knowledge and yearning for seeing Kṛṣṇa in these places. As this is a sanctified place, a primal place, so we come here for the influence of Thoreau, and the pure earth and sky, and for communion with Kṛṣṇa. Even if we take nature's own, such as white birches and oak trees, in their essences, here also we will find Kṛṣṇa.

The peace of the setting is intensified by the fact that Thoreau also sought peace and pure beauty in nature. As Prabhupāda used to quote Cowper, "The country is made by God." In one

description of a sunset Thoreau said the artist seemed to be mixing His red paints. So God is more perceivable in an elemental setting, where the birds fly and the trees grow and the waters flow. It is a good place to think about Kṛṣṇa and note His work of the changing seasons, from life to death and life again.

Thoreau is sometimes called an American *yogī*, and so the place associated with his *yoga* practice is also appealing. But even considering Thoreau and nature in a Kṛṣṇa conscious context, we have to leave Walden. Our spiritual master has ordered us not to retire like the *bābājīs* who go to the holy places in India, such as Vṛndāvana or Hṛṣīkeśa (which are more intensely transcendental than this spot). We should go to the cities, to the residences of fallen souls who are blind to the whole purpose of life. Although they do not ask for it, they need help. Therefore, for myself I may not consider a situation similar to Thoreau's staying in a *bhajana-kutir* for two years. Although I might live here or there and write in a simple and intricate way about Kṛṣṇa's *śakti* in the countryside, I would be neglecting my duty.

Yet we may sometimes come to these places and imbibe the Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, "The jurisdiction of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is everywhere."

There are wholesome healthy scents along the banks. Many pines and oaks. The old Indian trail becomes rougher, and one walks over the long roots of the trees extending like tendrils down to the pond. Rock outcrops.

This is probably one of the few times of the day when you can be alone here. The ranger said by 11:00 A.M. all the parking spaces are filled up by swimmers, picknickers, fishermen, hikers. . . . So before the day's business begins at Walden Pond, we will be on our way to Boston for helping to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have no particular desire to stay here.

It's a good *japa* walk.

June 8, Boston

On our way to the park two men on motorcycles, who had stopped for a traffic light, saw us and hooted and hollered. They kept it up even after we passed. I thought it might develop into something more, but they finally took off.

Live rock music in outdoor stadium by Charles River. People in passing cars honk and shout and stick their arms out the windows waving green hats and blowing green horns. Today the Boston Celtics won the World Basketball Championship. I think, "If I hadn't become a devotee I would have gone to live in a simple country setting if I hadn't died by now."

News article: The prisons are overcrowded. They are called "time bombs about to go off." One man was arrested on a slight charge, put into a cell with a dangerous criminal who stomped on his head with heavy boots causing permanent brain damage. Don't try to be peaceful here. Better renounce material life and take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness; use this lifetime to perfect it.

OLD DIARIES

June, 1973, England

Went to his room. He said, "At long last." Asked me about my journey from Bombay. "So you were able to break your journey?"

Later rang his buzzer and pointed out to me some girls and one householder boy sitting on the lawn. Didn't like it. "If they have no engagement they should chant or read books. Not sit & gossip."

Next morning on walk, also, "Don't waste a moment. You should always be engaged."

If you know just a little about Kṛṣṇa it can save you from greatest danger. Mentioned in beginning of Gita.

Indian from Calcutta. Prabhupad agreed to initiate him. There was talk how even big educationists do not know what is the next life. The boy started to say something about Kṛṣṇa, and Prabhupad cut him off, saying Kṛṣṇa is something very difficult to understand. We are just trying to understand there is a next life. The boy said Christians say there is no future lives, either at the end of this one you can go to heaven or hell. Srila Prabhupada said but if they talk about going to heaven then that is the next life. But knowledge of Kṛṣṇa is only for the most perfect. Out of thousands among men. . . .

Said to argue comparative religion with Christians is a waste of time; they will never agree, even if they are defeated. The best thing is as with Rathayatra festival chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and dancing, "Come on." The Christians—what kind of religion is it anyway? Was taught in

a desert, very crude teachings. Not applicable today, people are more reasonable. They don't even follow the teachings. One boy came to me and said he wanted to talk. He said, "I am a Christian," but I said to him you are not a Christian. "Thou shalt not kill." They have only pictures of Christ being pinned. The thorn crowns . . . We Vaisnavas do not like to discuss the disappearance of Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya, but that is all they have—those pictures of the crucifixion.

Rebatinandan Swami said he was speaking to an Oxford professor who said the Bhagawata was written only 1500 years ago that can be told by the modern literary style. Prabhupada said ask him what he thinks of the acaryas. His opinion is not the all in all. Just as he has an opinion so the great acaryas, Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Lord Caitanya, they all accept that Gita and Bhagawat are 5,000 years old. This is Indian culture and they are the great authorities. You (tell the professor like this), you are nothing in India. You are not accepted.

There is a saying that if the head and the evacuation are all right then your health is all right. You don't have to worry separately about your hand and foot. So if one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he doesn't have to worry about anything else—it will be taken care of.

Great sculptor who visited—Prabhupada said he may become famous among asses. But that is the external side of things. Body.

About the scholar, tell him there is a saying, in private one may say the queen is a prostitute, but one cannot say that publicly. So their opinion is like that, not something they can say publicly.

He said he liked to meet with famous men, at least he can "corner them" and defeat them.

Rathayatra mood is Radharani inviting Kṛṣṇa back to Vrindaban. Implied He was chanting in streets inviting everyone back to Vrindaban. That is the ecstatic mood of Lord Caitanya.

When I arrived in London, I went to Bury Place, and someone took me out to Bhaktivedanta Manor. I went into his room. "At long last," was Prabhupāda's sympathetic statement, relieving all my pent-up feelings, my resentment that Śyāmasundara didn't send me a ticket, my disappointment that I had missed accompanying Śrīla Prabhupāda in the London Ratha-yātrā, and my anxiety in traveling alone and trying to catch up with him. By his warm welcome I was simply happy to be again included in Prabhupāda's party along with Śrīta-kīrti and

Pradyumna, living next door and only a bell-ring away from His Divine Grace.

Prabhupāda had called me to point out the devotees on the lawn. The lawn scene was an idyllic setting, complete with a boy and girl. But Prabhupāda saw a flaw in this pastoral scene—relaxation plus a boy and girl equal material allurements.

I was not the manager of the Bhaktivedanta Manor, but as temporary secretary he expected me to point it out to the G.B.C. man or the temple president there, which I did. I thought it was significant, that he was so alert and they were so brazen and unaware to think that their spiritual master was up there and couldn't see them from his room with a big window overlooking the lawn.

One might argue that maybe the boy and girl were discussing Kṛṣṇa and devotional service, but Prabhupāda didn't like the looks of it. He could tell by the way they were sitting. He could see they were too much relaxed. It may not have been an illicit affair but it was too easy-going. And so I received direct confirmation—looking through Prabhupāda's eyes, out the window, seeing that this was displeasing to him. By a negative example, he instructed how he expected devotees to conduct themselves in the *dhāma*.

I noted down in my diary one phrase from a whole morning walk's conversation: "Don't waste a moment. You should always be engaged." Somehow or other a certain phrase from the spiritual master impresses us. Some of his words go deeper than others. They stand out from the many words that he may utter in a lecture or conversation. We think that these words are particularly intended for us, although all his words are potentially meaningful in an equal way, and all are personal—all are absolute. But certain words may save us: "Don't waste a moment's time; you should always be engaged." We may remember certain words at the time of death, and so the spiritual master speaks constantly in hopes that some of his words will penetrate the dull brains of materialists and some words will stay in the hearts of his faithful followers.

With Prabhupāda's return to the West, he increased his encounters with Christian philosophy. Prabhupāda had a genuine ecumenical spirit, but during this time he also made stern criticisms. One time a devotee defended the Christians to

Prabhupāda and said that there were some who were vegetarians and who chanted the names of God. Prabhupāda said that didn't change the general condition of their religion. He said that if you throw a little milk into the ocean that doesn't change it.

June 9, Boston, Hari-nāma at the Commons

It's dirty, crazy. It seems peaceful, but it could erupt at any moment. And here is our chanting party. A girl languorously lies on the cement reading *Boston After Dark*, men eyeing her. Wearing his dark sunglasses, Puruṣārtha dāsa is singing over amplification. The holy names of God benefit whoever hears, and many are peacefully giving their attention. Puruṣārtha seems like a singer they've heard, although they haven't seen or heard a drum quite like the *mṛdaṅga*, yet it has a nice rhythm, and at a separate table there is free lemonade. One drifter with a yellow tennis ball goes to Jiva Goswami dāsa, but makes a gesture of disgust and disbelief at something Jiva says. He walks away tossing his ball in the air, sharing his comments with a stranger on a nearby bench. A gray-haired man in youthful clothes, blue-hooded sweatshirt, Nike track shoes, and backpack, stares over at the languorous girl. Where is he going?

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme and I am His servant; at least I dress like one, and I am chanting. Pigeons are the same everywhere. Soon I will go back to the temple and consider my BTG article.

Devotees often say that ISKCON is Prabhupāda's body. Guru-Gaurāṅga dasa enlarged on this and said that the body of the pure devotee may sometimes appear to be imperfect. This is described in *Upadeśāmṛta*, where we are warned not to criticize a pure devotee if his body appears old or ill or deformed. Similarly, ISKCON may appear to be imperfect or contaminated, but since it is nondifferent from the body of the pure devotee, contaminations are only apparent and not real. They are like the appearance of pollution in the Ganges River. The Ganges cannot be contaminated and sincere worshipers continue to bathe in the Ganges by pushing aside filthy objects. Foreign objects do not make ISKCON less pure, but many people will not want to bathe there as long as those filthy objects remain.

Therefore, devotees of ISKCON have to remove the filthy objects.

SOLACE

The fact that there is opposition to our movement from *rākṣasas*, and the fact that there is in-quarreling and disillusion among devotees in ISKCON, doesn't make the purpose of ISKCON any less significant. These are difficulties, but Kṛṣṇa consciousness is worth fighting for.

June 10

A DAYDREAM

I suddenly lose all attraction to material life.

Kṛṣṇa blesses me to write directly *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.

I attain love of Kṛṣṇa.

I become absorbed in Prabhupāda's books and in chanting.

Godbrothers rise to the occasion and wholeheartedly perform their services.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes great influence in worldly society.

Government heads listen to our advice.

Anticult legal cases cease.

We no longer have to beg; devotees engage full-time in direct preaching; congregations supply money.

Devotees reunite and stop major quarrels.

Everyone recognizes Prabhupāda as topmost.

Blooped disciples return.

Everyone is humbled.

Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes the cynosure of all the population and is worshiped by work, religion, art, and philosophy.

All forms of speculators admit their defeat. Kṛṣṇa appears in their hearts and convinces them that He is supreme and they surrender to Him.

Most souls transfer to Vaikuṇṭha. Those who return to this world work for the welfare of others.

Tonight I answered questions put by the *saṅkīrtana* devotees of ISKCON Boston. I prefaced the session by stating that to become Kṛṣṇa conscious is to declare war on *māyā*. When Śrīla

Prabhupāda (at age eighty-one) wasn't feeling well, and his disciples urged him to rest in Gītā-nāgarī, he refused the offer, and said, "I want the opportunity to fight for Kṛṣṇa, like Arjuna did." We are engaged in a struggle and our satisfaction should be to fight on the same side as Kṛṣṇa, and to die on the battlefield.

DAY REALITY

I resist attraction to material life and gradually increase my higher taste.

I pray to Kṛṣṇa to save me from major falldown.

I go on chanting and hearing.

Court cases don't cease; we lose some but it only increases our determination.

We continue to ask devotees to sell goods in the marketplace and do it without the benefit of direct preaching and devotee clothes.

Governments of Kali-yuga don't listen to our advice and they meet their doom.

Devotees continue to quarrel, but sincere followers of Prabhupāda hold fast to ISKCON and feel it expand and improve.

Dirty objects remain in the Ganges.

Lord Kṛṣṇa is not as popular as the Boston Celtics or the rock groups, movie stars, presidents, and heads of terrorists. But in His form of Time He destroys them all.

Comparatively few souls come to know Him in truth, although He is the cynosure of all eyes in the spiritual world.

The speculators continue to argue with each other as arranged by *karma* and the will of providence.

Of cheats He is gambling.

By the active preaching of devotees, Kṛṣṇa is revealed to some, and they surrender to Him.

Some souls transfer to Vaikuṇṭha. Those who remain go up and down in the species of life. The Lord's pure devotees return to this world to perform the highest welfare work.

June 11, Boston, travel day to Miami

Yesterday there was a downtown reception for the Boston Celtics, attended by one and a half million people. Devotees

went to their usual spot on the Commons to chant, and to sell Celtic shirts, hats, and pennants to the celebrants. For a while the crowds were happy, but then fights and hooliganism broke out. A TV news truck was destroyed as people began throwing each other from the top of it to the pavement below. Drunks watching the *kīrtana* became rowdy, and some threw beer cans and a few even spit on devotees, who then decided to leave. They returned to the temple with sober realizations and stories about the madness.

June 12, Miami

Kali-yuga:
the lights on all night
at the construction site.

Yudhiṣṭhira is traveling with us. He is fifteen years old. He may think it is difficult for me to be so old, and I think it's difficult he's so young.

Nearby noises, big jets taking off so close you can read all the print on their sides and underbellies; like big porpoises, silver they sail, while we watch them from the motel pool. Only a few feet away from our window, workers with power saws and hammers build a cinder block building.

I started reading a translation of Dante's *Paradise*. He prays that he may be blessed to carry out the great theme of the work, a firsthand description of the kingdom of God:

The glory of the One Who moves all things
penetrates all the universe, reflecting
in one part more and in another less.

I have been in His brightest shining heaven
and seen such things that no man, once returned
from there has wit or skill to tell about.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Person, the actual goal of those who know You only as Light or as the One or as the Father. Your glories are directly told in the Tenth Canto

and other authorized Vaiṣṇava śāstras. take to think, even unconsciously, that ative. This happens if you read it without if you skim over it inattentively thinking, read it often." When one accepts Vedic t other books are largely erroneous. Most ignorant even of the basic information, "I spirit soul." This contrast between Vedic her should produce an explosive spark brought together in the mind of a devotee. ion doesn't occur, then he has fallen into reading of the Vaiṣṇava texts, or while book he has forgotten his relation to the careful association either with śāstra or duces deadness. We can revive ourselves and attentively to Vedic teaching, but if al faculties to go dead too often it may mage.

OLD DIARIES

*uct of the sun & yet functions to cover the
pirit souls & that is called matter. Actually,
iritual, atoms are spirit souls, so are rocks,*

*oom, comfortable room, dictaphone, & it
Krsna then why not use it? We are not liv-
tion. Not that because we are Krsna Con-
dictaphone but have to write everything
dry renunciators. We do not say it is false. If
ys this house is false, we don't accept this.
ldn't accept money, but we said to George
d for Krsna." This house doesn't belong to
belongs to Krsna. Everything should be*

*don't send their children to school where
w to use knife, smoke, etc. Therefore our
Brahmins.*

He told a British schoolteacher you should not be a teacher if you are imperfect. Said it is like the blind leading the blind. Yes, the man said, I think we are all partially blind. No, Srila Prabhupada said, not that everyone is blind, someone has eyes. Then teacher said God cannot be described. Srila Prabhupada gave the word Krsna as All attractive, as perfect description of God for everyone.

God does not force us to be obedient. Otherwise we could not be part and parcel of God. We are the same and yet different just as with one's mortal father. Difference is He maintains everyone. Everyone is maintained by Him.

God is good, rejecting Him we are bad. Anyone who is in prison it is understood he is a criminal, even though he may say he is very intelligent. So anyone in the material world is bad, fool and rascal.

That verse, "abhijanati mudha," is very dangerous for the demons.

Morning walk: recalling talk with teacher he said, the question is who is authority for knowledge. Authority is God and one who represents God is authority. Is it very difficult? If I say this is a cane and you repeat this is a cane you are authority. But if you manufacture something then you are not authority.

In room to Bhagawan dasa & I: it is not that everyone will immediately accept your Krsna Consciousness. We have to meet opposing elements. The more we successfully meet them that is the success of preaching. We have to always win.

Note on opposite page:

Yes, we always win, if we have complete faith in Krsna then as we preach & answer we will always win. Krsna is God, and if we are on His side we will win always.

The talk about rocks and all matter being spiritual (made of atomic spirit souls) was very fascinating to devotees and especially to Revatīnandana Swami. Sometimes it seemed like we all understood it as a doctrine but then again it would slip away when a new point was considered. Śrīla Prabhupāda was direct in his answers and willing to discuss it, but he wasn't caught up in the minutiae of the logic as was Revatīnandana. It was as if Revatīnandana suspected an inconsistency or flaw in the phi-

losophy until everything material and spiritual could be fully explained and categorized and analyzed. But Prabhupāda seemed to deliberately let it go as ultimately inexplicable. After all, Kṛṣṇa Himself is inexplicable, *acintya*, and even His material energy is possessed of inconceivable energy, *acintya-śakti*.

Is a “dead” stone made up entirely of spirit souls? If so then how is it material? Is there any difference between material elements and “covered” spirit?

The British schoolteacher was preparing a book and packet of teaching aids to stimulate teenagers in a spiritual direction. He was favorable to Prabhupāda and walked with him in the mornings. He seemed fascinated by the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement's connection to George Harrison. He thought that George Harrison's record, “Living in the Material World” was a tremendous achievement that school kids could relate to and meditate upon. To the teacher's enthusiastic praise of George Harrison, Prabhupāda replied that George was a “nice boy,” and he told how George had written “Living in the Material World” after a visit by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

“Yes, we always win.” We may appear to lose a day's battle, but that is only an aspect of our ultimate victory. Our victory is to depend on Kṛṣṇa and never to give up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As long as we utter, “*Jaya*,” and as long as we remain faithful, then we will be on the victorious side, just like the Pāṇḍavas. Wherever there is Kṛṣṇa, the master of *yoga*, and wherever there is Arjuna, the great bowman, there is victory, morality, and great opulence. The victorious devotee doesn't die but wins a place in the eternal world.

June 14

Trinidad will be like Mideast shuttle diplomacy between two temples. I must recognize the new temple's right to exist as a bona fide center, and recognize the hard work and sincerity of the Longdenville temple led by Tārksya Prabhu and the devotees there. Call for peaceful coexistence. What is the *raison d'être* of a second temple? That Agrāṇī Swami was willing to work with a considerable number of my bloomed disciples and restore them to devotional practices. In order to do that they had to have a full temple program. The Zonal Management Committee approved the plan. The island is big enough.

In-fighting. Why? Because some persons are materially motivated and deluded? Or is it simply because we are persons and so naturally we disagree? Isn't it both—mixed motives and personalism? Because pure personalism as it exists in the spiritual world doesn't result in bad talk.

Just opened a letter from a disciple in Trinidad saying that some devotees are speaking against me. "... such as Y. dasa were saying that you and Bal. talks a lot of stupidity and he don't care to follow you; and A. were also saying thing like he don't care much about you."

In-flight, ate our bananas. B. is reading through Śrīla Prabhupāda's talks, and memoirs about him. This is for Volume 5 of *Prabhupāda Nectar*. We will be lucky if we can acquire the fifty entries. I hope I can be drawn more into the atmosphere of Śrīla Prabhupāda stories and remembrances and compose a few "Personal" entries as I have in the past.

Coast of Barbados ahead; clouds over the ocean. We are tiny creatures and everything depends on Kṛṣṇa. Even the illusion of control as exhibited by man in his jet plane comes from the soul, which moves the matter—and the soul rests on the direction of the Supersoul and the Supersoul is an expansion from Kṛṣṇa.

The stewardess is talking with a little girl seated ahead of us who is hard of hearing. The stewardess seems to be intimidating her, teaching her a hand signal she says means, "I love you" and then making the girl repeat it. "This is a very important thing for people to know," says the stewardess. I agree, but is it so easy to convey and to accomplish? There should be sign language to convey "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa" that would include "I love you," as well as "God loves you." The same blue-eyed blonde stewardess was questioning Yudhiṣṭhira about his neckbeads and about our vegetarian diet. She says she was raised in Ireland on meat and potatoes, and it would be very difficult for her to give up meat-eating. The male steward on board is a comedian; he called Port of Spain, "Port of Pain," and other pains.

June 15, Trinidad

Last night, just as we got into the car with Tārksya and Ādi-puruṣa, a rain shower began. Then we immediately drove into a

big traffic jam. Tārksya says he knows a man and his wife who own three cars each. There are too many cars on the island, and small roads. As we drove, we saw a Baptists group wearing robes, standing on a street corner; one man was preaching while the others stood behind him.

Tārksya and I talked in the dark back seat. We alluded to numerous devotees who are in trouble in ISKCON. Ours was not malicious talk, but we admitted that the times are difficult, yet we have to do our service to Prabhupāda. I advocated working in one's own field and not becoming tuned in to the wrongs around the world. We avoided subjects that might cause disagreement between us.

Stopped at a Hindu friend's house to change from *karmī* clothes to saffron robes. They were watching a soccer match on TV, and invited us to sit and watch.

At the temple, Vrajendra's body shone with perspiration as he led the *kīrtana*. I gave a talk about the eternal soul; we are fortunate to be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Simple *paramparā* for simple people by a simple preacher, his speech loosed by the Lord in order to do preacher's work. I am appreciating again how Lord Caitanya's movement is spreading to this Caribbean culture so remote from Māyāpur.

Tārksya and I have adjoining rooms in the temple, and we share the bathroom in between. By 3:00 A.M. he turns on a tape of Śrīla Prabhupāda lecturing. While I am in the bathroom I hear Śrīla Prabhupāda saying, "Puffed-up with false pride," and describing people who don't know "Who am I: *ke ami*." It is like Prabhupāda is personally there talking—which he is—and I especially appreciate it early in the morning, listening to someone else listening to Prabhupāda.

I was sitting in the temple room and noticed outside the bluish dawn clouds. "Let's take a *japa* walk."

Japa walks in ISKCON usually mean mostly talks. But I wanted to chant my rounds. B. and I were soon joined by half a dozen devotees, one carrying an umbrella. A shower had begun, harmless and fresh. We all walked with not a word except for the holy names.

We each have our separate thoughts. I noticed the earthly sights—the egrets beside the cows in the pasture . . . small

shacks where large families live . . . poor but opulent in the country, clean air, and clean sky. How could they have very complicated anxiety out here? The trees form an orchard resembling Vṛndāvana.

Ācāryadeva once described South America as “India without Kṛṣṇa.” It is like that in this lush green tropic, coconuts, bananas, mangoes, resemblance to a divine land—and even Hindu names like Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa—but Kṛṣṇa *paramparā* is far away, or only with a small band of young devotees.

While walking, I had thoughts on Fussel’s book, *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing*, about two approaches to writing: 1. literature as the craft of a genre worked for effect, and 2. literature as sincere self-expression, “from the heart.” Literature is also a writer’s obligation to God, and therefore it requires that he be absolutely honest. Doesn’t that mean, for us, literature should be prayer?*

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are present in Trinidad as Rādhā-Gopīnātha dressed in a simple way this morning, pink silk . . . You are shiny black. As Prabhupāda once remarked to a black leader in Detroit, our Kṛṣṇa is also of your community. You are the supreme black treasure. You are also like the fresh raincloud, such as we see this morning, pouring down refreshing mercy.

In the guest room of Rādhā-Gopīnātha Mandir I am sitting at a desk facing a photo of Śrīla Prabhupāda whose lotus foot is pointed toward me.

Prabhupāda’s sweet look
after you have done some work
assures you he is real;
the nine years since he’s gone
count as nothing
when he speaks from his picture,
“You can be with me
according to your love.”

After class a man asked me how it felt to suffer from the sinful activities of my disciples. I felt an urge to tell him it hurts,

*See Appendix 5.

but as I began to gather my thoughts and give a responsible reply, the emotion cooled. I warned disciples it is they who suffer if they act against the orders of the spiritual master. As an obedient disciple of his spiritual master, the *guru* is protected, even though temporarily he has to suffer physically and mentally from the *karma* of disobedient disciples. He will tolerate this and it will not harm him spiritually, but the disciple who offends his spiritual master cannot expect to attain the supreme goal of going back to Godhead.

June 16, Trinidad

Two of the recent initiates were introduced to Kṛṣṇa consciousness through book distribution. Rasa-parāyaṇa of Barbados was visiting a friend's apartment where he saw a *Back to Godhead* magazine. The friend wasn't interested in it, but R. picked it up and became curious. Previously he had practiced T.M. After reading the BTG he bought an *Easy Journey to Other Planets* from devotees visiting Barbados, and then he wrote to ISKCON in Los Angeles for more small books. When the women's *saṅkīrtana* party from Trinidad was in Barbados a few months later, they sold him a *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. After that, he had several experiences of picking up the *Gītā* (weeks after not reading it) and suddenly feeling that all his anxieties were dissipated. From reading the different books he gradually became positive that he wanted to join the devotees. He wrote another letter to Los Angeles, but before he could mail it, a friend informed him that ISKCON had just opened a center in Bridgetown, Barbados.

I initiated Rasa-parāyaṇa through the mail, and only met him today. We spoke on the morning walk, and I gave him a photo of Lord Nṛsiṃha. He is a mild, slow-speaking black man. He had left Barbados yesterday to see me, but while he and another devotee were away the temple was broken into. Now they are going back. "It seems impossible," he said, "to make the people of Barbados into devotees." But I encouraged him to keep trying.

The devotee who was initiated last night was formerly Bhakta Eric Kuffy, who is now Ekendra dāsa Brahmācārī. He was attending a youth camp and a man there had a copy of *Coming Back*. The man didn't want it so he gave it to Kuffy, who

read it and became interested. After conversations with several devotees, he moved into the temple and has been living here for a year. Everyone is impressed by his simple, submissive spirit. He works in the kitchen cleaning pots and also takes care of the cows. In answering the essay questions I give for initiates, he wrote one-sentence replies for each question. At first I was going to ask him to do them over at greater length, but on reading them I decided to let it go. His “essays” are not so scholarly, but if he actually understands the little he has written, it is sufficient:

I accept Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami because he is a bona fide representative of Kṛṣṇa coming down in a chain of disciplic succession.

I accept Kṛṣṇa as God because He has six supreme opulences—all wealth, all beauty, all renunciation, all fame, all strength, and all knowledge. Common men may have some of these, but only Kṛṣṇa has them in full.

By initiation I hope to progress in spiritual life and learn the truth.

The person bhagavata is a pure devotee of the Lord who preaches from the book Bhagavatam and takes instructions from the Bhagavatam and lives from it.

Read a few lines of Dante’s *Paradise*. There is a lower sphere of paradise for those who are virtuous but who sought honor and fame while on the earth. I thought back to my discussion of the merit of different kinds of literary projects. Am I not seeking fame and honor through this? Could I give it up if asked? Am I doing a literary project most wanted by Śrīla Prabhupāda and most effective for preaching? But as a tiny soul, how much can I expect to do? Isn’t it also pride to think I have to come up with a great vision, a great theme, a project? As if the great theme has not already been given, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And I have already been allowed to treat a great theme, the biography of Prabhupāda.

Maybe it is not important which genre or theme I write in since in any case it is more important for me to remain a faithful, Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee. If the writing helps me to do this, then it has its purpose, and if it helps maintain my followers then it also serves its purpose. I do not have to aspire to be a great writer.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, please reveal to me more clearly what is my work and give me inspiration for it. Let me be open to it, and surrender to it, let it come to me, let me be ready for it. . . .

June 17

After three days here attendance falls off in the class. I try to remain cheerful and give the same quality class. If they feel that they have more important work than attending my class, I also feel I have important work in my reading and writing. So I will be eager to leave soon for that.

Today's verse was relevant to my writing. Prabhupāda stressed that it is easier to repeat prayers already given by previous *ācāryas* like Lord Brahmā rather than try to approach God directly. One may make his own prayer, but it has to be in disciplic succession. The prayer has to be directed first and foremost to one's *guru*. One should be situated as the servant of the servant of the servant a hundred times the servant of the Lord. One's acts should be service given to the spiritual master. So even if one doesn't know Sanskrit (in order to compose *uttama-ślokas*), still he can pray as Prahāda Mahārāja did, out of sincere emotion. But my prayers must be authorized, following the authorities and not jumping over Prabhupāda or made in concoction. Make prayers to Prabhupāda.

One of my disciples came to see me today with her complaints. First she complained of herself, how she is rebellious to her husband. He will give her some instruction while they are out on *saṅkīrtana* and she will refuse to do it. She stated this as an unfortunate fact. I attempted to encourage her to change her ways. Then she lamented about a devotee in the temple who speaks against her husband. She said she strongly dislikes this open criticizer of her husband. Then she complained about another who accused her husband of being envious of the temple president. She said her husband is usually reticent about these affairs but he admitted to her he was hurt by some of the charges. I know her husband as a humble devotee; when she said he admitted to being envious I took it as a sign of his humility.

As she went on complaining, with tears in her eyes, I advised her that the one person whose behavior she could control was hers. At least she could stop her own attacks against her husband, and that might even discourage others from criticizing him. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said that if a wife speaks harshly to her husband, and if his servant speaks back to him, and if his

son is a fool, then he really has no home life and might as well desert his so-called home and go to the forest.

Especially in Kali-yuga, cruelty and quarrel increase. First there are the broad categories of disagreement. For example, in worldly Trinidad the blacks and Hindus are in disagreement. But even among those in the same family, between husband and wife, between mother and child, sister and brother, friend and friend, there is enmity and dislike. I don't know what she expects me to do, but I thought that maybe she could become the friend and servant of her husband since she obviously feels respect and loyalty to him, such that she cannot bear to hear others criticize him.

Tonight we have moved to the temple in San Fernando, South Trinidad.

There is a yellow-bellied bird here
called the banana quit,
and a barefoot boy runs out from his house,
and a sweet, soft breeze travels to this place
as clear and pleasant as coconut water,
and mangoes are in season.

Don't pray to Me directly, says the Lord,
but use the prayers of Brahmā
and serve your spiritual master.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
I want to keep praising you
for others to read;
I wish to recall your ways
if you'll make me able.
Please bless me to remember you
and allow me to distribute
your *mahā-prasādam*.

OLD DIARIES

June 1973

No one accepts there is life after death. It is not their fault but ours that we are not efficient to convince them. I said, they don't ac-

cept Kṛṣṇa's arguments. He said, then what is their answer why a child doesn't develop after he dies? The soul is gone. Yes, soul, or call it active principle if you want to express it differently. From youth to old age the body changes, any person can see. Sober person can see, but you, you are rascal serving sense gratification, so you cannot see. The body is changing: a young boy speaks nonsense, but when he is grown-up and he speaks nonsense it is taken seriously, because the body is changed.

I am eternal. We say the soul is removed from the dead body. That is definite. They say, "It is dead because of circumstances." But why don't they produce circumstances so that he will go on developing? We say definitely, "The soul is gone." They say, "Something." So who has better knowledge? Our knowledge is more advanced because we know and they do not.

"They don't surrender out of stubbornness," said Bhagavan dasa. Srila Prabhupada said but will they be stubborn before death? "I won't die." They have to surrender to Death as God. And they surrender to their senses, like hogs & dogs. Constitutional position is surrender. Napoleon had to surrender. These arguments against life after death or not surrendering are childish.

I said one man said Srila Prabhupada is the only pure devotee. Then, he said, have him come & live with me, but he won't. You can tell him we (other devotees) are incompetent, but as long as we follow the instructions of the pure devotee we're the same, the electricity is intact.

Note on opposite page:

(It is our fault if they are not convinced. He is awake, alive by this philosophy, convinced that the soul is eternal. Vedic authority is sound, right before you it is available—transcendental information—it is more convincing than any other religious system against atheism. You have already accepted it—now you have to become absorbed & alive & convinced. Once absorbed in the ocean of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness then I don't think there would be so much worrying, planning, "How shall I best engage? Shall I travel outside of temples? Shall I do this? Why doesn't anyone come to our university lectures? What is the most receptive engagement?" If I am absorbed, the answer will be there. Really joyful, really alive, really preaching, convincing.)

The devotee requires to be convinced also, not just the

nondevotee, sympathetic or unsympathetic guests, but the initiated devotee, the Brahmin, everyone—and who is alive in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness can do it.

Prabhupāda brought out our doubts, which were of two kinds. One doubt is whether we can successfully defend the philosophy of transmigration against the atheists. "It is not their fault but ours that we are not efficient to convince them." A second-class devotee is described in *The Nectar of Devotion* as one who has faith in Kṛṣṇa, but who is not expert in making arguments based on scripture and logic. So by putting us through the exercises of debate, Śrīla Prabhupāda proved to us that we could stave off all challengers. As he has written in the introduction to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, "The reader will know God perfectly well, so much so that he will be sufficiently educated to defend himself from the onslaught of the atheists. Beyond this he will be able to convert others into accepting God as a concrete principle."

The second kind of doubt Prabhupāda exposed was our own lack of faith in transmigration. Like the agnostics, we too had lurking uncertainties, *anarthas*. These uncertainties were usually the result of our dependence on the method of empirical investigation. Who could say what existed before one's birth, and who could say for sure what would happen after death? How could we believe the *śāstra's* version since it was not corroborated by our own direct, sensual experience or the sensual experience of any mortal? These were the doubts that Śrīla Prabhupāda successfully smashed by his talks. "These arguments against life after death or not surrendering to Kṛṣṇa are childish." And so we sat and listened to him at Bhaktivedanta Manor, training to go out on his behalf.

Someone had said that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the only pure devotee. But he said we could represent him. They should not make it as an excuse why they could not surrender or why they would not associate with the followers of the pure devotee. Electricity is intact for those who desire to connect with it.

With Prabhupāda it was never merely duty to speak on behalf of Kṛṣṇa. As most people breathe, he lived to argue Kṛṣṇa's philosophy against all challenges.

Thoughts for the Day

I am satisfied
to speak tonight
from a verse of *Bhagavad-gītā*;
and to praise Prabhupāda's power.

I am satisfied to answer the questioners,
"You say we should be patient,
but shouldn't we work hard also?"

With the speaker's garland
around my neck
I am free of time's cuts,
and I am satisfied—
evening lecturer
in Trinidad ISKCON.

Aspire for more?
Mount Everest heights?
Purity of the purest?
But I am satisfied,
an atom at His feet.
If now I can rest
and rise for *maṅgala-ārati*
I am satisfied.

June 18, 3:00 A.M.

We have to do *maṅgala-ārati* without any drum or *karatālas*. Neighbors are complaining. The temple president says there is no sense pursuing a court case because the country runs on bribes and the neighbors have more money. So they are seeking a better place to move to.

June 19

Busy devotional morning; *japa* time with windows open, staying awake among devotees, pure *japa*, no talking. Dancing in *kīrtana* for Śrīla Prabhupāda, then *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse about Nārada's instructions to Vyāsa to concentrate more on Kṛṣṇa, since he had "almost not praised" Him.

Agrāṇī Swami arrived from Guyana. Told of troubles there. A disciple of mine left and took others with him. Agrāṇī Swami's neck and feet were swollen from mosquitoes' and wasps' bites. I am scheduled to go there in August. After speaking almost two hours, the pressure in my head built up. Got into the back seat of a car and lay down as Mr. Singh drove us to the Port of Spain airport. According to nature cure the body can repair itself, so we will devote a week now to resting at Key West.

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I know that I do not exist on my own. You are the inconceivable controller. Last night a man asked me how we may have free will if God knows and controls everything that will happen. This is considered to be a big philosophical problem. But it is no problem for me—You are inconceivable in Your multipotencies, and therefore You can do both—allow me my free will, and yet know what I will do.

June 20

Flying over an island, toward Florida. Black businessmen from Kiwanis of Trinidad on the plane, laughing it up, but it's just a dream. Below, the transparent sea is made of different shades of blue. Each cloud has an individual shadow floating on the surface of the sea. And milky streaks and swirling patterns in the light blue portions, and then a deeper, darker blue.

Finished reading *Paradise*. The final vision of God by the Pilgrim is of Light and a humanlike form—a union of God and man from which issues the Son and the Holy Spirit. We can accept all of this within Kṛṣṇa consciousness. But the hierarchy of Christian saints leading up to a vision of God tells us nothing of the activities of God, only a glimpse of Him by the Elect, and bliss in seeing His Being, which is All Love. Kṛṣṇa consciousness takes us higher and higher. Descriptions of God in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* go beyond that of Dante and the Catholic Church.

Besides, Dante's *Paradise* is a creation of his own imagination. As the translator writes, "One man's vision of the state of souls after death with the purpose of saving all mankind." But is the spiritual world an absolute fact, or is it something to be imagined based on precepts of theology? According to Vedic knowledge, the spiritual world is fully manifested and populated. The authorized descriptions of the spiritual planets as

given by Vyāsadeva are not one man's poetical vision, but the direct revelation of God to man.

Therefore, the kingdom of God in the spiritual sky can be understood only through the authentic descriptions of the *Vedas* and *Purāṇas*. . . . In the *Vaikuṇṭha* planets the land, the trees, the fruits and flowers and the cows—everything—is completely spiritual and personal.

—*Bhāg.* 3.15.15–16, purport

6:00 P.M., Key West

The man next door was supposed to have gone to Boston. B. said to him, "Still here, huh?" He replied, "Yes." He was glad he didn't go; he heard it was cold and rainy up there. Then he said, "It's another beautiful day in paradise."

June 21

I was impressed hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda say on a tape that not many persons will take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He said if you have a very valuable commodity, you won't get many, many customers. And he quoted Kṛṣṇa, *manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu*: Out of many millions of persons hardly one will know Kṛṣṇa in truth. Even if people don't respond to the preaching, he said, the devotees should not change the teachings. Nor should we be disappointed.

Today I saw a school of tiny fish out-race a barracuda. Each small fish would have been a dainty meal for the toothy barracuda, but try as he might, he couldn't catch them. But the barracuda also has his day.

June 22

Heavy lightning and thunder, electricity is out, front porch soaked.

I've chanted eight rounds so far, and they weren't very good—mind jumps to other services I'd like to do, and then I go drowsy. When there is a fearful time I chant from the heart. Otherwise, I think that I should use my time to do other services. Bored to chant? This is the sad state. Same is true of reading, not spontaneous.

June 23

While swimming, I thought of chanting. When I die I will want to chant. But while chanting *japa* in a normal mood I think of poetry and literature.

Prayer to my own mental and sensual faculties, to help me chant better:

Writing, please help me to chant better.

Reading, please help me to chant better.

Will power and discipline, please help me to be more attentive to chanting.

Stamina, allow me to keep going round after round.

Health, hold up and allow me to chant.

Mind, allow me to exert the effort; don't think it will be bad for health.

Faith, if I lack you, I won't chant nicely.

One way to approach improving *japa* is to think it out. What is my problem? What is my understanding of the *japa*? How do I actually feel about it? What do I think it is? How did I go off? Was I ever on? How do I improve?

Mentally and physically you have to get into it, breathing, saying the words, and leaning into the emotions. If you cannot cry, then cry that you cannot cry: "I am sorry this is all I feel and all the attention I can muster. I am sorry and right now I am trying to improve."

I am grateful Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us this *inward meditation*, which is the holy name. Of course, there is no inner or outer because all activities are spiritual in *bhakti-yoga*. But especially the holy name affords us near and immediate contact with Kṛṣṇa, made easy and direct. So *japa* is internal, direct communication with the Lord and His abode, and unlike some services it needs no paraphernalia or funds, and not much use of material facilities—but the subtle matter, mind, may make successful, offenseless *japa* very difficult.

Tonight we saw two rainbows at once in the sky. Boy and girl fishing from bridge. Heron in tree.

Navy jets are landing and taking off from the nearby Key

West base. We live amid many events that are actually horrible. For example, the fishing. Every one of the neighbors has a boat, and they go out and catch fish. It is part of their basic moral existence, to fish. But fishing is killing. In a memoir by Girirāja Swami he said that Śrīla Prabhupāda once lectured to Bengalis and told them fish-eating is worse than cow-eating.

Another way to give devotion to the holy names is by saying them clearly. And the prayer—please let me chant Your names.

June 24

JAPA REFORM

After years of chanting and serving, we remain tiny devotees. Waking up from a night in which we didn't think constantly of Kṛṣṇa, we have to revive. But after bath and *tilaka*, and in the good association of devotees, we feel auspicious. The main thing is to continue. As I began my first round, I recalled yesterday's determination to clearly enunciate.

Chanting really isn't so difficult. Much of it is remembrance. The two great rules in devotional service are to always remember Viṣṇu and to never forget Him.

Fatigue and drowsiness while chanting can be overcome by being *interested*. There is a story of a girl who came home late from work and felt so tired she didn't even want to stay awake for supper. But then her boyfriend phoned her, and with great excitement she went out with him and danced all night. The fatigue was from boredom. I am very interested in whether I can attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the chanting is a very important part of this. So chanting is not boring.

June 25

It's legitimate that we are always thinking of the many services we have to do in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and we cannot completely turn off such thoughts when we start our *japa*. But the attempt should be made to give full attention to the chanting as a service deserving concentration and wholehearted effort. The prayer of *japa* is the foundation of other services. By neglect, one will reach a low point where he regards the chanting as a botheration.

Bhaktivinoda has said that there is nothing in the fourteen worlds like the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. I read his statement with guilt and hope also. Is his praise exaggeration? No? Then, what to do? In the Age of Kali there is no other way for God realization except the chanting of the holy name.

When will I be able to lovingly and adoringly utter the names in awe and reverence? When will I be able to understand that the rarest thing is that which I do constantly, chant the holy names?

Overcoming bad habits in *japa* is a personal matter. We can name a bad habit like inattention or drowsiness and say that it applies to almost any faulty chanter. But even if I take help from another source, I have to apply it to myself. I have to be *willing* to take the advice of *guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*, and I have to receive the grace of Kṛṣṇa in my endeavors. Each person's unlocking of the reasons why he isn't chanting well and his application of the remedies is a unique reciprocation of *jīva* soul with the Supreme.

OLD DIARIES

June 1973

Talk with physicist. Prabhupad asked him what is the origin of the physical elements. Told him how Swarupa Damodar cornered the scientist asking him if I give you elements can you produce life? The man answered, "I don't know."

Physicist speculated there might be a machine that could produce its own male & female. Prabhupad said what is the advantage of that, it is already done by nature. Anyway, every machine needs a human touch.

Kṛṣṇa is distributed everywhere and yet He is. He is doing everything by His energy. Just as a complex machine like the dictaphone is so nicely arranged that just a touch of a button and sound comes, so Kṛṣṇa works everything by His energy. Later, said all these people are vague, "Maybe," "Perhaps"—even Darwin's theory is vague.

Note on opposite page:

French professor objecting to Prabhupada's extension of thou shalt not kill. Srila Prabhupada: That is because you are accus-

tomed to killing, but you have to agree on the principle that killing is not good business.

Later said Christian religion does not support animal killing. Jesus first became disgusted with Judaism when he saw they were killing animals in the synagogue, he thought what is this, and went to India to study. He was a great personality. Undoubtedly he wanted to give them something sublime. And now the followers are killing, how abominable. And they say, "What have we done wrong?" when no one comes to church. They are trying by flattery to get people to come, but there has to be something substantial. Not that you can make a friend by flattery. You can't simply cry, "I love you, I love you." That will not create a loving atmosphere. There has to be sincere understanding for friendship.

Later he said that it is very difficult to accept Kṛṣṇa Consciousness on principle because you are immediately out of this world, in Vaikuntha orbit. They are afraid to try it, but if they do, everything will be all right, they will leave that orbit and go into the Vaikuntha orbit.

Did Śrīla Prabhupāda like to debate with the Christians and scientists? Or did he feel they wasted his time? He saw everyone as spirit soul, so if someone came before him dressed and talking like a "scientist," Prabhupāda saw him as a victim of the asuric educational system. He tried to uncover the *māyā* (for Christians also) and reveal the original consciousness.

Prabhupāda admitted it was difficult for the earthbound to go into Vaikuṇṭha orbit. The first Russian astronaut looked back at earth and asked, "Where is my Moscow?" And the reader of *Easy Journey to Other Planets* wanted to know, "If we go to the higher planets, Swamiji, is there a way that we can return again?" But Śrīla Prabhupāda made it easy. We can go with him. He guides us all the way with *kīrtana*, *prasādam*, and philosophy, and so we have nothing to fear as we leave the earth millions of miles below.

Invitation to Chant

Navy jets racing over Key West
are more powerful than I,
but time is supreme.

Fifty years from now
where will these fighters fly?

The tide moves up and down,
and I am trying to utter
the Lord's holy names;
all it takes
is pure concentration.

If we cannot chant His names,
we are no better than the crabs,
enjoying with our pinchers
for a season or two
then, rotting in the sun.
(Like today we saw a loon
floating face down in the water.)

I am trying to utter
the Lord's holy names;
all it takes
is pure concentration.

June 27

I mentioned to Baladeva that I would like to someday teach Kṛṣṇa conscious literature and philosophy by presenting classics of world literature and then comparing them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Prabhupāda once suggested something like this; he said we should stock a library full of different philosophies and then invite people to come and study the philosophy of Lord Caitanya. They could present their favorite philosophy, and then by comparison we would demonstrate the superiority of Lord Caitanya's teachings. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja also makes this invitation in his verse:

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-dayā karaḥa vicāra
vicāra karile citte pābe ca matkāra*

"If you are indeed interested in logic and argument, kindly apply it to the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. If you do so, you will find it to be strikingly wonderful" (Cc. Ādi 2.15).

When I read the poems of St. John of the Cross, for exam-

ple, it increased my appreciation for the conjugal *rasa* as taught by the six Gosvāmīs. What in St. John is allegorical, is absolute truth in the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes. St. John's yearning for union with God appears in images of intense love, but does not refer to a spiritual world of real personalism. God is the ineffable; He is yearned for just as a lover yearns for sexual union with his beloved. But Kṛṣṇa consciousness is entirely beyond such mystical image-making—it is the real thing.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme beloved, and His dearmost *gopīs* actually approach Him in spiritual, conjugal *rasa*. In a similar way, you can bring any literary work, especially the great classics, before the scrutiny of a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee, and by his appreciation, the transcendental beauty and truth of Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy and literature becomes more clear. These studies would especially benefit Western devotees who have a basic faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness—but who tend to take it for granted (like those born into families of devotees)—or those who are intellectually curious to sample world literature.

DECLARATION

Henry Miller says we have to live totally or we die, and contribute to death, even while living. A writer has to resist the deadening influences of other persons and places like America and find his own self. Only then can he create works that are saying, "Yes!" To me (in taking the gold from this), it means I have to be balanced, always *paramparā*, not act independent or in a concocted way, but I always have to be aware that my surrender is an individual act. I intend to always cooperate with my Godbrothers and the organization of ISKCON (G.B.C.) because Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted me to, and I submit to the higher knowledge of the previous *ācāryas*, because I am a tiny, imperfect being—and yet I have to be myself. I may assert this in a quiet way, but somehow I have to do it. Then I am free and no one can depress me.

If "free thinkers" tell me I am already dead for surrendering to higher authorities, I defy them. If we examine their own free thinking we will find it defective in almost every way. I will stick with Śrīla Prabhupāda. That is my individuality and freedom—that I voluntarily accept my master. But I have to do so

every day, and in many ways throughout the day. It is not that my initiation act in 1966 accomplished all purposes. Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "Initiation" means *to begin*." By initiation, I declared war on *māyā*, and now I have to continue the life of devotion or I die. "For one who has been honored, dishonor is worse than death." Death occurs if I fall into illicit sex, intoxication, or meat-eating. For the *karmīs*, saying, "Yes!" to life means accepting one's animality. For me, saying, "Yes!" means to exert my will over the lower nature. *Yes* means living in honor and striving for the higher taste, the nectar of devotion.

COMPASSION FOR CRABS

It is mating season for the land crabs. We see them scuttling across the roads, running into their burrows as we approach. Apparently, they have already copulated, and now male and female are heading toward the ocean in a spawning migration. With their armored shells they look like toy tanks. Many of them measure almost two feet from outstretched claw-tip to claw-tip. The big ones are usually blue, but smaller ones have bright hues of purple and orange interspersed with white and brown.

One night, we saw two men in a car hunting crabs. They drove slowly down the road, then on sighting crabs, they stopped the car and rushed out, brandishing nets on poles and scooping up crabs. When we passed them on our bicycles they greeted us with Spanish accents, "How you doin', man?" The crabs are great favorites with the Cubans, who consider them a delicacy.

Just now our next door neighbor is running after a crab. He hits him and pierces him with a rake and then goes after another, stabs him also, and drops the corpses off the dock. The crabs' crime? They dared to trespass on the man's small bit of mortgaged land. The man's crime? No one knows.

The people of Key West have a reputation for being among the more broadminded and tolerant, especially for Americans. The human population includes retired persons, red necks, hippies, gay people, Cubans, blacks, Navy people, and there is an attempt to *live and let live*. But this doesn't extend to the lower living beings such as fish and crabs. Crabs especially seem among the least endearing. Floridans have a special sentiment

for the pelicans whom they find humorous and affectionate, and they even protect them. But who can love a crab?

Prabhupāda Said

Orange coconuts on the tree
remind me of Kṛṣṇa
because my spiritual master said,
a tree without fruits
is like a barren woman.

It is ridiculous, he said,
that the Hawaiian government
removes the coconuts from the trees,
fearing they will fall on people's heads.
God makes them so
they do not fall on people's heads,
just like in India
there is hardly a single case.

June 28

I woke up last night and thought how Śrīla Prabhupāda is not here personally to guide us all, and so we may fall into doubt. His devotees, including myself, seem to be more following their own tendencies, but when are we right and when are we wrong? I should be honest about what I am and render sincere service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as a writer, or whatever simple thing it is I am. "Am I ill in a psychosomatic response to ISKCON's illness? Why don't I read and appreciate more in Prabhupāda's books?" These touchy questions arose in the middle of the night, I thought about them, allowed myself to be disturbed by them, but then I defended myself, made promises, and today I am basically on the same course.

Pictures From the Bhagavad-gītā As It Is

Plate #9

Because He is the ideal preacher
of Kṛṣṇa's message in this age,
the picture of Lord Caitanya

belongs in *Bhagavad-gītā*.
 “Be thou happy by this *yajña*.
 Its performance will bestow
 everything upon you
 for living happily
 and achieving liberation.”

Everyone may hear
 and join the chanting
 led by Lord Kṛṣṇa
 in His most merciful form.

His feet on the road,
 make bright-day shadows.
 The earth and grass,
 palm trees and *pārijātas*,
 all join with Him
 in resounding *kīrtana*.

Plate #10

Thousands of years ago,
 in bodies that do not burn,
 Lord Kṛṣṇa first taught
 the *Gītā* to the sun-god,
 four-armed, gold-helmeted Vivasvān.
 Vivasvān taught the *yoga*
 to the father of mankind
 and Manu instructed it to Ikṣvāku.

When I first heard this from Śrīla Prabhupāda
 I thought, This link is wonderful—
 going back millions of years
 to ancient, mystical India
 like a ray of light in a short time
 and the whole length alive
 so when the teacher of today speaks
 you can touch eternity,
 provided he speaks
 what Kṛṣṇa said.

Arjuna wondered,
 How could my Friend
 speak so long ago
 to a god in the sun?
 He forgot
 the many lives he had passed,
 but Kṛṣṇa remembered them.

Saṅjaya sees all
 by his mystic vision,
 and so may we today
 by following *paramparā*.

June 29

Putting the wristwatch back on, today we travel North to our zone of operation. We were going to stay here two more days, but I woke with the conviction that I should attend our Zonal Committee Meeting on July first in Baltimore.

Last bike ride: At the ocean edge we saw a different kind of egret with black and white head, standing tall with upright neck and upper body. He had some tufts on the back of his head that look like the Vaiṣṇava *śikhā*. Some white egrets also have golden *śikhās*, and soft gold streaks on their backs. One white one seems to have become used to our bicycling by and he doesn't fly away. We also saw what looked like a large osprey in a distant tree, and heard the red-winged blackbird in the forest. B. said the redwings intimidate larger birds like crows and bluejays because the redwinged can out-manuever them. We also saw a frightened sandpiper flitting back and forth crying out, maybe because her young or eggs were nearby.

It never seems wrong to me to write reflections on nature, because nature is a very accessible form of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses examples and lessons from nature, and he also cites the expertise of nature as a challenge to the scientist. The expertise of the artist and scientist who arranges for the blooming of flowers and trees is a challenge to all human artists and scientists. This is another example that nature is close to God. For we who are struggling to always remember Kṛṣṇa, it is a relief to be in a natural environment where we can easily think of Him.

Last swim and sunbath.

During breakfast I hear Śrīla Prabhupāda on tape saying that worshipers of the sun-god actually cure their diseases by basking in the sun. But this is only temporary. We should cure all diseases permanently by Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

APPENDIXES



APPENDIX ONE

"Krishna Is" by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura

- Krishna is possessed of an unlimited intellect (84/22)
- Krishna is inaccessible to sensuous knowledge (16/46)
- Krishna is Lord of the infinity of worlds (69/17)
- Krishna wields the power of creating the unlimited (87/28)
- Krishna carries the impress of limitless power (87/14)
- Krishna is possessed of inconceivable potency (10/29)
- Krishna is unborn (59/28, 74/21)
- Krishna solves all heterogeneous views (74/24)
- Krishna is vanquished by exclusive devotion (14/3)
- Krishna is Inner Guide (1/7)
- Krishna is the Withholder of the energy of the wicked (60/19)
- Krishna is the Giver of salvation to *jīvas* that are free from
vanity (86/48)
- Krishna ordains the worldly course of conceited *jīvas* (86/48)
- Krishna is Primal God (deva) (40/1)
- Krishna is Primal Person (*puruṣa*) (63/38)
- Krishna is overwhelming flood of bliss (83/4)
- Krishna possesses fulfilled desire (47/46)
- Krishna is self-delighted (60/20)
- Krishna is the opponent of the sensuous (60/35)
- Krishna is sung by the best of hymns (86/23)
- Krishna is dispeller of the night of pseudoreligions (14/40)
- Krishna is devoid of increase and decrease (48/26)
- Krishna is efficient and material cause (10/29)
- Krishna is the only truth (14/23)
- Krishna is Awarder of the fruit of work (49/29)
- Krishna is not subject to the consequences of work (84/17)
- Krishna is the Seer of cause and effect (38/12)
- Krishna is the Person who is time (1/7)
- Krishna is Time's Own Self (70/26)
- Krishna is even the Time of time (56/27)
- Krishna is present in the heart of every animate entity like fire
inside wood (46/36)
- Krishna is Grateful (48/26)

- Krishna is the Augmentor (like the full moon) of the ocean of earth-gods, twice-born and animals (14/40)
- Krishna is the Tormentor of cannibalistic persons (14/40)
- Krishna is the Destroyer of the pride of the arrogant (60/19)
- Krishna is the root-cause of the origin, etc., of the world (14/23)
- Krishna is the Cause of the world (40/1)
- Krishna is the Creator of the world (70/38)
- Krishna appears as if possessed of a body like that of mundane entities, for the good of the world (14/55)
- Krishna is the Guru (center of gravity) of the world (80/44)
- Krishna is the Refuge (*aśrāya*) of *jīvas* (individual souls) who are afraid of birth and death (49/23)
- Krishna is devoid of death (49/12)
- Krishna is devoid of birth (46/38)
- Krishna is equally the Internal Guide, Cause and Director of *jīvas* (87/30)
- Krishna is the Destroyer of the miseries of persons who employ themselves in meditating upon Him (58/10)
- Krishna is of the fourth dimension and self-manifest (66/38)
- Krishna is worthy of being gifted (74/24)
- Krishna is the Punisher of the wicked (69/17)
- Krishna is the God of gods (80/44)
- Krishna is rarely cognizable by the gods (48/27)
- Krishna is unconcerned about body, house, etc. (60/20)
- Krishna is the Supreme Ruler of the greatest gods (73/8)
- Krishna is the Exponent of religion (69/40)
- Krishna is the eternal son of Nanda (14/1)
- Krishna is visible to man with great difficulty (71/23)
- Krishna's presence mocks the world of man (70/40)
- Krishna is the object of palatable drink of the human eye (71/33)
- Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (31/4)
- Krishna is worthy of the worship of all the worlds (69/15)
- Krishna accommodates all the worlds (59/30)
- Krishna is the Manifester of all light (63/34)
- Krishna is unstinted in giving Himself away to one who remembers Him (80/11)
- Krishna is the efficient Cause (87/50)
- Krishna, although devoid of all mundane quality, assumes mundane qualities by His inconceivable power for the purposes of creation, etc. (46/40)

- Krishna is not subject to change (64/29)
 Krishna is not capable of discrimination, by reasons of being void of any extraneous covering (87/29)
 Krishna is the Giver of Himself to those who covet nothing (86/33)
 Krishna loves those who covet nothing (60/14)
 Krishna does no work (60/20)
 Krishna is Human, Hidden, Primal Person (Purusha) (44/13)
 Krishna is present in the hearts of *jīvas* like the five elements (82/45)
 Krishna is the Supreme Sorcerer (70/37)
 Krishna is Supreme Godhead and Internal Guide of all (56/27)
 Krishna is the crest-jewel of those whose praises are sung by the sacred lore (71/30)
 Krishna is the Primal Person and ever-existing (14/23)
 Krishna is the highest among the objects of worship (74/19)
 Krishna is the Healer of the miseries of the submissive (73/16)
 Krishna is the Destroyer of the sins of the submissive (31/7)
 Krishna is the Destroyer of the distress of the submissive (73/8)
 Krishna is the Residue after the cataclysm (87/15)
 Krishna is devoid of touch with mundane senses (87/28)
 Krishna is the Soul and Friend of all animate entities (29/32)
 Krishna is devoid of distinction appertaining to an alien (63/38)
 Krishna is inconceivable by His nature (70/38)
 Krishna is the Master of the universe (70/37)
 Krishna is the Nourisher of the universe (85/5)
 Krishna is the Sun that cheers the lotus of the kindred of the Vṛṣṇis (14/40)
 Krishna is the God worshiped by the *brāhmaṇas* (69/15)
 Krishna is the foremost of the *brāhmaṇas* (84/20)
 Krishna is the Originator of Brahmā (40/1)
 Krishna is the worshiped of Brahmā (31/13)
 Krishna loves His devotees (48/26)
 Krishna wears forms in accordance with the wishes of His devotee (59/25)
 Krishna is eternally present in Mathurā (1/28)
 Krishna is devoid of the sense of kinship and regards all in the same way (46/37)
 Krishna is beyond all measuring potency (*māyā*) (63/26)
 Krishna is subdued by the love of Yudhiṣṭhira (72/10)
 Krishna is concealed by the screen of *māyā* from the sight of the people (85/19)

- Krishna does not follow the ways of the world (60/36)
 Krishna is the Destroyer of the fear of the mundane sojourn of
 the submissive (85/19)
 Krishna is the Womb of the Scriptures (16/44, 80/45, 84/20)
 Krishna is Śrī Guru's Own Self (80/33)
 Krishna is devoid of hankering for wife, offspring, etc. (60/20)
 Krishna is the Ordainer of the worldly sojourn and of the
 summum bonum (1/7)
 Krishna is the Cause of all entities (85/4)
 Krishna is the Friend of the good (69/17)
 Krishna is devoid of discrimination as of kinship (63/38)
 Krishna is existence (56/27)
 Krishna possesses true desire (80/44)
 Krishna is the true Entity (87/17)
 Krishna is true of speech (48/26)
 Krishna is true of resolve (37/12)
 Krishna sees with an equal eye (16/33)
 Krishna is the Cause of all causes (14/56-7)
 Krishna is the Originator of all (59/28)
 Krishna is the soul's own self of all *jīvas* (14/55)
 Krishna is Omniscient (16/48)
 Krishna is all-seeing (38/18)
 Krishna is the Embodiment of all gods (74/19)
 Krishna is the Seer of all (16/48)
 Krishna is the Lord of all (37/23)
 Krishna is the Stay (*aśrāya*) of all living entities (82/46)
 Krishna is all-pervasive and eternal (9/13)
 Krishna is the Soul of all elements (86/31)
 Krishna is the Knower of the minds of all elements (81/1)
 Krishna is the soul's self of all elements (74/24)
 Krishna is the Inner Soul of all elements (37/11)
 Krishna is the Internal Guide of all elements (47/29)
 Krishna is the Cause of the origin of all elements (64/29)
 Krishna is the limit of all good (84/21)
 Krishna is Omnipotent (37/12)
 Krishna is the Lord of Lakṣmī, the Presiding Deity of all
 riches (47/46)
 Krishna is the Internal Guide of all (63/38)
 Krishna is the Stay (*aśrāya*) of all (40/15)
 Krishna is Witness and Seer of self (86/31)

- Krishna is the Refuge of the good (80/9)
- Krishna is most difficult to serve (88/11)
- Krishna is the Friend of one's heart (48/26)
- Krishna is the Withholder of creation (82/45)
- Krishna is the Withholder, Creator and Preserver (63/44)
- Krishna is the Master of all functions of creation, etc. (16/49)
- Krishna is devoid of distinction as of kinship (74/21)
- Krishna is devoid of distinction as between kin and alien (72/6)
- Krishna indwells the universe created by Himself (48/19)
- Krishna is satisfied by the taste of His Self-delight (72/6)
- Krishna is the Destroyer of the worldly sojourn of His devotees (60/43)
- Krishna is the Wearer of body according to His wish (1/7)

APPENDIX TWO

Translation of the Brahma-saṁhitā (5.1-62) by Śrīla Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

1

Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes.

2

[The spiritual place of transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa is portrayed in the second verse.] The superexcellent station of Kṛṣṇa, which is known as Gokula, has thousands of petals and a corolla like that of a lotus sprouted from a part of His infinitary aspect, the whorl of the leaves being the actual abode of Kṛṣṇa.

3

The whorl of that transcendental lotus is the realm wherein dwells Kṛṣṇa. It is a hexagonal figure, the abode of the indwelling predominated and predominating aspect of the Absolute. Like a diamond the central supporting figure of self-luminous Kṛṣṇa stands as the transcendental source of all potencies. The holy name consisting of eighteen transcendental letters is manifested in a hexagonal figure with sixfold divisions.

4

The whorl of that eternal realm Gokula is the hexagonal abode of Kṛṣṇa. Its petals are the abodes of *gopīs* who are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa to whom they are most lovingly devoted and are similar in essence. The petals shine beautifully like so many walls. The extended leaves of that lotus are the garden-like *dhāma*, i.e. spiritual abode of Śrī Rādhikā, the most beloved of Kṛṣṇa.

5

[The surrounding external plane of Gokula is described in this verse.] There is a mysterious quadrangular place named

Śvetadvīpa surrounding the outskirts of Gokula. Śvetadvīpa is divided into four parts on all sides. The abode of Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha are separately located in each of these four parts. These four divided abodes are enveloped by the fourfold human requirements such as piety, wealth, passion and liberation, as also by the four *Vedas*, viz., *Ṛg*, *Sāma*, *Yajur* and *Atharva*, which deal with the *mantra* and which are the bases of achievements of the fourfold mundane requirements. Ten tridents are fixed in the ten directions, including the zenith and nadir. The eight directions are decorated with the eight jewels of Mahāpadma, Padma, Śaṅkha, Makara, Kacchapa, Mukunda, Kunda, and Nīla. There are ten protectors [*dik-pālas*] of the ten directions in the form of *mantra*. The associates of the hues of blue, yellow, red and white and the extraordinary potencies bearing the names of Vimalā, etc., shine on all sides.

6

The Lord of Gokula is the transcendental Supreme Godhead, the own Self of eternal ecstasies. He is the superior of all superiors and is busily engaged in the enjoyments of the transcendental realm and has no association with His mundane potency.

7

Kṛṣṇa never consorts with His illusory energy. Still her connection is not entirely cut off from the Absolute Truth. When He intends to create the material world the amorous pastime, in which He engages by consorting with His own spiritual [*cit*] potency Ramā by casting His glance at the deluding energy in the shape of sending His time energy, is an auxiliary activity.

8

[The secondary process of association with Māyā is described.] Ramādevī, the spiritual [*cit*] potency, beloved consort of the Supreme Lord, is the regulatrix of all entities. The divine plenary portion of Kṛṣṇa creates the mundane world. At creation there appears a divine halo of the nature of His own subjective portion [*svāmśa*]. This halo is divine Śambhu, the

masculine symbol or manifested emblem of the Supreme Lord. This halo is the dim twilight reflection of the supreme eternal effulgence. This masculine symbol is the subjective portion of divinity who functions as progenitor of the mundane world, subject to the supreme regulatrix [*niyati*]. The conceiving potency in regard to mundane creation makes her appearance out of the supreme regulatrix. She is *Māyā*, the limited, nonabsolute [*aparā*] potency, the symbol of mundane feminine productivity. The intercourse of these two brings forth the faculty of perverted cognition, the reflection of the seed of the procreative desire of the Supreme Lord.

9

All offspring of the consort of the great lord [*Maheśvara*] of this mundane world are of the nature of the embodiment of the mundane masculine and feminine generative organs.

10

The person embodying the material causal principle, viz., the great lord of this mundane world [*Maheśvara*] *Śambhu*, in the form of the male generating organ, is joined to his female consort the limited energy [*Māyā*] as the efficient causal principle. The Lord of the world *Mahā-Viṣṇu* is manifest in him by His subjective portion in the form of His glance.

11

The Lord of the mundane world, *Mahā-Viṣṇu*, possesses thousands of thousands of heads, eyes, hands. He is the source of thousands of thousands of *avatāras* in His thousands of thousands of subjective portions. He is the creator of thousands of thousands of individual souls.

12

The same *Mahā-Viṣṇu* is spoken of by the name of “*Nārāyaṇa*” in this mundane world. From that eternal person has sprung the vast expanse of the water of the spiritual Causal Ocean. The subjective portion of *Sankarṣaṇa* who abides in *paravyoma*, the above supreme *puruṣa* with thousands of subjective portions, reposes in the state of divine sleep [*yoga-nidrā*] in the waters of the spiritual Causal Ocean.

13

The spiritual seeds of Saṅkarṣaṇa existing in the pores of skin of Mahā-Viṣṇu, are born as so many golden sperms. These sperms are covered with five great elements.

14

The same Mahā-Viṣṇu entered into each universe as His own separate subjective portions. The divine portions, that entered into each universe are possessed of His majestic extension, i.e., they are the eternal universal soul Mahā-Viṣṇu, possessing thousands of thousands of heads.

15

The same Mahā-Viṣṇu created Viṣṇu from His left limb, Brahmā, the first progenitor of beings, from His right limb and, from the space between His two eyebrows, Śambhu, the divine masculine manifested halo.

16

The function of Śambhu in relation to *jīvas* is that this universe enshrining the mundane egotistic principle has originated from Śambhu.

17

Thereupon the same great personal Godhead, assuming the threefold forms of Viṣṇu, Prajāpati and Śambhu, entering into the mundane universe, plays the pastimes of preservation, creation and destruction of this world. This pastime is contained in the mundane world. Hence, it being perverted, the Supreme Lord, identical with Mahā-Viṣṇu, prefers to consort with the goddess Yoganidrā, the constituent of His own spiritual [*cit*] potency full of the ecstatic trance of eternal bliss appertaining to His own divine personality.

18

When Viṣṇu lying in the ocean of milk wills to create this universe, a golden lotus springs from His navel-pit. The golden lotus with its stem is the abode of Brahmā representing Brahmāloka or Satyaloka.

19

Before their conglomeration the primary elements in their nascent state remained originally separate entities. Nonapplication of the conglomerating process is the cause of their separate existence. Divine Mahā-Viṣṇu, primal Godhead, through association with His own spiritual [*cit*] potency, moved Māyā and by the application of the conglomerating principle created those different entities in their state of cooperation. And after that He Himself consorted with Yoganidrā by way of His eternal dalliance with His spiritual [*cit*] potency.

20

By conglomerating all those separate entities He manifested the innumerable mundane universes and Himself entered into the inner recess of every extended conglomerate [*virāḍ-vigraha*]. At that time those *jīvas* who had lain dormant during the cataclysm were awakened.

21

The same *jīva* is eternal and is for eternity and without a beginning joined to the Supreme Lord by the tie of an eternal kinship. He is transcendental spiritual potency.

22

The divine lotus which springs from the navel-pit of Viṣṇu is in every way related by the spiritual tie with all souls and is the origin of four-faced Brahmā versed in the four *Vedas*.

23

On coming out of the lotus, Brahmā, being guided by the divine potency turned his mind to the act of creation under the impulse of previous impressions. But he could see nothing but darkness in every direction.

24

Then the goddess of learning Sarasvatī, the divine consort of the Supreme Lord, said thus to Brahmā who saw nothing but gloom in all directions, "O Brahmā, this *mantra*, viz., *klīm kṛṣṇāya govindāya gopī-jana-vallabhāya svāhā*, will assuredly fulfill your heart's desire."

25

“O Brahmā, do thou practice spiritual association by means of this *mantra*; then all your desires will be fulfilled.”

26

Brahmā, being desirous of satisfying Govinda, practiced the cultural acts for Kṛṣṇa in Goloka, Lord of Śvetadvīpa, for a long time. His meditation ran thus, “There exists a divine lotus of a thousand petals, augmented by millions of filaments, in the transcendental land of Goloka. On its whorl, there exists a great divine throne on which is seated Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the form of eternal effulgence of transcendental bliss, playing on His divine flute resonant with the divine sound, with His lotus mouth. He is worshiped by His amorous milkmaids with their respective subjective portions and extensions and also by His external energy [who stays outside] embodying all mundane qualities.”

27

Then Gāyatrī, mother of the *Vedas*, being made manifest, i.e. imparted, by the divine sound of the flute of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, entered into the lotus mouth of Brahmā, born from himself, through his eight ear-holes. The lotus-born Brahmā having received the Gāyatrī, sprung from the flute-song of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, attained the status of the twice-born, having been initiated by the supreme primal preceptor, Godhead Himself.

28

Enlightened by the recollection of that Gāyatrī, embodying the three *Vedas*, Brahmā became acquainted with the expanse of the ocean of truth. Then he worshiped Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the essence of all *Vedas*, with this hymn.

29

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor who is tending the cows, yielding all desire, in abodes built with spiritual gems, surrounded by millions of purpose trees, always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds and thousands of *lakṣmīs*, or *gopīs*.

30

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is adept in playing on His flute, with blooming eyes like lotus petals with head decked with peacock's feather, with the figure of beauty tinged with the hue of blue clouds, and His unique loveliness charming millions of Cupids.

31

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, round whose neck is swinging a garland of flowers beautified with the moon-locket, whose two hands are adorned with the flute and jeweled ornaments, who always revels in pastimes of love, whose graceful threefold-bending form of Śyāmasundara is eternally manifest.

32

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose transcendental form is full of bliss, truth, substantiality and is thus full of the most dazzling splendor. Each of the limbs of that transcendental figure possesses in Himself, the full-fledged functions of all the organs, and eternally sees, maintains and manifests the infinite universes, both spiritual and mundane.

33

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is inaccessible to the *Vedas*, but obtainable by pure unalloyed devotion of the soul, who is without a second, who is not subject to decay, is without a beginning, whose form is endless, who is the beginning, and the eternal *puruṣa*; yet He is a person possessing the beauty of blooming youth.

34

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, only the tip of the toe of whose lotus feet is approached by the *yogīs* who aspire after the transcendental and betake themselves to *prāṇāyāma* by drilling the respiration; or by the *jñānīs* who try to find out the nondifferentiated Brahman by the process of elimination of the mundane, extending over thousands of millions of years.

35

He is an undifferentiated entity as there is no distinction between potency and the possessor thereof. In His work of creation of millions of worlds, His potency remains inseparable. All the universes exist in Him and He is present in His fullness in every one of the atoms that are scattered throughout the universe, at one and the same time. Such is the primeval Lord whom I adore.

36

I adore the same Govinda, the primeval Lord, in whose praise men, who are imbued with devotion, sing the *mantra-sūktas* told by the *Vedas*, by gaining their appropriate beauty, greatness, thrones, conveyances and ornaments.

37

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, residing in His own realm, Goloka, with Rādhā, resembling His own spiritual figure, the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty-four artistic activities, in the company of Her confidantes [*sakhīs*], embodiments of the extensions of Her bodily form, permeated and vitalized by His ever-blissful spiritual *rasa*.

38

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Śyāmasundara, Kṛṣṇa Himself with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.

39

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who manifested Himself personally as Kṛṣṇa and the different *avatāras* in the world in the forms of Rāma, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, etc., as His subjective portions.

40

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose effulgence is the source of the nondifferentiated Brahman mentioned in the *Upaniṣads*, being differentiated from the infinity of glories of the

mundane universe appears as the indivisible, infinite, limitless, truth.

41

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is the absolute substantive principle being the ultimate entity in the form of the support of all existence whose external potency embodies the threefold mundane qualities, viz., *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and diffuses the Vedic knowledge regarding the mundane world.

42

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, whose glory ever triumphantly dominates the mundane world by the activity of His own pastimes, being reflected in the mind of recollecting souls as the transcendental entity of ever-blissful cognitive *rasa*.

43

Lowest of all is located Devī-dhāma [mundane world], next above it is Maheśa-dhāma [abode of Maheśa]; above Maheśa-dhāma is placed Hari-dhāma [abode of Hari] and above them all is located Kṛṣṇa's own realm named Goloka. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, who has allotted their respective authorities to the rules of those graded realms.

44

The external potency Māyā who is of the nature of the shadow of the *cit* potency, is worshiped by all people as Durga, the creating, preserving and destroying agency of this mundane world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda in accordance with whose will Durgā conducts herself.

45

Just as milk is transformed into curd by the action of acids, but yet the effect curd is neither same as, nor different from, its cause, viz., milk, so I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whom the state of Śambhu is a transformation for the performance of the work of destruction.

46

The light of one candle being communicated to other candles, although it burns separately in them, is the same in its

quality. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who exhibits Himself equally in the same mobile manner in His various manifestations.

47

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda who assuming His own great subjective form, who bears the name of Śeṣa, replete with the all-accommodating potency, and reposing in the Causal Ocean with the infinity of the world in the pores of His hair, enjoys creative sleep [*yoga-nidrā*].

48

Brahmā and other lords of the mundane worlds, appearing from the pores of hair of Mahā-Viṣṇu, remain alive as long as the duration of one exhalation of the latter [*Mahā-Viṣṇu*]. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda of whose subjective personality Mahā-Viṣṇu is the portion of portion.

49

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda from whom the separated subjective portion Brahmā receives his power for the regulation of the mundane world, just as the sun manifests some portion of his own light in all the effulgent gems that bear the names of *sūryakānta*, etc.

50

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, whose lotus feet are always held by Gaṇeśa upon the pair of tumuli protruding from his elephant head in order to obtain power for his function of destroying all the obstacles on the path of progress of the three worlds.

51

The three worlds are composed of the nine elements, viz., fire, earth, ether, water, air, direction, time, soul and mind. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda from whom they originate, in whom they exist and into whom they enter at the time of the universal cataclysm.

52

The sun who is the king of all the planets, full of infinite effulgence, the image of the good soul, is as the eye of this world. I adore the primeval Lord Govinda in pursuance of whose order the sun performs his journey mounting the wheel of time.

53

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, by whose conferred power are maintained the manifested potencies, that are found to exist, of all virtues, all vices, the *Vedas*, the penances and all *jīvas*, from Brahmā to the meanest insect.

54

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, who burns up to their roots all fruitive activities of those who are imbued with devotion and impartially ordains for each the due enjoyment of the fruits of one's activities, of all those who walk in the path of work, in accordance with the chain of their previously performed works, no less in the case of the tiny insect that bears the name of *indragopa* than in that of Indra, king of the *devas*.

55

I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, the meditators of whom, by meditating upon Him under the sway of wrath, amorous passion, natural friendly love, fear, parental affection, delusion, reverence and willing service, attain to bodily forms befitting the nature of their contemplation.

56

I worship the transcendental seat, known as Śvetadvīpa where as loving consorts the Lakṣmīs in their unalloyed spiritual essence practice the amorous service of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa as their only lover; where every tree is a transcendental purpose tree; where the soil is the purpose gem, all water is nectar, every word is a song, every gait is a dance, the flute is the favorite attendant, effulgence is full of transcendental bliss and the supreme spiritual entities are all enjoyable and tasty, where numberless milk cows always emit transcendental oceans of

milk; where there is eternal existence of transcendental time, who is ever present and without past or future and hence is not subject to the quality of passing away even for the space of half a moment. That realm is known as Goloka only to a very few self-realized souls in this world.

57

On hearing these hymns containing the essence of the truth, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa said to Brahmā, “Brahmā, if you experience the inclination to create offspring by being endowed with the real knowledge of the glory of Godhead, listen, My beloved, from Me to this science set forth in the following five *śloka*s.

58

When the pure spiritual experience is excited by means of cognition and service [*bhakti*], superexcellent unalloyed devotion characterized by love for Godhead is awakened towards Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of all souls.

59

The highest devotion is attained by slow degrees by the method of constant endeavor for self-realization with the help of scriptural evidence, theistic conduct and perseverance in practice.

60

These preliminary practices of devotion [*sādhana-bhakti*] are conducive to the realization of loving devotion. [Loving devotion]—than whom there is no superior well-being, who goes hand in hand with the attainment of the exclusive state of supreme bliss and who can lead to Myself.

61

Abandoning all meritorious performances serve Me with faith. The realization will correspond to the nature of one's faith. The people of the world act ceaselessly in pursuance of some ideal. By meditating on Me by means of those deeds one will obtain devotion characterized by love in the shape of the supreme service.

62

“Listen, O Vidhi, I am the seed, i.e., the fundamental principle, of this world of animate and inanimate objects. I am *pradhāna* [the substance of matter], I am *prakṛti* [material cause] and I am *puruṣa* [efficient cause]. This fiery energy that belongs specially to the Brahman, that inheres in you, has also been conferred by Me. It is by bearing this fiery energy that you regulate this phenomenal world of animate and inanimate objects.”

APPENDIX THREE

A letter from Dayānanda dāsa regarding the Vaiṣṇava diaries and journals in the Gauḍīya Sampradāya.

February 9, 1986

Dear Srila Gurupada,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I received your letter of 9 Jan and read it with delight. I was most pleased to have been consulted and I hope I can be of some service to you.

In our own Gaudiya Vaisnava line there is definitely a tradition of writing diaries or journals. One type of diary is called a *kadca* (pronounced karcha). The dictionary says it is "a chronicle, a biography, a narrative, or an account book." The first important Kadca was kept by Svarupa Damodara and is still referred to as *Svarupa Damodarer Kadca*. *Caitanya Caritamṛta* is based primarily on this diary. Murari Gupta also wrote a Kadca which is the basis of other biographies of Caitanya. There are two existing manuscripts of Svarupa Damodara's Kadca and we are preparing to microfilm them. They have never been printed. Murari Gupta's Kadca was in print during the early 20th century and we are trying to find a copy to xerox or film. (The authenticity of these mss. may be under question.) We will definitely translate these as soon as we can get our hands on them.

Kadca writing was so thoroughly accepted as the most authentic representation of Vaisnava writing that two early 20th century scholars manufactured an "old" manuscript of what they called *Govinda daser Kadca* which glorified Caitanya's South Indian tour and gave a lot of information about Him that no biography had ever given. They claimed that the author of the "newly discovered" manuscript was Govinda dasa, the servant of Caitanya who had supposedly gone to South India with Him. Although the manuscript has now been proven to be a fake, it at least shows the influence that a personal diary carries in the minds of the Vaisnavas.

Prose writing did not appear in Bengal until the time of the British. Therefore, all the medieval writing of the Goswamis or other Vaisnava kavis was in poetry. The diaries or journals were also poetic expressions, not prose, as far as we have learned. *Bhaktiratnakara* refers to diaries kept by other Vaisnavas, but those diaries are no longer existent. Other recent Vaisnava scholars have also searched for them to no avail.

In addition to several biographies written about Caitanya, we have biographies of Nityananda, Advaita, Narottama, Shyamananda, Srinivasa and a few others, which were all written during the medieval period (1600–1700 A.D.). The style used in these biographies is like a journal in the sense that the author usually adds his own personal sentiments, sometimes his own autobiographical information or sometimes he makes comments about the local social, political, economic or religious environment. These authors weave the glories of the Vaisnavas into the social milieu of the times in which they wrote. These hagiological writings of the Vaisnavas, and their padavalis (poems primarily about Radha-Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya), comprise the major part of Bengali literature for the better part of 200 years.

I understand that there are probably old diaries kept by Vaisnavas in other lines such as Vallabha's, but at this point we have insufficient information to speak very authoritatively. However, more recently a journal-style book was written by Kuladananda Brahmachari called *Sri Sri Sadguru-sanga*. It is a five volume work principally about the author's guru Vijay Krishna Goswami, a famous Bengali Vaisnava who was a little older than Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur. I have not read the book nor do we intend to translate it from Bengali, but I have heard that it is a very honest piece of writing where the author speaks very candidly about his own struggles to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Vaisnavas tend to write on either philosophy or *sādhana*. Your books, *Japa Reform* and *Living with the Scriptures*, although written in a journal style, are both books on *sādhana*. There are many books like this in Bengali. We are currently compiling a bibliography of all the books we can find written by Vaisnavas or on Vaisnavism. Unfortunately, we have not made a separate section for diaries or personal journals. If you were interested in

having us find some particular style of journal or diary, we would have to do some special research.

We are currently having most of the medieval biographies translated into English—i.e., the biographies of Narottama, Advaita, Srinivasa, etc. They will be available through Garuda. The entire bibliography will also be available as soon as we can get it to him. I will keep your interests in mind as we continue with our research, and I apologize that I could not be of more assistance at this time.

I hope this meets you in good health. Hare Krishna.

Your servant,
Dayananda das

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APPENDIX FOUR

MORE ON THOREAU AND VEDIC THOUGHT

FROM LEADS OBTAINED DURING MY VISIT to the Thoreau Lyceum, I have now obtained a few more articles and books on Thoreau's relation to Vedic knowledge. These confirm feelings I had while at Walden Pond, that Thoreau was striving in his own way to practice *yoga*. It also becomes more apparent that without a bona fide spiritual master he was unable to understand the real goal of *yoga*. The scholars of Thoreau's Orientalism are also in ignorance, especially about the nature of *bhakti-yoga*, and the conclusion of the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

In *Walden and Yoga* (an article published in the *New England Quarterly*, Sept. 1964), Frank Macshane puts together convincing evidence from Thoreau's writings that Thoreau was heavily influenced by Indian spiritual thought. Macshane claims that most readers think of Thoreau's Oriental themes as incidental, whereas actually they are at the very heart of Thoreau's life and literary contribution.

There are many overt references to the sacred texts of India [in *Walden*], as in, "how much more admirable the *Bhagavad-gita* than all the ruins of the East!" And Thoreau himself followed certain Hindu customs: "It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who loved so well the philosophy of India." . . . flute playing, his own and that of John Farmer, is also reminiscent of the God Krishna's favorite musical pastime. Most significant of all are the many references to the river and the definite equation of Walden Pond with the sacred Ganges.

I have also found explicit mention of Thoreau's Indian leanings in his journal:

What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a lofty course through a purer stratum—free from particulars, simple, universal.

One wise sentence is worth the state of Massachusetts many times over.

The Vedas contain a sensible account of God.

—Thoreau's journal, 1850

Macshane argues that Thoreau went to Walden not in the

usual Christian manner, with the idea of repentance and resignation from life, but he wished to release himself from petty daily affairs to contemplate his personal nature. "What he did," writes Macshane, "is precisely described in the sixth book of *Bhagavad-gita*: 'The yogi should retire into a solitary place and live alone. He must exercise control over his body and mind. . . .'"

"Rude and careless as I am," Thoreau wrote in his journal, "I would fain practice yoga faithfully."

Macshane describes the goal of *yoga* as union with Brahman, or God. He also thinks the *Vedas* teach one to follow the *yoga* most fit for one's nature. He concludes that Thoreau's interest in Hindu philosophy was as a monist, and that Thoreau was attracted to the freedom of "following his own inclinations with dignity."

Thoreau's experiment of living by Walden Pond, as described by Macshane, has a sacramental action, which Thoreau followed in the mood of a *yogī*:

Every morning he would go down to the pond, for all the world like a Hindu in Benares, for his morning ablutions. This bathing in the lake he characterized as "a religious exercise and one of the best things which I did."

Macshane depicts Thoreau as a *jñāna-yogī*, due to his intellectual inclinations. He also describes him as a *karma-yogī*, by his renunciation of material acts dedicated to higher thought. Macshane equates *rāja-yoga* with the mystic practices of *aṣṭāṅga*, and claims that Thoreau followed this in part by his dietary control, solitude, and chastity. When Thoreau was questioned by someone about his vegetarian inclination—whether he could actually survive on vegetable food alone—he replied in his journal, "I am accustomed to answer such, that I can live on board nails. If they cannot understand that, they cannot understand much that I have to say."

Macshane is quite ignorant of the goal of *bhakti-yoga*, but he makes an interesting presentation of Thoreau as a *bhakta* by virtue of his devotion to nature.

Throughout those sections devoted to the pond itself, the animals, the fish, and even the earth, there is a constant note of praise and indeed of worship.

This nature worship of Thoreau's was not a simple pantheism. He did not see God as identical with nature or with the

self, but He is the transcendental creator. As Thoreau wrote in his journal: "The red-bird which is the last of Nature is but the first of God," and, "If Nature is our Mother, is not God much more?"

In one of his early *Back to Godhead* articles, Hayagrīva dāsa described the striving toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness as practiced by Emerson and Thoreau:

In *Walden* Thoreau wrote in even greater length about the *Gītā*, and it is clear that the words of Kṛṣṇa figured prominently in the transcendentalist movement. The transcendental ideal was to obtain union with God through "plain healthy living," avoidance of the frills of society and all forms of artificial intoxication, avoidance of dogmatic "church religion," and abandonment to the direct revelation of the Supreme, who usually spoke through His nature, or *prakṛti*, revealing His supreme *puruṣa*, or what Emerson called the "over-soul." For the transcendentalist, direct contact with nature was as good as direct contact with the divine, for it served as a springboard to direct realization of Him. Nature was a wise, familiar, and loving *guru*.

Even if we consider Thoreau a *yogī*, he was not able to realize the personal nature of the Supersoul, or the original form of the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In one sense we cannot blame him for this, because the Vedic texts available to him did not give Vaiṣṇava commentaries. Perhaps if he had met a pure devotee, he would have surrendered, but in any case, he never gained such an opportunity in his lifetime.

My study of Thoreau's Vedic leanings brings to mind two conclusions. One is the realization that no one, no matter how great a thinker or individualist one may be, can find his way past material desires and speculation to the ultimate truth, unless he has a direct Vaiṣṇava guide. By the philosophical process, or by a life of renunciation one can only approach an inkling of Brahman realization: "If Nature is our Mother, is not God much more?"

Knowledge of our loving relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead can only be revealed through the mercy of the spiritual master. Seeing Thoreau stranded in his own thought, makes me more appreciative of the welfare work that is being done since the appearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda in the West. To consider this in a positive way, we can appreciate that there are always persons like Thoreau with strong leanings toward spirituality and specifically toward Vedic knowledge. They may have inherited this from past lives, but at least in this life they are spon-

taneously attracted. In order to bring such sincere souls to the realization of their heart's desires, and to connect them in loving service to Kṛṣṇa, devotees of the Lord must vigorously preach and reach out to the budding transcendentalists whether they be living in forest retreats or deluded in the cities.

In this way we can make useful the emotions and associations that come to mind when we think of the "almost" Kṛṣṇa consciousness of Henry David Thoreau, who genuinely loved the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

The sweltering inhabitants of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmoginal philosophy of the Bhagavad-gita since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water and lo! there I meet the servant of the brahmana, priest of Brahma and Visnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas or dwells at the foot of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant, our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water mixes with the sacred water of the Ganges.

APPENDIX FIVE

A letter to Śrīla Ravīndra-svarūpa dāsa discussing journal writing as a craft and as self-expression.

June 13, 1986
Miami

Dear Ravindra Svarupa,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I am at present reading, *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing* by Paul Fussell, as you recommended. It is fascinating reading, and since you recommended it in connection with my own writing of *Journal and Poems*, I have also read it in that way.

I don't know how you have connected my journal to the discussion by Fussell, but I would like to express to you some of my own thoughts. As I read the discussion of the two poles of literature, 1. writing as the craft of a genre, and 2. literature as self-expression, I reexamined my own situation, and I finally came to a defense of what I am doing.

Fussell explains that Johnson himself incorporated both these attitudes toward literature. So I too needn't think that my presentation has to be either-or, or a choice between two poles. I should be aware as a writer that literature very much consists of preparing artifice and argument within the confines of a standard genre. And I also may follow my inclination to write as self-expression, as a record of life (while knowing that complete honesty or personal revelation is neither possible nor desirable). Now I have chosen to write in the genre of a journal and I am "composing" or "constructing" my journal with both these attitudes in mind.

My contention regarding the genres and self-expression is that I am not naive to the fact that a journal *appears* to be natural and artless whereas actually it is a genre. I don't intend to deceive readers. I know my "confessions" are only partial. And I know that I am always constructing a book. How to write a diary or journal, which is filled with personal and immediate expression of life, and how to shape this with both the responsi-

bility of a craftsman and yet with the honesty of a diarist—is a great challenge. I am trying to maintain the balance without being either a sloppy artist, or a dishonest devotee. I myself subscribe to the theory of genre in that I have selected the diary as a device to attract readers.

I am not attempting to pass off some scribbling notes as finished literature worthy of a devotee who should present the best to the world. I have read in Fussell's book and I also appreciate that writing is austere work. But there are different ways to go about it. One way or another, it involves a life-long dedication, austerity and committing oneself to writing. I certainly don't use all that I write, but constantly select pieces that I feel are the most effective and fresh. In effect, mine is also a kind of rewriting. I may not work over the same piece again and again as much as you do, but I reject different pieces until I find one that appeals to me, and which I think will be effective.

Of course, this discussion brings up some ultimate puzzles or contradictions. Is writing all appearance? How much is sincere?

I agree that in writing we try to make a product that will be effective. It is not the private outpouring of the heart, but it is the working in a genre, making a particular kind of poem within the rules of different forms and following the selection of rhetorical devices in order to "win the argument." Yet even accepting that, careful selection of sincere writing from one's own life and thoughts arranged and edited for subtle effects will produce, I think, high interest in Krsna conscious reading.

The duty to communicate is uppermost in my mind. And as devotees we have to communicate the message of *sastra*, to convince readers about Krsna conscious truths, to move newcomers to the practice of devotional service, and to help maintain and improve those who are already practicing Krsna consciousness. In the *Journal and Poems* I am writing of the private world of ISKCON and my own private world, *but for reasons of communication*. I hope it will fascinate readers by appearing in this genre and by coming from sincere attempts at honest expression.

In the book about Johnson, there is also interesting discussion about a person choosing a genre which is most apt and suited to him. I have a question about this. It seems to be some-

thing like knowing which *varna* or *asrama* you will best serve in. How does one know what genre is most apt for him to work in? What will best suit his talents? And also how does this choice line up with the obligation we have to preach in the most effective way to the public? For me, these questions are worth pondering on and working on and I don't have the final answers. Similarly I don't have the final answer worked out about the tension between being a mouthpiece for the *parampara* in contrast to honestly presenting oneself as a struggling devotee. But so far I am most enlivened to express this tension by attempting to write about my personal life, but doing it with art and of course as a way to give the truth of Krsna consciousness.

This discussion leads me to further questions. What is my obligation as a writer? What is the best thing I should write? Is a *Journal and Poems* best or is it a retreat into private life? Also, aside from writing what is my obligation to my spiritual master?

For the present I am very much absorbed in writing the journal. The fact is that I do accept it as a genre and not simply an expression of my own life; I am therefore studying many different journals. The public loves to read diaries and journals; some of these diaries are private and are released after the person's death, and some are written as literary journals, intended for an audience. There is an almost contradictory tension between these two types of diaries, private and literary, which is also something I regularly think about. But in either case the form is very interesting. In his own journal, Emerson made the following comment:

"These novels will give way by and by to diaries or autobiographies—captivating books if only a man knows how to choose among what he calls his experience and that which is really his experience, and how to record truth truly."

There is also a quote that I treasure from Thoreau, who as you know, was a lifelong dedicated diarist. He says in effect that the best thing for a poet is to write about his own life by keeping a journal. He says we want to know not the hero of one's imagining, but the actual "hero" in a day to day setting. There is also a quote that comes to mind by Evelyn Waugh who also kept a diary, and who commented, "Nobody wants to read other people's reflections on life and religion and politics, but the routine of their day, properly recorded, is always interesting."

So I have chosen this self-expression mode. Partly I want to write that way because it is the kind of writing that is possible for me since my life is so busy with nonliterary pursuits. At least I can write something every day in this ongoing account. So it is easier. It is also a modern form of expression, that is art through somewhat "artless" or natural approach. But also I feel it is effective even when considered as a genre in that it is more interesting than the formal philosophical essay.

And if we are to judge by reader's reception of effectiveness, the first book of *Journal and Poems* is appreciated both as personal confession and also as art.

To me the journal is a genial genre. But since I am working so strenuously at it, I am at present not able to do any other work. We have the example of Johnson who produced so many different genres. Perhaps one should not just work at one genre or perhaps if one finds the work that is best suited to him he should work strictly in that form. At present I am also limited by my health and cannot produce other books that I would like to, such as more books of essays like *Living with the Scriptures*, more *Prabhupada Nectars*, and also books of a more "commercial" nature which could be used directly by *sankirtana* parties, like pamphlets, etc.

Anyway, I hope I have not rambled on too long or incoherently in this letter. Needless to say the Fussell book is very stimulating and I appreciate reading about Johnson's religious commitment and conception of authorship as a sacrament or religious duty or way of serving God. We can certainly relate to that and also his dedication to working and producing.

I hope that we can exchange more on these and related literary ideas. I did not intend to anticipate your own opinion of my journal by my defense here, but I thought it might be helpful for you to know how I feel about my journal in response to reading Fussell's book. I am still awaiting your own letter regarding this. I hope this meets you in good health.

Your servant,
Satsvarupa das Goswami

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