

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

Volume 10

Accepting my Limits

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

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July 22, 1997

12:07 a.m.

The ideal way to start a day is to get up at midnight and to start reading where I left off yesterday in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* while feeling the spontaneous urge to write. I do this for an hour, then begin to chant around 1:15 a.m.

But today I can't begin my day in such an ideal way because I contracted a headache last night that drove me to bed by 5:30, and it has persisted through the night despite the Esgic. I mention it here to underline my dawning understanding that I have to accept the limits my life places upon me despite my desires to follow my schedule and to taste midnight enchanted by its special quietness and ability to concentrate.

Since I couldn't sleep last night, my mind was churning with ideas for new projects. Specifically I thought of something I would call "Dovetail University," which would be a home course in world literature. After I thought it over some more, however, I rejected the idea as decadent. I want to keep my focus simple: reading the *Bhagavatam*, chanting Hare Krishna, and writing.

* * *

1:30 a.m.

Eight rounds done. Headache lingering.

Lately I've been adopting more of a diarist's attitude. The old motto "forget the audience" seems a bit forced right now. *I* am the reader, the audience. Diarists speak of writing for themselves. Or an artist might say, "No one was writing the kind of book I wanted to read, so I decided to write it myself." Anyway, I don't want to analyze it to death, and I certainly don't want to pass judgment on it.

* * *

4 a.m.

Fair weather "headache coast is clear for now. Better chant while I can.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

You'll find scintillating things to observe on a morning walk. You'll come down to the lake edge and see a heron take off, slowly flapping away from you. You'll hear the call of a deer across the strait. You'll see wildflowers and the streak of jet trail in the sky. You'll feel *good*, glad to be alive. You'll meet Manu dasa coming out of his house for a *japa* walk in his own solitary direction and have a few words with him, all agreeable. But you won't find Krishna in the way you can find Him in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. We have to come to the book even though the outward exercise of reading may not seem as fresh as a walk.

* * *

10:07 a.m.

It's hard to pick up the book again after being thrown off schedule, but Krishna gives us facility, especially inclination and will. If you want to be an *asura*, He'll sanction it and allow your mind to become filled with asuric thoughts. *Krishnaya akuntha-medhasah*: Krishna's brain activity is never checked. I am so quickly exhausted and can almost feel my brain contract inside my skull. O Krishna, please don't let me lose the ability to read about You, lose the will.

In September I'll be called upon to lecture. I'll have to allow my heart to come out. I'll love what I say, because it will be filled with the taste of earnestness and realization. I'll also worry that I have given too many of the gems I have stocked. It took me months to collect them. But as I give, I don't become exhausted.

Or I do, but only by my false pride. I see that I am broke, a beggar, speaking from scratch each time.

Everything comes from Krishna "

Lord Siva mentions some particulars.

I ate grass roots and
divided in two. I sat
for exams and booted
the loot and grew
tired of that and jawed
an elbow.

* * *

I greased no meat but
was bleary and teary,
grim and dry
kept apart from God.

* * *

Music too I fled from
so
I could dwell in the
Lord's silence
although I sang
and rang
a gentle
bell.

* * *

12:20 noon

Early this morning, just as dawn was breaking, I went out for a walk. right outside Manu's house I saw Jayananda's toys. Jayananda is five or six. In one place he had neatly arranged his warrior stuff "a plastic breastplate, a bow, of course, about ten arrows

(small pieces of broken wood), and a plastic sword. A little further away was another cache with another bow and arrows. I was impressed with how neatly arranged everything was. It looked like he had prepared his gear for the morning so that it would be ready at a moment's notice should a demon come.

It seemed cute to me, something worth recalling to adults or maybe mentioning to Jayananda himself, but then I had a further thought. I wondered about my own "warrior's" paraphernalia "my beads, my books, my stopwatch, a glove, a notepad, a pen. I too laid it out last night, ready for the morning. Am I playing too?

"Lord Siva prays to the Supreme Personality of Godhead that his mind, senses and words will all turn toward devotional activities only." (*Bhag.* 4.24.43, purport)

Sound "we hear Hare Krishna and try to be attentive to it. Sometimes I think I'm playing at chanting, although I shouldn't say that. I'm meant to chant, but I can't. I need to read deeper and make it a personal offering if I'm going to succeed at it. "The real source of knowledge is the *vaca*, or sound vibration, given by Vedic instructions. . . . if the sound vibration is clear and purified, perfect knowledge and perfect activities actually become manifest. This is enacted by the chanting of the *maha-mantra*, Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare . . ." (*Bhag.* 4.24.43, purport)

* * *

2:40 p.m.

The Lord's beautiful form is all-attractive. Words attract, form attracts, senses are attracted.

I continue to lag behind today.

Controversy. Defend Srila Prabhupada. He is *rasika*. He is beloved. We must do that work. We want to be simple and even silent in the face of controversy, but we have to defend Prabhupada.

I work with feelings. We want facts about God, but also to find our own gut feelings. I mean, I know God doesn't depend on my feelings to exist, yet I depend on my feelings to exist with Him.

The words come out like a string played out to fly a kite. There is a brown-gray quail sitting on the window ledge with her baby. If the dog knew they were here . . .

"I want to see that form," Siva says, "that is most beautiful." Edge of my *kurta* cuffs are stained yellow from turmeric.

Where is Nanda-kiSora of Italy? I hope he hasn't become enamored by gurus outside ISKCON or waylaid in some way.

Srila Prabhupada, they are hammering at our hearts when they say you were only a general. Please protect our love for you. You spread the Krishna consciousness movement. "In the Krishna consciousness movement, everything is happening according to the predictions of Lord Caitanya, but the credit goes to Lord Caitanya's sincere servants." (*Bhag.* 4.24.40, purport) You say it is actually Lord Caitanya's doing, just as Lord Krishna is the killer at Kuruksetra but gives Arjuna the credit.

Recovery day. Short notes.

* * *

3:09 p.m.

The Lord's sidelong glance and smile refer to His dealings with the *gopis*, Srila Prabhupada writes. Did he get that from Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura? I need to break through that question.

But I thought your motto was to be patient?

M. has work to do because he was away, yet he's playing his bouzouki, practicing his scales. He was away for five days, during which he played harmonium and sang, so he didn't keep up with his own music. He feels a need to get back to it. I ought to empathize. That's what I am seeking too, to practice my scales and to feel myself a musician again. M. can't just wash dishes and copy microcassettes and make phone calls, although all those things need to be done. He needs to play music and feel inspired. I know what that's like, don't I?

Nothing satisfies. Nothing feels good. I can read, but sometimes books are not enough. I can take a walk, but communing with nature is not quite what I'm looking for. If I break my aloneness by meeting someone and talking, that only makes me think I need to get back to my center. Neither will it help to read something other than Prabhupada's books. I am writing within the limited field within which I live, and it repeats itself because I write so much. Still, I cannot write less. Is it the mind? Something is telling me I might be able to write in a different way, and something else tells me not to worry but to write what I feel is best at the moment.

My devotee identity is predominant and wants to be strong. The other subpersons, the ones with the various voices of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, know they cannot help much at the time of death. O human self, you must only remember Krishna and please Him. The devotee-reader in me says, "Let's go back to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and spend more time on it. Think of the Lord's face."

I read that Visnu has four arms, but two-armed Krishna is best. If Nanda-kiSora comes, I'll sit him down across from me and ask him to tell me about himself. But I won't be able to deliver him Krishna the way the Swami gave Him to me when I was twenty-six in New York City.

The sky is overcast, and haze is blocking the bright sunshine. It doesn't look as if it will rain, however. It's blowing, but mild.

Oh,

what can I say?

You left your dolly in the meadow?

You have no job

or terrible disease.

You don't live with the pressure of misery or such troubled thoughts.

Last night I felt pain behind the eye but then was released from it.

I got up late, hurried through mantras, paid less attention than usual.

Disoriented now.

A buttercup tells its story and sighs.

You have to stop this grinding to a stop. There are plenty of engagements for you. The chief is due here today. He can smile from his superior position and you can smile back with a "Howdy, pardner."

Oh, it's difficult,
difficult, Kierkegaard says "
is it rubbing off on me? Please don't delay in making
appropriate confessions
and let's get on
with it.

Krishna appears in many forms. Within Radha-Krishna Laksmi-Narayana resides. When you worship the Deity in *vaidhi-marga*, you accept Krishna as the Narayana aspect. "That's how we do it," he said. He didn't say worship the Deity in *raga-marga*. That's for those in the spontaneous stage. Deity worship has to be done nicely, offenselessly, and if you rush ahead, that's called *prakrta-sahajiya*. Don't confuse the terms, but even more importantly, just take whatever Srila Prabhupada says and don't compare it to what others say. Accept the absolute nature of guru. Like a simple devotee would. The full extent of our lack of faith is still becoming clear and we are suffering for it. We have come to see him as relative. I desire to free myself of this.

But it's hard to go back to something I have left behind. All I can do now is fight for a place, a right to be at his lotus feet.

Do you understand? I'm explaining the best I can. A man loves his lover. You can't ask him, "Could you not have loved another woman?" He can't answer that. It would require too much objectivity, and objectivity does not live on the platform of love. He loves his woman because he loves her. What more is there to understand?

We have faith in Srila Prabhupada because he saved us. We love him. He is leading us to Krishna. We can't say, objectively, "Could you have not become the disciple of another? Should you not now become the disciple of another?" How can we compare our guru to another and expect our love for Prabhupada to survive? I have seen that what happens to those who indulge in this relativizing of guru is they lose at least a portion of their love. It happened to me, I think. Therefore, although I don't judge others, I ask to return exclusively to my guru's feet and to regain that simple, innocent faith I had, that love.

In the meantime, I try to stay out of the quarrels on this topic. Everyone quarrels, so there are quarrels among devotees. It's not so unusual. At least in Ireland there are no huge schisms or problems like they have in England.

The Everest march began without supplemental oxygen. The North and South Poles crossed for the first time by women only in a team using no razor blades or huskies. They made it to the top in record time.

Srila Prabhupada said, "Don't distribute *prasadam* silently, but give them instructions." One should not become a guru unless he can deliver his subordinates from the cycle of birth and death.

* * *

4:35 p.m.

I went out walking. M. picked up his bouzouki as soon as I left. I walked off our property until I saw a red tractor approaching "the neighbor. I turned and walked back to the Hare Krishna reserve. Light rain sprinkled. I chanted. On the path, which is now like a tunnel dressed in green and dark brown, it was so dark that I didn't feel the same invitation to walk through it as I did in the spring. returning to the house I saw the van parked, now useless. My life has changed. I'm not up for long hours bouncing around in the back of the van and the adventures of sleeping in petrol station parking lots. It no longer seems necessary or to the point of my life. When I saw the van sitting there, however, I will admit that I entertained the idea to again find the road.

But no,
indoors, to this desk.

Krishna's beauty is described "how deep are His navel and the ripples on His abdomen.

The strait is calm "almost no ripples. A boat cruises slowly through the mirroring waters.

* * *

6:22 p.m.

Finished five paintings, each on 18"x 24" Bristol boards. GS knows how much fun it is to do these, and what a release I feel. Stuck on the canonical symbols and words. They were part of it. A guy stretched out and said, "No, no," and, "Don't waste your life in that way," which I was hearing Srila Prabhupada say on tape. A fellow artist encourages me, although the world I live in may think it's craziness. I am trying to offer it anyway.

The day has faded. I read Lord Siva's prayers to Lord Visnu. "You are in everything." He describes the body of four-armed Visnu, but Srila Prabhupada describes how this could also be two-armed Krishna. For example, when they mention the symbols Lord Visnu carries in each of His four hands, it may also be taken that these marks are on the palms of Krishna's hands. All incarnations come from Him. Christians describe Christ as the Incarnation with a capital "I," as if there were only one. Srila Prabhupada asks simply and bluntly, "Why should God have only one son?" Or, "Is He not capable of more than one good son?" I stick with what my master says. I'm not anti-Christian, but as SK says, it's not always easy to reconcile everything once and for all.

Neither is it easy to be a true Krishnaite. I'd *like* to be, but I have to discover whether I am willing to pay the price. I need to recover my simple faith. Please accept me.

Lord Siva will continue and I'll be there to listen. The Sanskrit words, the preaching and devotion "looking for myself in that niche. I heard Srila Prabhupada explain Govinda dasa Thakura's song: "Why are you wasting your life? Life is tottering like a drop of water on the lotus. At any moment . . ." Then he sings *ceto-darpana-marjanam* with tamboura.

Pale gold-headed weeds, wild wheat fields, growing from here down to the lake. The colors are soft. Devotees row quietly. They're not crossing, but at leisure among the

weeds. White clover. M. and I saw a light brown quail or guinea hen or whatever with three chicks. It's summer and the babies are learning to walk. Helpless creatures, I don't even like to think of their future.

The soft blue sky blended with white clouds is darkening. It's 6:30. I'd better stop and get ready to rest.

July 23

12:15 a.m.

Read and you don't have time for prayer *before*. But I "recited." *There's only this*. Brush aside smirks and misconceptions, need to please a public or scientific community, etc. Lotus feet are lotus feet. Lord Siva is auspicious. Join the community of the faithful and learn the science of Krishna.

Fears are vanquished (doubts too) when you see the Lord's lotus feet. They are represented by the First and Second Cantos.

It's like spreading paint on Bristol boards or a big page. You desire to cover a page with written words too. A broad stroke of brown embarrasses you because you thought it would be beautiful, but it reminds you of something horrible. Make it beautiful by adding a pleasing light tan stripe next to it. Why are your hand movements straight and square? Why don't you wriggle? The page takes shape as I add later, almost desperately, a figure with a human head and eyes that resemble big seeds.

"There were some nice free-write prayers, but they didn't go to completion," the editor wrote. The manuscript was returned in the mail, "We got a feeling of potentiality but not completion. Are you willing to write these over?"

"Oh no," I said, "I won't." I've gone beyond that. If it's not good enough now, it's not going to be improved by patching it up. How can you add to or rewrite improvisation? Better to spend your time on a new one. Keep going until it reaches completion. It has to reach *something* eventually. Elvin Jones once described a drum solo as looking for an open door. Sometimes it takes longer to find the door and sometimes shorter.

What's this got to do with Lord Siva's prayer and Krishna's two lotus feet? Do we have to stop always at the feet? Can we not see His smiling face? "When one sees the lotus feet of the Lord, all kinds of doubts and fears within the heart are vanquished." (*Bhag.* 4.22.52)

I don't understand why you won't rewrite the PMrB 2 ms if it needs it.

Cross out and

you

cross out your life.

That voice I recorded *wanted* to be heard.

Add to it, make sense of it,

make *incense*

in a Spiritual

Sky factory. This is,

after all,

the material world, Prabhu,

but our spiritual master said

we can do it to make money for
the mission. We hear *Krishna* book
and our guru's speech,
*bhajan*s, and that sound and our
purpose make it the
spiritual world.

* * *

Of course, we all want to produce works of genuine merit. I could add to a purport, I suppose, but to a free-write?

Yes, we must be fearless (Bg. 16.1). Fear is a creation of the bodily concept of life. Fear hinders freedom. The purpose of writing is to free oneself of the wriggles and the sweats. It doesn't cure hay fever though, or even prevent it, but it can, like an effective prayer, remove the fear of the needles and tubes inserted in a newborn baby and allow him to go home with his mom to be nurtured.

She said (the one with a child who is well) that she fears for him in this nasty world. Well, what can I say to that? I can't say, "We (or he) never should have come here in the first place." The fact is, we *are* here and we have to do the work. "Unless one becomes fearless and joyful, he cannot understand the science of God." (*Bhag.* 4.24.52, purport)

Become joyful in the face of birth and death, disease and old age. Srila Prabhupada says people need to discuss the miseries. They also need to accept the solution, which begins with hearing about Krishna. Only Krishna can activate our original, fearless nature.

How far do we have to go to reach the final stage? How much do I have to write before I say it's complete? What are we waiting for? What's supposed to happen? Whitney Balliet said Coltrane's solos lasted as long as a good meal. That long? How much more did he have to go then, and what *is* it that makes it complete?

I thought everything remained incomplete.

"My dear Lord" (I'm copying out sacred text. I know I could get a scanner, but I want to handwrite it), "those who desire to purify their existence must always engage" (pause) "those who are serious . . . "

". . . must always engage in meditation upon Your lotus feet, as described above."

"Those who are serious about executing their occupational duties" (will we have to meet schism members in the spiritual world?) "and want freedom from fear must take to this process of *bhakti-yoga*."

People speak of meditation but don't know what it means. real meditation is on the Lord's lotus feet.

But what does that mean,
literally? Do you import two feet into your head?

We are not impersonalists. Yes, there is a figurative or poetic meaning, but the literal meaning is the point. God is a person with an eternal form, including feet. He's beautiful. We are being told a secret here. Start His worship at the feet.

You have to come to the platform of devotion. *VarnaSrama* or other yogas are external. *Sthane sthitah Sruti katam*: hear the messages through the ears. Hear of His

feet, become free of fear. He submits Himself to a devotee who hears sincerely. It's pious work; the Lord clears his heart.

Don't imagine. Don't be over-active. Don't concoct. Just hear.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

A gray and white cat jumped up on the windowsill outside and looked in through the window. I didn't see her until she meowed. I jumped up and chased her away. The top window was open, and I was afraid she would come in. A few moments later she again jumped on the windowsill and peered in at me. This time I closed both the window and the curtain. I didn't like her peering in at me like that.

Maybe I was nervous because I had just been answering a letter about Srila Prabhupada's emphasis and the difference between him and another guru. I realized that all we want is an exclusive, simple understanding. I won't repeat it all here.

Then I went for a walk. The sky is dark today and my ankle hurt, so it was not a sprightly walk. The clouds descended further, and as I chanted I thought, "Yes, this is the prayer." The main thing is to pay attention to the sound vibration. This is the prayer of my life. I don't need to learn any other. Truth is ultimately subjective. The "jealous" love we have for Prabhupada and the exact way he taught us are absolute for his followers.

M. will soon be here in the adjoining kitchen to prepare breakfast. It takes him no more than half an hour. After breakfast, we have our business meeting.

O gray dark dawn, what is your secret? I don't have to go off alone to join the Navy on a day like this, or go to work in some shop or office. You have given me this day to use as I like.

After the walk, while sitting on the floor in the hallway unlacing my boots, I imagined what my Godbrother might say when he comes here in three days. He might say, "It appears you do nothing all day long." To that I would reply cheerfully, "No, I am quite busy. Plenty of communications and things to do."

I keep looking to that window expecting to see that Cheshire cat grinning in at me with eyes like blazing jewels, but she hasn't returned. Lord Siva describes the form of the Lord whom he worships, known as Lord Aniruddha. He calls Him the Supreme Person and says he worships Him. The Lord teaches us *bhakti*, which is the highest process. I can't remember any of the verses specifically, but I remember at the end of them, Srila Prabhupada writes that we should always pray. Then the Pracetas enter the water. Much later, Narada will come. Or was that with the HaryaSvas?

I admitted in my letter that I don't know the Sanskrit terms delineating the science of *rasa-tattva* in Gaudiya Vaisnavism. I don't need to know them either. Someone else can learn to show opposing parties of *panditas* that we know our stuff. As for me, I'll specialize in the simple understanding of Prabhupada's books. That's what I hope to do.

* * *

O sleepy boy,
the day is yours to grab, seaman.

You are free to worship and
chant Hare Krishna
and to write free-writes.
You ask me why you should
follow so closely behind the
Srimad-Bhagavatam.
I'll tell you why "so you don't veer off the road
and plunge into a ravine.
You have a habit of doing that
and have crashed more than once
on your ISKCON path. Follow
under the arch on the Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg
and accept his truth.

* * *

4:25 p.m.

A headache started at 7 a.m. and incapacitated me, although I just snuck in reading two *Slokas* and purports. Lord Siva says only devotional service can bring us to the eternal spiritual world. Time cannot vanquish a devotee because he takes shelter at the Lord's lotus feet. Liberation is impossible by *karmi* activity, and even *jnanis* cannot attain it. But it's easy for the devotee. Both the king of heaven and the big *yogis* desire the ultimate goal.

Fortunately, Prabhupada has trained me in *Bhagavatam* reality. Others are baffled by it, can't come close to its reality. I lament that I can't come closer, but Prabhupada didn't teach us to be dejected because we are fallen and nothing and God is the infinite all-good. Somehow we should not become discouraged. When I read that it's easy for the *bhaktas* to enter the eternal world, I think, "But it's not easy for me." However, that too should be considered positive. Even if I can't make it in this lifetime, I can continue my attempt in the next. Therefore, I should now use my time well and pray to remember Krishna and resume my devotional service as soon as possible in the next life.

It's all complicated, but devotional service brings light to the situation. However, you have to have faith.

When my Godbrothers visit, I have to face the reality of my life. A headache crowns my reality. I cannot maintain a routine, and I cannot maintain a travel schedule. I can no longer meet many people or do big preaching events or even small ones. All I can do is this.

I don't even have the strength to rewrite. I just write and let it go. My editor uses whatever she finds usable. Now if I were to continue PMrB, each verse and purport would have to be substantial. If I don't bring one verse to completion, I can't skip over it and print something else. It doesn't lend itself to selection. EJW is good for that; I write in my world, my real world, with all its physical limits, and the publishing goes on separately. Workers enter the vineyard and pick what they can while I go on growing the grapes.

In the few minutes when I tried to do something besides feel pain today, I glanced at the editor's Introduction to Kierkegaard's *Sickness Unto Death*. It made me remember how exciting it is to write separate books and to invest in each as much literary genius as one possesses. Kierkegaard wrote of his personal suffering regarding a lost love (regina) and applied it to the universal theme of sacrificing what we love most in surrender to God's will. Great art comes when the individual expression weds with the universal. For me, I concentrate on the individual. Others may accept it as universal, but I don't consciously create a universal link. Kierkegaard's editor, Bretall, writes that science appeals to sense-data because anyone can perceive it. Art, however, "appeals to what is found by the individual in his particularity, with just this personal make-up and just this special experience of the world, *when this experience is penetrated by reflection*, as it was in Kierkegaard's case."

Do I penetrate by reflection? I suppose I try to do that. I sense *something* when I see the cat at the window. It's just a cat, but it's surcharged with the moment, the pre-dawn, the surreal moment of me indoors and a beast on the outside looking in. When you live in writing practice, then your recording of ordinary or individually private experiences can appeal to a reader. I'm aware of art and I guess I seek it out, but I know too much preoccupation with it is deadly.

I've got a headache, that's all. I'm an author with a headache, but to hell with that. I'm an aspiring devotee waiting for a headache to lessen so I can return to concentrated reading and writing. In the meantime, I'm trying to understand the point of the pain.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

Just shaved my face and looked in the mirror. I wanted to talk to someone about where I'm going. I seem to sense less of a mission than I used to feel. Am I a writer who should try to achieve something in literary art on behalf of the Krishna consciousness movement, or am I a simple, lowly devotee who's trying to bring himself more into remembrance of Krishna by reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and chanting? If it's the latter, then there is less reason to seek out art in writing. (Even thought of asking GNP workers, "Please don't ask more of me. My career is over. I'll keep writing, however, and if you like, you can take things from it." Then I thought, "What do you mean, 'If you like?' They're only doing it because I have asked them to.")

Kierkegaard thought of himself as primarily a poet and only secondarily as a preacher. He wanted to write art, be remembered at least by his solitary reader, yet in his books, he strove in the most personal way to understand what it means to be a Christian in Christendom.

* * *

Lord Siva begs to associate with devotees. I can't concentrate on it right now. Instead, my mind turns to the Brooklyn temple, to Satya dasi, to the New York Ratha-yatra, then to Lough Erne, to the boat passing with the yellow umbrella on deck.

But it's raining.

The grass is wet.

"My dear Lord . . . I think your real benediction will be to allow me to associate with such devotees." (*Bhag.* 4.28.58)

Which devotees are association for me? My Godbrother over lunch? Narada in this book? Madhu? GNP workers? Melville and his circle: the last years.

He humped over the hill last
we saw of him in his
hiking boots, he wished to
die because of the pain and
diminishment and died off
early and wrote no
more
just a big diary at the
end.

The devotee is happy because he can hear about Krishna. Material nature doesn't touch him. Nothing matters but Krishna.

Happy by association with Krishna
and His pure devotees.
Happy he is, but
pays dues,
paints faces on sidewalks
for money "they throw a
few coins for his wife and his kids
but he's happy
in this world
knowing Krishna.

July 24

2:50 a.m.

Missed my midnight reading. Had to wait for the headache to go down. It's almost gone now, but I still don't have the concentration and calm I need to read with attention. Feeling mentally feverish because I want to make up for lost time.

Blow a horn
for you not
me "for Krishna.

I said some guy looked phony, but maybe that's who he is. Maybe he's playing a role he really wants to play because he sees it as effective preaching. Well, I didn't like his style, but what then of my own? Who am *I*? Am I the person who wears the *sannyasi* skirt? Do I want to wear sweat pants and a sweatshirt and wander around like Albert Einstein in a daze of writing and reading?

Madness mild
Hid wild
the poor cat, the
poor helpless chicks
of the hen, our dog

ate 'em, or he would
at least kill as sport
in his instinctive romp.
"That's the material world."

* * *

The kids in Wicklow are excited by the arrival of the llamas. They came from
England, missed the ferry, then had to wait twelve hours for the next one, poor llamas.
Feelin' better that I can
express in an
Italian expresso cappuccino
monks and long-haired girls
sixteen-year-olds in Levis
singing with guitar
poems of their 1960s
eternal youth and
dead old hippie poets
dying dying dead
now after
misusing the body
drug-wasted and lamenting
old fools.
It's too late.

* * *

I took the safe path,
and eternal, seeking
ever
my Swami. Laugh, America,
have a good laugh
a good look at
the animal (thin) in the zoo,
his topknot and
wear-ever
wristwatch, his
funny look and tortured headache,
just go ahead and laugh.
Then throw your Popsicle sticks
at him "it's his
feeding time.

* * *

Prose hose sock
Soren
word pose ain't
solvin' my dilemma.
Krishna Art Pose
Christ Have Sale
I don't have to work for a
living, see, but I paid off the karma in
headaches.

* * *

This day I'll read the
songs sung by Lord Siva and
maybe the Kumaras'
speech to Prthu "I
mean the original,
O speaker of the House.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

I have limited energy and wanna know how to go through a book or hour in whatever time I've got. Hey, Mista Jive, I gotta see you. My unconscious tells me you is a good fella. Whadya say?

Belch, gelch. Kierkegaard is hard going. Kumaras "pure, high, transcendental teachings. (Smile when you say that.)

Reporter: "Please tell the folks what you are talking about."

Yes.

Rare esteem achieved. Wet-haired *yogis* came up in the Ganges interplanetary river system. *Yogis* like Durvasa are much faster than jets.

Oh, but Prabhupada, those are just Hindu myths (they would say).

Amazing he convinced us all. In the 1960s spirit, we were not obedient to what they taught in school. Darwin and Marx and Freud and Henry Miller "all the gods collapse. We leapt into the absurd, although we soon realized that it wasn't absurd at all. It was true.

All truth.

The way it is.

Writing this until the sky
is clear enough

to go out for a walk.

Sergeant Wilcox added his
measure to the beef account and
I just didn't have enough energy

to paint with all it takes and
yesterday I got sick.
O rexroth, dense with
allusion, I
listened to that sound
at John Young's house not *so*
long ago. I'm not *so*
different except just I
added the one.

* * *

5:55 a.m.

In the mail (hung on outside doorknob in rain), a Global Priority letter from a disciple who says she and her husband and child are all back happily under the same roof. Sometimes Vaisnavas fight, but they should make up as Indra and Maharaja Prthu embraced under Lord Visnu's gaze.

* * *

8:23 a.m.

Up and at 'em. YogeSvara refers to both the Supreme Lord and the devotees. Ease into the stream. You have a little outboard motor attached to an old rowboat, a limited supply of petrol, and scarce funds to purchase more. YogeSvara, I am worshipping You. "To serve the topmost devotee means to hear from him about the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.4.22.33*, purport) That is a pious life.

Deliciously dark sky, like *Syama* they say, the hue of fresh rain clouds. ParaSurama dasa is at Inis rath with his *pada-yatra* crew about to start a walking tour of rainy Ireland. Lord Siva proclaims the Brahmajyoti Krishna. Impersonalists cannot understand "how such a huge cosmic manifestation can rest in a person."

Raining, raining, the whole sky comes down with the mist.

There are pious things and impious things "the front and back of the Lord. Krishna is all-pervading in both impersonal and expanded forms. Yet He is not there. He's aloof. We don't have to speculate; just hear and understand the science, accept the *jnana* (theory) because it's in the book (*grantha, Sabda-brahma*). realize it, eventually, by His grace.

The material nature never disturbs the Supreme Lord, nor does it disturb His devotee. I'm not so pure, so I feel pinched. I'm spared certain pains because I am detached from family life, and although I live in a house, it's not mine. The phone is ringing, but I don't have to answer it. Yet still I'm concerned. What is the knight of resignation, who is the knight of faith, which one am I, and why do I have to learn that anyway?

The news is not good. The only good news is that God is love. Even if he's put in prison, the devotee would be able to find Krishna. M. wants to go to a homeopathic doctor in Dublin. I don't. Bury me not on the lone prairie. Where is the doctor of the soul?

A Godbrother went out to see the llamas in Wicklow. The weeds here are all wet, deeply rooted but padded down from the rain. The chicks hide in them. Sometimes I feel I have a vantage point from this window similar to what a child sees when he looks at an adult's world. Sometimes children pretend there is a war and that they are watching people being killed, or sometimes they watch whatever they see and remain silent.

Krishna created the material world in all its categories for those who want to enjoy through their senses. The Lord and His pure associates don't concern themselves with the difference between matter and spirit, creation, etc. rather, they stay in the spiritual energy.

The verses and the purports in sections like this start screaming at me. I can only take so much. My mind goes over the plains like Basho's traveling ghost. Come back! Come back and study, at least one more purport. Sit down and hear it, contain it. Then we'll let you go to another variety of devotional service. This is the most concentrated service. Just hear.

ISvara parama Krishna . . . you're in gurukula reciting it aloud, singing, shouting the Brahma-samhita.

(Gurukula "a buzzword bound to set you off . . .)

Aham sarvasya prabhavo . . . I am the source of all material and spiritual worlds, yet He exists before the creation "aham evasam evagre.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

"One should mold his life in such a way that he cannot live in peace without drinking the nectar of the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.22.22)

Lord Krishna makes everything happen. He creates the material ingredients, but they cannot act by themselves. Therefore, He enters as Supersoul, with the *jivas*, and then the action starts. It's all Him: *aparayam itastvanyam*.

Think of these categories or realities. It is described nowhere else. The *Vedas* are full of specific details about how things happen in relation to God in both the material world and the spiritual world. Kierkegaard, by contrast, deals with all the details of a complex *jiva* trying to surrender to God. Often it seems the Vedic teachers don't have much to say about this. Of course, Arjuna and others raise plenty of questions, and some things are said, but . . .

Oh boy

Rasta men aplenty
in Trinidad and me
in England and me
with pen and paper
the rain coming down
on this lightweight, this head,

* * *

Oh, he is misused
bemused
in body and brain
cupped in hands.
What you talkin'
'bout, man?
You crazy?
Why don't you write an
essay in three parts
and dialectics and
points one, two, three, four,
then rewrite it thirty-two
times (he said he did)
and be proud of that
instead of
this Puff the Magic Dragon stuff.

* * *

I can't repeat happiness
if I try.
Better to abscond, I mean,
Renounce jive from
the '50s and '60s and live
these last few days of your
autumn (one o'clock in Lord Brahma's
day, but it's later for me)
smiling
genuine
headachy
eking out a living
one purport at a time.

The *Bhagavatam* says we try to enjoy like bees in a honeycomb, but we get stung by the other bees. The Lord remains aloof from the squabble. Don't get stung trying to squeeze out the honey. When *jivas* insist, the Lord gives them the facility to build honeycombs. "Material enjoyment means inebriety, whereas spiritual enjoyment means pure enjoyment under the protection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.24.64, purport)

* * *

11:32 a.m.

During *gayatri* I thought of the cabin at Gita-Nagari where Lord Jagannatha, Subhadra, and Balarama are now waiting to celebrate their Ratha-yatra this Saturday.

That cabin "I picture the peaceful sleepiness of summertime there. Now there's a festival and there are plenty of devotees. How different it is there now. The old days are gone, never to be recovered. Unless I want to be reborn at the Tuscarora as a human, which I don't. *Gayatri* gone before I know it. Impressions in my mind when I close my eyes "a visual rendition of Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

"In one way or another everyone is busy denying the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and rejecting the supreme authority of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.24.65, purport) Destruction of families should be taken as indirect evidence of the authority of the Supreme Lord. We are all under the grips of the laws of material nature (and those laws are under a Lawmaker).

The universe and the individual bodies are subject to destruction. "However, the devotees do not fear the annihilation of the body, for they are confident that after the annihilation they will go back home, back to Godhead."

Krishna promises and asks Arjuna to proclaim, "My pure devotee will not be vanquished under any circumstances." I pray to realize it.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

It stopped raining. Took a walk with M. We chanted one round, and then I began to speak about my writing. I said I didn't want anyone to tell me how I should write. Still, sometimes I feel a need to talk about writing life and I have no one with whom to discuss it. I gave the example of Thomas Wolfe and how he made a mistake when he changed from his character Eugene Gant to his character George Weber. Then I spoke of Kierkegaard and how he wrote *books*. That is, he made a career of book-writing while at the same time wrote a journal. I don't seem to be able to write a book anymore, just this diary-like form, but more than that. What I'm doing is unique, I hope, but maybe it's not.

I don't like playing the author and praising myself. What I'm really doing is looking for confidence and joy in my service. I want the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing what I am meant to do and what I'm best at. My headaches limit me, so it's best I write something I can return to whenever I am clear of pain. I like the facility, but am I meant to do more?

I told M. how the editor usually encourages me that the process will teach me what I am meant to do if I will listen to it, but sometimes I wonder if I am meant to seek other guidance. I would distrust any source outside myself, however, even though people would be willing to advise me "or manipulate me "to do what they think is best. I go over this almost every day.

Then it occurred to me that EJW can stretch and become almost anything.

* * *

5:25 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada says in the purport at the end of Lord Siva's prayers that "one can execute devotional service anywhere and everywhere in the material existence simply by offering prayers unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* is also a prayer, for a prayer addresses the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His name and invokes good fortune by petitioning the Lord to allow one to engage in His devotional service." (*Bhag.* 4.24.69, purport)

Devotional service cannot be checked by material circumstances. We can cry out His name anywhere, and we can hear about Him (*jnane prayasam*).

* * *

8:34 p.m. (Free-write when I couldn't sleep)

Krishna, these headaches. O Krishna, I try to get to know You by reading and prayer, but is that the way? I stand with my mind and heart before You. O Lord, O Lord, O

Lord,

Repeat the

words until you ache.

Sickness unto death

despair. O Lord,

O Srila Prabhupada

and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*

you go directly to the heart.

I have done most of my literary work, I told M., and I meant that I didn't know what more I have to do. I am not a young man deciding on a career. Still, I could have more than a "last burst." I could have more. Krishna, give me time. Or Lord, give me the mercy to know You sooner or later "as You desire. As I desire. It's *my* desire I wish to increase

but "

sing it now "

I can't seem to go to You and

it takes a long, long time.

Hare Krishna "those words on my wall.

July 25

12:15 a.m.

"My dear princes, in the form of a prayer I have delineated the yoga system of chanting the holy name." (*Bhag.* 4.24.71)

Muni-vrata: " . . . become as good as a great saint simply by not talking unnecessarily with unwanted persons."

We have to act in this world and yet that's entangling. While we act we can counteract karma by always remembering our relationship with Krishna. "Thus despite our

engagement in the creation, we cannot be deviated from the path of Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 4.24.72, purport)

Basic *Sraddha*. Take your choice "the *Vedas* or Darwin. I side with Vyasadeva. I do my best to receive him with submission. I mix with the Lord's devotees. I may not be a devotee myself yet, but I try to serve the devotees and work for their cause. My first work is to transform myself through prayer and other services "writing, reading, dovetailing "then representing the *parampara* as best I can.

When answering a letter or giving a lecture I rarely refer to my inadequacies or struggles. It's too private. I may hint at it (I like to hear other preachers hint at it too), but it's not my main discourse. We are meant to preach manfully on the *Bhagavatam* text assigned. We are meant to become spokespersons or instruments to convince others of Srila Prabhupada's message.

"Except for the service of the Supreme Lord, whatever we want is called illusion, *maya*."

I finished reading "The Song Sung by Lord Siva." I hope to be back to it later. Always chant until the light goes out, and then chant in the dark. Or light a candle and write another page. Learn how to write better, be a better devotee. Follow the instructions you have imbibed. Live them, the prayers, scientific teachings, directions for preaching, and so on. That's what it means to mold your life and become a Krishna conscious person. You'll be an individual in service of a cause.

I write in a letter, "Let's be devotees." I read letters others have written to me and then answer the earnest questions. Then I write from my life. The senses want to tell their story, what they saw, touched, smelled, and heard. The heart wants to tell its story too, what it ached over, what it loved, where it felt joy. Don't forget Krishna. That's all I want to say.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

M. clearing his throat and shutting doors. I asked him to be quiet, very quiet, when he shuts doors. He's going to Dublin today to find relief for his hay fever. I asked him to look for a copy of *The Art of Prayer*, which is based on the letters of Theophan the recluse.

Someone ought to know God
directly,
and if it were me I'd sure be fired
up. But my eye-
ache might be just the same. Would it stop
me? I'd be outwardly still
maybe, unable, but I'd find ways
to be with God
to try to save souls "
my life is for that "
and save myself
through preaching.

* * *

Mirror calm. "I'm weak physically," she wrote me, "and how do I know what Krishna wants me to do?" What should I say? You don't know, or you do know, but you ask guru, read Krishna's statements, ask devotees, and pray. Then you do the best you can, knowing that Krishna influences our intelligence. Do what feels right and possible and that to which you can give your heart.

* * *

Don't be astonished to hear that the Pracetas stood in the water for ten thousand years. "That's just a story in a book," Brahmananda said to Srila Prabhupada on a morning walk (Vrndavana, 1975), after Prabhupada said that Krishna was not ordinary because He lifted Govardhana Hill.

Srila Prabhupada replied, "You may say it's just a story that you have a father, but your mother says it is not story, here is your father." I liked Prabhupada's defense.

"But we can't see Krishna today."

Yes, you can. You simply need eyes of devotion.

Srila Prabhupada had an answer for every doubt, every agnostic or atheist's challenge. Finally he would say, "You are a rascal if you do not accept God. I kick on your face."

We could call the Pracetas and their ten thousand years absurd or, as Kierkegaard put it, an offense to reason, but we accept it as fact, or we want to accept it, because it's in the scripture.

M. is cooking my breakfast in the adjoining room, stirring porridge in a pot while talking on the telephone. I hear what he is saying and even consider objecting, then let it go. He'll be gone for the day again and it'll be quiet.

* * *

9:07 a.m.

I think I'll take a break from the sequential reading I have done this year starting with the Second Canto. The Puranjana allegory is good, of course, and I've read it many times, but right now I would like to read something else. Maybe selections on the holy name or another section of the *Bhagavatam*. Maybe even read just past the Puranjana section.

* * *

10:46 a.m.

It's relatively easy to make changes (mode of passion), but it's harder to carry them through over time (mode of goodness). Let's see what will happen now that I have decided not to read *Bhagavatam* for awhile. I have pulled *The Nectar of Devotion* from the shelf; I haven't started reading it yet, but like the idea of starting there. I will read a small amount at a time and then pray for a tiny drop of Krishna conscious spirit to help me go from comprehension of the passage to personal application of the same passage, and prayer to the Lord and my master.

You had some intimations that maybe . . . something about the writing could change? How can I change if I myself in my innermost desires don't change?

There was a knock on the door. It was Manu saying that Madhu, who is now in Dublin, forgot the name of the book I wanted him to get me. I repeated the title, *The Art of Prayer*. We talked a little about my Godbrother's upcoming visit.

So far today my barge is sailing clear. I will do Prabhupada's *puja* soon. I feel good about taking my nose away from the reading grindstone. Since writing *Sacrifice for the Bhagavatam*, I was trying to concentrate only on the *Bhagavatam* and to read it canto by canto. It's not harmful to relax sometimes, to stop and look for deeper prayer through the change.

* * *

4:17 p.m.

I liked Madhu's saying yesterday that I *should* think every day, "How shall I write? Should I try for more literary art or just write?" He said I should be free of other concerns so that I can think of this. If I don't worry about reading and writing, I'll worry about money and manpower, temple management, *varnaSrama*, families, etc.

I'm looking at *The Nectar of Devotion* in a different way. I'm writing heart-felt prayers and reminders to pray on Post-its and leaving a trail of them throughout the book.

Jayananda crying, protesting, his mother lecturing him. A devotee wrote me a note about how I used to share some unpublished writings with him and have now stopped. There doesn't seem to be a pressing need for him to read them now, and as he admitted, his life is strewn over many subjects. We both doubted he could give them the attention I'd want him to offer them. Also, he admitted he felt anxious when he read certain sections. For my part, I didn't like to think someone was judging or disapproving my intimate notes.

I'm encouraged how Kierkegaard wrote for such a small audience, yet that didn't diminish his dedication to his authorship and feeling its importance for Christianity. He was aware that he had an intellectual and poetic gift, and that he was being used as an instrument by God. It humbled him. When he saw that his writing disturbed people and caused him serious inconvenience in terms of seeking employment or simply living in peace with his countrymen, he decided to sacrifice himself for the truth. I have no such great gifts, but still, what I write is my path.

* * *

5:15 p.m.

Ears straining to pick out various motor sounds. I'm waiting to hear the deep guttural of the Ford Econoline. Hasn't arrived yet. Plane or helicopter unseen in the sky, passing cars or trucks. Big white clouds, soundless. The clouds flatten and fade as they float by.

* * *

6:15 p.m.

M. is really late. I'll be taking rest in forty-five minutes. From my desk I can see that my Godbrother has arrived. He's a friendly devotee. I knew him once from America. He used to go bravely to the airport to distribute books even when born-again Christians tried to break up his sales. I sat with him on a rainy day years ago and told him early memories of Srila Prabhupada. After that, not much relationship in over twenty-five years. This devotee is physically and mentally strong; I am weak and delicate. I usually don't like to admit that. I prefer to think that I'm delicate, yet . . . strong? At least I'm still surviving. Srila Prabhupada maintains me with his mercy so that I don't fall down.

* * *

8:20 p.m.

M. drove in about 8 p.m. I went out to see what he was doing, but he wasn't there. Now I can't sleep. Probably won't be able to get up at midnight now, but at least I want to be up by 1:30 to chant.

July 26

4:18 a.m.

Some kind of arthritic pain in my wrist. Phil Rizzuto complained of the same kind of pain, and also said he felt cold even in the summer in the broadcaster's booth. He hitchhiked home to the Bronx once and met a devotee, who gave him a book by Srila Prabhupada.

Was it a beginner's book?

No, it was deep.

Should have been given a *rasika* books by a *rasika* author. Get him started on the goal of life.

Srila Prabhupada *is rasika*.

Raisin

Razor

Ras "ic!

Ick.

* * *

5:47 a.m.

NOD memories of past readings. I have taken notes before while reading it. "Once again," as E. B. White wrote with love for his summer vacation home. "Once Again, To The Lake." His essay ended with an awareness of approaching death. How many more times would he be allowed to enjoy his life? For how many more years will I be able to relish *The Nectar of Devotion* and the particular sweet identity I have of myself as Srila Prabhupada's disciple? How much longer to appreciate that this book something I can read when I want to taste my relationship with Prabhupada?

* * *

8:30 - 10:10 a.m.

I read the Preface. *Bhakti-rasankirtana* in Cambridge Park, "The nectar of devotion is the ocean of bliss!" The nectar of devotion . . . rupa Gosvami . . . Prabhupada.

Daiva, destiny. My destiny to be delicate, to be . . . calm waters. To have pain. I can't live forever. It seems nice to listen to the pitter-patter of the rain, and especially to hear someone murmur Hare Krishna mantras in another room, but it just can't last. *Bhakti*, however, lasts forever.

* * *

3:24 p.m.

Met with my Godbrother over lunch. He has beautiful Deities. They're much bigger than my Srila Prabhupada. He has Gaura-Nitai Deities (he has been worshiping Them for about sixteen years), a large Nrsimhadeva, a Giri-Govardhana, and recently added, Radha-Krishna. Radha-Krishna in particular caught my eye. My Godbrother travels with all of Them in one piece of carry-on luggage. It made me hesitate again about my decision not to travel with Srila Prabhupada.

We spoke about Prabhupada and how we had both taken shelter and then withdrawn from another guru. I admitted I had allowed the other guru to become more prominent than Srila Prabhupada when it came to interpreting the scriptures. My Godbrother told me that once when some of Srila Prabhupada's disciples went to hear from Sridhara Maharaja in 1974, another Gaudiya Math disciple of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura appeared and spoke something against our Srila Prabhupada. Prabhupada said his disciples who heard it were "scarred for life." Srila Prabhupada will forgive us our folly, my Godbrother said, but we too are now scarred for life.

We also spoke of Krishnaloka. It was a nice talk. We will meet again tomorrow for a couple of hours.

* * *

5 p.m.

Went to the temple to hear my Godbrother's lecture. I told Madhu I wanted to go because my head was clear today. The boat had no oar lock, so M. and I each took an oar and paddled, canoe style.

I have decided to go back to reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I shouldn't be embarrassed that I change back and forth. Maybe the meeting with my Godbrother put my head in a different place. It seems good to stick with the *Bhagavatam*. I think, however, that I will skip the Puranjana chapters and go to where he becomes a woman.

Reading is a crunch one way or another. We all have a desire to relish the topmost *rasas*, but we have to face the fact that Srila Prabhupada is not only giving us nectar, but instructing us on how best to reach the topmost goal in honesty. We can't avoid the work of facing our own spiritual lives. That would be like talking about something rather than doing it.

Well, I'm doing it now, sitting in class, waiting for my Godbrother to come. Hope my head holds up. I've got an Esgic in my pocket just in case.

* * *

Nectar of Devotion Post-its

July 25 - 26, 1997

Preface, p. 11

Stay in the mood of Srila Prabhupada writing this in 1970, how we worshiped him, how we lovingly received this "lawbook" and studied it. Keep this attitude even today. Let reason and objective scholarship be "offended." read prayerfully, in devotion.

Srila Prabhupada starts by reminding us how Lord Caitanya uplifted the two brothers (as He also did Haridasa Thakura), despite their Muslim association.

The mercy to uplift the fallen is also Prabhupada's power.

p. 12

This history first came to us from Prabhupada alone and no other source. I don't want to now "enlarge" or objectify the knowledge I received from him.

Also, I have read these accounts in *The Nectar of Devotion* many times. What's the benefit of yet another reading? Just to refresh myself of the facts? I'd prefer to slow down and read prayerfully "stay with sentences until I can feel them coming from Srila Prabhupada and with my original faith.

I *return* to Srila Prabhupada. He states, "These teachings of Lord Caitanya to Srila rupa Gosvami Prabhupada are narrated in our book *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*." Just meditating on that sentence about Lord Caitanya teaching rupa Gosvami for ten days, letting the scene and context sink in "I also root out from my heart the impressions I received of what was called a more *rasika* version, along with the idea that that version is more or deeper. It's a delicate point, yet I wish to remove those impressions.

Certainly a Gaudiya devotee-scholar could say this differently, could emphasize *madhurya-rasa* under more Sanskrit categories. We may appear "simple" in comparison to them. But this is what our spiritual master gave. It is deep and it is realized. If we accept it submissively, we too may gain *vijnana*, which is worth tons of unrealized "*rasika*" talk. I'm fighting for this "not for a public debate against another guru and his followers, but to keep my loyalty and love intact. To get it back.

p.13

Don't measure what your spiritual master says. Accept it as truth. To do this, to enter this quality of hearing, you must slow down and savor what you read. Wait until you can tune into it. Or just stop and pray for it. That's how I'm reading about mundane *rasa* and *bhakti-rasa*. I'm anticipating he will say *bhakti-rasa* is ever-fresh. Then how come I get tired of *japa* after eighteen rounds? Why is it so hard to read? This is the test: how to believe in the absolute when you see your failure to taste it.

p. 14

Ultimate faith in eternity. If you don't believe it, everything fails. *Daiva*, destiny, awards us our next body. All *rasas* end in death except *bhakti-rasa*. "Therefore, all bona fide activities in Krishna consciousness are *amrta*, or permanent. This is the subject

matter of *The Nectar of Devotion*. This eternal engagement in *bhakti-rasa* can be understood by a serious student upon studying *The Nectar of Devotion*."

General instructions are given and we must apply them in our own life.

p. 15

"renovating our relationship with Krishna in five primary *rasas* . . ." You can attain eternal life of bliss and knowledge.

To live means to love someone. By loving Krishna everyone can become happy.

While reading this page on love I think of my sister and her marriage "Madeline and Tommy. That's not eternal love. Or my teenage love for rock 'n' roll. Then I think of the title of SK's book, *Works of Love*. He teaches the Christian love of neighbor, for God's sake. Krishna consciousness goes directly to Krishna and then spreads out like ripples in a pond in which we have thrown a rock.

p. 16

The same example: water the root, feed the stomach. rather than reject these examples as too familiar, let me say I yearn to water the root of my devotional creeper. Just a few drops. Feel the branches nourished.

"*The Nectar of Devotion* will teach us how to turn the one switch that will immediately brighten everything." Srila Prabhupada is appealing to the confused men and women in America.

p. 17

I have to be somewhat easy on myself. If I can't read with attention and devotion . . . I still have to read . . . Maybe I should go back to regularly reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* where I had accepted the discipline of reading no matter what.

July 27

12:12 a.m.

Confessing to my Godbrother, and he to me, how we developed a relative vision of our spiritual master, something we never had in the past, after hearing from another guru. We are scarred for life. I am too frightened now by the results I received to ever allow that to happen again. I know Prabhupada will take me back to himself. I need to accept myself back too, and not just because of this issue, but because I am no longer the railroad preacher I once was. I have to learn to accept the limits being imposed upon me by health and temperament and be myself freely.

"When a living entity is accustomed to think of a particular subject matter and become absorbed in a certain type of thought, he will think of that subject at the time of death . . . one will think of the subject that has occupied his life when he was awake, lightly sleeping or dreaming, or while he was deeply sleeping." (*Bhag.* 4.28.28, purport) Thus King Puranjana gave up his body while remembering his wife. That's a good warning not to dwell on past attachments and not to create new ones. At the time of death, we won't be making those pretty speeches to bedside friends that we may have planned. We will be forced to reveal our inner selves.

I was impressed by my Godbrother's radha-Krishna Deities. They were not installed, he said, but what does that mean? My Srila Prabhupada "is he installed? I don't even

remember. I did some little pouring ceremony, I think, but the real installation is in the heart. How deeply installed is he?

Hare Krishna. Fifty-eight-year-old man changes course in life. Learns to love the Lord. After showing me his Deities, my Godbrother gestured to the small computer on his desk and said, "Here's another deity." Yes, I knew immediately what he meant. I have my pen and legal pads.

* * *

"All actions are taken into account and the living entity is offered a new body by his superiors." We do have superiors and we cannot avoid them. We will have to accept a new body, a next life, whether we remember it later or not.

Still, every situation has its new advantages. For example, Puranjana's attachment to his wife made him take a woman's body in his next life, which wasn't a step up, but his pious acts allowed him to become the wife of a great devotee. We have to learn to take advantage of whatever good points our situations offer. Krishna always provides new opportunities to surrender the self and to culture our Krishna consciousness more.

* * *

In the class yesterday, my Godbrother emphasized that we have to come to the mode of goodness in all our acts. He spelled it out. *Bhakti* is most effective when practiced from the mode of goodness. I was inspired to hear it.

The higher authorities render justice to the *jiva* according to his desires. We can't expect a different result as if we are complete mercy cases. Although mercy is causeless, we are more likely to come under the hand of universal justice, even as it is administered by Krishna, to bring us to a purer platform. We have to take responsibility for the desires that live on in our psyches "those things we desire while we're awake, lightly sleeping, dreaming. Krishna, Krishna, I wish to dream of You. I also hope to become a better devotee in the few years left to me.

Vaidarbhi married King Malayadhvaja, who was both a great devotee and a king who stood as firm as the Malaya Hill. Srila Prabhupada says a great devotee is firm and makes other devotees similarly firm. "With his devotional flag unfurled, he always stands fast to conquer other conceptions of transcendental realization." (*Bhag.* 4.28.29, purport) He can even conquer the kingdom of God, by Krishna's grace.

Lord, let me in.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

Some letters answered, but always more coming in. Feeling restless and not wanting to go inward. I thought of going next door to see Madhu just to talk, but that's just restlessness. I feel like being entertained rather than sitting alone with my own face and this page.

My Godbrother gave the example of the Pentecostals up all night singing country songs about Jesus. Are they pure devotees? They eat pigs and drink liquor, and maybe

have loose sex, but they call out to Jesus. Or, for all we know, they could be living always in the mode of goodness. Is it possible to dwell in lower mode habits while (slovenly) performing devotional service? He had analyzed everything well.

If I don't have a headache in the afternoon, I'll go again to his class.

Krishna, the truth is . . .

I'm playing the typewriter like Horace Silver, pounding at silvery keys, music to my ears and eyes, the blues, the Krishna conscious blues. All you people are invited to my web site. I count on your blessings.

Chant Hare Krishna. It's an ancient chant, a mercy chant, and it's free. All you have to give is your life. His shoulders hunch in a loose jive over the piano.

Hey, I thought you was leaving such mundane reference behind?

Okay, I'm at a *pandal* in New Delhi with thirty thousand other people. It looks like Ebbets Field on the day of a big game. I'm singing with Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa and a star hoop player from the Bronx. Then we discuss Mid-East suffering.

No, we discuss the dawn, and when we can see it, the lake. That's more mode of goodness.

I'll be okay. I want more than anything to love spontaneously and sincerely, to please the Almighty. I don't mean the Giant or the Horn of Plenty. I mean the Lord of Vraja-dhama.

* * *

8:43 a.m.

I said, "Wednesday is EkadaSi, so in the next two days I should get a headache . . . uh, hairache . . ."

"Haircut," Madhu said. "I hope you don't get a headache."

"That word is in my vocabulary," I said, feeling the Freudian slip. I don't want to will myself into a headache. What's in a word? It doesn't even describe the experience that well. It's not that my head aches; rather, the pain is sharp.

I'm not attempting to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* right now. Sprinkled cold water on my face.

The answer to the question . . . is

in the ear ache,

body loss, weight-height,

you see the words

are not so important. Rather, they are interchangeable.

As he spoke he made little chalk marks, half-words, on the blackboard and then erased them. It was a way to hold our attention and it worked. A little chalk number or word, even a quick illustration (he did one of bamboo sticks on fire), kept us alert like small kids during a magic show. I even heard one of the little boys ask his father, "Daddy, what are the words next to those numbers?" A string of numbers, a string of pearls. A verse reference 1.3.7, and then gone, only to be replaced by arrows left and right: "As in chemistry you have reversible equations, so the modes of nature affect the quality and the quality affects the modes."

Kierkegaard said unless we can seduce others, we cannot deliver them (liberate them). Interesting concept.

Dawson and Hines are purveyors of quality smut. Frank and Smith, sellers of Pitch. O Stevie, the hours. Preserve yourself so you can be jolly in *sanga* at noon. But I heard that *sanga* should be detached. Don't be slobbery. Associate out of duty; give only Krishna consciousness. Hmm.

A *bhakta* handed in his initiation exam. In answer to, "When can you reject a spiritual master?" he wrote, "If he shows interest in anything material."

Wow. It's as easy as that. Find a super-hero and you're okay.

* * *

3:04 p.m.

Sakhyam atma-nivedanam is the advanced platform of *raganuga*. "A neophyte devotee cannot actually become a preacher." (*Bhag.* 4.28.30, purport)

I advertised my desire to love Srila Prabhupada as I used to in 1966 when I was pure and innocent. relative and absolute. So many things we discussed in two days. Now it is over and he'll be leaving early tomorrow morning. I asked him how he came to receive the Radha-Krishna Deities on his altar. There was a story behind it. Then he asked about the shack in *Shack Notes*: "Was that a transparent shack?" I said it was only a wooden frame covered with mosquito netting, and that it was in a man's backyard. We changed the subject again and talked about how he believes *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* was empowered by the GBC and will always be Srila Prabhupada's official biography. I thanked him for that.

That's how it went. No one knows the purport of this song because I don't always give it. It's buckshot from the hip. It's flowers. I mean no harm.

* * *

5:57 p.m.

I find relief when I apply paint. Pain is art "the ache for God.

Oh, I don't know. You can't say it. There are many things we can say, but some we can't. We paint or cry or both. Words bleed ""Nitai," "help." The words of his song-singing bleeding down my arm to this page. Something true.

"That shack, was it transparent?"

I had little to say. That's my private madness. It was an awkward beginning to a free-write career. I am never content.

July 28

12 a.m.

During the night I made a little prayer that Radha-Krishna may come to me in Their *murti* form. I like the size of my Godbrother's *murtis*. He says he never tires of seeing Krishna in his *tribhanga* form. Yes. And Srimati Radharani beside Him. Maybe Radha-Krishna will come to me in another way. I could draw pictures of Them. I could grow attached to Them. In 1972, Srila Prabhupada said *sannyasis* don't travel with

Deities, but in 1976 when I asked permission to worship Gaura-Nitai he said, "Private worship is nice."

If Srila Prabhupada had stayed in this world after 1977, we could have asked him so many questions. We can't guess what ISKCON might have been like if he had not disappeared because we cannot presume he would have always answered all questions exactly as he answered them up until 1977. His writings are not temporary, but it's hard to say what more would have been said. I only pray that he will guide me in the heart. I have so much still to learn in the realm of surrender and devotion. When Srila Prabhupada was asked what would please him most, he replied, "That you love Krishna." He taught us to love Krishna by loving and serving guru. Such love will bring us to Vrndavana.

"Unless one is an advanced devotee, he cannot fix his eyes on the Deity in the temple." (*Bhag.* 4.28.34, purport)

* * *

King Malayadhvaja attained perfect knowledge when he was "directly instructed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead" (*saksad bhagavatoḥ klana guruna harinah*). This can happen to us. When a devotee is completely purified by devotional service, the Supreme Personality of Godhead speaks to him directly. Don't expect it before that, though.

In the advanced stage, the devotee never acts for his own separate interest. rather, Krishna's interest is his interest. Thus he sees the material world as spiritual, and he sees ways to use material things in devotional service. "Thus if a so-called material thing is dovetailed in the service of the Lord, it is no longer to be considered material." (*Bhag.* 4.28.42, purport)

King Malayadhvaja represents the spiritual master, and his wife, Vaidarbhi, is the disciple. These are important instructions relevant for my continued relationship with Srila Prabhupada after his disappearance. May I receive the message in an inspired and practical way. I do know that we associated with Srila Prabhupada in his *vani* early in his preaching. "The personal, physical form is immaterial." *Yes. Vani. Vani* is also personal. His books, his teachings, the mission to preach, the chanting, the *prasadam*, the avoidance of nondevotees, and his instructions to speak about Krishna among devotees. *Vani*.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

After three clear days, a headache is rising across the top of my head and starting to lodge (burrow) into the spot behind the right eye. I'm going to take my one Esgic per week and see what happens.

* * *

12:20 noon

Almost three hours since taking the pill and the headache persists. When that band of pain is present, I can't read. Reading the *Bhagavatam* is not a casual act. I should be grateful for the times when I am up to it and try to increase them. I should look for minute-by-minute opportunities to read.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

The spiritual master and the disciple always keep company "as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master." That's what's left for us disciples of Srila Prabhupada "his instructions: chant and hear; preach and cooperate.

The purport to *Bhag.* 4.28.48 discusses how after the *acarya* disappears, insincere persons and cheaters introduce unauthorized processes, and things become disordered. This reads as a prophecy about ISKCON post-November 14, 1977. Somehow we're still moving forward, despite waves of disorder created by persons within and without ISKCON.

Perfect disciples follow the guru to relieve the situation and "to bring actual peace and happiness in the world."

* * *

I didn't cry immediately when Srila Prabhupada passed away. I was too numb. But I've been grieving ever since in one way or another. I need him; I lack the guide to whom I can surrender absolutely. We all have this problem. Now I'm scarred, but still with him. The bond is strong. Krishna consciousness is my life, but progress is slow. "Could do better." They're still writing that on my report cards.

". . . to execute the will of the spiritual master, the disciple should be prepared to lay down his life and abandon all personal considerations." (*Bhag.* 4.28.50, purport) We don't have to throw ourselves on the funeral pyre to show faithfulness to Srila Prabhupada. Rather, we are meant to *live* for him. Like Kunti-devi, however, who didn't live as a "merry widow" but only to care for her five children, we must live to take care of Prabhupada's devotees. Preserve yourself as *cela* and as active servant and preacher.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

We see the Supreme Personality of Godhead by seriously following the spiritual master's mission. We meet the Lord in the spiritual master's instructions. This implies that seeing and meeting may be indirect, although definite. *Vani-seva* is tangible, and it provides the strength we need to continue. We feel that strength in our ability to continue after Srila Prabhupada has disappeared. "Since the Lord is in the heart, He can advise the sincere disciple from within." (*Bhag.* 4.28.51, purport) The Supersoul guides us to

follow guru. We pray for that intelligence: "Please, dear Krishna, give me intelligence to follow my Gurudeva and not to deviate."

The Supersoul, in the form of a *brahmana*, asked the woman about the identity of the deceased person before her. She said, "He was my spiritual master, and I am perplexed about what to do in his absence." "At such a time the Supersoul immediately appears, provided the devotee is purified in heart by following the direction of the spiritual master. A sincere devotee who follows the instructions of the spiritual master certainly gets direct instructions from his heart from the Supersoul."

Then are the guru's instructions themselves *equal* to Supersoul, as good as Supersoul, and in that sense only, are they Supersoul? The guru's *vani* is as good as the Lord speaking, but the Lord on His own also dictates from within how to follow Him and guru. Prabhupada explains this further in his purport to Bg. 10.10.

* * *

5:58 p.m.

Notes on SK

July 25 - 28, 1997

I could go back and look at the anthology, but all I can put up with is a snippet here or there. I seem to get more when I read a commentary explaining SK and quoting him to illustrate a point. Kierkegaard demands too much, goes on and on in his rationalistic philosophizing. Although he is championing faith, love of God, and complete surrender, he does it by starting in the field of philosophy and working toward faith step by step. I don't need such a rigorous treatment and in fact, I can't stand it.

When you do read Kierkegaard, think of how his authorship can apply to your authorship. He had a grand plan; I seem to have none but to grope for new ways to express Krishna consciousness honestly. I may be able to learn from his dedication to writing.

It's the *idea* of SK that invites me, and it's that idea that may actually help me. SK himself is too much for me "and also not enough. He's too intellectual, philosophical, and wordy. He has too little concentration on *bhakti*. He can't speak on sweetness or even personalism to the degree that the Krishna conscious scriptures can. Granted, he's trying to give us a man's understanding . . . no, I shouldn't say *what* he's doing. I'm not a Kierkegaard scholar. I want to be a teacher and poet of Krishna conscious scriptures and life.

July 29

12:20 a.m.

"My dear friend, even though you cannot immediately recognize me, can't you remember that in the past you had a very intimate friend?" (*Bhag.* 4.28.53) I don't remember, but I do remember straying from Prabhupada's exclusive shelter along with some Godbrothers. When a Godbrother asked Srila Prabhupada why he didn't allow his disciples to associate with his own Godbrothers, Prabhupada said, "I have built a high wall around my disciples."

In Vrndavana high walls are necessary to keep out dacoits and undesirables. I climbed over the wall more than once to seek guides, entertainment, enjoyment, and so on. I'm not a perfectly faithful disciple. I have free will, so what can my spiritual master (or Krishna) do if I insist on straying? I become a scarred specimen of a disciple.

But still he keeps me.

Yes, I repeat myself, damn it.

ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada are going to be attacked more and more by disciples of other gurus. They want to break up the monolithic conception that whatever Srila Prabhupada teaches is right. They will dare to say he taught things wrongly and he managed wrongly. We have to defend him and remain faithful.

The Supersoul lives with me in my heart. We are like two swans. "Although we have been living together for many thousands of years, we are still far away from our original home." (*Bhag.4.28.54*) I like to think of the Lord present in my heart. I'd like to be more aware of His presence, and to pray to Him to make me steady and enlightened in my relationship with Srila Prabhupada. I can't force myself to become an extremely loyal and pure disciple, but I want to pierce through whatever reasons are offered as to why we shouldn't be one hundred percent loyal to Prabhupada. I want to build a more solid foundation. We have to fight for faith.

Because of my health, my strength to do other things has diminished. At least this much I can do. There's no point making ambitious plans to increase or change my life, and there's even less point to feel bad about that. But I can concentrate on hearing from guru and building my faith. That's a solid contribution both to myself and to others. I am trying to reconcile myself to the fact that not only is that about all I can do, it has to be enough.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

Bodily relationships are illusion. "Actually every living entity is a separate individual being, and it is because of his contact with matter that he comes together with other bodies and becomes falsely related." (*Bhag. 4.28.60, purport*) That includes national identification. When you are conditioned, you think, "This is it." You sing of false affiliations. We come together like straws in a river's current, sometimes together, then inevitably carried apart.

Then to whom do we belong? What about the people with whom we have lived in Krishna consciousness? People always ask that question. Those relationships also seem like straws in the current. Where are they all now? We belong to the same institution, practice the same philosophy, but never see one another.

Still, Prabhupada said we may have soul relationships that will be preserved in the spiritual sky. Nothing true is destroyed. We will meet at the destination.

The one sure relationship we each have is our relationship with the Supreme Person, Krishna. I beg to realize *that* despite my limits. Why don't I *lament* my limits? Why do I so glibly accept them?

No, I accept what I cannot change and try to continue my work to improve. I don't accept that I am inattentive in chanting. On the other hand I do accept it; that is, I live with that reality and move on from there. I don't pretend I don't have that limit.

Also, I don't accept that I am a person with chronic headaches. rather, I'm spirit soul, eternal, and free from bodily concerns. I am not even an old man.

* * *

I do accept EJW because that's all I can do.

I accept that I am being helplessly carried down the stream, despite my big words.

* * *

Why did he die?

He was disgusted with his neophyte disciples, someone said.

That's a controversy way above my head. I'll stay out of it and tend my own garden instead.

Talking to M. about what we will do when we return from America in 1998 "may we live that long. *If* we survive and return to Ireland, I'll be able to move into a house devotees have lent me. Then I'll stay there most of the time and try to face myself and the *Bhagavatam*. It's up to Krishna.

The continued challenge: "Your spiritual master taught only (or mostly) beginner's subjects. You need to cultivate something higher if you wish to go back to Godhead. Take it from a *rasika-guru*. Srila Prabhupada told us to go to him."

ISKCON has made various replies to this challenge. One was to indirectly agree that Srila Prabhupada taught mostly *vaidhi*. He did not teach us to practice *raganuga-bhakti*. He did assure us that we would go back to Godhead on the strength of our willingness to preach. Gaura-Nitai would save us.

I tend to think it will not be as automatic as some devotees assume. We each need to make a full-out effort in our particular service. My service is to read and write. It's true that I don't emphasize *radha-bhava* (or *gopi-manjari-bhava*) because Srila Prabhupada didn't emphasize it. Rather, I want to emphasize, as he did, the development of pure devotion acted out in our services. Then by the nature of our *purity*, by our one hundred percent faith in guru, by our *realization of the reality of Krishna in our lives*, more will be revealed.

We want to go to Srila Prabhupada. Where is he now and how do we join him? First be faithful to his teachings, his way. He will teach us to love Krishna. We have to guard the softness of our hearts.

* * *

2:47 p.m.

The Pracetas chanted the song Lord Siva had taught them, so they were able to please Lord Visnu. Vidura asked Maitreya about their achievements.

If we don't fully accept something we read, that doesn't mean we reject it or disbelieve it either. It can mean we don't fully believe and love and know the reality of it. We may

find we lack that sense of reality in other areas too. Do we know and believe in lunch? I mean, we know it's *prasadam*, but does that knowledge deliver us Krishna? Even happiness? Anything more than temporary satisfaction?

Rain pouring down. A pleasure boat passing. I saw the man onboard through my binoculars. He was staring back at me through his binoculars. After ten thousand years of *tapasya*, Lord Visnu appeared in a beautiful form before the Pracetas. In Kali-yuga we simply chant Hare Krishna and attain the same results "eventually." However, as Lord Caitanya points out, we are so unfortunate that we are not even attracted to chanting the *maha-mantra* "Hare Krishna . . . (*Bhag.* 4.30.4, purport)

Another limit: at this moment, I can't sustain this reading. I'm already pushing myself. I'll be back.

Yes, a great devotee would go on hearing and hearing. A thoughtful GBC man said he envied my free time; he wants to take a year off and study Prabhupada's books. Would he experience the same limits I experience? He lectured that devotees in ISKCON tend to think they are already transcendental, but if you examine the symptoms of a transcendentalist (in the *Bhagavad-gita*, twenty percent of the verses mention those symptoms), you'll admit that we're not always purely on that level. That means we are subject to the modes of nature. He's right. We struggle with the modes. Why not be free of fatigue and distraction? He said there is benefit from *sadhana*, even when performed mechanically, but better we practice with enthusiasm.

Do you want to hear a description of Krishna as *pita-vas*, dressed in yellow garments? I don't mean to embarrass you by such a question, but since you claim to be transcendental, I wonder if you have all the symptoms. Remember, "He can't live in peace without drinking the nectar of the glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." We have to be free of sense gratification to attain that state.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

Syamananda paces about six or eight feet in one direction on the quay, then turns and paces in the other direction, chanting *japa*.

SK says that in childhood you think you can play with God, in youth you think of Him as a friend, and as you mature (and he means not just grow older, but mature spiritually) you feel more infinite distance between the all-great God and tiny you. Our response is that it's the opposite for one aspiring for Vraja-rasa. You start with feelings of awe and grow to playing with God. But that growth takes more purification than we can even understand. I played with Prabhupada at 26 Second Avenue; now I feel the distance. The closeness as father and son was real, although even then there was respect and formality.

Sonata, I don't need you. Trees and fields, rain gives you the strength to be green. He said he walked in the rain from Derrylin, and when the rain stopped, he kept walking and dried off. Gentle day. I met two devotees while out walking.

Some devotees may bring me Radha-Krishna Deities to play with, to feel friendship for, to feel distant from. Distance, nearness "God is great and we are small. He is in our

hearts, qualitatively one with us. Yet He is the beautiful cowherd boy of Vraja. Please help me rise above the material modes so that I can learn to see You.

July 30

12:15 a.m.

I don't *always* have to be crippled by my *anarthas*. They can fade. I can be true to my spiritual master and eventually purified. I want that nature. Surely it is possible. This morning I read that as the Pracetas were blessed by hearing Lord Siva's prayers to Lord Visnu, so anyone who hears them "can both fulfill their desires and attain good intelligence." (*Bhag.* 4.30.10) Srila Prabhupada writes, "The topmost perfectional fulfillment of desire is to go back home, back to Godhead." We can also achieve the same benefit Arjuna achieved when he heard *Bhagavad-gita*. These statements made me hanker for faithfulness. It doesn't matter that we are born so long after the pastimes took place. We can become linked with Krishna by faithfully hearing and following our guru's orders.

Do the required work in Krishna consciousness. read. Preach. Pour out your feelings in Krishna consciousness.

His repertoire is limited. He obsesses on certain themes.

Who?

Everyone "Picasso, Michelangelo, Dickens, Kierkegaard, Beethoven, Bach, Coltrane" everyone. They play the same thing over and over again, even if there are variations on the theme. O Krishna,

Your energies are
vast.

This is the second page of a new writing tablet that contains a hundred pages. I woke up and saw it was 11:57 p.m. It surprised me that it was so late. Must have slept solidly. Good fellow, get up. Don't waste time. It's EkadaSi today.

I thought of writing certain themes into separate books. Yesterday I thought, "Why not do a new version of *Here Is Srila Prabhupada*, but six years later." Why not just express it here instead? And please, be more permissive. You don't have to stand on ceremony. You're at home.

The Pracetas obeyed Lord Visnu. The obedient don't suffer; the disobedient do.

I'll be fulfilled if I offer my work to Krishna with love, for His pleasure. Same with desires, with knowing oneself.

I repeat what's written in the *Bhagavatam* and my original statements are expressions of body, mind, and day. I am not an intellectual. That's another limit. I also lack the knowledge of bitter suffering. I call it a limit because it limits my insights into suffering.

Same, same, rain. No, different.

This is new rain splashing.

It *looks* like yesterday's rain, but it's never the same. Everything is always changing. I want to record it regardless of how similar it is to yesterday. This is my happy book of days, illuminated by *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* holy words.

Prahlada dasa thinks of capturing all thirty deer on Inis rath, but, "it's not feasible," the English devotee with the long face said. He walked in the rain with full shopping

bags, returning to his family. He provides for them. I wish him well, homesteader. Let everyone be blessed.

We all want the Eternal. I am spirit soul
and my hand moves, writes
from wrist and brain.

The Lord gives and can take away.

One proof among many
that God acts in this world.

"Thus when one acts, he offers the results to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and passes life always engaged in the topics of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.30.19)

Accept the unlimited Lord (with your limited faith)
your limited candor and
sense of humor.

Out of a hundred arrows I shoot at the target, not all of them will hit the bull's eye. Activity means to pray, and prayer means accepting your limits as they are now in a Krishna conscious way. "O Krishna, this is all I can seem to do. *Please* see the good in it. *Please* let me serve You."

* * *

4:46 a.m.

Inner life forms your next body; be careful what you desire and how you conceive of yourself. "I'd like to be," he said, "a complete saint in Krishna consciousness, an ISKCON *sadhu*. Then I would always be chanting and hearing or counseling people, my compassionate self flowing out."

Such a *sadhu* cannot go without the nectar of hearing about the Pracetas. That's what it means: we need the nectar. Unfortunately, we often don't recognize it as nectar. Pramloca gave birth to a daughter, who became famous, although I can't remember her name. The moon-god put his finger into the baby's mouth and the child sucked nectar from it and survived.

O Krishna,

I sing the song of limits. By 6:30 p.m. I'm usually tired and want to lie down. I have limited power, limited energy, limited time "now fifty-eight years old. What can I expect of myself *now*? I can't imitate love of God. Let me approach Him in whatever way I can.

O Swami, I want my exclusive discipleship. I know this is a mixed bag. Sanskrit calls that *karma-miSra* and *jnana-miSra-bhakti* "something like that "depending on the mix.

Swami, still I am yours springboarding as I do from the Bowery and the days at 26 Second Avenue. Remember? You said we would not suffer a pinch if we served the Lord. Chant and be happy. That's what you said.

O Swami, you want me to give everything, but I'm suffering. I *am* suffering. I'm trying.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

The day is my main structure. Today I have a headache, so this may be a short day. I measure it in terms of how much *Bhagavatam* I read and how much I can write. Some writers think in terms of short stories or this- or that- length novels. Even poems. I think of the day and pour experience and art into the shape it makes. It's all zero "novels, poems, stories, or days "unless a writer glorifies Krishna between sunup and sundown.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

Making my way back to the reading table. Even if I can only read one verse, give it attention. Prabhupada writes, "Know that the Supreme Lord is the ultimate enjoyer of all acts." Liberation means offering the results of your activities to God. Of course, those activities must be suitable offerings. At least you have to want them to be. And they have to be both rendered and offered with affection. They have to be *meant* for His pleasure. Offer your activities to Him and pass your life "always engaged in topics of the Lord."

A real devotee always feels fresh in devotional service. That's what the purport says. Rupa Gosvami wanted millions of ears and tongues to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*.

Golden heads on the rye grass. The whole field is golden-headed, sloping gently down to the lake, grass swaying in the wind. Sunshine, then fresh rain clouds, then a splash of a shower, then clear. Any minute now M. will leaving for the south. We've decided to travel at the beginning of September in the van instead of by plane, which is too expensive. Messages, arrivals, notes, subduing headaches "it's a busy day even before I get down to an attempt at sustained reading and writing.

* * *

Now the Pracetas offer prayers in the Lord's direct presence. When Srila Prabhupada writes of "the devotee," does it exclude his disciples? It doesn't include all of them "all of us "because not all of us are practicing devotion to this level. Then where are we? I'd almost rather not know. I might become discouraged.

O Krishna.

* * *

4 p.m.

Well, I overcame today's headache, or at least it went down by itself with no need of a painkiller. Maybe the extra rest helped, or the warm, wet rag on my forehead. Madhu had to do my Prabhupada *puja*. Now I'm steady and the house is empty and quiet at the same time.

* * *

5 p.m.

"The Supreme Lord gives us the facilities to act in the way we wish." (*Bhag.* 4.30.26, purport) If we want to forget Him, He'll give us the intelligence to do so forever. If we sincerely want to remember Him, He'll give us the intelligence to do so. Our activities create our future karma. When we spend money on sense gratification, we become bound by it. We use money in a particular way, but it isn't ours to use. We will have to pay it back. It can delay us in reaching our goal. Therefore, simplify, simplify, simplify, and pull up the weeds.

* * *

The Lord in Deity form is *arca-avatara*. Neophytes "can see the real form of the Lord face-to-face" and offer obeisances and sacrifices. "Deity worship . . . is the most valuable benediction given by the Lord to beginners. All neophytes must therefore engage in the worship of the Lord by keeping the *arca-vigraha* at home or in the temple." (*Bhag.* 4.30.27, purport)

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Looking over today: it went well from midnight to 6 a.m., and even after that "until I got the pain and lost the rest of my morning. Later, I got down on my knees beside my bed like a child, but no prayers came. But I remained quiet and looked into my mind. I am looking for more from myself. I have to face my limits, yes, but I have to make sure they are actually limits. O Krishna, chanting is the only way in Kali-yuga, but sometimes I think the mantras are external. I mean, as they come out of *my* mouth. I think there has to be something else coming out of me, some crying to the Lord. Srila Prabhupada sankirtana means describing. We can hold *kirtana* in writing or in lectures as well as the singing kind. The point is to find the Lord's holy name and keep it in the heart.

I told a devotee in a letter that beauty should be connected to Krishna, not just appreciated in the moment that we see it. A Buddhist monk thinks the present moment is everything. He makes living in the present his religion and doesn't know anything beyond it. It's a kind of mysticism and it has its thrills. But it's really not everything. It's not even really that much. The moment passes, then another and another. We have to be reborn even if we live in present moments for "eternity." Or until hell freezes over, as some people would say. Only in Goloka will we be able to live in the present moment eternally. Only as Krishna's servants will anything have any real meaning. If you don't even know you are the servant of God, then *who* is experiencing the present moment?

* * *

The water here is never rough, although there is often a superficial waviness to it. It is a lake strait, and the lake itself is generally calm. Still, people have drowned here. A child drowned at Inis rath some years ago. The few devotees here wanted to re-mortgage

the building and use the money to improve the place, but their authority would not allow it. "Just live with what you've got," they were told. Hare Krishna. If the Deity is *really* the center of their lives, they can live in the buildings as His servants, the authority said. That's really what they wanted to hear and they became inspired by his call to faith and simplicity.

* * *

You cannot possess Krishna easily or millions would have already done it.

The sky a swollen dark blue. Rains and stops. The island bright with trees. I asked the president here to write me a letter.

July 31

12:10 a.m.

The Lord . . . can I worship His form with Radha? I'm beginning to desire it. It's how we become trained to become servants of Radha and Krishna.

The Pracetas pray that we *jivas* seem to prefer miserable material conditions. "To deliver us from these miserable conditions, You have advented Yourself in this transcendental form. This is evidence of Your unlimited causeless mercy upon those of us who are suffering in this way." (*Bhag.* 4.30.27)

"Dear Lord, You are the killer of all inauspicious things. You are compassionate upon Your poor devotees through the expansion of Your *arca-vigraha*." (*Bhag.* 4.30.28) Here Srila Prabhupada writes, "When the Lord is gradually satisfied with the service of a devotee, in due course of time he accepts the devotee as one of his many unalloyed servants. . . . Atheists may think that the devotees are engaged in idol worship, but the fact is different. Janardana, the Supreme Lord, accepts *bhava*, the attitude of service." The worshipping devotee may not even understand the value of the worship, "but the Supreme Lord, being *bhakta-vatsala*, accepts His devotee and in due course of time takes him home."

"Thus it is the duty of every sincere devotee to accept the *arca-vigraha* at home or in the temple and worship the form of the Lord as advised in authorized scriptures and directed by the spiritual master."

Didn't Srila Prabhupada say he was going to a planet within the material world and his sincere disciples would join him there? We will go there to worship Radha-Krishna under his guidance. With him leading, we will become inspired to go out and preach again. I admit I have failed him in many ways, but still he has bound me with unbreakable ties.

I have desires, but my desires are mixed. I like to read poems and capture dreams, so I can use them in my writing. I want people to see that Krishna consciousness can be presented in many different literary forms. I want to penetrate by thought and artistry and personal feeling each of the genres in which I work. Srila Prabhupada said of my first book, *readings in Vedic Literature*, that I had quoted the rascals (Indologists) without becoming contaminated. Now I want to learn from fellow sufferers how to

transform suffering into art, but then do it myself in Krishna consciousness. That is my path.

Lord Krishna knows everything about us. He's in our hearts. "Although we are very insignificant, why should the Lord not know our desires?" (*Bhag.* 4.30.29)

Yet now I'm writing the most artless of forms, the diary. I can't seem to measure up to any other structure. Maybe that's one reason I was attracted to Kierkegaard: he uses various forms, including the novel, to preach his indirect communication and then to make direct, edifying discourses. It's an author's path.

* * *

The benediction the Pracetas ask of Lord Visnu: "Be satisfied with us."

Srila Prabhupada: "The devotee simply wants to be in the presence of the Supreme Lord "either in this world or the next "and engage in His service. That is the ultimate goal and benediction for the devotees." (*Bhag.* 4.30.31, purport)

The Pracetas address the Supreme Lord as *ananta*. We cannot conceive of His unlimitedness, but we can link up with His unlimitedness when we hear of Him. "Such understanding of the unlimited becomes unlimited by hearing and chanting."(*Bhag.* 4.33.1, purport)

It's nice to see devotees intent on service. New devotees have fresh enthusiasm and plenty of energy, but the old-timers can too. Srila Prabhupada has written that we don't get tired. "If a person is Krishna conscious, he can work like a young man even if he is seventy-five or eighty years old. Thus the daughter of Kala (Time) cannot overcome a Vaisnava." (*Bhag.* 4.27.24, purport) Krishnadasa Gosvami wrote the *Caitanya-caritamrta* when he was in his nineties.

This reference is important to me. Prabhupada is showing me that writing can go on and on and improve in old age. "Thus Jara, the affect of old age, does not harass a devotee. This is because the devotee follows the instructions and the determination of Narada Muni . . . Apparently a devotee may grow old, but he is not subject 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." The devotee knows that after death he's going back to Godhead. "Thus instead of depressing a devotee, advanced age helps him become fearless and thus happy."

* * *

6 a.m.

People get sick, have an organ removed, a leg amputated, learn that they have cancer, and actually die. I've got a slow, not so severe, chronic disease. It interrupts my life and I've been living with it for over ten years as it is now. It seems like a long time.

* * *

7:45 a.m.

"A devotee doesn't need to pray for transference to the spiritual world. He can create Vrndavana anywhere just by chanting the glories of the Lord without offense.") A

devotee's anxiety is not to stop the repetition of birth and death, but to associate "with other devotees who are engaged in chanting and hearing about the glories of the Lord."

* * *

10:25 a.m.

I hear the helicopter but can't see it. The clouds are almost total, the sky dark and sunless. That's okay with me. It's cold for July 31, even for Northern Ireland. I read poems on illness by people who'd been there. They were all real and sincere. None of them prayed, at least not overtly. One mentioned "the gods" with fear. Another spoke of a precious present when he was able to hold a teacup. After you've been in the hospital for awhile, you notice the details more carefully. Heartache poems.

Tomorrow, plenty of mail and Baladeva. Today, I'm alone to worship Prabhupada. Don't waste time.

* * *

Early this morning, when I was in the bathroom, I flashed on the idea that for September I would put aside *Every Day, Just Write* and write a second volume to *September Catchall*. I even went and picked out a notebook in which to begin it. Here's what I wrote on the first page:

"Devotees write that they like *September Catchall*. I am planning to travel again in September. Why not do a second volume? We plan to go by van via ferry to France, then to Madrid, then to New Vraja Mandala, then to Italy before the end of the month."

Then this:

"Why not just stay with *Every Day, Just Write*? Then your editor will have the variety to use in her selections for future productions of the one big book of your life. Once you start playing it up for the readers, trying to make an interesting travel book, it will feel less than completely honest, which is what you are striving to attain in EJW."

"Yeah, you're right. Let it be whatever it is. Put it all in EJW."

* * *

11:55 a.m.

"For the living entities who are destined to give up the body and die, associating with pure devotees is the highest benediction." Srila Prabhupada writes, "One should search out such pure devotees and remain with them." Someone takes this statement as a green light to live with a *Siksa-guru*. It may also be taken as a green light to remain with Srila Prabhupada. "I built a high wall around my disciples."

Hearing and chanting, hearing and chanting. Whenever it's performed among devotees, that place becomes like Vaikuntha "at least for the time being." (*Bhag.* 4.30.35) When they chant and hear together, devotees give up envy, and they don't suffer from anxiety or fear.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

"In the Caitanya-*sampradaya*, those who strictly follow must travel all over the world to preach the message of Lord Caitanya." (*Bhag.* 4.30.37, purport) We say a preacher is like a "postal peon" in that he doesn't change the message but delivers it on behalf of higher authority. Still, it takes more than the mechanical covering of a mail route. Krishna! We have to find the balance. Don't stay home for your whole life, but don't run around without actually facing the holy name either. Only when we find the balance will we be able to give the essence.

My day has been clear of pain so far. Still raining outside though.

If Srila Prabhupada once more repeats that an Aryan is one who follows the Lord's order, and if he quotes *patram puspam* as evidence that there are restrictions in what we should offer the Lord, I want to consider the points anew. We shouldn't assume we know it all. Some want to study Srila Prabhupada by going deeper through systematic study. I don't want to do that; it's not what I feel I need. I just need to learn to worship with my attention and intelligence each purport as I read it.

But don't listen to me. I don't know. I don't feel like an instructor right now, not at all. Nothing I say is a hundred percent personal experience.

The next verse and purport is a solace. The Pracetas say that even the greatest *yogis*, mystics, and personalities cannot fully understand the Lord's glories and potencies, but they try nonetheless. "In the same way, we, although much lower than these personalities, also offer our prayers according to our own capability." (*Bhag.* 4.30.41)

Take heart. When I read that Ananta Sesa cannot finish glorifying the Lord despite praising Him with thousands of heads for thousands of years, I want to feel it, muse on it, stay with, and not feel it is repetitious. It's sacred knowledge, and it will only be opened to me by faith. God is unlimitedly praiseworthy. "Yet everyone of us can offer prayers with heart and soul as far as we can appreciate the Lord's glories. That is our perfection."

* * *

4:50 p.m.

Writing is not a romantic occupation. Like anything, you don't always have the drive to do it. You lose your vision temporarily. It's hard work. But it's my job. It's like a preacher traveling from Belgium to Amsterdam and finding that few people showed up for the lecture. Some people walk in, but they're not that interested and they make too much noise. You preach anyway. It may not have the sensationalism of the ambulance driver who couldn't save the twelve-year-old kid, but that story's over in a day. Writing is a quiet occupation, and you feel all your aches and pains, but you can't be ashamed of it.

On the way back from the walk I met Arjuna in his car. He's on his way to Dublin to sell frames. He says he was thinking of giving up his duty, but when he heard from the preachers, he decided his attitude was wrong, not his job. Then he told me how he

humbled himself when his authorities told him about something he had done wrong.

"What will I lose by bowing down to them?" he said. Then, "I'm sorry for keeping you."

I said, "I have a guest arriving tomorrow."

May the Lord Nrsimhadeva on his dashboard protect him.

I didn't walk down the woods path at the end because there were two unfriendly dogs. It was also starting to rain, so I came back here and read more *Bhagavatam*.

Hare Krishna. When I came back I thought "accepting your limits" means that I am a preacher to only a few. For example, when I spoke with Arjuna, that was preaching. He did the talking and I was friendly; maybe just having a friendly exchange is enough to inspire him. I'm there for him.

I don't have to speak to a hundred people in dozens of cities every month in order to call myself a preacher. I can preach in a smaller circle. But that's a limit. One might even say I am a *bhajanandi* or a coward, that I'm even selfish, because I choose to concentrate on chanting and hearing. A *gosthyanandi* travels all over the world. He goes to countries in the former Soviet Union, crosses dangerous borders, or preaches in New York City. He puts out.

Did you know that there's a word for putting yourself down? It's called *atma-ninda*. Does it make me feel better? Does it bring up interesting truth? My books record month after month of a relatively calm life. Maybe that's deeper for me than writing a diary describing the bombs dropping through the roof. I don't know.

A man passed me in a van as I walked back from the end of my walk. He stopped, rolled down the window, and asked, "Do you want a ride?" He looked like a congregational member or someone friendly. I said, "No thanks, I'm out for a walk." Off he went. Then I realized he was probably a nondevotee doing business with Randolph or someone else. I saw how insular my world is. I rarely see or talk with nondevotees. It doesn't have to be so "us and them." Maybe that man was just a nice person willing to consider God consciousness. He could be kind or kinder than I am. I am so used to preaching to devotees. I couldn't ask a man like that, "Did you chant your rounds today? How was the quality?" I would have to ask him how he was.

Walking back, a few drops of rain. Any road I take I seem to meet people here, but at least the devotees own the land.

Darker. This is my last night alone. Starting tomorrow for a week, there will be a friendly presence in the house. In meetings I will tell memories and try to weave them into stories. I hope to talk about my writing life too.

* * *

Perfection is to please Krishna. Don't stop what you are doing; just dovetail it. There is no way out of this. People die. *We* will die. Someone writes a poem against doctors and someone says they are like gods. Everything depends on how you look at it. Same for preachers. Many people think preachers are cop-outs, fools, frustrated celibates, or foolish dogmatists who can't face the ambiguities of life. They say a priest can't be a poet because he's tethered to a cause. Others think priests are holy; they like the way they present the liturgy, how they renounce matter and pray to God. Some people appreciate the social welfare work priests do among lepers or other unfortunates. Hare Krishna

priests are not appreciated much except by a few Hindus who also eventually see them as fallible people trying to follow their Prabhupada. It's at least better than being a nondevotee with no reference to God, Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada said all these other workers are of much less importance than those who spread the science of Krishna. Suffering continues life after life and the devotee is teaching how to stop the cycle, but people usually don't believe in God or the next life or the soul as important. They think he's just trying to win converts to a sectarian religion so they'll become more powerful in the world.

How do I feel about that? I don't know. Seraphan said preaching is like throwing rocks off a tower and practice is like carrying rocks to the top. I'd like to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and leave this world with all its duality and suffering and enjoyment behind.

The grass is blowing like ruffled hair. The water is a drink in the cup of the lake. God is holding it together so that it doesn't crumple and ruin us all. We still can't live forever in these bodies; no doctor can save us. It's just a matter of when we die and how we do it.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

The Lord is not attached to anyone. "He's equally kind to His innumerable devotees all over the creation." (*Bhag.* 4.30.43, purport)

The Pracetas' wife and children purports about that, how to live as humans "when to marry, when to renounce. I don't disagree, but it seems no one can live like that nowadays.

Brown army helicopter passing over. It always makes me feel a little uneasy. Bunches of green trees on the sacred island where Radha-Govinda dwell. Syamananda in bright orange sweatshirt and *brahmacari dhoti* rowing across. These are night notes, before I lie down.

The Pracetas burned down the trees until Lord Brahma stopped them. Daksa was their son. He had to be born again in the material world due to his offense to Lord Siva at the Daksa-yajna.

Now Narada will instruct the Pracetas. They said that due to family life, they had almost forgotten the instructions they had received from Lord Siva and Lord Visnu.

Bless this devotee land. I'm happy to be here. Is the peace an illusion? If I think, "I can live here forever," that's illusion. If I live for the temporary, forgetting the goal of life, then the peace becomes bondage.

It is soothing to be by an Irish country lake, I admit it. Krishna has given me the taste to appreciate such peace. I don't desire to run off where there are city lights and shops. Here is fine. Let it mist and rain, I'm still satisfied. Darker this mysterious natural theater "the earth, sun, planets, orbits, spinning in space, the planetary music and order under His control.

The clouds are like smoke. I'll rest now as long as my heart agrees to pump. O Krishna, please be with me always.

August 1

12 a.m.

"Dear master, kindly enlighten us in transcendental knowledge, which may act as a torchlight by which we may cross the dark nescience of material existence." (*Bhag.* 4.31.7)

I heard that a black man, a Catholic cardinal, could possibly become the next pope. Then I thought of doing something wonderful for Krishna. Pipe dreams. Still, I want to serve. Daydreaming is pleasant sometimes. Imagine ISKCON becoming a wonderful and loving place, well organized, attracting millions, yet increasing in quality, its members showing more and more of the symptoms of *Krishna-prema* and compassion.

The truth is different. It's Kali-yuga after all. Many temples have dwindled to just a few members. The "outside" society of devotees is flourishing, but even that is small. The center seems to be disintegrating. I fancy myself doing something to help by my diary, dreams, meanderings, but it seems so much has already been said and done by the *acaryas* and my contemporaries.

If Srila Prabhupada and Krishna will actually accept my service as devotion, then I can offer my auspicious life. Otherwise not.

What am I doing to assure this? I'm lucky because I already have a connection. I can chant the holy names, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, offer my food to Prabhupada, draw, but I have to ensure that whatever I am doing is done with quality. Krishna likes to taste quality.

My Godbrother's lectures on the modes of nature were humbling. He pointed out that we're not automatically transcendental just because we join ISKCON and wear a devotee's uniform. If we have material symptoms, we are subject to the modes. Life is not meant to be lived cheaply. "A living entity is the eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord, and unless he comes to the platform of devotional service, his life-span, good birth, glorious activities and everything else are null and void." (*Bhag.* 4.31.10, purport)

* * *

Hey man, what's your song today? Where's your series?

I don't know. Don't push me. I'm trying to stay relaxed because today my guest arrives from America.

What's this about you bein' an Irishman?

No, I'm not an American, not Irish, not a *vipra* or a *sannyasi*. I'm a servant of the servant a hundred times removed "a servant of the servant of the Lord.

Oh.

O (open mouth).

May he be blessed. Don't give up the ship. Keep chanting (writing is also chanting) until the end of life. We tend to think individuals can't help much; we have to unite. Kierkegaard says the opposite. He says the group can't do it, only the individual can. He says we should encourage each other to become individuals, a society of strong individuals.

Nothing can stop the diminishing brought by time, but we've heard a true devotee becomes more encouraged as he grows older. Does he keep silent about that? No. Krishna consciousness is for those. He can argue against Mayavadis and anyone who tries to diminish his spiritual master, but he doesn't debate in order to enjoy the argument. He glorifies the Lord to submissive, receptive audiences.

Wherever I go in ISKCON, other *sannyasis* and preachers have just been there. Others will come soon after I leave if they're not in the same place at the same time. There's nothing I can add to change the listeners' situations. They're not in crying need of *my* message. I go only for my own good. I take my turn because it's good for me.

That's my sermon for midnight Mass. Who will measure it?

O Krishna,
I hope to forget
I ever had a date
with an angel,
forget the Miles' tunes,
forget trying to enjoy
a vague concept of spirituality,
New Age dream explorers . . .
O Krishna, fill my memory
with Krishna Krishna Krishna "
please protect
my song
my intentions
to serve You.

* * *

9:12 a.m.

I heard the van engine and knew that Madhu had arrived. I am waiting for him to come in. Since Baladeva is here, it will give me impetus to discuss my writing. Ultimately, however, only I can decide what's best, if only for the present.

Come on M., get out of the bathroom and tell me what's happening.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

Baladeva and I plan to work an hour a day on memories. He encouraged me to go on with EJW. He said the strongest argument in favor of it is that all professionals agree we should practice every day. That I do. Today I couldn't do much. That's part of the story too.

August 2

8:04 a.m.

I told you I took a pill last night even though the pain wasn't great. I couldn't sleep. You don't have to explain it to me, sir.

Third party: But when you get rebound headaches, don't complain.

Did you hear, Bhakta so-and-so doesn't want to marry the girl to whom he's betrothed?

Alas.

I heard a disciple bought you two pens and enclosed the price tag. I never told him to spend so much. I heard you were considering the pens to be like deities "the gold one is Radha and the grayish one is Syama.

No, that's not true.

But I heard you asked for a pair of Radha-Krishna Deities to worship as practice for a week, and they brought you an eight-inch Krishna and a three-inch Radha.

I heard . . . you mean Baladeva brought all this stuff, the mail too, and you have to contend with it?

What can you write if you don't read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*? It seems ages since I read of the Pracetas. There was another invitation in the mail to go see the *rasika-guru*. When I took B. and M. on a tour of Geaglum yesterday, I felt my love for the clouds and the sky, the places I walk and live here. I hadn't noticed it on my own. Still, I'll have to die and leave this world.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

What is the point of practicing severe austerities, hearing, speaking "anything "without devotional service? We cry with boredom because we don't invest ourselves in what we are doing. Who are we truly? *Where* are we truly? Do we listen to our inner voices even when they're not coherent? Do they have any answers?

Someone said, "Leave me alone. I am worn out trying to relate to others."

I'm tired of tuning into the mail right now. It's full of voices too. Grateful to come to the *Bhagavatam*.

There's a new magazine by Catholics called *Praying*. I didn't subscribe.

A man wrote from America and asked me to initiate his wife. I said I don't initiate much.

America "Ozzie and Harriet, Ricky Nelson, my *mom* . . . Oh please, please don't blaspheme my guru, I said.

I began to reconsider, then heard

Scientology, Kowit, Germany,
words,

free-writes "the

desire to simply cover pages with words while I am still alive-o.

Unless you understand Lord Hari, your studies and prowess are useless. You ride along on a new pen point.

Looking up, I hear an engine. Is it a tractor in a field or a car going down to the quay? I can't see any of it. Doesn't seem to bother the collie, who is now stretched out, asleep, on the cement. He does night duty, so he sleeps during the day.

Unless you know the Lord, it's all useless. We will be tested at the time of death. My heavenly prize "my hellish fear "of having to return again to this mortal world. No, I don't worship demigods.

Okay, I'll review my answers. Someone asked how a Prabhupada follower in ISKCON could receive *raganuga-bhakti*, or does he not need it at all?

Fifty questions.

Krishna,

Krishna,

"I'm okay," he said.

Thank God.

August 3

12:10 a.m.

I tried to read the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse that says everything emanates from Krishna and later enters back into Him, but my mind traveled to Kierkegaard. I thought that just because everything is related to Krishna doesn't mean my own relationship with Him is already developed. I have the responsibility of developing it as an individual, before Him. Then I thought of the letters I answered yesterday "one from a Godbrother who was considering whether or not he should begin to initiate, and others. I looked at the *Bhagavatam* verse again and tried to consider how everything comes from Krishna. Then I felt the challenge of those who go to the *rasika* guru: we're not studying Krishna from a *rasika* perspective.

The verse gives two analogies. One is that all vegetables are generated from rain, and all beings, including humans, are generated from earth. Dust thou art and dust thou shalt become. Similarly, the entire creation comes from the Supreme Personality of Godhead and enters into Him at annihilation. He is unlimitedly great. May He please accept my humble obeisances, and in His original form, may He bestow blessings on me. May I attain His Goloka one day.

Hare Krishna. They say we have failed to recognize a pure devotee because we think there is only one.

No. We honor many pure devotees, but our Srila Prabhupada saved us.

They say you can have both relationships, that your faith in Srila Prabhupada need not diminish.

No, it does. At least your faith in hearing from Srila Prabhupada *as he himself presented himself*. I want Prabhupada as he defined himself to us.

The two groups seem irreconcilable. They fill my head and these pages.

Please write something else.

Please lift us up.

My heart is beating, burning. How people suffer in this world! Last night I felt I was suffering in separation from Prabhupada. I am without my beloved spiritual master. Now so many things have gone wrong. One woman wrote that she realizes she's not a heroine. She's weak.

Me too. Better not to try for heroism but for honest devotion.

I received another letter from a woman devotee who at 77 feels she can't live much longer. Hare Krishna.

After finishing his construction work at the house, Aniruddha painted peacock feet with sticks on the floor, then varnished over them "his artistic touch to remind us of Vrndavana. What about the footprints of young Nimai in His parents' home? They were amazed when they saw Krishna's footprints inscribed with all the symbols manifested in the dust. They thought the *murti* of Bala-Krishna had been walking around.

Krishna.

I give you this, dear reader, to look at later.

Today is Sunday and I'm supposed to row over to the temple for the morning class. I'll rest before I go, but at 4:15 a.m. I plan to sit with Bala and reminisce for a book.

O Lord, be kind.

All glories.

I babble-pray.

As I write, the collie is barking "out scouting. Bala said he would go out and show him a stick to quiet him. I told him not to bother. Just sleep and let me write and read how everything appears from and disappears into God. Don't let things distract you from that. Go on reading these books.

The Hare Krishna monk walked the entire length, east to west, of Canada. While walking, he spent his time chanting Hare Krishna on beads. He wore out several pairs of shoes. While he was walking, I was writing a book called *Pada-yatra*.

Jimminy Cricket, you say you will arrive in January when it is frozen over, and you expect people to gather to see you? Yes, I do.

"Those who are really conversant with this knowledge can utilize everything for the service of the Lord because nothing in this material world is unconnected with the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.4.31.18*, purport)

* * *

10:50 a.m.

Dear Lord, there are the things I will have to give up when I die: the gold pen, the new Radha-Krishna Deities that will arrive, the view from the window, the joking with Baladeva, the skies, the poetry (mine and those poems from which I springboard), the research, the pain, the fears. Will I have to return for more of the same? Or something else? I mean, instead of using a gold pen I could be a spring rabbit happily twitching my nose in the breeze and being smashed by a car or gobbled by a fox a moment later. Word-spinning.

Do come into my life, O Radha and Krishna, and let me serve You in the presence of my Srila Prabhupada. I can't wait so long.

O Lord

he said,

I forgot to push the record button on the tape recorder this morning before beginning my *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture in the temple. I spoke on the holy name as the most important of all the items in devotional service. Just call out to Lord Hari, chant Hare

Krishna, His holy name. Anyone who chants Hare Krishna is a good boy, like Jayananda who was chanting *japa* and who walked into a wall.

I walk into mental walls. Manu asked, "Where was Krishna when I chanted my first ten rounds?" Someone else asked, "How is it that the name is absolute, yet I am so fallen I cannot contact it?"

* * *

2:13 a.m.

What to do between headaches?

Prabhupada

tired

Repeater

Rifles

dies by living

low level,

Kierkegaard's challenge to go alone before God and give Him everything. Don't think you can slip in the wide gate with the crowd. Each will be examined. In my case, I have *sad-guru* and I must follow him. That is, I don't even try to go before God except through him. I grasp at fads, possible ways to find easy redemption, easy love of God. I am about to receive Radha-Krishna *murtis*. Will that cold metal with its sharp angles bring me relief? Or my soft yielding to sense gratification? My heart will fail to love Them, I already know that, and I've lost the vigor I once possessed to perform austerities. These are my limits.

When we say, "Accept your limits," it sounds like we are pandering to modern psychology and becoming easy on ourselves. Aren't we supposed to fight to the end? But I can't. I have too much pain and I'm tired. All I can do is write this book and make repeated attempts throughout the day to become truly Krishna conscious. It's almost lunchtime, and I can't even eat as much as some devotees wish I would.

* * *

3 p.m.

"Being completely cleansed of all material desires, the devotees are free from all mental contamination. Thus they can always think of the Lord constantly and address Him very feelingly." (*Bhag.* 4.31.20) And the Supreme Lord never leaves His devotees. We can think of Krishna because His pastimes and teachings are accessible. He's not vague, not entirely unreachable, unnamable, unknowable. We can learn to see Him in His original form.

Narottama dasa Thakura prays, *Ha ha prabhu nanda-suta . . .* "My dear Lord, You are now present with the daughter of King Vrsabhanu, Srimati radharani. Now both of You please be merciful upon me. Don't kick me away, because I have no shelter other than You."

The Supreme Lord does not tolerate His pure devotees being offended. He's pleased with the devotional service of those who have no material possessions, but who possess only devotional service.

Sailboat passes slowly. Madhu returned. Fog in head "I can't read further. A boat with three sails moving from right to left. I'm trying to think of Krishna by hearing from the pure devotees, especially Srila Prabhupada. I have cast my lot with ISKCON even though I live exiled by illness and my temperament. They say I'm missing out because I don't hear from the *rasika-guru* and for other reasons. Okay, I'm missing out.

August 4

12:10 a.m.

You can't reason with God or understand Him by speculation. You have to be guided by higher authorities.

I want a quiet life and to worship Radha-Krishna Deities along with my worship of Srila Prabhupada. This is in contrast to what M. meets when he goes to festivals. A crazy girl came up to them shouting, and drunkards . . .

Bhakta Valery from Russia, now in America, chants Hare Krishna throughout the day, even while chewing. He wants to model his behavior after the pilgrim in *The Way of the Pilgrim*.

I explained "almost apologized "to the guests that although Inis rath-Geaglum is sleepy, it is home. To live here, one has to know how to use one's time.

Since Baladeva arrived I haven't been able to read and write as much, and I have had no time for drawing.

It's a source of pleasure and release
when I can draw a pumpkin
and turn it into a carriage and
draw *tilaka* on the footmen
and the princess is a servant
of Srimati Radharani.

But that takes both time and energy. Poor guy, had head pressure in late afternoon and thus the hours were lost. He had to sit "don't say, "like a pumpkin" "and do *nothing*. But Krishna didn't leave him.

* * *

Why did King Priyavrata leave his renounced life to become a householder? Maharaja Pariksit thinks a real *bhakta* would avoid such a thing.

O Krishna
be kind
he said, as if Krishna needed to be reminded,
as if He's not *already* infinitely kind.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

"A devotional path is so auspicious that a devotee cannot be lost under any circumstances." (*Bhag.* 5.1.5, purport) We may be obstructed; it may take more than one lifetime. All kinds of impediments may arise "due to surrounding circumstances," but a

devotee "automatically perseveres in devotional service and gradually advances until he once again becomes perfect."

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Hee hee laughter through the walls (Bala is here). I'm not in on that joke.

"Looks like a water buffalo," she said.

"It's esoteric" (which Radha-Krishna Deities one becomes attracted to).

I'm not a roaming international preacher. Stays at home, worships, reaches a point where he chants in his mind to the music-less tune of the Hare Krishna mantra uttered even within the fog or vise.

What you say you want to be you can actually be. Wish it harder. Imagine it. Act on your desire as far as you are able.

Told a correspondent to tell his troubles to fellow *grhasthas*. I don't make fun of householders. They could make just as much fun of me. I heard that one devotee does impersonations and they laugh. They say it's not done cruelly, but oh, how they laugh in those private quarters.

The Swami walked across Canada and now plans to do Africa.

Low level pressure doesn't inhibit me. My teeth are removable. Certain sages had none. The idealized paintings show them with their eyebrows arched as if they had been plucked. Where are those hairy, toothless sages? Who is it that cares nothing for his appearance?

But ambassadors
ought to look good "
take mud baths for firm skin
and squeeze out words,
trimming them to *parampara*.

On the grass hill at a
festival, 'twas where she
first met the devotees when
she was only four years old.

Now the man who preached to
her at the tent program
no longer wants to do that.

I'll stop here for now and maybe later tell you how he faced a five-man firing squad who were firing him because he was guilty of seclusion. "You must associate more and not only on your own terms." They read him the riot Act, then the Quiet Act. He showed them, as proof, his CAT scan, but they weren't interested in medical excuses.

By the weight of their superior arguments they crushed him and proved him mistaken. He admitted everything, even began to believe it. (remember Big Brother in 1984?)

"You guys are actually the voice of Prabhupada coming through to me. I bow down. You is my best friends. I'm guilty for sure."

But he still couldn't do what they asked. He simply didn't and couldn't make Sheridan's march to the sea or even attend a single symphony under the stars without thinking

I want to go home
to my *prabhu-datta* nation
and be alone (mostly) to
tell stories. Or
okay,
I'll
do what you say but
where's my bolt hole?

It's less than a month before Sergeant Billcox and his pill boxes climb his Ford wheels to preach the *dharma* and answer provocative Qs, although he knows these things are not something you can really speak about (what you feel in your heart) and he's not even sure they can be advocated (his individual love).

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Madhu rowed over to the island with several guests who had arrived. He was going to give them a tour because Manu and Syamananda are not here. The temple is almost empty. O angels.

Free-write periphery.
Don't ask me why
Rain sprinkles on my pain or
how long it will be before my head fogs
for the last time and then I die.
I saw the awful,
garish pictures of suffering in hell "
they deserve it, but
Pariksit wanted to know
if they could be saved.

* * *

4:40 p.m.

I went for a walk in the rain. I met a businessman in a small white car. The man had white epaulet-like straps on the shoulders of his white shirt. The man asked for Randolph. Was he a policeman? I told him that Randolph was at some fair selling his glasswork, all pronounced with my American accent.

"When will he be back?"

"Certainly tomorrow," I said, although later I realized that I didn't know that for sure. The man gave a cheerful response and drove off.

Then I was alone, but I could hear a child wailing. Then I saw the child's mother walking up ahead. I surmised that the child was probably being unreasonable and the mother was disciplining her because I know this mother to be loving toward her child.

Then a car zipped by and I recognized the devotees. The collie ran alongside the car yapping, heading toward me. I walked through all this and returned to my desk. In Madhu's room, I saw his Irish traditional music tapes spread out in an open drawer. I had called for Bala to accompany me on the walk, but no one had answered when I used our signal "banging on the wall with a hammer.

Lord Brahma descended with great personalities (four *mahajanas* were present) to persuade Priyavrata to give up his renunciation. He couldn't defy them. They assured him that he would be able to maintain his Krishna consciousness even while executing his worldly duties.

I want to . . . by my vocation . . . please Krishna,
please Prabhupada.

We can't disobey God, or even Brahma or Narada. I told Bala that the shed is warm, but if I open the windows, flies come in. He said he'd tried to get screens. That was easier than getting Radha-Krishna *murtis* or the holy names to fill me with nectar.

"Oh, it was a long journey," he said, meaning he had come all the way from Belfast.

Kierkegaard asked his ideal reader, "Do you will one thing only? Do you live as an *individual* before God [or do you evade your responsibility and hide in the crowd]? Do you serve Him by your occupation?"

Hare Krishna. The crunch cannot be escaped. It's your ears, your mind.

In *bhakti*, earnestness is all. Express humility, inability, the desire to be better. I pray He will give me clues how to succeed. Don't be complacent. It's not what we do, but why we do it.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

The rain, the beautiful dark blue skies always changing. This is the master painter at work in the Fermanagh sky regions. I hope the visitors can appreciate it, although it really doesn't matter to me if they do not. I like these skies and they inspire me to paint my little men, strange shapes that I hope to see "inner landscapes.

The small Radha-Krishna Deities are here. In the evenings I will take Their crowns off for the night and wish Them goodnight. I don't know anything about Deity worship.

We are accountable to God. Krishna is kind, but part of His leniency is to give us what we want. Do we want the highest? Then we have to show him evidence of that. We have to be detached from this world. We have to act according to our one desire and surrender to the Lord.

Tomorrow we will hear how Priyavrata obeyed and what it means to me. Tomorrow, if we live, we will continue to plan and rest and eat.

August 5

12:17 a.m.

Lord Brahma told Priyavrata that one has to follow the Vedic direction as a blind man is led by one who can see. That means that all orders and stages of life should follow the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What is His instruction? "Always think of Me,

become My devotee, and offer your obeisances unto Me. Then you will certainly come back home, back to Godhead. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend." (Bg. 18.65)

Bhag. 5.1.16 uses the analogy of the dream and compares it to the present material body. As one disregards a dream on waking, considering it unreal, so "a liberated person . . . does not think about whatever he has ignorantly done in the past; instead, he acts in such a way that he will not produce another body in fruitive activity." Thus dreams, as this analogy implies, are not worth investigating.

Of course, there is another discussion on dreams in Narada's instructions to Barhisat in the Fourth Canto. Maybe I should go back and look at it. I don't want to divert my will from going back to Godhead, but I have to admit that dreams fascinate me in the way they are such complete stories.

Lord, I dream at night and now I am awake, moving slowly on upwards through the modes by hearing Your instructions. Our work is likely to be incomplete at death, because each day passes without our completing it. How many days can we possibly have left?

The clerk and the boss and
the *ksatriya*
and rash driver of taxis
the henchman, punch man,
clever manipulator, all
eligible for going back to

Godhead and entering Krishna's pastimes even in this life. *Gopi*-hood? That's the best way to worship the Lord, Lord Caitanya said. He also said the land of Vrndavana is worshipable, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* must be studied as the *Amala Purana*, and the goal of life is *Krishna-prema*. That doesn't mean, however, that we can imitate the *gopis*, worship Vrndavana with *bhava* if we don't feel it, and study the *Bhagavatam* with love if we don't feel that either. Therefore, we can simply hear.

The states described in purports are not always easily achieved. And yet . . . my Godbrother said that most of the statements about being transcendently situated "*mam ca yo 'vyabhicarenacarena*" (Bg. 14.26), etc. "do not apply to us, but in an essay on *Bhagavad-gita*, rohininandana Prabhu quoted Srila Prabhupada's statement that all his disciples were pure devotees. Rohininandana said "pure devotee" is a generic term covering beginners to the most advanced. In that sense, it could mean that anyone who has sincerely changed his life and become some kind of full-time (at least externally) devotee in Krishna consciousness is a pure devotee. If you *are* a pure devotee, here's what Srila Prabhupada says of you: "regardless of what we have done in our past lives, if we engage ourselves in unalloyed devotional service to the Lord in this life, we will always be situated in the *brahma-bhuta* (liberated) state, free from reactions, and we'll not be obliged to accept another material body." *One who acts in that way* (Bg. 4.9) doesn't accept another material body but goes to Krishna.

Become liberated, free of matter. That means *vitaraḡa bhaya krodha* "free of attachment, fear, and anger. I can't claim I'm liberated. I am afraid of going on the street, of violence and bloodshed, and I'm attached to bodily comforts. I get angry sometimes. Yeah, working up through the modes of nature.

Where is that first-class citizen who doesn't envy his Godbrothers and Godsisters or even find fault in them? Who reads of Sarvabhauma's liberation and feels great joy? Who works hard to serve his spiritual master's mission? Who reads and serves, doesn't scum like a worm, but has good regard for others? Don't live with the six co-wives, the mind and the five knowledge-acquiring senses. Control them. Engage them fully in the Lord's service. That's *iha yasya harer dasye*. We can't claim to have achieved that state only by becoming members of ISKCON, although membership is an advantage.

* * *

9:50 a.m.

This is the time of day I often feel the pain beginning. I tell you, I'm lucky. It could be much worse.

Prabhupada, I hope to worship Radha-Krishna Deities. I don't have a deep *bhava* yet, and I heard *raganugis* don't like to worship *murtis*; they prefer to worship in the mind by meditating on the *asta-kaliya-lila*. Deities are for neophytes who can't pay attention. When *raganugis* do their *seva*, the Deities talk to them.

Oh well. I do have an affection for living with Deities already, and I just started.

White sky. Fire-sun behind it, spreading out behind the membrane and suddenly burning through. No boats on the lake at present.

A brash Bohemian on the
Nalge Trail drinks water
from his hard plastic bottle.
He poses in his ankle-high boots
while standing on a rock "
the L.L. Bean catalog look,
handsome young man's smile.

* * *

In a Nalge catalogue of
good-lookers, consider me a
crumb of affection.
I's writing this way because
my head hurts and
I can't concentrate on seriouser
topics as Little Lulu
and Tubby. Could be doing
kirtana. Wouldn't that be
nice? Spiritualize the
comic books!

* * *

Eternity will judge us as individuals.
We won't be asked who is to blame

because those who are
will also be judged
under God's eye.
It won't matter in the end. Joint karma
doesn't really exist.

* * *

3:17 p.m.

Pain. A new book I'm reading says that pain is natural and that we can gain from it. But I can't read the book. The pain has burrowed and now nestles in behind my right eye. They say it's caused by my veins, which are so tight the blood has to force its way through. I don't want to make it worse by writing, but I thought I would sneak in a message to let you know why this day was suddenly cut short.

Here's another message:

It's important to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Otherwise, it seems you'll be a devotee only in retrospect. Same with chanting *japa*. If you don't chant it regularly, then what's the nature of your devotional identity?

I took a pain reliever at 10:30, but it subdued the pain only for a couple of hours, like smoke covering the flames in a forest fire. It's blazing again.

August 6

Midnight

I want to be spared having doubts in Srila Prabhupada or Lord Krishna, or to overcome whatever doubts are already there. If those things aren't possible, then I will have to live through them like a man lives with a limp. I will . . . persevere.

But I don't want to discuss that now. I feel like writing about my health. More and more headaches steal the hours of my day "every day. I know if I try anything that creates too much stress "mental, physical, or emotional "it will probably cause a headache. I know I don't have much time left in my life, so I try to do whatever I can before I'm shut down.

Back to doubts. What a waste of time. One *bhakta* wrote and asked how to counteract doubts he felt in his spiritual master. I gave the standard advice, defined the perfection of the guru, etc. But the fact is, every day, those of us who suffer from doubts must face the same issues. Gradually, some doubts fall away, sometimes to be replaced by others. We have to face the repetition evident in our own lives with honesty. It's what makes us realize how slow our actual progress is. It may make us realize so many things. But it's the real truth of our lives as we attempt to practice Krishna consciousness.

One of the types of thoughts I put into the category of doubts is ISKCON controversy. There is often no black and white solution to it, and there are always many sides and opinions. Often, people fault-find one another while expressing their opinions. It's another area where I feel it's best for the average devotee, myself included, to refrain from debating. Our time is limited. I feel that especially about myself. I remember in the years when a Godbrother was making changes in Prabhupada's standards at his temple

and how his activities were being discussed around ISKCON. I managed to refrain from the discussion. I didn't inquire into the latest, didn't express my opinion, and didn't ask to hear anyone else's. I knew there was no profit in it since we were powerless at that time to change the situation. Neither was I sympathetic toward that Godbrother and his changes. Anyway, I was spared to think and speak of other things.

Sometimes it's not as easy to avoid the controversies. There's one raging around ISKCON right now of which I haven't shaken myself free. Maybe I should think that others are speaking enough about it that my particular shade of opinion will eventually be represented. I don't want to get into the fray, although I am concerned. Ultimately, I know that this too will pass.

* * *

Priyavrata was ordered to leave his renunciation and return to household life. Protected by Krishna, he was able to live with material opulence without becoming disturbed. Similarly, by living Lord Caitanya's instructions, we too will be protected despite the opulence with which we are surrounded (or the lack of it).

"A preacher on behalf of Lord Caitanya is protected from *maya* while he's in the world and in due course of time he returns back to Godhead for 'perpetual association' with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (*Bhag.* 5.1.19, purport)

Liberation.

Rubber plant.

Alarm clock ringing.

M. came into my room last night and we spoke of our travel plans. Then I dictated a few letters. Swift delivery from the ocean of death. Krishna delivers better than Federal Express.

A lame joke I know, since we're all standing on the edge of the graveyard casting wry looks at our unfinished devotional lives. My *Sikha* tousled, my aging organs can barely hack it any more. I walk under the Geaglum sky, I'm not attached to pets (as per BTG's latest instruction), and I know I want nothing more than to seek the shelter of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. Yet here I am.

As an inferior, the disciple must obey the spiritual master's order. When Priyavrata was ordered he said, "Yes, sir," then he did what he was told.

* * *

I dreamt that Srila Prabhupada was painting *Bhagavatam* verses on the wall in a big hall. Devotees gathered to see. It was as if he were lecturing, but it involved painting on the wall. I also wanted to paint. Prabhupada kept speaking about how life is short.

* * *

5:45 a.m.

Talked with Bala on two kinds of memories of Srila Prabhupada, sweet ones and ones that cause pain. Quoted Kierkegaard saying we are meant not to confess our merits but our sins. I can't confess the worst, not even in front of Bala. I'll serve Prabhupada, I

hope, until my dying day. As for doubts and *aparadhas*, I can expect them to drag me back to the material world. I only hope they won't drag me away from his service. *Sri Krishna-caitanya prabhu nityananda*.

* * *

Tired now. Waiting for breakfast, the business meeting, and then I'll be allowed to sleep.

* * *

12 noon

I answered a letter and started another until I ran out of steam. Shower, faded, head in fog, on stick of neck. read Dr. Kane's book. He says everyone will get a chronic disease sooner or later, so learn how to live with it creatively. Stop the monkey chattering of your mind and breathe attentively. That in itself will lift you past the pain, or at least the concentration on it.

Well . . . a disciple said he couldn't see me because he was too busy. Went for a walk. Chant in a satirical voice, the voice I hang out there to hear. Where's the heart praying? Hare Krishna "such foreign words sometimes. O Krishna, please be merciful and reveal Yourself in Your name. That would be even more foreign if it didn't contain *my* sentiment. The *maha-mantra* is absolute sound. Even if I fail to enter, it has some effect. We just have to have faith enough to chant.

O Krishna,

Krishna, I hanker for creative inspiration, but I'm aware that everything must pass through the eye of the needle known as chronically reduced time. Poems have to pass through headaches.

* * *

Madeline and Stevie are no longer. They've gone their separate ways. Brief life spans dwindling down to nothing and then our dynasty will disappear from the earth as did Thoreau's line. My books will outlast the firehouse. Be glad, Dad, I took the route to immortality and didn't die prematurely. I have inherited your whimsical, artistic touches and used them in Krishna's service. May you be blessed. May all souls make progress.

Prabhupada, true father, please hear your failing son. He wishes to be with you in some capacity and to contribute to your movement.

* * *

Swami crosses over
we follow, his
shoes we worship his
vyasasana, bow down,
then get out and work.

* * *

Swami crosses over
to us instructions vital "

* * *

He gave me split beans for lunch,
death, he said,
doesn't actually count or touch the
soul.

* * *

The soul can fly
to Krishna. This
Society for Krishna consciousness
we are starting "please
join us "
(I did)
will soon ask you to ask others
to join, at least on
Sundays for the Love Feast
and to chant in the grassy park.

* * *

I'm too old
for the tent campaign,
and my head hurts. I need
to rest. O Swami.

* * *

3:08 p.m.

A pure devotee of Urukrama can do wonderful things. "All glories to Lord KeSava,
who assumed the form of a dwarf. . . . O wonderful Vamanadeva! You tricked the great
demon . . . "

* * *

4 p.m.

I was going to go to the shed to write. I thought as I walked out there I might drop
into a mood that I couldn't catch in here all day. Just being out in the open air. I looked
out the window and saw three pleasure boats one after another. I realized that in the

shed, the boats would be nearer every time I looked up. That might be a diversion from the eternal, from remorse and repentance.

So I came over to the typewriter to tell you about it. Did you know that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and in Him there is no sadness? You cannot reach Him as long as you continue to look for your happiness in matter. You have to give up one for the other. Have I said this before? That's all right; we can all stand to hear it again.

Krishna is the Supreme, but we cannot reach Him if we are enamored by matter or even if we are simply forgetful. Grief makes us forgetful, and speculation. Agnostics tend to drive out the hope for Krishna consciousness by their decision to remain uncertainty. That is most unfortunate.

Calling Krishna to mind is not *so* easy because it's not superficial, yet even when the name is taken lightly, as in jest, or without awareness of just who Krishna is, or if it is taken in vain, even those utterances bring fortune. *Nehabhikramo-naSo 'sti*. Even a little devotional service can save us from the greatest danger at death.

Full Krishna consciousness, where we live in the eternal, is attained only when we are liberated in mature Krishna consciousness. Let us not harm others by what we read or say. They may be harmed when we fail to bring them face-to-face with the ultimate truth. This life will end soon enough and then we will be forced into another living body either in lower or higher species. Only if "while we're in this body "we engage our body mind and words in the Supreme, will we be able to get free from that inevitability.

Next Sunday, if I live so long, I plan to speak on Sarvabhauma's verse, *vairagya vidya nija-bhakti-yoga*. Each of the elements listed in that verse are important. One is *vairagya* and the other is *Siksastaka*, instruction. The center of instruction is to chant the holy names. Lord Caitanya gave much more than that to the Gosvamis, and we can learn what He gave by reading their books, such as *The Nectar of Devotion*. Lord Caitanya should be worshiped. Now Sarvabhauma is giving knowledge. His previous so-called knowledge leaves out the target that Lord Caitanya is to be remembered; His teachings remind us to surrender to Him. We can accomplish them when we become detached from matter. To speak of anything less than this will be a distraction. It is violence toward the listeners. Still, our minds go off even as we say it.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

Prince Agnidhra was attracted by Purvacitti, the Apsara. He seduced her by his flattering, flirty words.

I can see a saffron-orange shape at the quay on the Inis rath side. Is it a gas bottle or a *brahmacari*? It's probably Syamananda chanting his *japa*. Bala is out shopping for jars in which to put paint, and screens for the shed. I have four weeks left here. Just made plans with M. for our travel in September and October. It's easy to sit in an armchair and plan the miles, but it's quite different to live the experience. We even planned December and January in the Caribbean and America. Now the sun is shining on the fields of weeds. It is as much of a summer as we're likely to get here. I saw wildflowers with pods broken open and cotton stuff floating out. Midges blew at my head as I walked "they swarm in the heat "yet today was cool enough for a sweatshirt.

I'm not reading every purport to the Agnidhra chapter. Purvacitti is described in detail. "Indeed, she seemed to be making a path for the entrance of cupid, who is most powerful." (*Bhag.* 5.2.6, purport) Srila Prabhupada comments that a devotee can see hundreds of thousands of beautiful women and not become prey to lusty desires. I don't want to test *my* powers. Stay away from it.

The main thing is not to be detained in this world. I'm already held back by my low state of devotion. Life is running out quickly, although a foolish old man thinks he has ample time "for what? Nothing is more important than attaining devotional service. Don't go after it in a leisurely way.

Moving on to hear of Agnidhra's son Nabhi, whose wife, Merudevi, gave birth to the auspicious *avatara* Lord Rsabhadeva.

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

Dear master, bless me as I try to write, try to be at peace, try to approach you, and try to live with my illness. The hours pass so quickly and sometimes constrict me like the blood trying to squeeze through my head.

It is now 6:30 p.m. I'm drinking a Chinese tonic these days at this time. This world is not bad. You, Lord, are here everywhere, especially in the *Bhagavatam*. When I write, it is of You.

August 7

12:05 a.m.

I dreamed an elaborate fiction. On waking, I asked myself again why I don't try to write fiction for Krishna. I already answered this question in my book, *Why Not Fiction?*

You mean, then, that you are a mere writer of *diary*?

Yes. That's what I do. I accept that limit.

Are you convinced that this is your best?

I could be tempted to think I could do more, and I always hope to do better. Kierkegaard said we should live for eternity. In other words, we should do what's best for spiritual life. Therefore, I concentrate mainly on reading the *Bhagavatam*. I write some notes. There is no "creative" or fictional element involved. Simply notes. I also write floating paragraphs "they float on or between the "skip lines." They are *dvipas* floating like clouds in the sky.

You mean it's all a poem or a series of poems?

I try not to be long without returning to the *Bhagavatam* anchor.

How long do you go between headaches?

Oh, I'm still working on my definitions. Dr. Kane says that there is disease and there is illness. They are two sides of a coin. Disease is the objective, measurable stuff a doctor diagnoses and treats. Illness is the subjective, immeasurable experience of one's actual suffering. We may not be able to do much about the disease, but we can approach illness creatively.

* * *

King Nabhi performed a *yajna* to Lord Visnu to receive sons. Out of affection for His devotees, Lord Visnu appeared at his *yajna*.

Wrote to a *bhakta* and said I would initiate him on Janmastami. I said I would tell him later about how to see the spiritual master's perfection. We have an understanding. He said that he sees my good intentions as being beyond his, and in that sense, I'm more advanced. He says even he could be considered a "pure devotee" by the liberal definition, so me more so. As to how pure I am (i.e., how much I live in the upper realms of Krishna consciousness), that he cannot know or measure.

* * *

I gave a seminar quite a few years ago on this section of King Nabhi's sacrifice. I showed that even if we have mixed motives, if we are sincere, the Lord will reciprocate and we can improve. There is no literature like *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It's right that I should defer to it and sacrifice my life and my writing to serving it.

Devotional service takes many forms. It's not done by a ritualistic formula. Krishna is pleased by our service and our attitude. This implies that by our service we are able to think of Krishna's pastimes and teachings. For example, chanting Hare Krishna is a service of prime importance, but something else like raising money to use in His service is also important. Arjuna fought for Krishna.

* * *

My *Srimad-Bhagavatam* volume is filled with penciled in notes on these purports. The Supreme Lord is known only from the *sastras* and the *mahajananas*, and "when we are engaged in the Lord's service, the Lord reveals Himself to us." (*Bhag.* 5.3.5, purport) My margin note: "Even we in ISKCON?"

Yes, God reveals Himself to us ISKCONites, at least a little. He is intelligence and the ability in man. He's the sound in ether.

The sound?

Music, then.

Mingus'?

Not music for sense grat.

O Krishna, for *seva*.

Serve the Lord with devotion. That's why I'm suggesting to myself that I worship Radha-Krishna Deities. It means actually dressing the Lord. It will direct me to worship His form. O Krishna, please accept me. Please draw me to You in Your forms of Radha-Syama. The purport says devotion is all I need. (My marginalia: "But I have no devotion. What's the answer? Don't give up. Have faith in the *bhakti* process to bring out my original love for Krishna. *Vaidhi* "utsahan niscayad dhairyat.")

* * *

5:45 a.m.

White jet trail moves like magic against blue chalkboard of the sky. Krishna, Hare Krishna. I spoke memories of India to Baladeva. I am trying to produce something for a book, but I don't know if it is coming out.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

Warrior, our ranks are being blasted again behind the right eye, our activities stopped. I sulk, or at least remain inert in the trenches.

No, I'm defying the imposition and writing here anyway. *Prakrti* may hit back harder as if saying, "How *dare* you write when I have seized the territory for a headache! I'll punish you. When a headache comes, I want you to *stop!*"

A devotee recently arrived here who is perhaps making his home in the temple. He's a "*rtvik*" proponent and in the past has published letters and articles against the ISKCON gurus, specifically me. M. said he doesn't think we should mention it to the temple authorities (who may not be aware of the man's thinking) lest they overreact, but my mind is going through a loop-the-loop over it. I don't know his intentions. Shouldn't the temple authorities ask him where he's at? If not . . . the loop repeats itself. That loop is particularly short when I have a headache.

Bala was reading the five hundred pages I wrote ten years ago about my life, past and present. He said the first six pieces were defensive. I was apologizing and defending my process. Last summer when I wrote *Memories*, he said, I seemed to have got beyond that and said what I had to say.

Eye ache, neck ache "illness means how you suffer. They say you can change that. They say illness becomes a story in someone's life and the story changes over the years. Here's a quick story outline of my illness:

From the stress of GBC and guru duties and a general pushing myself for twenty years, I worsened a headache condition until it became chronic. Its crisis coincided with the guru reform crisis in ISKCON. The story continues as I spent years seeking cures and not finding them, and how I have now come to live in semi-seclusion.

Oh, it hurts,

I shouldn't travel,

I can't kill the pain today because too many painkillers only make the situation worse.

May the Supreme Lord be kind and

Reveal Himself to me.

I didn't mean to complain.

August 8

6:47 a.m.

Good morning. I've revived. Devastating pain overnight. I called aloud spontaneously, "Krishna!" "Prabhupada!" a few times, but otherwise I didn't have much presence of mind to pray or chant within. I simply endured. Now it's over "until the next one.

Spoke with Bala at night and early in the morning before he left. Now my life will return to normal.

Hello to the sky covered with its light white shawl. The air feels blue and summery, and the grass is wet. Someone is walking toward the quay. He has a perfectly smooth lake strait to row across.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

Pure devotional service. Foggy day outside. rounds chanted poorly because of ache. Excuses, varieties, comparisons "while you don't will one thing.

Dreamt a friend was censored in a letter by a GBC-appointed committee for some kind of *raganuga*-type activities. His daughter was present as we discussed it. Some of our Godbrothers sympathized, saying the committee members were unqualified. In a later nap, the dream continued. I had to share a living space with my friend, and he voiced more complaints about the censor. I didn't want to talk about it despite my sympathy. I wanted to be alone to read. That seemed to be the main message of the dream: I have a desire and a need to withdraw from so many concerns and to concentrate on the *Bhagavatam*. Too much bouncing off one another, even among close friends, is a distraction.

I have three weeks left to myself before we travel. Headache yesterday showed me how important it is to use time when it's available. I can't maintain too much intensity or passion in my endeavors because it brings on pain, but at least I can be steady and chant and hear away from the controversies. These beautiful, calm days at Geaglum are God's gift.

The truth is
anything I write is a
persona,
but the days flow
and there are flowing fields here

full of grass. I saw some of it was cut. Who did it and how? Is it for the cows?

"If we somehow or other receive blessings and benedictions from the Lord, our consciousness can be purified and we can become eligible to return home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 5.3.8, purport) His blessings come in the form of attraction to His holy name and as sparks of interest in preaching. Also, by His mercy He comes before us in the Deity so that we can see Him and serve Him. If we are inclined to these services, that too is His blessing.

* * *

Notes on reading Soren Kierkegaard

August 3 - 8, 1997

Purity of Heart Is To Will One Thing just arrived. I appreciate what he says. I like his insistence on our surrendering to God as individuals. Being part of a church or a culture with religious affiliation may help, but it isn't a substitute for the difficult, individual work of facing yourself and making the leap of faith.

At his height of productivity he wrote for twelve hours a day:

"He found in his writing a form of worship of God, and in the exercise of his calling as a writer whose every page was composed as under the scrutiny of God, he found his healing. If one is as weak as he is, and has so much to do, he will soon learn what it is to pray, he suggests. And he describes his vocation as a writer as literally living with God as one lives with a Father. He rises in the morning and gives thanks to God. Then work begins. At a set time in the evening, he breaks off and again gives thanks to God. Then sleep. So he lives. The twelve-hour day of writing when his production was at its height is broken only by a midday walk among the common people in the Ostergade. This keeping of sorrow and remorse silently between oneself and God keeps a man humble and acutely aware of the service he owes to God. Buried in this center, these sufferings release light that has no fear of darkness. And rarely in religious literature has suffering been treated with such delicacy and penetration as in Kierkegaard's own writings.

His vocation, his calling, is not your calling. No one could be more faithful than Kierkegaard in pointing that out. But do you know what is your calling, what is your vocation, and have you accepted it?"

"From the Introduction by D. Steere

* * *

9:56 a.m.

M. should be back soon. He took Bala to Belfast Airport this morning. I love him "them, my co-workers. read in *Be Sick Well*, the case of one person who meditated on her tumor and somehow connected it to the fact that she wasn't a warm person and had no close friends. She became outgoing and cured her tumor. Of course, another person might need the reverse to affect a cure. He might be fawning, flattering, trying to gain others' approval, too social, afraid to know himself. I thrive on being alone. There could be some negative reasons for it, I'll admit. A GBC committee criticized a Godbrother for not submitting himself to more of his Godbrothers' association. He wrote to me and explained his own feelings about it. I couldn't fault him for what he said.

* * *

Kane says when you have pain, look at it, approach it gradually in an objective way, then describe it with a fitting image. Then turn the image to a favorable one. I tried, but didn't get far with his meditation.

But he also gave some good advice: when you try to have a serene and healthy attitude toward your illness, don't expect it will cure the disease. Don't maintain a good attitude to become free of pain. A good attitude is always worth it in and of itself.

* * *

Noon

Lord Krishna wants to appear in our lives. If we don't turn to Him, He'll still relate to us as Supersoul, but only to witness and award us the results of our desires and actions. Somehow I want to distinguish myself as a devotee. I want the *prema* Prabhupada spoke of. He says we have to go beyond performing *bhakti* just to diminish material suffering and contamination or for liberation. Rather, we have to become completely absorbed in love for Krishna. Srila Prabhupada described it by quoting Lord Caitanya's *govinda virahena me*. The whole world is vacant without Krishna. Love Him and He'll never leave you.

"Although we may be engaged in the Lord's devotional service in the temple, material conditions are so tough and inevitable that we may forget the Lord at the time of death due to a diseased condition or mental derangement. Therefore, we should pray to the Lord to be able to remember His lotus feet without fail at the time of death, when we are in such a precarious condition." (*Bhag.* 5.3.12, purport)

* * *

3:05 p.m.

The priests of King Nabhi were sorry that they called the Lord to fulfill their material desires. "The Lord is engaged in various activities, and the pure devotee does not want to see Him whimsically, for his own sense gratification. The pure devotee simply depends on the Lord's mercy, and when the Lord is pleased, he can see Him face-to-face." (*Bhag.* 5.3.15, purport)

That's nice. We don't have to demand. We serve in separation, happy to receive His association by chanting and hearing, serving the Deity and His devotees, preaching, etc. If the Lord wants to appear, that's His prerogative.

Also, don't disturb the Lord with impure motives.

M. is back. He spent most of the day jamming with a fiddle player outside Belfast. He smiled while telling me "obviously had a good time" so I didn't tell him he should have phoned and let me know he would be gone all day.

Now I think I'll take a walk. What to do with a week here and there? Read about Lord Visnu and what He says to Nabhi's priests.

O Lord this fiddler
Stefan plays with
a fiddle on his knee his
stifled songs, doesn't
know real sacrifice for You
sings self-centered blues
but doesn't want to disturb
You with his love-lack.

He would sure like to love You "
You extract such a price for that
and he's in such a Kali-yuga slump.

* * *

3:46 p.m.

English, long-haired devotee cutting hay with a slow-moving tractor. He fingers his beads as he steers. New wildflowers in August, and the blackberries are red on the bushes. I'm out in the shed, door and windows open, inviting flies and butterflies in.

Few people around on a Friday. The weeds and high grass are untended, like a woman's unattended hair. They grow right down to the water. Only a botanist could identify all the species, but a painter could paint the upright purple flower stalks, and a poet would know something more about them, such as how they move into the breeze. Even the trees are chanting, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna."

* * *

Radha and Krishna. My shoes make me feel hot. Breeze blows paper towels off the desk. I did a facsimile of Radha and Krishna, but messed up on coloring Radha's face. When the light orange was too bright, I streaked black over Her lip. No way to salvage it now. I went on to do a sloppy portrait of a black-faced man playing a bouzouki with music notes and the words, "*Hari hari biphale!*"

Now it's 4:15 and I should go back to my room to read. Krishna says we should always think of Him. I read this to nuns and priests once. I don't know if it helped. They probably don't remember anymore. They're devotees of Jesus Christ. They laughed when I said we were also devotees of Jesus. A nun said, "Does that mean that *we* are not?" I let that pass. If they laugh in their confidence that they are more devotees of Christ than we are, so be it. It's true anyway. We are devotees of Vraja-Krishna and want only Him to protect us. He promises that He will and I believe Him.

* * *

5:40 p.m.

Saw a *mataji* in a *sari* rowing herself across. It took her three times as long as it takes the men; her boat went around and around, then zigged, then zagged, but she made it in the end. I didn't spy on her with my binocs, but read about Rsabhadeva's birth.

Then I defended ISKCON in my mind. The palomino weeds are so pale that they look like a flowing sea of gold. Rsabha's feet were marked with the symptoms of an incarnation of God.

O Hare Krishna. Don't misuse the van, Madhu. Keep it nice for our tour. I don't want to break down in France or Spain. I'm a fastidious gentleman who doesn't want to meet the rude shocks and people of this world, these roads, or any towns. I want to stay in a room and read and write with Radha-Krishna standing nearby. I don't know what I'm doing beyond this.

Seeing that his son was qualified to rule, King Nabhi retired to the Himalayas.

Not me. I sigh
be a guy
poet
taster
although I got no
taters to play with
summers away I'm a
hoot-tooting egoist
no music planned "just
silence,
the darn ol' silence
and I'm happy with it
in my saffron sheet
and calm, calm,
life of no plans beyond this head
with limits.
Your servant,
Guarino of Naples
Dante.

August 9
7:50 a.m.

In the material world you have to work hard. I have to work even to fill a page with words or paint. Still, I try to do it only in fun, love, truth, and because I want to. Can't, won't do otherwise.

The story is I am not a high-handed football player who has to go.

He avoids sex, even in dreams. It's all nonsense, the Swami says. All serious religionists know that: sex is the greatest attachment to this world. Much propaganda against celibacy nowadays. They see it as sick and frustrated.

Oh yawn.

Krishna, I accept my limits and this here is my graffiti to prove it.

* * *

I feel out of sorts today. Couldn't do anything well. I didn't tell Madhu. Maybe I can write it down.

I just refilled this pen, but already the ink is gray instead of black. What's going on here?

Answered a letter: "You guys have to decide among yourselves who is in charge of the temple. I am simply happy to see you rightly situated as president or not. Don't say I'm partial."

I put my response in an empty bottle outside the house. He had paddled over in his kayak to leave me his note.

I'm the figurehead guru after all, although I don't eat lunch with the boys and girls.

Radha-Krishna have Their own suitcase. Tears in my eyes like dew on the grass, not of emotion or *viraha* or even self-pity. Just yawning tired.

Grouse, quail . . . the dog scented something and his long face suddenly became serious. He stood listening. Tomorrow I'll lecture on sankirtanam. We have to meditate, but not complacently. Our meditation is not better than theirs unless it is.

She said walking on a deserted beach in Wales with the family dog was nice. She doesn't like noise and thinks that means she is bad. It's okay. I don't like noise either.

* * *

9:35 a.m.

There were prayers made honoring King Nabhi. He worshiped the *brahmanas* and they, by their *ojasa* (devotional service) showed him the Supreme Personality of Godhead in person.

Rsabhadeva took over the kingdom and was ideal in his administration. He went to *gurukula*, then married, and he and his wife had one hundred sons. The eldest was Bharata.

Gray skies moving. I saw the smoke from a rubbish fire burning in a rusty barrel. Arjuna smiled shyly when we met. We spoke briefly. He said he only needed to go out one day this week to earn money. Hare Krishna. M. gone shopping. I'll be alone for lunch, so my plate gets left on the tin trunk outside my door.

Maybe I feel sour because I got up late. Or maybe it was because I chanted *japa* with no heart. Could be anything. Too many dreams and too much attention to them, and that syndrome I have explained that I can't sustain any activity to the point of it causing stress.

No solace available today. I tried reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but still felt tired.

Collie followed me on my walk. I fancy he likes the sound of me murmuring my *japa*. Someone cut hay yesterday and gathered it into mounds, old-fashioned style.

Radha-Krishna in a big suitcase "the little ones, mismatched, for training. Srila Prabhupada looks on through all this, knowing.

* * *

3:07 p.m.

It's true I mourn the fact that I don't have more taste. *Tapo-divyam* (5.5.1) for me means reading the Bhaktivedanta purports. I don't want to read other gurus' works. I want to read Prabhupada's books without referring to those other things "Swami Maharaja meant but could not say." It's hard work, paying attention, praying. *Nayam deho*. Keep your nose down in the book.

Instead I look up at the low-slung speedboat in the strait or try to trace the sound of the crow's cawing.

Nondevotees work hard for the rewards of hogs and dogs. They miss the purpose of human life. A big pleasure boat passing by flies a Swiss flag. They become happy in this life in relation to their distress, but it ends and they have to take another birth with no guarantee it will even be human. "The living entity is seeking happiness life after life, but he can make a solution to all his problems simply by practicing *bhakti-yoga*. Then he

immediately becomes eligible to return home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 5.5.1, purport) Know Krishna and it can happen.

We lecture on these points at Sunday feast gatherings again and again. We unroll our points with enthusiasm. Even our congregations have heard it all before. Sometimes we defend the doctrine of transmigration because our Western audiences don't accept it as easily as Hindu audiences do. Let's get into it, since we are familiar with the parts. *Nrloke*: human life is rare and has special privileges and responsibilities; *vidbhujam*: not like the stool-eating hogs. Then the lineup of three things as cause and effect: (1) *tapo-divyam* (not ordinary suffering, but suffering for a divine purpose); (2) *Suddhayet*: the heart becomes cleansed; and (3) *brahma-saukyam tvanantam*: then only can you experience eternal happiness. For a starter, repeating Srila Prabhupada's words, we would mention that these were the instructions of a father to his sons. It's relevant; it's urgent. I long to taste these teachings.

Mahat-sevam varyam ahur vimukhteh. We can serve Srila Prabhupada, our *mahatma*, even after his disappearance. He said our love for him would be shown by how we cooperate to keep ISKCON together after his disappearance. Purify it. Think of him; serve him. We don't need a new *mahatma* or a different movement.

* * *

M. and I both noticed how dark it was this morning, and not because of the clouds. The summer season is passing.

* * *

5:08 a.m.

Walked. Saw two persons but didn't stop to talk. At the end of the forest path, I saw someone else, so turned around. Headed toward the quay where the view was marred by speedboats pulling skiers. Then walked back and forth over a path of land near the water shielded by trees and berry bushes. Chant, chant . . .

Kierkegaard calls serving God with the desire for material reward "double-mindedness" (hypocrisy).

"Until one has love for Lord Vasudeva . . . he is certainly not delivered from having to accept a material body again and again." (*Bhag.* 5.5.6) Srila Prabhupada hammers away at our basic illusions of fruitive gain and mental speculation and focuses us on Krishna's *lila* in the spiritual world. Premature focus on *only* the *lila* won't be effective. And of course, merely pointing out that the material world is illusion is nothing more than what impersonalists or Buddhists do. Please, Srila Prabhupada, let me follow you. Please nourish me as you see fit.

* * *

6:08 p.m.

The New Age doctor said illness is symptomatic of a deep release in the area of blame. No good will come of it. He prescribed sense enjoyment "particularly sex" to release the tensions.

Rsabhadeva spoke differently. He said sex was *maya*. Sex breeds attachment; it creates the knot in the heart. It will keep us cycling in repeated birth and death. *Sannyasis* also become attached to things "temples, their few possessions "but those attachments rarely have the power to bind like family attachments.

He told his sons to associate with *sadhus*. Don't associate with nondevotees.

We are the accumulation of everything we have done and felt. If we don't follow this advice, we can't see it and we cannot take responsibility for it. Forget the past, the guilt trips and all that. Love Krishna now.

The waves are tossed by the moon; the skier is a spirit soul inhabiting a body. I don't hate him. I just want to be away from those who may drag me down. This is truth, Rsabhadeva said. We shuffle, but deny nothing.

* * *

I had to censor the last paragraph because I told the readers that I was not *urdhvareta* all those years. I've been pretty good since '66 though. I wanted to say it because I am a spider's breadth away from death.

August 10

Midnight

Lord Rsabhadeva's instructions in texts 10 - 13 are about austerity, giving up worldly pleasure, and hearing about and chanting the Supreme Lord's names. People nowadays would see this as a too-negative discussion of the world, which they say was also made by God. Some would revolt if their fathers tried to lay this trip on them. "Live in a secluded place . . . have full faith in the revealed scriptures and always observe celibacy . . . avoid unnecessary talks . . . acquire knowledge from the right source . . . "

* * *

Someone says an author's greatness is when he's both personal and universal. What's universal? That everyone should take to Krishna consciousness and get rid of false ego. What's personal? That my stomach feels heavy from yesterday. I have no big crises to report, just the same, slow burning issues. It's *all* personal, even the universal. The scriptures are absolute and I write about my attempt to love them, my falling short, and not much else. Travel will be good for me; it may give me a fresh perspective. Looking for depth.

Rsabhadeva advises his sons to give up even the means or process of liberation. ". . . when one is actually engaged in devotional service, he should not bother seeking out knowledge." (*Bhag.5.5.14*, purport)

"One should not be simply intent on consulting books but should simultaneously execute the spiritual master's order (*yatau pradesam*)." Do something practical. Also, "consulting books" is a derogatory remark, I think, toward *jnanis'* books. There is no harm in consulting *Srimad-Bhagavatam* for three hours a day or more. That's the spiritual master's order too.

"If one is serious about going home, back to Godhead, he must consider the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the *summum bonum* and chief aim of life." (*Bhag.* 5.5.15)

I will continue to instruct disciples even if they are unable to follow my order. I don't want to be angry with them for their failures. We are meant to help the blind, not condemn them. That means consistently holding up the light. Srila Prabhupada was untiring in that way. He may have seemed angry toward *mudhas* who don't know what will happen, but he never gave up trying to present Krishna consciousness to them. He was never disgusted in his preaching attempts. He got good results, but he was not blind to the problems in the institution or his disciples' failings. He didn't give up; I won't either.

* * *

Devotees at Bedside
Go ahead, Nurse,
he's dying. Give him
the holy name. No
one is watching. This
one's so out of it you can get
her to repeat it after you:
"Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare."

* * *

But sometimes they remember
later or even invent it.
Daruka's mother claimed he
gave her prayer beads and devotees with
him sang chants around her bed.
"Did she resent it?" he asked
his sister. No, she didn't mind,
thought she imagined the whole thing
and it was fine.

* * *

So keep on blending the *maha-
prasadam* into their drinks,
but don't get caught by the
antiseptic doctors
who prefer it their way.
Don't let them see or hear
the mercy you actually give.

* * *

I took a nap before breakfast so I would be able to give the *Caitanya-caritamrta* class. I anticipated dreams and images. This is what I got:

I dreamt of an expensive rocking horse. It was being advertised in a magazine. There was a picture of a chronically ill boy, his face shriveled. The pitch was that we should try to make the kid happy by giving him this horse "the kind that every kid would want "for Christmas.

During the dream I felt I was looking at a real commercial pitch. The ad was like the ones you see in the back of *New Yorker* magazine for rich people. The boy's face was so hopeless that it seemed more cruel than kind to offer him a toy instead of a cure.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

I put notes from *Be Sick Well*, into the back of my health log. I'm hoping not to feel fatalistic and resigned when pain comes, but to accept it more, whatever that means. It's a normal part of my life, certainly. I can't escape it. I do need to stop pain if I'm going to lecture though. Otherwise, I'll be forced to cancel. I want to explore, if possible, how to relate less to the hurt when the pain comes. I could play with metaphors to describe the pain. For me, the most important thing is to find Krishna there. I tend to think I can't practice Krishna consciousness unless I'm pain free because I can't read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, can't chant on my beads (it's too vigorous), can't really write. I would like to be able to perform devotional service during pain and offer it to Krishna, even if that service is only a devotional attitude. I'm not looking for something fake, something I haven't really processed into reality for myself, but something.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

M. has taken on the responsibility of organizing a Hare Krishna festival to be held on August 21 in Galway. He'll do it mostly by phone. He's enthusiastic. I hope it doesn't distract him from the needful regarding purchasing our ferry tickets, planning our route and departure on September 3rd, etc. He seems more enthusiastic to do the preaching festival than for the routines of servant-secretary for this guy. This means I should be a one-man enthusiastic party writing EJW, and read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Maybe I can even get into writing some poems! Or draw pictures with fresh energy! To enter the pain of headaches to find new opportunities to heal. So many things to do, even if I can't immediately share them.

* * *

They bought some Vietnamese pigs for their farm in Wicklow. The female llamas are nervous, but the male likes people. Devotees tend to their services. Praghosa is struggling to rent a restaurant in Dublin, but another guy may out-bid him. Each devotee's got his world.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

O God, I told them in the temple this morning that feelings are not everything. *sastra* should rule our lives. Therefore, when *sastras* say the holy name is most important, we should make it a top priority. As I spoke, a few took notes. Something worth remembering: "The holy name is the only way."

"Then how come we say any one of the nine methods of *bhakti* can bring us perfection?" someone asked.

Even if you specialize in another limb, you still have to precede it with *kirtana*. O Krishna, please accept our obeisances. Our dullness is due to lack of faith, which of course, leads to lack of devotion. You have already explained it all to us. Still, we wish our gut feelings could be more sublime.

Society should be guided by *brahmanas*. When it is not, we will see chaos, crime, poverty, shortcomings, and miseries. Spiritual teachings are not esoteric or applicable only to a few advanced spiritualists. The whole planet is adversely affected without a God conscious ruler who follows bona fide *brahmanas*. I may not be able to lecture on this in a way that convinces complicated *karmis* who believe everything comes from matter, but I know it for myself. And the heavy, dull feeling, the empty feeling comes when I doubt, when I fall short.

Someone asked me this morning to explain the difference between *japa* and *kirtana*. I sankirtana, but *japa* is meant for our own purification. I implied that we have to practice what we preach before our propaganda will have meaning. We give cards to the people on the street telling them to chant and be happy. Then we invite them to our ISKCON center. When they visit, however, if they find everyone absorbed in *prajalpa* and envy, they'll wonder where the chanting is.

* * *

Gently rock yourself into *samadhi*, you said. You tried something like that at least once, read a passage and kept with it, ruminating. Yes, that's a different practice than reading. We are not heroes. Some say we should climb ever higher mountains to find fresh perspectives on all that we haven't achieved. Others say we should stay with the simple life. Someone said the mountain view changed his life. What to do? Anything other than that sounds non-heroic. It's a choice, I guess.

* * *

4:10 p.m.

Bhakta Leo went on *harinama* on Saturday afternoon in Birmingham. Giriraja Swami led the chanting, then asked Leo to give the lecture. As Leo spoke, some Christians challenged him. He spoke back boldly, saying that they should love him as a neighbor. Then he added, "raise your hand if you believe God is limited (and can have only one son)." The Christians became favorable and questioned Giriraja Maharaja.

I thought about that. I *want* to go out sometimes and preach like that too, but as I took a walk this morning, my ankle hurt. Healers might say it's my mental attitude "if I see

myself as a crippled, reclusive invalid, so I will be one. I don't know, but I'll say that the headache pain is real and I am beginning to face the effect it has on my life. I don't want to spend my time lamenting the pain, nor waste time wishing things could be different. Neither do I want to feel guilty. Often headaches draw me deeper, especially when the pain is prolonged. At least I hanker to return to a pain-free state when I can turn with fresh love to the *Bhagavatam* and this writing. It gives my devotion more clarity. It makes me face Krishna and try to "fix the name in the mind and then bring it down into the heart." I don't have to repeat many mantras quickly or even aloud. If I can just turn toward Krishna and not close down. I'm not talking about mental gimmicks to control pain or even to control devotion.

First I have to release myself from disappointment or a feeling of loss. Pain does not automatically mean time is lost. Pain is a normal condition for the material body. If it happens to come four or five times a week, what else can I do but accept it? I tend to look to Madhu for sympathy or at least commiseration. I seem to need that from *someone*. He knows what I want to achieve in a day, and he knows it's difficult for me to be stopped. It's not easy to live with pain. That said, I still want to accept the work of making the best of it.

I said I wanted to talk with M. about illness, but now I have decided to keep my feelings to myself today. What could I say to him? He is like immediate family, my support group. Should I tell him his sympathetic look helps? No, why create something artificial? I don't want to ask for sympathy.

August 11

12:09 a.m.

"The *brahmanas* are very dear to the Supreme Lord due to their high *sattva-guna* qualities, and they also engage in welfare activities for all conditioned souls in the material world." (*Bhag.5.5.24*, purport) *Apani acari prabhu jivera Sikhaya*.

Don't forget to memorize what you've written. This is a personal notebook, not a place to pontificate.

The brown moth, his wings folded, climbs the Fifth Canto, rests on the *deva-nagari*, then hops and flies away. Maybe something's wrong with him. I will throw him off because he's not reverent or intelligent enough in how he crawls on this page.

The *brahmanas* are *akincananam mayi bhakti-bhajam*. They don't ask the Lord for anything; they are completely satisfied being always engaged in His devotional service.

The devotee-*brahmana* honors all living beings as temples of God. "We even offer respects to a temple from a distant place, and all living entities should be similarly offered respect. This is different from the theory of Pantheism . . ." (*Bhag. 5.5.26*, purport)

* * *

We have to be honest. SK says we will feel ashamed of our shortcomings before God. He says such shame is a good companion with which to go through life. He demanded it of himself.

I fritter and burn
and ease and celebrate
look to masters of word jugglery
of sacrifice and
old time's sake
who choose the right expression
from a life of suffering,
sense grat, *ennui*, pain
and what "
then go alone . . .

But it's hard to do that. I try to realize and loop under the desk lamp like the erratic moth part flying, part hopping, part crawling, then falling limp in a dramatic collapse. Back to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to savor what falls to me.

* * *

All the senses should be engaged in the Lord's service or else you can't get out of *maya's* clutches. I can do this with pain or without it. When I don't have pain, I live in its shadow. It can return at any moment. Some people like to forget the facts of life by water-skiing, but they too will die. Another point is to really accept. When death finally arrives, say as Socrates did, "First you catch me, then put me in the grave." Death and disease *cannot* harm the spirit soul. One who realizes this won't be distressed in pain, but will realize, "This is only the body. It seeks to enjoy and it feels pain, but I am different from this bundle of nerves, bones, and flesh." To know this you have to live it.

* * *

Lord Rsabhadeva installed Bharata on the throne and then renounced all honor and comfort to wander as an *avadhuta*. People mocked him, but he remained silent. Wherever he went, people mistreated him. He knew the body was meant for such an end. Being in His own spiritual glory, he didn't mind the insults. "Thus without being angry at anyone, he walked through the whole world alone." (*Bhag.* 5.5.30)

Talk of living with illness! "When a person finally realizes that the material body and world are temporary, he is not concerned with the pain and pleasures of the body." (*Bhag.* 5.5.30, purport) *Matra sparsas tu kaunteya.*

We cannot imitate this realization. Rsabhadeva had a completely spiritual body "and consequently did not at all suffer pain." He was never saddened by the mistreatment he received. We cannot imitate, but we can apply whatever we can according to our limited capacities.

Then joy and a voice linked to God
In *kirtana*. Find the true note.

* * *

5:21 a.m.

People who live in temples have the advantage that they are always centered on Krishna activities "Deity worship, classes, preaching activities shared with the community. The disadvantage is that people collide. You have to be ready to live with many people, and there's a hierarchy of authorities, and there's a public liturgy in which it is sometimes difficult within the group to think peacefully or even devotionally of who you are in relation to God.

What is there to say and what is there to do? Gerry Mulligan on his baritone sax sang that question in days past. Difficulties come and go like seasons. Note it and note that you'll be back for more. You, the self, returns in another body. You don't know what kind of body you'll get. Some say it doesn't matter since we'll have forgotten everything anyway, but Srila Prabhupada says that just because we forget doesn't mean we don't suffer.

After thinking about this and gazing out at the distant shore, I began to doze. I dreamt I was in a temple and saw a thin Godbrother in a worn, brown leather jacket, something a motorcycle tough might wear. He was anxious and demanding. He wanted all the devotees to immediately rush out to do something before the curtain opened for *mangala-arati*. Other images followed as I ran out to do his bidding and found myself in all kinds of strange situations. We seemed to be in Paris.

What did the dream mean? Anything?

* * *

The bathroom is a good place to find fresh insights. I'm aware of that, so I sometimes plan to keep my mind clear of other things when I'm in there. I also like to hear Srila Prabhupada while I'm in the bathroom. Today he mentioned that the mimeograph machine, the hand, and the typewriter are all present, but now they're being used on Krishna's account. In the shower I thought that maybe I should bring Srila Prabhupada *murti* with me on this upcoming European tour. We thought it would be extra trouble that a semi-invalid like me could do without, but I'm used to being with him and we will be gone for a month and a half. I also thought of taking the training Radha-Krishna.

A disciple of many years is trying to get in touch with me before he leaves for India to get me to give him permission to worship Govardhana-Sila. I prefer that he take the responsibility himself. The guru is not the rubber stamp of the man's own plans. What's the use of that?

Time is moving along. After I meet with M., I will face another emptiness. Then what will I do? If I could stay awake and pain-free, that would be a different story. Little increments of energy and loss. The next pain will not take my time; I will shift to a different kind of activity, which is also part of life in Krishna consciousness. It doesn't have to mean my day is lost. Accept your limits and make use of them.

* * *

I wrote to a devotee to say that it's important to follow the rules and regulations if we hope to free ourselves of *anarthas*. What else can we do but be obedient?

Krishna,
Krishna, the particle of light,
the full light,
the blood and
nerves,
the brain and spine and
everything that can go wrong with it all.

Live long enough, says Dr. Kane, and you'll probably get cancer or migraines or arthritis. It's normal. We hear about it all the time. Our number will come up eventually. It's got to.

We're on easy street now. I look to my left and see Radha and Krishna on Their swing. To the right I see Prabhupada sitting on a sheet-covered mat looking fresh and easy with his *japa*. If I look down I see the typewriter at my fingers. If I look inside I see plenty of stuff, chatter and maxims and what I ate for lunch yesterday, baked-over, recently-gone-through ideas, and doodles, exercises, gutsy stuff too, all of which will come out. Where's love for Govinda? It's there, but I can't grasp it.

* * *

8:20 a.m.

In our conversation, M. mentioned that devotees recruited in Ireland were sent by a recruiter to England. I then switched the topic to the time of the plague and famine in Ireland, around 1840 - 60. I said I'd read that while Irish people starved to death during the potato blight, the same country was producing large amounts of grains and shipping them to England every day. What was my point? Was I trying to evoke pity? Anger? To show I knew a little Irish history?

I regret I mentioned it. I'm not touched by such suffering. Since I don't know what it's like, my commenting on it is worthless. Better I turn to what I can actually do "read, write, and chant. After telling the bit of Irish history, I could have added, "That's the material world, " but it felt too cheap to say that. I also didn't say, "Only Krishna consciousness can save them." Instead I tried to bring our thoughts back to August 1997 and asked M. about his upcoming Hare Krishna festival in Galway.

What do I care about? "One should be very careful of the mind, just as a husband should be careful of an unchaste wife." (*Bhag.* 5.6.4, purport)

* * *

I told M. of the disease-illness distinction. He said sometimes a devotee's plans (say, to catch a plane at the airport) are interrupted. If the plane is canceled, he has to wait. If this happens to a *karmi*, he feels frustrated and distressed, but a devotee can take the opportunity to chant Hare Krishna on his beads. Similarly, if my normal activities of chanting and writing (sixteen rounds, fifteen pages) are stopped due to headache, I can . .

. offer my suffering to Krishna (as Therese of Lisieux did). May He please accept my state of mind as devotional service. Yes, that's the idea.

Srila Prabhupada criticizes the hippies, the Jains, King Arhat, so I criticize them too. We try to give everyone a chance to take to Krishna consciousness.

Sticks in the throat
your insincere utterances
what you can't back up with
action or knowledge.

"Check-out Ms. Lamot's on-line diary." One writes from the gut. I fall over . . . "her self-deprecating humor and homespun wisdom."

Arhat.

* * *

Nityam bhagavata sevaya. "As a matter of principle, devotees should read, speak and hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam* persistently, twenty-four hours daily if possible. That is the recommendation of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (*Bhag.* 5.6.16, purport) I missed the point of my reading again "to know Krishna's nature and to go to Him in this life. I read mechanically. At heart I know it's important no matter how I'm reading. I've come to that conclusion.

* * *

12:10, noon

Last day on this volume. Prove what you've written with your life.

Little things to do now, and I run from one to the other. My watch says 12:20. This is the moment. Eternity is waiting.

Swami, please dedicate
another. I mean let me
dedicate this life and another
to you. I'll wipe off the
picnic table in the
courtyard of 26 Second Avenue as
one of your raw men asked.

I'll "well, I can't claim I'll
give out books eternally in parking
lots because that's too hard "

I'll fail and fall at your feet,
do the lecture route and be
grateful. I won't fall
down but exit as a saffron
elder, dying at least
an official *sadhu*.

* * *

2:44 p.m.

Serve with caution. "Otherwise a little discrepancy will cause one to fall again into material existence." (*Bhag.* 5.8.7, purport) Maharaja Bharata, out of affection for a fawn, neglected his *sadhana*. "We must rise early in the morning, bathe, attend *mangala-arati*, worship the Deities, chant the Hare Krishna mantra, study the Vedic literatures and follow all the rules prescribed by the *acaryas* and the spiritual master. If we deviate from this process we may fall down, even though we may be highly advanced." (*Bhag.* 5.8.8, purport)

Another reason for falldown is misplaced sympathy toward helpless creatures. That is, trying to give them material comfort instead of spiritual emancipation. These purports are like a navigator's guide for all time.

* * *

4:05 p.m.

Farmer in suspenders and old-style pants and cap shows Andy (from England) how to rake and stack the hay. M. and I walk by chanting.

It's all right. I fall short, yes, but what can I do beyond what I am doing? I am ashamed, yes, and humbled, but the dark clouds fill blue sky and then after the rains, turn white. Peace is always cut by the sounds of speedboats or something else. right now I hear the distant lowing of a cow and a human voice calling over the lake. We are here to the learn the point.

Krishna, the science wandering
down these Lough Erne channels
not like fun-
farers from European countries.

No, worship Krishna there too. Don't waste time or neglect duties. That's a ragged truth.

* * *

5 p.m.

Volume over. Reached a limit. It's tricky because I want to go beyond limits, but not without accepting them first. This book is limited to this many pages though, so I'll start by accepting that. I'm still a beggar and have to take what I can get.