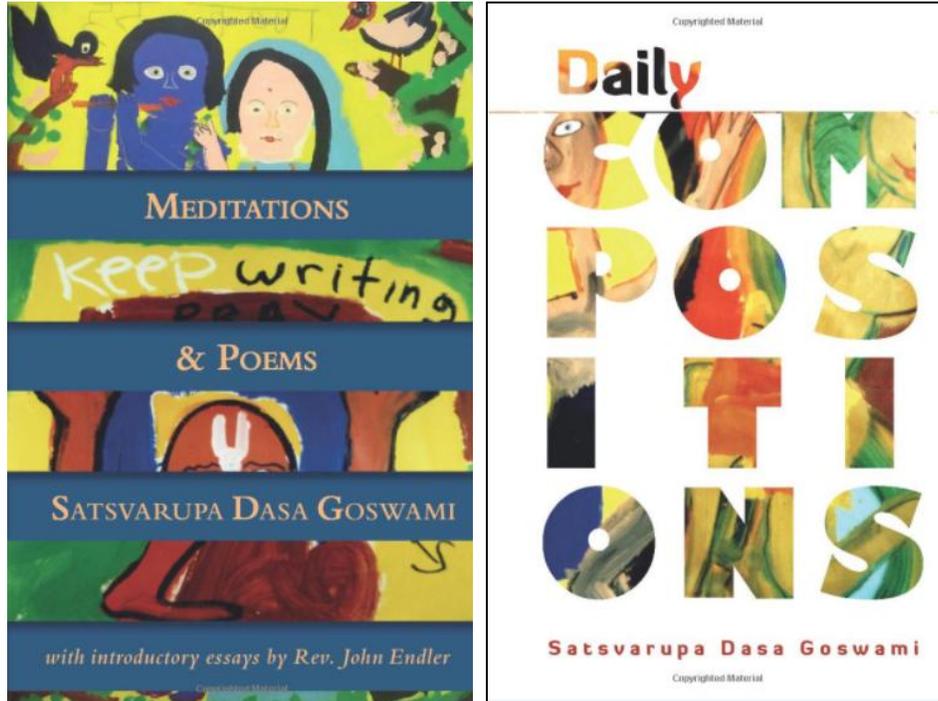


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***Meditations and Poems, Daily Compositions* now available!**

I am excited to share with you the news that Satsvarupa Maharaja's latest books are now available. These books continue the current series of volumes dedicated to the publication of the treasures to be found within the *Every Day, Just Write* literary series. These latest publications contain different formats in which the reader will discover prose meditations, poetry and free-writes thereby providing an introduction to the diversity of literary styles within the *EJW* project.

Originally, these two volumes would have been presented by Satsvarupa Maharaja at the annual July program in Stuyvesant Falls but due to the global pandemic that gathering was canceled. So, we intend to distribute *Meditations and Poems* by mail order.

The companion summer book, *Daily Compositions* volume is now available for purchase exclusively on Amazon. To purchase *Meditations and Poems* (within the USA), please send a check or money order in the amount of \$15 (**made out to GN Press**) to:

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami
P.O. Box 233
Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174

Shipping expenses are included in that cost. Orders outside the USA should be made through Amazon.

Happy reading!
Rev. John Endler

Advertisement

Free Write Journal #112

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Free Writes

COVID-19

Urgent prayers needed! His Holiness Yadunandana Maharaja has been diagnosed with COVID-19. He's been ten days with symptoms of fever, cough, lots of muscle pain and physical tiredness. He currently resides on the ISKCON farm New Vraja Mandala in Spain. According to our news source, his health has not improved, but he's not been hospitalized yet. We ask all our devotees to join asking our Lord Krsna for his well-being.

Different devotees are testing positive for COVID-19. Some cases are mild, and the person doesn't suffer many symptoms, and gradually it seems to go away. But others drag on with illness and are to some degree incapacitated. Their associates are asking devotees to pray for them. Each devotee are loved by many, and devotees are dependent on them. I am writing to several of these devotees, inquiring for information if convenient, and expressing my love and concern.

The Backward Glance

Bhurijana Prabhu would be pleased to hear that our out-loud reading group is going through his book *The Backward Glance*, which is a detailed overview of the Eleventh and Twelfth Cantos of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. At first we had some difficulty finding the book, but gradually we accumulated them, and now devotees have about six books. There are so many speakers in the book it is sometimes difficult to follow along. We were listening to King Nimi and the Nine Yogendras. Now we are hearing a lot of commentaries by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Sridhara Swami, Jiva Gosvami, Sukadeva Gosvami, Bhurijana Prabhu and the BBT purports. Krsna is often

quoted, and He emphasizes that pure love for Him is the highest goal and the perfection of life. Other transcendental processes such as *jnana*, yoga, philosophical speculation, austerities, pious deeds, sacrificial *yajnas* cannot reach Him. Only by pure unalloyed love can Krsna be attained. Krsna is very straightforward about this. We are now reading the “Uddhava-gita.” The *Bhagavad-gita* teaches different processes and then says *bhakti* is the best. But the “Uddhava-gita” denies the superiority of any other process and goes directly to unalloyed love for Krsna. Every one of our readers and hearers is enthusiastic about *The Backward Glance*.

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In the Eleventh Canto there is a section where King Yadu meets an *avadhuta* and inquires from him. The *avadhuta* says he has learned from twenty-four gurus. The *avadhuta* said he now wandered the earth in a liberated condition. The *avadhuta* said he learned from the wind. The wind doesn't become affected by something pleasant or unpleasant. Thus he learned detachment regardless of whether he's in touch with something pleasant or unpleasant. The *avadhuta* then says,

“A saintly person is just like water. He is free from all contamination, gentle by nature, and by speaking creates a gentle vibration just like that of flowing water. Just by seeing, touching or hearing such a saintly person, the living entity is purified, just as one is purified by contact by clear water. Thus a saintly person, just like a holy place, purifies all those who contact him because he chants the holy name of the Lord.”

The *brahmana-avadhuta* learned from the moth not to be attached to see a woman's form.

“One who has failed to control his senses immediately feels attraction upon seeing a woman's form, which is created by the illusory energy of the Supreme Lord. Indeed, when a woman speaks with enticing words, smiles coquettishly and moves

her body sensuously, his mind is immediately captured, and thus he falls blindly into the darkness of material existence, just as a moth maddened by fire rushes madly into its flames.”

In this way the *brahmana-avadhuta* enumerated twenty-four gurus who enlightened him in spiritual knowledge. |

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Now we are hearing Uddhava’s asking numerous questions of Krsna and Krsna’s answers. Bhurijana states that he has arranged the question and answer section in an accessible way by making the speaker’s words concise. Otherwise, the questions and answers are so numerous and detailed it can be bewildering. Bhurijana writes, “Uddhava: Question” and then immediately, “Krsna: Answer.” There are thirty-five questions and answers in this particular section, although there are more throughout. Bhurijana’s skill is to make the sometimes dense and technical philosophy accessible and palatable without watering it down. He often quotes the commentator Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, who gives his cogent contribution to what Uddhava and Krsna speak.

Jayadvaita Maharaja Lectures

After long delay, we finally obtained recordings of Jayadvaita Maharaja’s *Bhagavatam* classes from Towaco ISKCON. We had trouble getting the MP3 to work but finally did it. It has been a long time since I have heard Maharaja give a class. He does it in a very interesting, interactive way. He reads the verse, a little purport, and then speaks something. Then he takes questions from a chat box. The questions range all over the place, and Maharaja is expert in answering them all. He is strictly *parampara*, a Prabhupada man. He is in isolation lockdown in Towaco because of COVID, and he’s been giving three *Bhagavatam* classes a week for

approximately six months. Yesterday I heard two lectures. One was about the necessity of householders to perform Deity worship in their homes. He also took many questions about the practice of chanting *japa*. He said a devotee should chant loud enough to hear himself, and he quoted Prabhupada as writing to a devotee that “You should chant and hear sincerely.” I look forward to daily listening to my learned, engaging Godbrother.

John Endler Visit on Zoom

Baladeva has been urging me to print as many books as possible as soon as possible because when a vaccine is discovered for COVID-19, John will have to return to his pastoral duties and can't give full attention to service with my books. I wrote something about this in the *Free Write Journal*, and John read it. He assured me that even when he returns to full pastoral service, he won't reduce his work on my books. He says it's too important to him; it's his personal *sadhana* and part of his ministerial work. John said years ago Thomas Merton used to be his man to go to for spiritual advice. Now he said I'm his “go to” person for spiritual guidance. He is presently typing up the *Karttika* book, to be available in the summer of 2021. This way the devotees will have it on time to purchase and read during the *Karttika* season. They can make a personal vow to read a few pages at a time. This week he's beginning a series of counseling sessions with a couple in his congregation who are about to be married. He's going to use the exchange of letters of the fiancés written in *Sanatorium*, and he's eager to let me know how it goes. He's planning to publish *California Search for Gold* for my Vyasa-puja in 2021, and I'm still deciding whether to ask for a second book at that time. I've expressed my hesitancy that I'm giving too much to read to the devotees, but I've received two letters urging me to go ahead and print more.

Local News

Due to cold weather, we have taken Tulasi Devi inside permanently for the winter. One plant

has spider mites and has to be taken outside to be sprayed with neem oil. Our *tulasis* had a good summer and recovered from the long winter. We had thirty baby plants this year. Ten went to the Schenectady community, ten went to the Albany community, and the other ten were given to various persons.

Our Sunday guests came wearing masks. Lalita-kaisori helped Krsna dasi in reorganizing the *pujari* room. They cleaned, and they are planning to put up shelves to store the paraphernalia. Lalita's husband Atindra Mahajana worked to put Jayadvaita Swami's *Bhagavatam* classes on my MP3 device. Amit from Albany took part in our hearing and reading out loud.

Bhakta John Mulligan, an expert devotee-workman, and two other devotees, have come to do landscaping on our front yard. Yesterday they cut back the grass that had overgrown the parking strip to a line that's parallel to the house. They tapered the ground away from the house because now when it rains it creates a big puddle of mud. They will put down a steel divider to separate the grass lawn from the gravel they will put down over the dirt, and then compact it with a rolling machine. And they're putting down cement on the landing and on the place where the *tulasis* are kept in the summer. At present this area fills with water and creates icy patches. The men were served lunch on the porch, and they'll be back again tomorrow. They are skipping a day of work for predicted rain, and that's just as well, because I'm scheduling a meeting today on the porch with Haryasva from Philadelphia.

Today Bala from Trinidad has a CAT scan appointment. He is in anxiety because every six months he has a checkup like this to see if any of the cancer condition has returned.

We obtained a new mattress to be used in the back guest room for use by Bala and Krsna dasi. They are going to use that back room for sleeping overnight to avoid having to walk from their house early in the morning when it's so frigid and dark. As they walk to our ashram. They are "tropical birds" and have to be very careful about their health in the winter. We can't afford to lose anyone else to illness because of the smallness of our staff.

Kirtan Rasa visited and spoke with me on the porch. He told me news of the outside world. He has advised us to get guns in case violence comes to the door. Baladeva is in agreement with this opinion, but we first have to get permission from the authorities. Anyway, we live in a safe place. Over fifty percent of our neighbors are Trump supporters, and we are friendly with them all, and they all take *prasadam*.

Facing Sufferings in Krsna Consciousness

I received three letters in one day from different devotees experiencing suffering in different ways. One devotee has had a lot of anxiety over the years. He's now taking a course at Mayapur where the directors give essays to write where the devotee describes his sufferings in an autobiographical/confessional way. He then quotes scriptures and tells how he is trying to deal with the troubles. He's having some success. He's keeping a healthy diet, and his friends tell him he looks younger than he has in years. In the past, he allowed his mind to carry him away, and he lived in anxiety. But now he's starting to do better, coming out of the mode of passion. Another letter I received was from a devotee who has done as much management and book distribution as the first correspondent. But this devotee has always been in the mode of goodness. He recently tested positive for COVID-19, but he's not struggling in his mind with it. He's peaceful and reading Srila Prabhupada's books, and after about two weeks his COVID symptoms are subsiding. A third letter I received was unhappy. It was from a friend of my disciple Lilananda in Italy. I was told he just passed away suddenly at a relatively young age, and I was asked to pray for his auspicious destination. Lilananda was always friendly to me and kept up regular correspondence. We do not know what suffering will come or when death will arrive, but we have to get prepared now for the difficult times. Chanting and hearing, associating with the devotees and serving the spiritual master are key ways to stay in Krsna's shelter.

Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 3

p. 97

“Prabhupada Meditations

(February 5, 1991)

“Taking solace from *Cc.* and then *S.B.*

I know action is required

as the response to these purports.

But now that you are grounded,

waiting a day, don’t bother with the phone.

A few more letters answered,

but mainly the books.

Be happy in them.

Think of Godbrothers who love these books,

who can study them all day,

and then come out

explaining in lectures

with learned references.

“He is teaching what we need to know.”

You’re not studying to write a book,

it’s not for ammo in a debate,

not to prepare a morning’s lecture.

Then why? Because by hearing of Krsna

you spend time in the best way.

You save yourself at death,

you please the Lord, and by reading
you will remember Krsna's pastimes
when it is your turn to speak.

My master is pleased.

At this one day of my life

I am content to be with him,
savoring what he carefully speaks,
and thinking about it

if I become morose at my unworthiness,
that's also not bad.

I'm following the narration
of Lord Caitanya through the forest.

He was happy to eat the forest vegetables
collected and prepared by His servant,
and even happier when He had a chance
to stay in a solitary place.

'Krsna is an ocean of mercy,' He said.

'He is especially merciful to the poor
and fallen. Without His mercy,
there is no possibility of happiness.'

Cars and trucks are rolling to JFK Airport,
winter sunshine suddenly comes through the window,
quiet friends are in the house. Nothing to prove today,
just stay awake and read.

Don't doubt it: This too is a way
to be with your master."

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p. 144

Remembering Srila Prabhupada While Traveling

February 7, 1991

Ibis Hotel, London

"We were here last year during a heat wave. Now London is muffled in a heavy snowstorm. There is a bowling alley next door, and I hear the repeated sounds of bowling pins being knocked over. So what does this all have to do with Prabhupada meditations? It has a lot to do with it.

"Recently in America, I had some good recall sessions by anchoring myself in Prabhupada's '66 *kirtanas*. That may be the best way to remember him; but now that we are traveling again, I have to remember that Prabhupada meditations are always happening.

"Part of me wants to say that it is not possible to think of Prabhupada in all circumstances. The sound of the bowling pins being knocked over has nothing to do with Prabhupada. But another part of me says that Prabhupada *must* be here. If he is absent, it is my Prabhupada consciousness which is lacking.

"Let me scan my recent memory and see if I can think of Prabhupada moments. The day we flew from Long Island, we stayed at the house of Ranacora dasa, who lives near the airport. In the last few hours I was leafing through *The Teachings of Lord Kapila*. I found some outstanding passages. Prabhupada states that a pure

devotee is so humble he does not even hope that he will be liberated in this lifetime. Prabhupada wrote, 'A devotee always prays, "For my misdeeds I may be born again and again, but my only prayer is that I not forget Your service." I wrote that down, and I am carrying it with me in my bead bag. Prabhupada also stated that the boys and girls in the Krsna consciousness movement do not read the daily newspaper. He said they do not know what's going on from day to day in the world, that it is not important to them. They are more interested in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita*. That stood out when I read it, especially nowadays when there is such a deluge of news about the Gulf War. Prabhupada's statements gave me conviction. When I got on the plane, I did not look at the newspapers or news magazines.

"On the airplane we met a woman who was interested in Krsna consciousness. She has traveled to India several times and knew about both Hinduism and Buddhism. I tried to introduce her to the *Bhagavad-gita*, and she became interested. Later, Madhu told her how Prabhupada came to America in 1965. She asked if he were the first Krsna conscious person who ever came. Madhu said that others may have come, but he was the first one to make an impact. That was nice, hearing Prabhupada's glories recited to an interested person on the Pan Am flight. She also asked if there was a biography of Prabhupada.

"As soon as we arrived in England we were met by devotees who gave us breakfast and drove us to the hotel. Why were they so kind? Did I take it for granted? The real basis of relationship with the devotees is that we are all followers of Prabhupada. They took care of us because they think we are true to him. Wherever you go in the Krsna consciousness movement, people treat you with kindness. They are interested to hear you speak and to read what you write because they think you

are true to Prabhupada. Therefore Prabhupada meditation means gratefulness.

“Dear Srila Prabhupada, it would be best if I could serve you staunchly like some of your devotees do. I take solace that you keep a place for me in your service. I want to improve. I want to enter more deeply into your purports by the process of recall and concentration—and love. I want to think there’ll be more. I want to speak with you, to be your servant, to bring you nicely prepared food, to bathe you, dry you, worship you. I want to remember you, and, as I travel, do some substantial work. Prabhupada, I don’t want to waste your time, but I know that if I have something to say for your service, you will be willing to hear from me. For now, let me tolerate the bowling pins, just as you tolerate me.”

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pp. 211-212

“Swamiji's Prasadam Fix --A 1966 Memory

“On Monday, Wednesday and Friday nights, Swamiji gave everyone a piece of apple. The two *kirtanas* were over, the lecture and debates had ended, and now before going back into the city night, you sat in the audience of the storefront and chomped on a little piece of apple. The daily life with Swamiji, however, was for those who wanted a real fix.

“*Prasadam* worked. It made you feel satisfied and free of sex agitation. Everything seemed nice. You didn’t want to argue with people. *Prasadam* helped to heal the ailing self. The *atma* is not only the soul; it is also the mind, body and self. All of these will be satisfied by eating *prasadam*.

“When you honor *prasadam*, the body says, ‘I like Krsna consciousness.’ The mind says, ‘I like it too. I’m not agitated anymore.’ The self claims, ‘This *prasadam* was offered to Krsna. Swamiji says it is not ordinary food.’

“*Prasadam* was an item of faith, a sacrament. It was as good as the Eucharist taken in the Catholic Church. The Eucharist is surrounded with awe and mystery in a ceremonial ritual. *Prasadam* was eaten from a plate on the floor with the boys and the Swami. Someone might doubt, ‘You are eating like everything else. What is the difference?’ Swamiji would reply, ‘This is offered to Krsna.’

“As with all other Krsna conscious activities, *prasadam* depended on Swamiji’s presence. He was right in our midst as we ate with his invitation, ‘Take more, take more.’

“Nations such as the Italians know how to relax and satisfy themselves when it is dinnertime. They put their problems aside, and they eat. With Swamiji we did that also, but without heavy sense gratification, and without wine and meat. It was spiritual eating. It was satisfying but not merely gastronomic satiation. It was also different than taking the holy Eucharist once a week (or at most once a day) in the form of a tiny thin wafer.

“ . . . The boys joked, ‘Satsvarupa, you have to work this afternoon, so you need to eat more to be spiritually strong.’

Swamiji heard them and smiled, ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘be spiritually strong. Eat *prasadam*, that is our answer.’ Regardless of what a critical onlooker might say about overeating, Swamiji was our leader, and he was the one who told us to eat more. He did not say we should start with one *chapati* and decrease from there—not in those days. This was the happy entrance into Krsna consciousness. Each of us came with our many hang-ups and lamentations, but *prasadam* took care of it all.

Although it is true that we should not eat in a mood of sense-gratification, as indulgence, there was something wonderful in the beginning—the enjoyment of eating in good company. The loving exchanges brought us into Krsna consciousness.

Eating has always been celebrated as a way to share love and togetherness. Rupa Gosvami even mentions these two forms of loving exchanges among devotees: “To accept *prasadam* and to offer it to others.’ A spiritual family eats together in the spirit that Swamiji showed us. There was something to be learned from that example and not just laughed at as funny stories from 1966, ‘when everyone ate a lot.’

“Try This: By chanting Hare Krsna, wonderful *prasadam*, offering, serving and eating, is not distant from thinking about Prabhupada. How can we avoid the connection? Just think about it. Here are a few suggestions: tell Prabhupada stories about *prasadam* while you cook or honor a feast. Cook his favorite recipes. Also, think of statements that Prabhupada used about *prasadam*, like, ‘Eat sumptuously, but not too much.’”

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p. 214

“Do It for Him

“It is reassuring to take stock of the fact that we follow Srila Prabhupada in almost everything. Often we feel bereft of love for Prabhupada, and we think we are distant from him. However, if you take inventory, you will see that you were always doing what he wanted you to do.

“I wear *sannyasa* clothes because it is my destiny that I be a Vaisnava monk. I do it because he introduced it. When I think like this it gives me assurance that I am

completely immersed in Prabhupada consciousness. Even me, a laggard who does not fulfill front line duties, who fails in many ways to cooperate with devotees—even I am following Prabhupada in general and in the particulars with devotion.

“Chant your rounds, read his books, do your preaching service, whatever it may be; do things the way he wanted them done. With the instinct of a well-trained person, you act the way Prabhupada taught you. You have experience and should be guided by Prabhupada’s *vani*. Whatever comes up in our lives, we simply act according to Prabhupada’s instructions.

“If someone asks us, we may verbalize the source of the instructions. Usually we do not have to verbalize it. Let me give a small example. When I was in Hawaii cooking for Prabhupada, he came into the kitchen and saw that I had some big knives spread out on the table. Prabhupada said, ‘Do not leave knives spread out like that. Put them in the drawer.’ Many people might have said the same thing, and some people even have phobias about sharp points. Prabhupada was not extreme, but he made this remark, ‘Do not leave knives out. Put them in the drawer.’ It is a small point, and not even a transcendental teaching. It is what you might call a habit of Prabhupada’s. But I remember it and agree with it. I don’t resist it. So this morning I noticed that one of the devotees had left some big knives out. I put them away without saying anything. It is nice when these thoughts go through the mind, not even verbalized—you see something and do it the way Prabhupada did it, because you see the wisdom of his ways.

“Here are more examples of things we do as Prabhupada taught us: you use a tongue scraper the way he does. You sit on a toilet, crouched, with the soles of the feet on the seat like an Oriental (not the way Westerners do). You eat only food that is offered to Krsna. In order to offer the food, you say prayers to Srila Prabhupada

three times and ask him to accept it with devotion, so that the food can be offered to Krsna. You read the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Whatever you do, you are always thinking, ‘How is this service to Prabhupada?’ If it is something he did not explicitly teach, how can it be accepted as an innovative form within the mainstream of Prabhupada’s teachings? If there is anything we do that is not given by him, we must deliberate whether it is acceptable by taking inventory of our actions. We want to conclude that we are doing everything for him.”

Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 4

pp.280-281

“Little Moments with Prabhupada

“Sometimes we have what I like to call a ‘Prabhupada moment,’ that is, we connect something in our present-day reality to a memory or impression of Prabhupada. These things are usually not momentous revelations, so we tend to disregard them. But Krsna conscious life is filled with service to the spiritual master, and that service is filled with little remembrances of his personality or instructions, little moments. We don’t have to wait for the demigods to shower flowers on our remembrances or beat drums and cymbals crashing in the sky. We are followers of Srila Prabhupada. He is *jagad-guru*. We just have to notice and appreciate whatever moments come to us and be favorable toward them.

“What does it mean to treat our ‘Prabhupada moments’ favorably? We can treat them more carefully, just as we tend to plants by watering them and keeping them free of insects and insuring they get enough sunlight, we can tend to our connection with Prabhupada. Paying attention to our ‘Prabhupada moments’ will make us more

conscious of our entire relationship with Prabhupada. Perhaps we can pray to him as we wipe the dust from his framed picture. Or when we say something like, ‘All glories to Srila Prabhupada!’, we can stop and think about him for a moment, rather than just rattling it off mechanically.

“For example, I like to remember how Prabhupada used to stop between Calcutta and Mayapur in a mango grove. He did it a number of times. It was his habit, but it was always something special for the devotees who were with him. The grove was almost halfway between Calcutta and Mayapur. Stopping there broke the three hour journey.

“We used to fill *tiffins* with puffed rice and fruits—mango, papaya, and maybe *sandesa*. Usually two carloads of devotees would be at the grove. The women would sit a little apart, and Prabhupada would sit with his secretaries and male disciples. *Prasadam* would be served to Prabhupada, and then he would wash his hands and mouth. After Prabhupada was finished, his *prasadam* would be distributed, and we would all eat. We all felt happy to be with him and honor *prasadam* before getting on with the journey.

“Even while it happened, the stop at the mango grove with Prabhupada was a just a ‘moment.’ Now when we recall it, it is not a ‘major’ event. We have these experiences, and then life goes on, yet what is life but a collection of such moments? Some of them are special, although they may not actually be earth-shaking events. Then what is a tremendous event? Usually we think of them as disasters or violence or sudden windfalls. But with Prabhupada, so many things happened subtly, quietly. For example, the publication of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, which revolutionized the world, is a tremendous event. But Prabhupada composed the *Bhagavatam* morning after morning. Although he was internally intense, the mornings were routine for

him. Every morning, he added a little bit to the entire *Bhagavatam*. As Prabhupada himself said, ‘Little drops of water wear away the stone. In this way I have written all these books.’

“All of Prabhupada’s ordinary moments are special to us: his rising at 1:30 A.M., his turning on the light and opening the books where he left off, his putting on his reading glasses, deep in his scholarly mood—he was communing with the previous *acaryas* just to save us. And then, another volume of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Prabhupada said, ‘When I publish a book, I feel I have conquered an empire.’ He conquered more than an empire; he conquered his devotees’ hearts.”

Every Day Just Write, Volume Two: Search for the Authentic Self

p. 122

“12:45 A.M.

“When I arose from bed this morning I made a few notes for the talk I have to give tomorrow morning at the disciples meeting. I’m going to start out by saying that I’m going to Vrndavana. I’ll read references from Prabhupada’s books. The first one will establish that Krsna in Vrndavana is the object of our worship. Vrndavana in India is a replica of the spiritual world. It’s important for us just to go there. Then I’ll read a quote that says that if you can’t go to Vrndavana, you should think of Vrndavana in your mind. This refers to *raganuga bhakti*, but it can also be applied to our level of devotional service. That means we can practice chanting and hearing in a Vrndavana-like mood, or to put it more simply, in an attentive and serious way. And just to assure us that we don’t need to travel to India, I’ll read a quote by Prabhupada where he says we can think of Vrndavana wherever we are in the world.

“But the real substance of my talk is to encourage devotees to establish a sacred

place in their life for daily *sadhana*. One of the keys is regulation, then maintaining that regulation. And being creative so that we find it interesting and we make gains by practicing it.”

The Wild Garden: Collected Writings 1990-1993

p. 64

“The date is set, a time when I will have to leave this body behind. Prepare yourself for that parting. Behave in ways conducive to that fact. Whatever I think of at the end will determine my next destination. For the materialist, death is a reverse. It is a wrenching away, a tragic defeat. Devotees shouldn’t die like that. A devotee’s anguish is that he or she did not attain Krsna *prema*. We will feel that anguish.

“At the hour of death, it’s too late to develop our chanting, to promise to read more, to serve Srila Prabhupada to our full capacity, to preach and serve others. Of course, if we yearn to do these things, Krsna will ensure that we can carry them out in our next life.

“I’m convinced that at death we should pray as Narottama dasa Thakura prayed, for association and for service to advanced Vaisnavas. We can’t demand to go to Goloka Vrndavana if we are not qualified, but we can beg to serve the Vaisnavas no matter what condition of life we attain. Beg to continue hearing and chanting in the line of Srila Prabhupada and Rupa Gosvami.

“Death is inevitable, it’s not far away. Wind up your material life today. Why do you eat so many sweets? Is it really to keep your body healthy and strong? What acts do you carry out to serve your body but which have no spiritual benefit? Nothing is more important than self-realization. How gradual does your path have to be? At my age the word ‘gradual’ takes on a new meaning. I do not have time for long-term plans, and there are no senior citizen discounts in the spiritual realm.”

Calling Out to Srila Prabhupada

p. 228

“O Prabhupada, whom we think of day and night;

“O Prabhupada, who came to America with *Srimad-Bhagavatams* as his only means, who sold volumes to bookstores in order to pay for groceries, and who thought in the beginning, "They will never accept this Hare Krsna mantra, but let me try.’

“O Prabhupada, who happily endured the austerities of New York winters on behalf of Lord Krsna; O master, who years later made thousands of disciples and had many houses to reside in, but who said, ‘I was happier in the beginning in New York because I had no one to depend on but Krsna;’

“O Prabhupada, who favored New York City by opening his first ISKCON center there and by singing in Tompkins Square Park, who beat the one-headed drum hours at a time and sang strongly, who braved all the rudeness and strangeness just to deliver us from birth and death by giving us the holy name;

“O Prabhupada, whose preaching was guided by Lord Krsna, whose preaching was ‘to go in like a needle and come out like a plow,’ whose preaching was pure, and who stayed to do it, who fulfilled all the qualities of a saint, being tolerant, merciful, friendly to all, and fixed in the Absolute Truth;

“O Prabhupada, who loved his disciples and nurtured them like a mother cares for her children, and who, like a father, imparted to his sons and daughters the gift of courage to stand and fight; O Prabhupada, please live vibrantly in our thoughts and actions.”

Truthfulness, the Last Leg of Religion

p. 94

“Anecdotes of Truth

“In the *Mahabharata*, Lord Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, tells a story to the Pandavas about the meaning of truth. This story continues to be told by great thinkers all over the world, often, and they do not even know that Sri Krsna told it in the *Mahabharata*. It is usually offered as a test case against the absolutist’s version of truthfulness in the world.

“Lord Krsna’s friend Arjuna had vowed to kill anyone who suggested that he give away his Gandiva bow. In a moment of anger, when Yudhisthira was disappointed that Arjuna did not kill Karna, Yudhisthira suggested that Arjuna give the Gandiva bow to someone more qualified. When Arjuna drew his sword against Yudhisthira, Lord Krsna intervened and told His story.

“Lord Krsna said that once there was an ascetic named Kosikata who lived a small distance from a village. He had made a vow, ‘I will only speak the truth,’ and he had become famous as one who never told a lie. One day innocent persons seeking refuge from robbers entered the forest near the dwelling of the ascetic. The robbers soon arrived, searching for the men. They approached Kosikata and inquired, ‘By which path have these men gone?’ Kosikata replied, ‘They have entered the forest just near here.’ The robbers then slaughtered the innocent persons and took their wealth. For this sin, Kosikata fell into hellish life and suffered greatly.

“Lord Krsna then drew His moral from the story. He said, ‘There must be some indication of distinguishing virtue from sin. Therefore great sages have indicated that seeing through the eyes of scripture does not provide for every case.

Hearing this from Me, you should now decide whether your brother should be slain.’ In this story and other explanations, Lord Krsna found a way to preserve Arjuna’s vow while at the same time avoiding the killing of Yudhisthira.”

From Imperfection, Purity Will Come About: Writing Sessions While Reading Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Saranagati

pp.38

“In Song Seven, the tone changes. A pure devotee enters the scene and rescues the poor sinner. ‘A wicked mind brought me into this world, O Lord, but one of Your pure, elevated devotees has come to bring me out.’ This is not make-believe; it actually happens whenever the Lord’s confidential servants contact the *jivas*. It is preaching. The pure devotees come to rescue the *jivas* from illusion and deliver them to Krsna. I know because it happened to me. All glories to the pure devotees who carries Krsna’s message.

“A wicked mind brought me into this world, and a wayward and fickle mind will keep me in it. The pure devotee comes to save me. My spiritual master is a specific person, and I serve him specifically to please him. He’s a preacher and a pure devotee of Krsna, my Prabhupada. He wants me to surrender and practice *bhakti* in my own life, and he wants me to do something to help others.”

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p. 39

“I can hardly believe the opportunity before me, also the fact I have so much freedom. Krsna, there is so much to read, so much to absorb, and my capacities are limited. And there are threats I can’t perceive, just as I can’t perceive weather fronts

that move in from the sea, or the influence of the demigods and demons, stars and planets, and me just one tiny dot. I'm spirit soul, shining, although infinitesimal in size. I'm not yet aware of or experiencing *prema*. I'm still here within the seven walls of this universe. I want to become free so that I can join my guru in his *nitya-lila pravista*, but I don't have enough credit to pay the price."

Japa Reform Notebook

p. 127

"He hopes in early morning that he will finger his beads in the quiet room, and yet his dreams indicate his roaming mind.

"The holy name is Krsna Himself; he knows this is true; he has known it for over a decade.

"Far away he hears a train, nearby a sound; someone moving; his right hand enters the string of beads, and thumb and third finger grip the first one with instant hope.

"Chanting with offense cannot produce the relish of the pure holy name but only the shadow of the name. 'That is what I can expect,' he thinks, but he knows the Name's power can overcome him.

"Great saints also in sacred quarters like the courtyard of Radha-Damodara Temple, Srila Prabhupada beneath a mosquito net in his room in Bombay at 3 A.M. having just dictated the *Bhagavatam* purports—great saints chant. And so another devotee chants in their footsteps, peacefully bowing to the order of the guru and knowing in his heart that it is true. He would rather die than abandon this. But it has been years; still his mind and habits prevent the pure Name from entering his ears.

“Even the shadow of the Name brings liberation, just as the first rays of the dawn chase away the ghosts and thieves of the night. ‘Yet still I live in the shadow of the Name,’ he thinks. ‘Should I even aspire to rise? Let me try first to stay awake, free of illicit desire, properly pronouncing Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Even I can be transformed.’”

Writing Sessions

“My Purpose at Isola di Albarella

“October 20, 1996

“2 A.M.

“No relief. Sharp pains remain at my right eye from all night. My consciousness is spaced-out, can’t bear to follow any train of thought, just lightly going along from one thing to another. Didn’t want Madhu to read to me yesterday.

“Sit on a pillow and forgive myself for chanting poor, silent rounds. I try for six before going to take a shower at 3:00. So far, my day looks like just more lying around in bed and sitting in a soft chair spacing out.

“For thirty-five weeks I kept a ‘medicine log’ in which I carefully noted day-to-day intake of allopathic pills. At first, I was taking about one pill a day, and it was sufficient to completely check the symptoms of headache pain. Gradually it’s gone to up to two per day—and more recently 2.5, 2.7—and there have been weeks that I’ve had to take three per day and still couldn’t check the headache symptoms. So

starting with the thirty-sixth week, my ‘medicine log’ is going to be a log of living without allopathic medicine. Here is what I wrote for October 20th, morning:

“Right eye pain stayed all night. About 6:30 A.M. it began to lighten. By 7:30 A.M. the pain rose up again in the right eye.”

“It’s as if the pain is saying to me, ‘For so long you repressed me and now...’

“3 P.M.

“The headache went down a little and I was able to break my fast and eat lunch heartily, including pizza slices made on a newly-bought mini electric oven.

“After lunch I read in *Caitanya-caritamrta*. I was anxious to get back in direct contact with Krsna’s message as told by Prabhupada. I read about half a dozen verses and purports. But then my eye pain was signaling again that that was all I could do. Close eyes and thank God.

“4:47 P.M.

“Eye aches too much to write, don’t want to aggravate it. In ten minutes, I will take hot and cold footbaths. M. says maybe we should stay here only three weeks and then go to Avignon, France to hear from a devotee, Padasevana, who is a naturopath professional. Reason: this Italian doctor is strict, expensive, not open to our regularly asking questions in between visits. Okay, I’d go, but then what about *My Purpose in Isola di Albarella*? Will ‘it’ be achieved in only three weeks?

“Biggest thing is to kick this allopathic medicine. My body is revolting against it now – hurting for not having it and hurting for having had it for so long. The body is in a pain crisis. Headaches with no control. That’s why I vomited yesterday.

“I did it all in service to Krsna. I wanted to become more fit and active, not a semi-invalid with headaches. So I started to take this medication, being convinced to take the first pill early in the A.M. of that fourteen-hour car ride from Khargone to Bombay. That was the first. The second was while giving a lecture at the Chowpatty temple. Now, thirty-six weeks later, I get off the train: ‘No thanks, I’ve had enough.’

“My purpose in Albarella is to kick this habit and be ‘normal.’ Get back to where I was before – not headaches *every day* and *all day every day*. Can you do that in three weeks? It’s peaceful here. Mmmm. I don’t mind moving after three weeks. We are movers.

“Got to get back into the routine of reading. We read this and liked it: ‘If one does not understand in the beginning but continues to hear again and again, the wonderful effects of Lord Caitanya’s pastimes will bring love for Krsna. Gradually one will come to understand the loving affairs between Krsna and the *gopis* and other associates of Vrindavan. Every one is advised to hear over and over again in order to greatly benefit.’ (*Cc. Madhya-lila 2.87*)

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“October 21, 1996

“How ya doin’ pardner?”

“Okay. Belch. Clear head at present. During the night pains came, and I applied a wet rag with success. If I have no obligations, no scheduled lecture performance or meeting, I’m okay. Because if a headache comes, I can go back to

bed, snuggle in. That's what we are here for. Now take your pre-breakfast tonic for increasing digestion. Wrote note to M., a belated birthday greeting.

“We don't want to be madly searching out the best clinic to go to. No relief in this body.

Save me, a fallen, Your Divine Grace.

You will still play-write while listening to music? Yeah, I will, and it will come out KC.

Indigestion

Undigested

signs of a lag in spirit,

this guy is no good, too ailing,

bids ill

he'll pray, “If I could only read *Cc.* again and again and come to love Krsna and the *gopis*. That would be best.”

Hare Krsna. Today, at least right now, you don't feel pain, so let's see you use your time well.

“I thought, ‘As I gave up these pills maybe I could (should) give up writing and reading mundane poets and just read Srila Prabhupada, his *Caitanya-caritamrta* or *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.’ Don't think you have to write. It might be an illusion, an attachment. Are you addicted? Could you give it up? Could you mortify your personal desires and only read SP's books all day and not write like this?

“Is it best?

Or do you have to face your desires and use them for Krsna?

“First time out-loud *japa* in two days:

Backyard
 out loud rounds
 by smooth leafy plants
 canal shiny and on
 other side, slowly walking deer,
 maybe she's old, rear end and
 front-gait, then a
 gamboling small young deer
 runs past her.

Dinanatha dasa, behind me, hangs wet-washed saffron clothes on the drying rack.

“10:15 A.M.

“Writing to Bach’s ‘Suite in *A Major*.’

“First, *Fantasia*, 2.06 minutes

“Bach saw music as mainly service to God. Some austere religionists of his day would confine themselves to a role of little expressiveness. He wanted to write and play as art glorifying God. Very good.

“I’m writing in that way in Krsna consciousness.

God be praised.

“It is the day once again, and I am at the end of the twentieth century , a Westerner – a spirit soul discovered by my Swami Bhaktivedanta, who taught that all but KC is sense gratification.

“But is Bach? We will springboard. This plastic table is very shaky – Bach sometimes had inadequate organs to play on and couldn’t always find masters who let him express himself. His subjective form of worship.

“Oh, let it be said I’m going for the clear in the head.

“*Courante*, 3.47 minutes

“This is *Courante* (what does that mean?). ‘Imperfect works; he didn’t contribute to modern orchestration . . .’ – this stuff I don’t comprehend but like lush strokes of the violin by Goebel and the harpsichord’s fast scurry. Writing in no light as the electricity is off in this house, gray fog-light gives me enough to see the black ink on the white page, my scribbled score:

“Lord Caitanya in Radha-desa

wandering singing

etam sa asthaya

paratma-nistham – sannyasa

is the heart, not the formal dress or the taking of the *danda*.

“Four rods for Vaisnavas – I heard Cc. for ten minutes, M. reading, and then I got sleepy but will be back for more when the lights are on. This is Bach’s undoing? No, I wish him well, go to his heavenly reward, give us a good music score.

“But secular? Let all be used in God’s service, let it be listened to by artist-devotees and played for devotees. Only devotees can understand *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

“Don’t play it for *karmi* editor-scholars, magazines, etc. It’s for devotees, but who among them will listen to this pip?

“Now, *Entrée* (3.29 minutes)

Then I’ll stop. Deep breathe. This course of days is for kicking this medication habit and restoring the pain I used to know in its place, and fulfilling health measures, including exercises.

“And to pray, ‘Please Lord, change me if You like in spirit as well as body.’ There may not be much scope for that in an oldster like me. May God be praised in the music of the violin and bass and whatever we can say.

“We love to serve Your devotees. Save me from disgrace and offense to all – to Vaisnavas and to all entities. Be a good devotee. Be obedient and daring too, gather your strength and go out to preach. Write them letters,

“sing your songs and

be good

clean

“free of contamination, and expressive, not confined. Religion of music and words of servants to praise in all he can find in Rupa Goswami’s *yukta-vairagya*.

Glories

“glories to the Supreme Lord who gives all

music tones,

pains,

for His reason He

guides us and we dance in

praise of Krsna, Krsna

the cowherd boy.

From encyclopedias:

On Bach:

“Music, to Bach, was the apparatus of worship, and it has been truly observed, the line of demarcation between the sacred and secular forms for him was not decisively drawn...From the day he copied a coveted manuscript in the moonlight at Ohrdruf (eight years old), his life was the indefatigable pursuit of a purpose undeviatingly observed, a searching for all that was best in his art to refine it in the fire of his genius.”

On Ludwig Beethoven:

“Those who would think his greatness and goodness to the Christian faith have gotten little positive support for the claim...in Beethoven, more than in any other man, music was the fabric of existence, the channel of emotional life. To him the human and spiritual issues enunciated by the Mass would be a call upon the resources of the imagination and craft within the range of his art...Yet, Beethoven’s was a deeply religious nature: of this the Mass itself is witness. There, unrestrained by canonical doctrine, he strove to reach and encompass a God whom he knew to exist but could not comprehend...To Beethoven’s vision, God was a universal presence, boundless and timeless, physically immanent in nature, yet an abettor of human affairs; a mystery beyond seeking, yet real beyond questioning...God was the source of his music, and he the agent chosen to spread the divine message. This was no self-flattering claim to heavenly merit; rather it was the knowledge of duty and therefore of humble station. Beethoven’s belief in himself as a chosen instrument for mankind’s betterment found expression in the *Heiligenstadt Testament*; and we cannot doubt that it strengthened him to meet his affliction, then and in the coming years.’

“2:52 P.M.

“If I could break this medication habit, on deciding that it was not good for me, then I could break other habits also. You could break the habit of free-writing, of listening to music outside of the strict KC canon; you could break the habit of solitude...but there’s a limit. I can’t suddenly do all things. I have to continue within certain limits. Just because today you don’t have a headache doesn’t mean you’re cured of that syndrome.

“And certain habits are good for you. You have discovered your niche – as a *sannyasi*, a non-manager, a writer. But yes, the initial premise may be considered – the ability to break out of habits not good for you. Reconsider how to face the fact of death. That is, ask truly the question of Maharaja Pariksit: “What is the duty of one about to die?”

“A desire to be genuine.

“Resting in this place. This is my first clear day after two days clouded with pain. On getting free of pain one considers how may I best use this gift of time?

You can answer mail. Some is here, and more is on the way. And discipline – read what Krsna says and what Srila Prabhupada says in *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*.

“The *mahatma* does not divert his attention to anything outside Krsna because he knows perfectly well that Krsna is the original Supreme Person, the cause of all causes. There is no doubt about it. Such a *mahatma* or great soul develops through association with other *mahatmas*, pure devotees. Pure devotees are not even attracted by Krsna’s other features, such as four-armed Maha-Vishnu. They’re simply attracted to the two-armed form of Krsna. They are not at all attracted to other features of Krsna, nor are they concerned with any form of a

demigod or of a human being. They meditate only upon Krsna in Krsna consciousness. They're always engaged in the unswerving of the Lord in Krsna consciousness.' (*Bg. 9.13*, purport)

“6:12 P.M., Night Notes

“I’m very grateful, grapefruit juice – all comes from God

aham sarvasya prabhavo

He

God

Bach and Beet

may be only people

but God is the Supreme Person

don’t speculate. Laugh at Dr. Patel, SP on the Bombay beach. I am here to get back to him. He too is tough sometimes but he knows what’s best. Can wipe disciples, get’ em to laugh. Someone said, ‘Harikesa couldn’t come on the walk, has bad headache.’

“SP said, ‘People say I have a headache or I have a stomachache, and no doctor can detect it.’”

“They all laughed. (I heard Brahmananda.) What? Laugh at people who have headaches? They are malingerers? Fakes?

“Prabhupada, are you saying that?

“He says what he says. It’s possible. No one sees my headache.

“People can think what they like. May the rest of my life I’ll say I get headaches and that’s why I don’t attend yearly GBC meetings. Believe it or not. I will not submit to pain if you force me. I’ll stay in Uddhava’s cabin or Manu’s house with

Irish residency. Spare me, a fallen. Write like I did last summer's *pada-yatra* confession. Yeah, I want to use the time right for Krsna confession.

“My purpose is to quit this medication and lead a clean life. Hey, your purpose isn't to listen to Vivaldi, is it? Come on, man, get off that trip and be a straight devotee.

“I surrender.

“I love life. I wanted to ride on a bicycle but felt a slight twinge in my right eye, so didn't. Instead, reached out by answering a few letters to the faithful.

“Night notes should be peaceful. It is peaceful here. Rest as much as you like. Today was great and wonderful. Thank you, Lord and thank you for those two previous days of pain.”