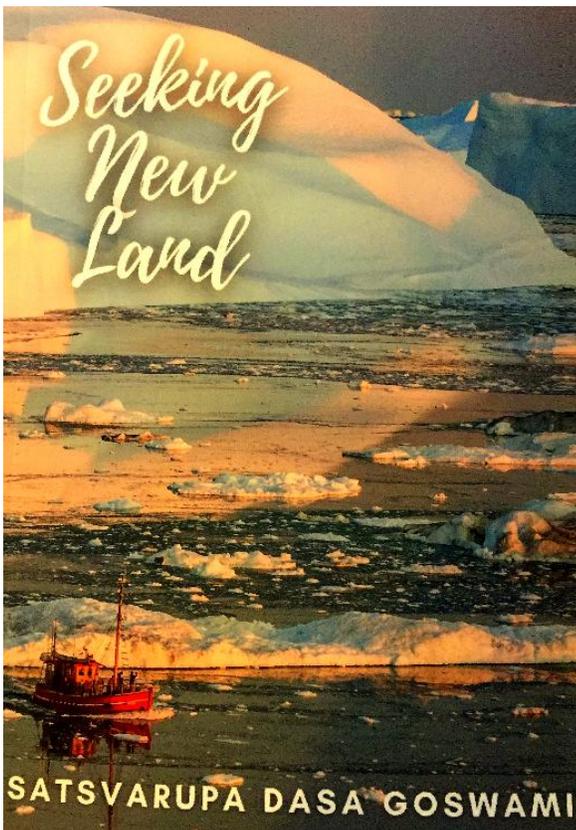


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DEAR DEVOTEES: A MESSAGE FROM SATSVARUPA MAHARAJA.

“I was very disappointed that our July gathering was canceled. But I earnestly ask my disciples to order *Meditations and Poems* and *Daily Compositions*. The price is \$10 for the former and \$12 for the latter. Please be aware that *Daily Compositions* must be ordered from Amazon. To order *Meditations and Poems*, please send your home address and a check for \$10 made out to “GNP” to Baladeva Vidyabhusana dasa, PO Box 233, Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174. John Endler will mail the book to you. This will bring us close together as guru and disciples. These are new books and I expect a big response from my disciples to make up for the cancelled summer meeting. Please don’t disappoint me—order these books.”



From Rev. John Endler:

Dear Devotees,

Seeking New Land represents a bold new step in the writing of Satsvarupa dasa Goswami and is the sixth volume in the ongoing retrospective of his literary series, *Every Day, Just Write*. *Seeking New Land* may be considered a narrative poem and the reader follows the journey of an itinerant monk who pursues new means of self-expression as part of a larger journey to discern a renewed vocation within his religious tradition and the institution which he serves. This book is characterized by a literary complexity and existential subtleties which are the hallmarks of the author’s artistic and theological vision. A volume that is challenging and profound, the reader is invited to discover his or her own spiritual pilgrimage within these pages, as the author pushes every literary boundary to boldly create something wholly new and inspiring.

To order a copy of this book, please send a check for \$10 made out to “GN Press” to:

Baladeva Vidhyabusana dasa
P.O. Box 233
Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174

Please email me at johnendler@comcast.net with your mailing address, and I will gladly ship this book to your doorstep.

Happy Reading!
JE

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Free Write Journal #123

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Free Writes

Snowstorm

Twenty-two inches of snow fell, and when the plow trucks came through they pushed the snow to the side. Any accumulation doubled in height and tripled in density. We have no plow or snowblower, but Bala and Baladeva went out with shovels to dig out the car and access to it for use in an emergency. A stranger with a plow truck saw them and offered to plow Bala's driveway. The plower was so much in a rush, with other places to plow, that he could not stop even to take cookies. Baladeva shoveled a foot and a half of snow off the roof of the car and also made access to the car possible for me to get into it. Now I can get into the car safely for my next medical appointment. That's the only reason I go outdoors these days. Otherwise I stay inside and do Zoom broadcasts or create my *Free Write Journal*. But all reading of manuscripts is severely hampered as I wait for my ten-day-old cataract surgery to heal.

Many small plow trucks are wandering around, digging out people for a large fee. Normally the big municipal trucks go by every half an hour and plow the main road, piling up snow to the side of the road which has to be dug out again. Somehow the big municipal trucks must have worked all night because there wasn't much pileup snow after their plowing. We were lucky; we missed a secondary pileup.

Krsna dasi changed Radha-Govinda's outfits and made lunch while the men were out shoveling. We were all busy. I have listened to all of Jayadvaita Maharaja's lectures given in Towaco, and I have nothing new, but I can still listen to new Prabhupada lectures on my device. I am requesting some new lecture materials by my Godbrothers, but it may take a little while.

Medical Update

My eyesight is in poor condition. I took the right eye lens out from my eyeglasses, and I'm seeing through the left-eye lens. But I can't read book-sized print. I have asked those who correspond with me to send emails in extra-large print. I get different opinions as to when I will be able to have normal vision. One assistant to the eye doctor said that it will take me six weeks after the surgery on my left eye for it to heal and for me to get new prescription lenses and new eyeglasses. My own doctor thinks this is an exaggeration in time, and he is researching it.

I am experiencing frequent incidents of incontinence, three times in the last five days. Each time I am not wearing a catheter, and clothes or bedsheets have to be changed. The urologist performed dilation, but it hasn't brought dramatic relief yet. I am next to bring in a sample of my urine to see if I have a urinary tract infection (UTI). If I have an infection, it is likely the cause of the incontinence, and I'll have to start taking stronger antibiotics. So many bothersome conditions in these miseries of old age and disease. It is to be expected for every conditioned soul.

Rama Raya's Report

Rama Raya wrote me that the New York City Yuga-dharma Sankirtana Party has moved into and taken shelter of the Radha-Govinda temple in Brooklyn, where the devotees warmly welcomed him and he was inspired by the leader, Hansarupa Prabhu. For most of the autumn the weather was mild, and they went outside every day chanting in public.

The outstanding date was November 7th, when the results of the presidential election were announced and Trump was defeated. Hundreds and thousands of people spontaneously gathered at NYC's Washington Square Park. The Yuga-dharma Party also showed up, and by their *kirtana* they captured the focus of the event. They had many, many young people chanting and dancing for four or five hours. They were even featured on a main TV channel for three minutes. That can only happen in New York City.

Rama-raya's heart is intent on going out a few hours every day with a few core men and congregational devotees chanting the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* for hours.

Despite all obstacles, the *harinama* party continues to go out in public, and sometimes they hold the *kirtana* in the temple, which enlivens the congregational devotees.

Indian Publishing

Yesterday we received in the mail two newly-reprinted books, *Vandanam* and *Am I a Demon or a Vaisnava*. They were done by my disciple Nitai dasa with help from his wife Vraja-Pyari and an American proofreader. They have attractive new covers, and many corrections have been made from the original edition. We received two copies. They are intended for an Indian audience. Nitai is planning to send 100 copies of these books, along with others, to the U.S.A. He is very busy with his job and family but manages to do book production because he takes it so seriously. I am pleased with these new reprints, and I think they will sell well to devotees and friends.

Good News

Atindra came with his wife Lalita-kaisori and fixed me up with 30 hours of lectures by my Godbrothers. I had run out of listening material, and this is a great boon for me. I will be able to listen every day in the afternoon to at least one lecture by devotees like Jayadvaita Swami, Bhakti-Caitanya Swami, Radhanatha Swami and others. This is the silver lining to the pandemic for members of the Hare Krsna movement, where so many devotees are giving lectures in difficult times.

Lecture by Jayadvaita Maharaja

I have listened to all Maharaja's lectures given in Towaco, N.J. Now he has moved to Gainesville, Florida, but he is still giving three *Bhagavatam* lectures a week. Last night I heard him speak on the occasion of Prabhupada's disappearance day, and he gave his memories of

Prabhupada. He began by saying he wasn't a GBC or a very big devotee, so he didn't have much association with Prabhupada. But he was just being humble. Once he began, he continued nonstop for over half an hour, and he could have spoken more. He told how Gopal Krsna worked in a big company and apologized for coming to see Prabhupada in his "karmi clothes." Prabhupada said, "They are not karmi clothes. You are working for Krsna, and it is devotional service."

Jayadvaita told a story about ISKCON Press. Prabhupada called him in and said that he heard the Press manager, Advaita, wasn't attending the morning program. Prabhupada said that if that was the case they should close the Press down. Jayadvaita didn't want to "rat" on Advaita, but he admitted it was true. Advaita, however, soon left the association of devotees, and the Press continued to operate under different management.

Jayadvaita said that the temple in Brooklyn had an excellent theatrical group. They played a drama of Krsna kidnapping Rukmini. Rasajna played Rukmini, and her writing to Krsna was very emotional and dramatic. Rasajna's husband Lohitaksya played Krsna and Lokamangala played Rukmi, the envious brother of Rukmini. Prabhupada watched the drama from his rocking chair, and when Rukmi's hair was cut off in patches, he remarked, "Oh, it is worse than death!"

Prabhupada also remarked that the entire drama was "better than the book."

Jayadvaita was very humble in saying he didn't get much of Prabhupada's association, such as a GBC man got. But Prabhupada trusted him completely as his editor throughout the years and right up to the end, when Prabhupada dictated last purports from his disappearance bed in Vrndavana, squeezing out last words while Jayadvaita Maharaja kneeled beside his bed, holding the Dictaphone microphone close to Prabhupada's mouth. For many years Jayadvaita was the editor of *Back to Godhead* magazine. This was a big responsibility and took up much of his time. Prabhupada liked the magazine under his editorship.

Prabhupada Lecture

I listened to a lecture Prabhupada gave in India. After his talk was ended, he fielded argumentative, unintelligent questions from people who did not ask with submission befitting a spiritual master. One man spoke of a yogi who taught “rocket-ship” yoga. Prabhupada cut him off short. He said that wherever the yogi could go in his rocket ship, he would have to come down again to the material world for lack of devotion to Krsna. Prabhupada also defended his disciples. He said, “Bring anyone here to talk with them about God. They know more about God than anyone, even though they have only been practicing Krsna consciousness for three or four years.”

Prabhupada answered all possible questions in his twelve years of public lecturing. Mostly the questions were by unsubmitive, ignorant persons who did not accept his answers. His followers should carefully study recordings of Prabhupada’s answers to questions and not just make up answers on their own. That way they can be sure of not being defeated. And by giving the straight *parampara* truths, they should be confident and prepared.

Out-Loud Reading in Cc.

We are hearing of the different branches of the tree of Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya said that Vasudeva Datta owned His body. He said this several times. Vasudeva Datta prayed that he could receive all the sinful reactions of the conditioned souls so that they could go back to Godhead. Vasudeva Datta was so liberal in his handling of money that Lord Caitanya assigned Sivananda Sena to be his secretary and keep his affairs in order.

Sivananda Sena used to lead the big party of Bengali devotees every year when they traveled to Jagannatha Puri for Ratha-yatra. He dealt with the numerous tollkeepers and paid all the taxes. He arranged for food and accommodations for the devotees. They were entirely dependent on him. One time Sivananda Sena was held up dealing with the tollkeeper, while the Bengali devotees were allowed to travel on. They waited for Sivananda standing under a tree. They had no food or

accommodations. Complaining of His hunger, Nityananda Rama became very angry with Sivananda Sena and cursed his sons to die. When the mother of the sons heard this, she began to cry. Finally Sivananda Sena arrived and told his wife not to cry, saying, “Let all of our family be cursed by Lord Nityananda!” Then Sivananda went to Nityananda Prabhu, and Nityananda kicked him hard. Sivananda Sena was in bliss for this punishment. He quickly arranged for food and accommodations for the party from Bengal.

Later we heard from *Adi-lila* Chapter 11, “The Expansions of Lord Nityananda.” Lord Caitanya ordered Nityananda to go and preach in Bengal, and many devotees went with Him. They form the branches of the Nityananda tree. Nityananda is the topmost branch of the indestructible tree of eternal love of Godhead, Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu. From that branch springs many branches and subbranches. Virabhadra was one of the heaviest branches of the Nityananda tree. He was the direct son of Nityananda Prabhu and a disciple of Jahnava-devi. His real mother was Vasudha. According to the *Gaura-Ganoddеса-Dipika*, Virabhadra was the incarnation of Ksirodakasayi Visnu. Therefore, Virabhadra Gosani is not different than Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Jahnavi-mata was the internal pleasure potency of Lord Nityananda.

The branch of Advaita Acarya came next in size. Advaita Acarya’s servant went to King Prataparudra, informed him that Advaita Acarya was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and attempted to absolve a debt He owed in the sum of 300 rupees.

When Lord Caitanya heard this description, He became angry. How could the Supreme Personality of Godhead be in debt for 300 rupees? The Lord said, “The incarnation of Godhead cannot be indebted to anyone in this material world.” Caitanya Mahaprabhu was not satisfied with such a condition, which is technically called *rasa-bhasa*, or overlapping of one humor (*rasa*) with another. This is the same contradiction that Mayavadis maintain when they say “Narayana is poverty-stricken (*daridra-narayana*).” Prabhupada writes that the three hundred rupees being talked about was at that time the equivalent of about 30,000 rupees today.

“Gadadhara Pandita was the third very big branch on Lord Caitanya’s tree. The sub-branches of Gadadhara are very numerous and powerful. Simply by remembering these three big trunks, Nityananda, Advaita and Gadadhara, one becomes free of the entanglement of material existence. Simply by remembering the extensive list of names of all the Vaisnavas associated with the branches and sub-branches, one can attain the mercy; indeed, simply by remembering their holy names one can achieve the fulfillment of all desires. Krsnadasa Kaviraja states, “It is not possible to dip into that great ocean, but its sweet, mellow fragrance attracts my mind. I therefore stand on the shore of that ocean to try to taste but a drop of it.” Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami immediately follows this description of the great trunks of the tree by writing of the advent of Visvambhara.”

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

“Now in old age, deprived of all means of success, humbled and poor, Bhaktivinoda submits his tale of grief at the feet of the Supreme Lord.’ The word ‘humbled’ in this verse is significant. He is forced to his knees. It’s not a humility that he has arrived at by natural thought. He hasn’t voluntarily decided that humility is useful and should be cultured. Old age has taken away the illusion which fostered pride and false ego and possessions. This kind of humility can be as genuine as any other.

We also know from the *Bhagavatam* verse ‘*yasyaham anugrhnami*’ that it is Lord Krsna who humbles the devotee by crushing his material life. The humbled man is humble. He grieves not simply because he has lost his money, beauty and sexual power but because he has been pursuing illusion of material happiness. He weeps. He thinks he has wasted his life and not worshiped the all-attractive Supreme Lord.

“This is true of me to some degree, but I cannot see it. Externally I wear

saffron, carry my *danda*, follow the four rules and worship Govinda by the topmost religious process, *harinama sankirtana*, but internally I am not a Vaisnava. I live a subtle version of a life of illusion. I appear to be religiously successful. When I confess my wrongs, I don't feel bad. I don't even see what damage I did to myself in this lifetime before I met Srila Prabhupada. He saved me, but I'm still unredeemed in the core of my heart. I'm satisfied by the relief I've gained through Prabhupada's association and pleased with the respect I've received among devotees, that I don't feel myself a sinner. I have a tiny intimation that things may not really be as I see them, but how can I change my vision?

“I try to skip over remorse and go straight to the nectar of remembering Krsna's pastimes. Who wants to dwell in the cesspool of bad thoughts and self-recrimination? Rise up!”

The Wild Garden

p. 192

“Sadhana

“If we attempt to interest ourselves in *rasa* without overall purity and surrender to the guru—if we fail to give up other ambitions—then we will never enter into Krsna's pastimes. Attaining Krsna's love is not an easy thing.

“I need to work on my chanting. Should I chant more? That is one aspect. But we barely have time to do all the duties required—meeting people, attending the morning program, reading Srila Prabhupada's books, preaching, understanding the science of God in all its subtleties—we just do not have huge amounts of time for extra chanting. Neither did Srila Prabhupada ask us to set aside such blocs of time to improve. So how do I improve?”

“I don’t have all the answers. Life is a struggle. Krsna, You accept each of us. This one person who is handicapped with doubts and bad karma calls out to You, ‘Please let me send You a sincere request for pure devotional service while I am here in Vrndavana. I seek the benediction of pure devotional service.’

“Srla Prabhupada writes that pure devotional service is characterized by joyfulness. Joyfulness is a sure sign of Krsna consciousness. Many devotees feel joyful in their services, but how can we know that our satisfaction is produced by right means? Therefore we seek the benediction of pure devotional service. We pray. Krsna doesn’t accept mere rhetoric. He wants to know what is actually in our hearts. If we say, ‘Please take all the dirty things out of my heart, including my personal ambitions, and give me what is best for me’—then what? Will Krsna immediately take us at our word? No! He wants us to prove ourselves. And of course, He helps us.

“We struggle for years to find a niche in Krsna consciousness. When we do get a service that is both satisfying and helpful to Srla Prabhupada’s mission, it would be foolish to abruptly give it up just because we detect a little *kama* in our hearts. *Kama* will be removed in the course of our service; still, we have to be ready to give up even that service if Krsna desires. His will for us manifests as fate or time, as what happens in our lives. A sincere inner core, the simple essence—this is what Krsna is looking for, more than the outer display.”

Talking Freely to My Lords

“Tulasi-puja

“I waved the incense, flame and flower
 and placed a drop of water
 in the palm of each devotee
 as they came to water her.
 Touch her earth, dance around.
 For twenty years I never thought deeply
 of the meaning of the song:
 ‘I beg you to make me a follower
 of the cowherd damsels of Vraja.
 Thus within my vision I will
 behold the beautiful pastimes of Radha and Krsna.’
 Touch her earth,
 dance around.”

Every Day, Just Write, Volume 1: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life

p.68

“We draw a blank sometimes in trying to understand where to go or how to
 move forward in spiritual life. We hear from *sastra*, but it doesn’t move us. When we
 get up to that mood, it creates an emotion in which we question our entire identity
 and purpose as we have been living them out. At the same time, it’s not that we’re
 racing to make a change or bring relief. We have to face our lack of taste at certain
 times during the day because they seem to be almost physical cycles.

“I can just see the lake through my window, and it’s a perfect mirror today. Still
 cold, though. The lake will change. Will we? How long will we sit and measure time if
 we are forced to pray?

“Those words—bored, dry, empty. We watch ourselves going through the motions and wonder why we don’t chant more. It’s something to do. We’d feel bored, empty and dry no matter what we were doing sometimes. But that shouldn’t stop our attempt to increase our surrender to *hari-nama*. Chanting will take us where we want to go. And I know I’ve said this before, but I feel the same way about my writing service. The more I write, the more I will be able to forge ahead in the way I want to go. Simply chant (and for me, write). It doesn’t have to be pretentious. (There’s that word again.)”

ISKCON in the 1970s: Diaries

p. 356

“December 5

“Should I worship Prabhupada’s *murti*?

“I don’t want my memory of Srila Prabhupada to dwindle with time. When we remember him, it is always jolly, but I always want to feel an appropriate and natural sadness that he left. If that personal attachment to and keen remembrance of his form diminish, thenlike the vigorous execution of his will, to me it seems less potent. I have to remember him, so I deliberately cultivate remembrance. Therefore I thought of the Prabhupada *murti*. Perhaps it is too much trouble and will detract from the very execution of his *vani* preaching mission, which requires all my energy in reading, writing, preaching, managing. But I’m thinking—no. Do I have faith that Srila Prabhupada is actually present in his *murti*? Then let me serve him *prasadam*, keep his clothes, serve him in his daily schedule as the Deity, and taking the time and trouble to worship his Deity, if done not as a burden or drudgery—will enable me to still associate with his person. If I really have faith that he is personally present as

arca-vigraha, then the question only remains (just as it did when he was personally present): Is there important benefit to personally being with Srila Prabhupada and being his servant? The answer must be, “Yes.” While he was present, I had this opportunity, so I will be reliving it. I may not have used that opportunity properly in real loving service, but it was most valuable to offer personal bodily service. It’s as valuable now as it was then, but as before, one could be restless even in his presence and consider it a minor service compared to preaching. That mentality could also develop while worshiping his *murti*. I am thinking, ‘Let me try it, and later if I become restless, I can turn the worship over to one of our established centers.’ But I shouldn’t start the full worship and then abandon it, or let the *murti* lapse into being unattended, like a picture. If it could become a part of my routine without slowing me down—then what is the harm?”

Shack Notes: Moments While at a Writing Retreat

p. 5

“We have been reading Krsna's pastimes. I am preparing for a seminar of twenty lectures on “Krsna's Vrndavana Pastimes” for the Vrndavana Institute for Higher Education in India this October. The lectures are prepared, but I still feel inadequate. Everyone has already heard these ‘stories’ many times. How can I bring them to life just by presenting the same old thing? I don't really want to research esoteric texts to find additional stories of *krsna-lila* ; I have faith that whatever Srila Prabhupada has given of *krsna-lila* in the *Krsna* book and Tenth Canto is sufficient. There is a challenge before me: how to speak about Krsna with sincere *bhava*? The blissful relationship of Krsna with His devotees is the real nectar. How to capture it?”

“The reading we are doing now, with visualization of the scene, is providing me the added dimension. I am learning how to participate more in the pastimes of Krsna. Srila Prabhupada encourages this. After reading a verse with many visual details, such as describing Mother Yasoda churning butter, Prabhupada writes that we

“should contemplate the bodily features of Mother Yasoda ...

Therefore, this description is provided here. Advanced devotees must cherish this description, always thinking of Mother Yasoda's features—how she was dressed, how she was working and perspiring, how beautiful the flowers were arranged in her hair, and so on. One should take advantage of the full description provided here by thinking of Mother Yasoda in maternal affection for Krsna.’ (*Bhag.* 10.9.3)

“The Franciscans have a tradition dating back to fourteenth century England of preparing texts, both to guide the common people through the scriptures and to encourage them to participate in the scriptural teachings. In a book called *Meditation on the Life of Jesus Christ*, the author describes a familiar gospel passage and then elaborates on some of the daily life details to provide the reader with a visual and familiar setting for the passage. Although the ‘additions’ may not be found in the scripture itself, the details faithfully follow the mood of the scripture. Then the author invites the reader to respond to the descriptions, to admit their own failings or doubts, and to pray to lead a better life in obedience to the Lord.

“We can do this when we hear Krsna's pastimes—we can employ the imagination without falsifying or concocting anything. Srila Prabhupada says that we should always think of Mother Yasoda’s features, how she was dressed, how she was working, how the flowers were arranged in her hair . . . We may have to imagine what

kind of flowers they were. Was it a small garland, or flowers arranged here and there? Were they *mallika*? Fragrant jasmine? And when I feel resistance to thinking of Mother Yasoda, why is that? Do I think she is ‘just a mother?’ Then I can disallow my negative mood or my turning away from this image of Mother Yasoda—and I can pray, ‘Lord Krsna and Srila Prabhupada, please allow me to stay in the shelter of these pastimes. Teach me how to think of them.’”

Churning the Milk Ocean

p. 5

“Know What Is Favorable

“I was rescued by Srila Prabhupada when I was twenty-six years old. Under his influence, and by the discipline of chanting Hare Krsna, I was able to give up the sinful activities I was immersed in. Still, I continued to carry the impression of years of demoniac habits, not only from this lifetime, but from previous lives. Therefore, as I try to express myself in Krsna consciousness today, some demoniac traces — *aparadhas* and *anarthas*, offenses and unwanted bad habits—still block my attempt to taste the nectar of the holy name and to serve Krsna selflessly.

“When I write, I become aware of the battle between demon and devotee, between skepticism and faith, between hardheartedness and love. Therefore, the Lord's advice to the demigods on how to overcome the demons intrigues me.

“. . . . Krsna advised them not to be angry, but to agree to whatever the demons proposed. He said He would be with them. They had to be aware that when they began to churn,

“A poison known as *kalakuta* will be generated from the ocean of milk, but you should not fear it. And when various products are churned from the ocean, you should

not be greedy for them or anxious to obtain them, nor should you be angry.”

“Purport: “It appears that by the churning process many things would be generated from the Ocean of Milk, including poison, valuable gems, nectar and many beautiful women. The demigods were advised, however, not to be greedy for the gems or beautiful women, but to wait patiently for the nectar.” (*Bhag.* 8.6.25, verse and purport)

“My purpose in writing is to produce the nectar of *krsna-katha*, *krsna-upadesa*. I may become entranced from time to time with the vividness of the images that come to mind or the power of expression, but the Lord advises that I don't become attached to any of these things. I shouldn't try to cash in on the results of the free-writing process, but keep going. In my case, when the nectar does come, it's not for me anyway. It's something that I will offer to Krsna. I will take His remnants, and may it make me a better servant of the Lord.

“ . . . So again I am saying, when I start writing and powerful things appear, part of me may want to go with their energies. I don't go with the energy in order to become a great writer or to revel in powerful imagery or because I think I've discovered some great universal secret; I trust that I know what to reject and what to accept, what is favorable for Krsna consciousness and what is unfavorable, and I trust that Krsna will protect me. I also accept that this is Krsna's plan for me that I work in this way.”

Pada-yatra

p. 1

“Last night I dreamt I was carrying thirteen million dollars sewn into my clothes. It was stolen money and I was carrying it for ISKCON. I was to turn it over

to ISKCON authorities as soon as possible. I'd never steal in waking life—does such a dream mean I've stolen in the past? Have I stolen something in this life in the name of loyalty to the institution? We must be loyal to Prabhupada, but we also have to be scrupulously honest and responsible. In the dream, stealing was approved.

“Is that how James Joyce's words can be applied? This is what Joyce said:

“I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church. And I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile and cunning.’ (*A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*)

“Srila Prabhupada told me not to sign a check to be handed to Mr. Payne unless I was satisfied. Don't go with the crowd if you are not convinced that the crowd is going in the right direction. Don't do it even when someone says, ‘This is what Srila Prabhupada wants.’ Don't share the mistake.

“But to oppose error or misdirection and to preserve integrity, an artist permits himself only ‘arms of cunning, exile, and silence.’

“What does he mean? Jokingly, a brother said, ‘Are you still going to live as you have been doing—in cunning, exile, and silence?’

“These are first thoughts on today's walk. I responded to my alarm clock at midnight and crawled out of my blue tent.

“What! You're living in a blue tent?!”

“Sure, because Richard Hugo says, ‘You owe reality nothing and the truth about your feelings everything.’ Therefore, my tent is blue.

Memory in the Service of Krsna

p. 15

“Right and Wrong

“Even the food each person prefers is of three kinds, according to the three modes of material nature. The same is true of sacrifices, austerities and charity. Now hear of the distinctions between them.’ (Bhagavad-gita 17.7)

“PURPORT:

“ . . . Those who can understand analytically what kind of performances are in what modes of material nature are actually wise; those who consider all kinds of sacrifices or food or charity to be the same cannot discriminate, and they are foolish. There are missionary workers who advocate that one can do whatever he likes and attain perfection. But these foolish guides are not acting according to the direction of the scripture. They are manufacturing ways and misleading the people in general.’

“Growing up, I had inklings of distinguishing right from wrong. Sometimes I would get an intense feeling that I shouldn't be in a certain place with certain persons, and so I would flee. But I could never be sure what that, feeling was; I could only acknowledge it as an instinct so strong that I had to obey it. Maybe it was just self-preservation.

“One time I joined anti-war protesters on the steps of the Liberal Arts building at Brooklyn College. Sirens rang for an air-raid drill, and everyone obeyed the alarm except a group of us. The dean came out and said he would take down our names and it would have a serious effect on our careers. I wasn't sure what was right or wrong.

“I once asked my father was it wrong to eat meat, since we had to kill the animals? It seemed wrong. He replied, over our juicy steaks, ‘If humans didn't kill animals, they would ruin the world by over-population.’ Was he right?

“It depended on whom you followed, and on circumstances. It was wrong to cheat on an exam, mainly because you might get caught. Was it all right to enjoy sex outside of marriage if ‘everyone’ did it? Was it wrong that America dropped the A-bomb on Japan? At first I thought it was right, because according to the TV series Victory at Sea, if the U.S. had not dropped the bombs, there would have been far more deaths when America attempted to invade Japan. But a few years later when I associated with a different group, I realized bombing Hiroshima was wrong.

“Many well-intentioned persons cannot figure out that it is wrong to eat meat and to indulge in sex pleasure outside of procreation. They can't understand God's plan. They think they have a better plan, more liberal than Krsna's. They don't know right from wrong. But in Krsna consciousness we have perfect codes and guides. This is not religious sentiment or speculation, but a phenomenal science. You can see it for yourself. If you act in the mode of ignorance, you get the result of madness; if you act in the mode of passion, you get distress; and if you act in the mode of goodness, you become purified. It works even in terms of hygiene and mental health. It also works in spiritual life, since the results of *bhakti-yoga* can be directly perceived.

“Whoever is without this Vedic direction is groping. Despite the best intentions, a person may commit serious mistakes, such as the mistake of thinking that animals have no soul and so there is no reaction for killing them. Or someone may think that after reading enough books, he can become a teacher and advocate that one can do whatever he likes and attain perfection. As a result of such teachings, a self-appointed guru paves his way to the worlds of darkness.

“My dear Lord Krsna,
 my dear Srila Prabhupada,
 sometimes it's too hard
 to know what I should do to serve you.
 But at least I know
 basic right from wrong.
 There is no excuse now,
 I know what's right,
 because I know your will and I accept it
 as my way.
 You may punish me for wrongs
 as your erring servant,
 but whatever you do,
 I remain your devotee.
 Please give me courage to teach your way
 to those ‘who do not know
 what is to be done
 and what is not to be done.’
 Please free me from the wrong

of complacence,
 as if simply being ‘right’
 were enough.”

Niti-sastras : Sayings of Canakya and Hitopadesa as Quoted By Srila Prabhupada

p. 34

“TRANSLATION:

“Excessive leniency will produce many faults, while strictness will build good character. Therefore, be strict, not lenient, with the son or disciple.’

“COMMENTARY

“Devotees prefer to be reprimanded by their gurus than praised. Srila Prabhupada was fond of recalling the time when he was reprimanded by his spiritual master. ‘So far we are concerned, when our spiritual master used to chastise, we took it as a blessing.’ Srila Prabhupada tells us how he was fond of hearing his spiritual master speak. Once, while Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura was lecturing, a retired doctor leaned over to say something to our Prabhupada. Prabhupada then turned to this retired doctor, but Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja saw them and became angry. Prabhupada says, ‘He saw that my attention was drawn by him. He chastised me like anything . . . First he chastised the doctor, “Do you think that because you pay sixty rupees a month you have purchased us?” A very strong word he used. Then he turned and said to me, “Do you think that I am speaking for others? You have learned everything? You are diverting your attention.

Why don't you come up here and speak instead of me?" This was not a chance occasion, but Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati regularly reprimanded his disciples. 'A little discrepancy he would chastise like anything. But we liked it very much.'

"Similarly, we should accept the guru's reprimand as mercy, and we should look for that attention from him. If we see that our spiritual master is not willing to be strict with us, then we should look within ourselves and determine whether we have given him the power over us that he needs to discipline us. The spiritual master has to be careful about applying stricture on an unsundered disciple, because if the disciple disobeys, it will be worse than if he was not given any instruction at all.

"Prabhupada's disciples wanted to please him because we loved him. He attracted us to Krsna. He offered us a life of eternity, knowledge, and bliss. He fed us delicious *prasadam*. He let us live in his temples and gave us the responsibility for the buildings' upkeep. He gave us *japa* and *kirtana*. We were obliged to him. We were willing to accept his strictures as the price for living a life we loved with the person we loved.

"We also had faith that he was a pure devotee who could give us Krsna. That faith took some of the sentimentality out of our following. Although in one sense, it's a mystery how Prabhupada could have imposed discipline on so many young people, it was really our sense of obligation to him that made it possible. By fulfilling our obligation to him, we came to realize that the discipline was for our own good.

"I personally liked his strictness. I know others did too. It made us feel safe and righteous, not in an arrogant way, but in a religious way. Prabhupada's discipline gave us the strength to avoid outside influences, to follow the regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds, to get up early and to talk about Krsna instead of something mundane. Within that discipline, which we soon learned to impose

upon ourselves, Prabhupada developed a personal relationship as guru which was as real and familial and loving as any other relationship. We gave up everything—our girlfriends or boyfriends, our buddies, and often our families—to follow that one relationship.”

Last Days of the Year

p. 8-10

“Looking forward to the new year. It is unsullied and waiting to be used. Please let us use it in devotional service to Lord Krsna and His pure devotee. Let it be a good year, not just for me, but for the whole Krsna consciousness movement. Let me have good humor toward the hype and funniness of ISKCON. Let me pay dues. And what if in this year I get severely tested? That's the expression Prabhupada used in the Bali Maharaja chapters. He said Bali Maharaja was being severely tested by Krsna. So that happens. You go along free and easy and then something real hard and bad happens, like a car accident. It happened to Gobhatta in Santo Domingo. And then you are tested or examined.

“Krsna wants to see how you do under pressure. That is a difficult time, and you can't do the things you normally like to do—sit and eat and be at leisure. But it changes you for the better. So the year will have some tests, and don't be afraid of that. But build your will now in these last days of the year for going on writing and going on hearing about Krsna (as Arca-vigraha dasi loved to do in her last days, hear about Krsna).

“Pray Lord, be with me in the days to come. Give me strength for my usual little trials and bigger ones as may be ordained. I have not reached the goal of pure service yet. I try and try, but I can't control the mind or taste the holy names. Krsna is not yet the center of my life. So how much longer do I have? How many more

times can I stand at the end of a year and look forward to a new one? You had better . . . I tell myself.

“The fire catches in the fireplace. You seek to write something symbolical, more than just, ‘This is going on.’ But then you return to that. The metaphor-less, the immediate. Bah, I cannot escape the literary pose. But let's chant Hare Krsna.

“So these are the last days of the year. I am not afraid to be here. We told them we are staying on in south India. But instead we came here. I am doing my work as earnestly as you prabhus, whoever you are. Yeah, you are monitoring the book distribution marathon or actually on the streets. So what can, I do to compare with you? Nothing. But I am reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and preparing for lectures and I am staying out of the way of your charge. I bow down to you. All I want is the place on earth to live and serve. And out of this, maybe some good will come. But I am saying this is the end of the year and I'm taking this time to write. My Lord has given me the time. I pray I will not misuse it. I just wrote a book in which I put a little Krsna book synopsis in each chapter. But this is not a book. This is a series of notes. It is the end of the year and we made nice plans for next year.

“You shouldn't tear out your hair even figuratively. It's all right. Just keep going. Then chant the half hour in the kitchen and then put my teeth in more firmly and then go upstairs for exercise but maybe not today, I feel too sore. I am not feeling sorry for myself but need a little encouragement, that's all. Sing, sing, sing.

“(And encourage others too.)”

My Search Through Books

p. 70

“Reading on the Job

“For the two summers that I was in junior college, I worked for the Parks Department at Great Kills Beach on Staten Island. The pay wasn't terrific, but it wasn't a hard-working job. You got to hang around the beach. I was also able to read a lot while at work.

“I liked to impress people with what I was reading. ‘Parkies’ wore green t-shirts and orange pants, so I would keep a book in my back pocket, ready to read whenever I could. I also liked to have the title sticking out to impress people. One girl who came alone was a fellow student in the community college. She noticed the book, saying in a pleasant way, ‘Oh, you're reading Nietzsche.’ That was calculated; she was supposed to notice. I also read a popular book that I thought was funny, *No Time for Sergeants*. I sat on my chair and laughed out loud.

“One summer I concentrated on Dostoyevsky. I perched the chair at a little angle against the bath house wall, and sat and read. One rainy day, no one came to the beach, and so I read *The Brothers Karamazov* all day. (‘What is life? What is God?’) One of Dostoevsky's main themes was the existence of God, not in a theological tract way, but God in people's lives.

“(Recalling my summertime reading into God consciousness makes me wonder, ‘Was I at any time God conscious before I met Srila Prabhupada, or was I even close to it?’ In one sense, I was not even close. The Vedic mantra states, ‘*om ajnana timirandhasya ...* I was standing in darkness with my eyes shut, and my spiritual master came and forced open my eyes with the torchlight of transcendental knowledge.’ When I finally met Srila Prabhupada and began reading *Bhagavad-gita*, then for the first time, I learned that all of us have always been Krsna conscious living entities.)

“ . . . I remember once being introduced by a friend who said of me, ‘He's got a big backlog of novels.’ At first I couldn't understand what he meant. A backlog of novels? He said, ‘I mean, you have read a lot.’ It was true that my reading was starting to accumulate. I had read many Charles Dickens novels and big volumes of Dostoevsky and all of Marcel Proust. But it really didn't seem to make me any happier, this big backlog. The predicament of the eclectic reader is also described by Krsnadasa Kaviraja in *Caitanya-caritamrta*:

“If one becomes a bookworm, reading many books and scriptures and hearing many commentaries and the instructions of many men, this will produce doubt within his heart. One cannot in this way ascertain the real goal of life.’ (*Cc. Adi 16.11*)

“This verse occurs as a description of Tapana Misra, a learned scholar who met Lord Caitanya. Elaborating on the point, Srila Prabhupada writes,

“In this connection, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura gives his opinion that those who are attracted to studying many kinds of literature concerning various subject matters, especially fruitive activities and philosophical speculation, are deprived of unalloyed devotional service because of their splayed attention. . . . Lord Caitanya’s instruction to Tapana Misra is especially significant for persons who loiter here and there collecting books and reading none of them, thus becoming bewildered regarding the aim of life.’

“All I can say is, thank God I met Srila Prabhupada. Otherwise, my life might be summed up with an epitaph, ‘He has a big backlog of novels,’ (to which a *brahmacari* might reply, ‘So what? He missed the real point of life, didn't he?’). Yes, his books were the burden that drowned him. He read but never learned to swim.”

Entering the Life of Prayer

p. 116

“I am coming back from another walk at Gita-nagari with some leaves, but there are not so many good choices of leaves as before. I am trying to get more into realizing that I don't demand anything of Lord Krsna and Prabhupada in my prayer. I just ask that they allow me to speak to them and pray to them with connection. I ask that they grant me the faith to do this along with dutiful activities so that I can serve with more love. I am praying to admit my wrongs and to see them for what they are. I want to admit my need to pray and glorify Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and to remember Him and His unique position as taught in Krsna consciousness. I ask for faith, but I do not demand it. I am pleased with whatever Krsna does. I want to know more how to act in His service. That's what I should be praying for.

“Sunny afternoon on a Sunday. The purpose of speaking mostly to myself is for encouragement, but also, sometimes I have to face defects. It occurred to me that I have the defect of seeking material peace and a little hypochondria, oversensitivity to physical pain. Although my desires for solitude have a spiritually positive aspect to them, there are also the negative aspects of desiring isolation, not going into solitude out of compassion for others, or for contemplating God. I want to be alone to get away from people. These are my weaknesses.

“One way I am countering this is to balance the inward, introspective life with taking part in community activities and counseling and preaching and living in the temples. Also, I try to purify whatever solitude I take so that it is a solitude in which I think and pray for others as well as to prepare myself to be with others.

“Walking at noon, October 31. It is perfectly still, sunny and cool, peaceful in this forest atmosphere, but I had a headache all night and still have one; so I found myself, of course, not able to pray as well. This occurs to me as a real deficiency that I should try to overcome. Find some space within where you can pray and not be affected, not meditating just on physical pain. This headache is a tiny thing: what about the pain when you have to leave the body? Does that mean you are not going to pray? The prayer may be a little different. It may be like a limp rather than a vigorous walk, but you have to keep praying, talking to Krsna in nice ways and not just about your pains (‘Oh Krsna, this hurts, Oh Krsna, that hurts’).

“You did it this morning—you remembered that Krsna is the source of all the material and spiritual worlds and everything is connected to Him. If we serve Him directly, everything will be taken care of in *bhakti-yoga*. The demigods are satisfied, humanity is served in the best way, and our self-realization is achieved. Krsna is so great that He is simultaneously one with everything, and everything is Krsna. He still has His own individual personality as Visnu and as Krsna. So *bhakti-yoga* is the complete act, just as watering the root is the complete act for nourishing the tree. In this way, one can transcend his material, so-called pains by thinking of Krsna.

“Prayer doesn't have to mean, ‘Okay Krsna, here is the bottom line, here is what I want,’ but just to glorify the Lord and then say, ‘Please accept me. Please let me keep talking to You and speaking to You and speaking what I have heard. Please let this message be realized by me or, if I have to remain just a parrot, then let me squawk or sing nicely what I have heard in disciplic succession and defeat all doubters and atheists, including those who dwell within myself. Let the lionlike Lord Caitanya, by His roar, be in my heart and chase away the elephantine vices and doubts. Hare Krsna.’ After all, prayer is basically glorification, and petition can be

included in that. You glorify and glorify and then you say, ‘And therefore, my Lord, please accept me as dust at Your lotus feet by the mercy of my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada.’ If prayer is largely glorification, then let me pray to the Lord.”

Truthfulness, the Last Leg of Religion

“Truth and Illusion

“Impersonalists advise meditating on any form that one likes according to his imagination. But Prabhupada states, ‘Imagination is always imagination and results only in further imagination.’

“Specific and elaborate descriptions of the eternal form of the Supreme Lord are given many places in the Vedic literature, especially in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Liberation from the material world is not achieved by mental speculation but by meditating on the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord.

“As described in *Bhagavad-gita*, the Absolute Truth appears in this world when there’s a discrepancy in the discharge of religious principles and a predominance of irreligion. The Lord descends for the protection of the devotees and the destruction of the nondevotees. His main purpose is to give solace to His devotees.

“The Lord appears in a particular form loved by a particular type of devotee. There are millions of expansions of Krsna, but they are all one Absolute. Some devotees want to see Him in the form of Radha-Krsna, others prefer to see Him as Sita-Rama, still others want to see Him as Laksmi-Narayana, and there are others who want to see Him as four-handed Narayana, Vasudeva. None of these forms are imagination.”

ISKCON in the 1970s: Diaries

p. 182

“Chalk-Dust Preacher”*June 10, 1976*

“Tomorrow, His Divine Grace is due to arrive in Detroit. In this notebook, instead of describing my vascillating self, I shall write down the transcendental words and activities of His Divine Grace. My position is to surrender to his will without any attachment, except to do what pleases him most. At present, he seems to like my management of the library party. I can report that they are steadily going on and getting standing orders, and I have built up our party to be a self-sufficient unit, spiritually and financially. There are different departments, all directed toward the selling of books to the libraries and colleges, and the collecting of *laksmi* to support it, as well as a program of giving college classes.

“Perhaps I could simply ask his blessings and permission to continue the library party at present without change. It would be nice if the library party could have *darsana* with His Divine Grace, assure him how the program is developing and ask any other questions.

“He may send me wherever he desires, but for myself I will be glad to stay on with this traveling and preaching in the U.S. I think it will develop more and more. There seems to be no need to do something different, since the present work—repeat visits to the universities—is resulting in more and more acceptance of his books. As for my restlessness and dissatisfaction, that is definitely chronic and has to do with a lack of Krsna conscious realization, a lack of being situated in Krsna consciousness.

“If my program is to study, I will be discontent at not ‘producing’ more by

preaching; if my program is active preaching, I will be discontent not to study; if I am managing, I will complain, and if I am not managing, I will claim that I am lazy. If I travel as a *sannyasi*, I say I should go beyond being a *sannyasi*, remain in one place and work hard at a project for His Divine Grace. If I am given a project to manage and surrender to, I will feel stuck in one place and wish to fulfill my *sannyasa* order by traveling and preaching. It is impossible. Presently I am traveling and preaching with time to study, no management burden, and in the fall opportunity to preach at colleges. I am responsible for the ongoing library party work, which is beginning its third year.

“I don’t think in the name of catching my spiritual master’s eye I should embark on a new project in a new land in a new field, but go on with this. If he would indicate his satisfaction and whether this conclusion of mine is right or wrong, I would feel more convinced and fixed that I am doing what is right.”

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Writing Sessions

My Purpose at Isola di Albarella (continued)

“November 5, (continued)

“I’m an aspiring devotee.

Light flashes faster than

I can write. By the third line

I am hundreds of miles behind and using

words made up to give you

just some rote idea.

“Well, I finished reading the
 three chapters on Ajamila and
 ‘Hamsa-guhya Prayers’ are next.
 Was I ever free of doubt and
 satisfied in the 1970s?
 No way. Either as GBC of
 U.S.A. temples or on the road
 with the library party *brahmacaris* or
 lecturing in colleges – sitting in
 a library in southwest U.S.A. with
Srimad-Bhagavatam . . . after a while always seeing my
 discontent. So, don’t
 think it’s only now.
 Always was.

“Always was connected to Krsna,
 Supreme. I don’t give up. But
 this body is giving up on me.
 I appreciate Madhu’s attempts
 to improve my diet. I’m
 an incorrigible
 wrong food mixer,
 tongue gratifier. O Lord,
 it’s dry,
 this life I lead is dry

but there is no other.
 Your saints are my heroes.
 But I'm running.
 Please guide me as the lights
 fade and my steps falter.
 Please show me the way.

“I'm listening when I can
 remember it – the prayer returned
 by You. O Krsna, Your mercy
 is all that I am made of.

“Lunchtime. Carrots grating in the machine. Bhakti-rasa is in the homestretch. Sweets made (simple date blobs), the mashed sprouts salad is readying, and the main *subji* (whatever it is). When I was massaging the Prabhupada *murti* I heard where Prabhupada was being massaged in Vrndavana, 1976. His cook was there, and Prabhupada directed him to make *kicharis*, *subji*, chutney and *puris*. (They also talked about Carter, who had just been elected president, about a politician's remark that the Hare Krsna movement might spread in ten years and capture government posts. Prabhupada said we should go on being known as Hare Krsnas; he liked that name.)

“Then at 11:30 A.M. I went into the bathroom, and Madhu gave me a haircut. I told him what Prabhupada had asked for for lunch. Madhu said nothing. It wasn't obviously a good 'Nature Cure' lunch. I didn't want to provoke Madhu, but I just wanted him to know what Prabhupada was eating, which sounded delicious.

“We have our little back-and-forth about this. But I do appreciate Madhu’s long-term commitment to trying to help me to get better health. We’ll do what we can. I also feel more prepared to go to Avignon and meet with Padasevana, who’s a devotee and a nature-cure nutritionist. I was expressing to Madhu today my reluctance about the whole thing, but after we talked, I’m more ready to go and see what we can do.

“4:33 P.M.

“This scarecrow gets chilly, hair grows on his old chest, a bit flabby there too. Thought of Walt Alston (ex-manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers in the pennant-winning World Series days) with his hands in his back pockets, standing in the dugout or out on the pitcher’s mound where he’s about to remove the tiring pitcher, Johnny Podres, call in Ralph Branca, #13. Wave of the hand to the bullpen. Those guys have a lot of responsibility.

“Bhakti-rasa said when I tell a memory that’s not directly Krsna, it’s still within Krsna because it’s a devotee’s memory. Yes, I said, and because the audience is devotees, they hear it that way, ‘Just see what it’s like without Krsna.’

“Srila Prabhupada and devotees in ’76, Vrndavana, talking about the Peace Corps. His disciples defended when one disciple gave a cheap, wrong definition of it and Prabhupada criticized the Peace Corps.

“‘Tejas was in the Peace Corps,’ someone said. Others explained it as Kennedy’s alternative to war for young men.

“‘It is a good idea,’ placating them. Peace Corps isn’t *krsna-katha* either, but when Prabhupada’s there, the Vedic message is always inherent and soon explicit. Have faith in him and enjoy all his talks.”