

## ***Free Write Journal #147***

**June 11, 2021**

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### **Free Writes**

#### **Bhurijana's Lecture from *Bhagavad-gita* Sixth Chapter**

In the Sixth Chapter, Krsna teaches *astanga-yoga*, including *asanas*, *pranayama*, etc. In the last verse of the chapter, He says, “And of all *yogis*, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself and renders transcendental loving service to Me—he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion.” (Bg. 6.47) In his purport to this verse, Prabhupada discusses the difference between the words “worship” and “service.”:

“Worship means to adore, or to respect and honor to the worthy one, but service with love and faith is especially meant for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Anyone who does not render service and neglects his duty unto the primeval Lord, who is the source of all living entities, will certainly fall down from his constitutional position.” (Bg. 6.47, purport)

#### **Prabhupada's Childhood**

Lokanath Maharaja is organizing an extended video of illustrated readings from the *Prabhupada-lilamrta*. He has already finished Prabhupada’s childhood. It is excellently done, filled with rare photographs and paintings from when Abhay Charan was a young child. All the different scenes from the *Lilamrta* are illustrated, and a man with an Indian accent reads from the sections of

the book. It is done to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Prabhupada's birth. Everyone is advised to watch this wonderful offering.

### **Out-loud Reading: Citraketu Meets the Lord, Gets Cursed**

After Narada Muni relieved Citraketu from his grief over his dead son, Narada then became Citraketu's spiritual master. He gave him a potent mantra and said that after chanting this for a week with devotion, he would gain the audience of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Citraketu strictly followed his spiritual master's orders, and he saw Lord Visnu after a week of chanting the mantra. After making obeisances and prayers to the Lord, we next hear that Citraketu was flying in a large spaceship accompanied by Vidyadhara women. They are all chanting the glories of the Supreme Lord and traveling in outer space. In his journey, Citraketu comes upon Lord Siva, who is surrounded by saintly persons and is holding his wife, Parvati, on his lap. Citraketu was astonished that Lord Siva is dealing so familiarly with his wife in public, and he laughs loudly within the hearing of Parvati. Citraketu was not insulting or offending Lord Siva. He was just expressing his astonishment as a friend. Lord Siva and the saintly persons are not offended. Nevertheless Parvati becomes very angry at Citraketu. She curses him to become a demon in his next life. We are told this is all ordained by the Supreme Lord in order to bring Citraketu back to Godhead as soon as possible after his one life as the demon Vrtrasura. Citraketu receives the curse very submissively and humbly, as an ideal Vaisnava. He bows down to Parvati and asks her forgiveness. Then he went away in his airplane. Lord Siva next turns to Parvati and tells her that by his behavior Citraketu has surpassed Parvati in gentleness and beauty. "My dear wife, you are very beautiful in your bodily features, and you are very powerful. But I think Citraketu has defeated you in his behavior with you. He was so gentle and submissive after your curse." (SB 6.17.27)

Prajapati Daksa is mentioned in this connection. He was envious when he thought Lord Siva neglected him, and he cursed Mahadeva. On the other hand, Citraketu had no malice toward Lord

Siva. He was only having a good laugh with his friend. He was simply astonished to see Lord Siva acting with his wife in intimacy before the saints and sages. But he meant no ill.

## Dasarath Suta Translations

Krsna Bhajana has written me that he has discovered a number of Dasarath Suta's translations of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's writings. But they are all on computer. We can, however, download them into paper pages and put them in notebooks. Four are the songbooks, *Gita-Mala*, *Gitavali*, *Kalyana-kalpataru* and *Saranagati*. Together these would make a large single volume of more than 500 pages. The other three are *Baul-sangit*, *Sri-sri Navadvipa-bhava-taranga* and *Vaisnava-siddhanta-mala*, which are all small books that together would make a compilation of around sixty pages. Krsna Bhajana is continuing to track down persons he knows who have Dasarath Suta's translations. I am glad they are not lost but are available. He is a special translator with verve and love for Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

## *Kalyana-kalpataru*

Dasarath Suta's translation of *Kalyana-kalpataru* is unique. It's accurate, but it's also very playful, personal, and much more. Here is a favorite section:

“Coming into the clearing and beholding Krsna in Her mood of total self-surrender, the *gopi* . . . Just then Bhaktivinoda Thakura, fearing that the reader may not have the *adhikara* (qualification) to hear about what happens next, throws down his pen violently on the table and cries out in exasperation, ‘Why is my pen so feeble? It cannot possibly express all these ecstatic pastimes with Krsna, which are causing my heart to throb incessantly. Curses on this weak, useless pen! But maybe it's trying to tell me something. The persons who read this book may not be fit to hear the confidential

pastimes that are enjoyed by meeting with Krsna and sporting in the forest with Him in thousands of different ecstatic lilas. So therefore, I better take heed of this message hinted to me by my crippled, impotent pen, thus ending my *kirtana* here.’ Thus Bhaktivinoda ends *Kalyana-kalpataru*, leaving those readers who do have the *adhikara* on the edge of their seats . . .”

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Now a disciple of mine has sent me a collection of English translations of books by Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They are translated by Bhanu Swami, Sarvabhavana Prabhu, and rare copies of translations by Dasarath Suta. In many of the songs Bhaktivinoda Thakura described himself as “a wretch.” He says he has wasted his life in sense gratification and has never worshiped Krsna. But in the same song there will appear in a verse that he has met a pure Vaisnava. From his association, he now chants Hare Krsna in ecstasy and gathers with the devotees to hear *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I am attracted to these songs because they are so personal and autobiographical. Bhaktivinoda Thakura is a great *acarya* and his books are highly recommended by Srila Prabhupada.

## **Prsni**

I receive regular letters from my disciple Prsni, who I initiated many years ago and who writes from Mississippi. In my last letter to her, I wrote, “I am pleased that you feel I have encouraged you over the years. I see the same thing now that I wrote in my first hand-written letter to you over twenty years ago: ‘I simply want to help you clear up at least your inner difficulties so you can fight *maya* for Krsna.’ Because you are submissive to me, I want to help you more and more.

## **Tai Chi**

Someone sent me an introductory video of Tai Chi exercises. They originate from ancient China.

The person who sent the video to me did so because it is a sitting form and doesn't require vigorous bodily movements which I am unable to do. Even in the sitting forms there are many movements, and I can learn them gradually. They seemed majestic to me, and I hope to practice them, although some of them are actually standing up and would be difficult to do. I know some devotees who have been doing Tai Chi for years, and they say it helps them to stay fit and healthy. The first segment I watched was done by a Tai Chi expert, a Chinese man named Dr. Lam. He was friendly and confident in his practice. He encouraged practicing with colleagues. I think if I do it, I will have to go alone and build up gradually.

## **Wellness Examination**

Yesterday I had my annual wellness examination with my primary care provider. It's a mandatory thing for insurance. It's partly to make sure I'm still alive and that I still live in the county. The Nurse Practitioner, Ryan Marshall, said I looked good, better than I did last time. He tends to do that every time I come. But I don't take it lightly even though it seems to be a snap judgment. He finds me a frisky, alert old codger. He examined my feet and found the right one was swollen. When he pressed down on it, it turned white and left a depression. He says I am retaining water there. For this he is prescribing water pills but in a reduced prescription from what the urologist, Dr. Subudhi, recommended. He examined my vitals and found them satisfactory. My blood pressure was good, 100 over 62. For practically the whole visit, Ryan was complaining of his new computer system. He said the technicians made a lot more money than he did. Baladeva asked Ryan, "Who decides when you need a new computer system?" Ryan replied, "Someone who makes a lot more money than I do." We gave Ryan a bag of chocolate chip cookie *prasadam* and another bag to his receptionist, but we didn't receive any lollipops in return.

## **Refrigerator Breakdown**

A few days ago our freezer broke down and we had to throw food out. Yesterday the entire refrigerator stopped working and we lost more food. This is a major disruption to our ashram. It's 95°F outside, and we have no way of keeping the *bhoga* cold. Baladeva has ordered a new refrigerator, which is supposed to arrive in less than a week. Our present state is a major inconvenience, and we have lost a lot of *bhoga*. Ironically, two days ago we just did our major shopping for the month, and it is now a loss. These are some of the material miseries we face in household life; they are inevitable. We have a kitchen with its heart ripped out; we have to push on and tolerate it.

## **Picnic**

Yesterday we had a picnic for lunch. We had pizza, ice cream cones and soda. This is breaking our usual austere diet of just *kichari*, bread and salad, and no dessert. We're trying to keep our weight down by strictly avoiding desserts. Yesterday was a special feast.

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From ***Every Day, Just Write: Volume 3***

***A Sojourn in Tapo-bhumi***

pp.482-84

**“VRNDA #18”**

“Vrnda, I need to know more

tales of your glories so

I can sing these irregulars,

not leave them so empty.

Don't abandon us, dear *tulasi*.

You grow even in the north,  
 asked to stay there by your devotees  
 who wanted  
 what Prabhupada said.”

**“VRNDA #19”**

“He was pleased when  
 tulasis appeared first in Hawaii then  
 in a St. Louis, Missouri attic  
 with fluorescent bulb through snowy winters,  
 even Boston, even Sweden,  
 barometer of devotion—  
 now, the twigs are dry,  
 don’t cut, take care, let her  
 bloom—  
 Devotee’s plant  
 connected to Radha and Krsna.”

“We are planning to go to Radha-Damodara, Srila Prabhupada's room, and another day to Radha-Gokulananda. ‘It's only the *puspa-samadhi*’ (of Narottama dasa Thakura). That’s all right—pray there, pray to write in American language with devotion, your own description of what happened as you tried.

“Play tape and say, ‘See? He’s great, he’s fine. He said this because— I chose it because it moved my sense of appreciation.’ Spontaneous, not prepared. All glories . . .

**“ROOM 42”**

“Room 42 is where I do  
 open to Lord Krsna  
 my heart I mean, and  
 Madhu when he knocks.  
 I unbolt the door  
 to 42, a magic number.  
 Two is Radha and Krsna—  
 mind and heart  
 beads and hand  
 books and brain.

**“JAPA LOG**

“I thought, ‘What’s the use of keeping a *japa* log? I certainly won’t keep it up after I leave Vrndavana.’

“Why? I think it’s an artificial extra. I pretend to be more devoted to *japa* than I am. Besides, there’s nothing to say. *Japa* is *japa*. It’s inexplicable. It’s either good or bad. What’s the use of writing, ‘Today was better,’ ‘Today was worse’?

“Okay, but I may just keep the log anyway. It’s nice to write and thus think about *japa*. ‘Write your realizations,’ Prabhupada said. I remember the editor of *Modern Haiku* used to publish his one- or two-sentence realizations and descriptions about *haiku* in each issue of his magazine. He numbered them. You could tell he loved *haiku* and liked writing about it. A *haiku*, like a Hare Krsna mantra, may be inexplicable by



nature, but a lover likes to talk of the one he loves. Even a struggler or offender like me wants to be focused on chanting.”

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pp.487-88

### **“3:20 P.M., SRILA PRABHUPADA'S ROOM**

“Devotees are quietly walking around the campus. Some are chanting on beads, some have stopped to talk to each other. I feel responsible to give them the best thing. That is, unadulterated Prabhupada. Find him again in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I'm thinking to start with the Second Canto.

“He’s ours. Each one finds him and keeps him. I can share him only partially. It’s not the same as embracing him—his purports.

‘O Prabhupada, I'm a phony,  
but you keep me on the right track.  
He is who he is, Sats.  
Don't point your feet at your spiritual master.’

“I'm not Norman Mailer. I don’t have to read Allen Ginsberg to see how he divides his lines. Write on your own.

“The audience will read you. Tell your life in Krsna consciousness, and the life of devotees. Hare Krsna.

“Guys talking loudly in Hindi outside, something about work. It’s pious, it’s even ‘transcendental,’ but it's a distraction. I want pure *bhakti* and wish to find it by a discipline of chanting *japa* and reading Prabhupada's books.

“Recently I decided my writing should serve the interests of my pursuit for better *sadhana*. Also, *sadhana* should be done to please my spiritual master. Make it

contribute to his movement. Stay in his movement, even though it's inconvenient sometimes.

“Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna.

“‘Routinization of charisma’ (Max Weber). *The Web and the Rock*, by Thomas Wolfe.

“The pert girls, the sad boys who want a pert girl to love them. The guru in trouble with material desires. The dry, tired-out ISKCON sage.

“Yapping, yapping Hindi workers. On and on they talk.

“The monkeys of Vrndavana are not to be hated. Vrndavana is Vrndavana—worshipable. I have a great purport to read on this tomorrow.

“I'm allowed to read *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* to the devotees tomorrow since it's Ekadasi. Don't ask me to chant sixty-four rounds or to do sixty fasts or sixteen pinpricks inflicted on purpose. *Tapasya* for me is to chant despite dryness, to worship, to go to Trinidad and Guyana and America with good will and gratitude.”

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pp. 489-90

“Yellow straw mats with green elephants on them. Parrots outside, me in, inside this room where he sat and talked to so many. Preached and managed. Didn't want his disciples to be cheated or deviant or lazy. He reprimanded us: stay in ISKCON. Do your work. ‘Don't be like a monkey at Radha-kuuda.’ Don't be a monkey associating with the Radha-kunda *babajis*.

“Yes, Prabhupada, you sure did say those things. I'm still in your ISKCON and not well enough to even go out on a rickshaw to the Radha-Damodara temple. I figure

your room here is as good as your room there. Better, in fact. I can write here freely and no one will kick me out. Guards will chase out the monkeys.

“Krsna-Balarama statue on black mantle. Framed pictures of Radha-Gokulananda from the old days, Radha-Damodara old days, 1977 when he was here. Nothing new to say.

“After all the flood that has passed over, you mean you have nothing to say?

Peace and quiet

master is master

ISKCON is afloat despite . . .

“I'm not adding to the trouble. I'm trying to ‘set a good example,’ as we say. Set it.

**“JAPA LOG, 1:00 P.M.**

“Sixteen rounds done. I'll try for extra. Just to say I've done more? Yes, because I see it as a virtue. To scale higher on the wall. Hare Krsna. Maybe it will help me to overcome mechanical chanting.

“Hear, please, your chanting. Early in the morning I did fourteen by 4:30 A.M. Hear and chant.

**“JAPA LOG, 5:35 P.M.**

“Four extra today. Caw, caw. I don't brag. Screech. Thud, Yap. Hindi. Crash. Hare Krsna. You ate sweetbread? Tomorrow is Ekadasi—I know, I don't expect you to do something herculean. But at least four extra. Or, don't let me pressure you. You've got two lectures. Just make whatever chanting you do good quality. Start before 1:30 A.M.”

pp.492-93

“Surrender while reading and in writing it down. I have nothing extra to achieve. I am poor. Another day I may write a ‘great’ poem, or rather it may pass through me. A powerful description may pass through my pen onto the page. I’ll write in quiet and in excitement. I’ll leave a trail of words. Some will be memorable and readers may wonder, ‘How was he able to evoke this, to flow like this? This piece is a breakthrough. He didn’t use to be able to write so well.’ But often it will be the quiet walk to and from the shed in Geaglum. And who knows what is the best in the trail of words? I don’t know; it’s not up to me. I have to speak, write—and it must come from a life that is not diverted by literary aims (by greed for powerful writing pieces).

“Approach Krsna to surrender.

### **“10:30 A.M.**

“I gave the Ekadasi class in the temple room, reading and speaking from Srtla *Prabhupada-lilamrta*. The topic was Prabhupada in Vrndavana. I was planning to read, but I decided to paraphrase. It came out all right. As soon as I began I felt a twinge behind the eye. It didn’t develop immediately into a painful headache, but now I’m afraid that it may. Therefore, I haven’t dared to write here, and neither am I able to chant extra rounds for Ekadasi. Neither am I able to read to prepare for my 3:00 P.M. class. Gun-shy in Vrndavana.

### **“NIGHT NOTES**

“Lying on my back while Bhagavata dasa does acupressure just before I take rest for the night. I hear the wonderful sounds of Vrndavana—the bell ringing at 6:30 P.M.

for the evening *arati*, the bell that I associate with Srila Prabhupada and his last days here. At the same time a flock of peacocks starts calling out.

“Not so ‘wonderful’ are the screeching, chattering and grunting monkeys nearby. But they’re also part of it. Then during the night I’ll hear the *chaukidhar* walking by loudly banging his stick, insensitive to the Guesthouse full of sleepers. He makes a gruff ‘ho-ho’ sound to show the monkeys who’s boss, and when I’m up here in the morning after *mangala-arati*, I hear clearly the duet between a man and woman loud-speakered from a nearby drama. He sings, ‘Govinda-Radhe, Radhe,’ and she sings back, ‘Radhe-Govinda, Radhe-Govinda,’ back and forth in a musically interesting way. We may object that it’s not a scientific mantra, but nevertheless it’s nothing but Govinda, Radhe, Radhe and Govinda. All sounds in Vrndavana are different from sounds elsewhere.

“As I said in the class this morning, Vrndavana was not just Prabhupada’s residence, but it is the residence of all Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Although we may feel culturally foreign here, certainly we feel religiously at home. Nowhere else, even in India, do we find people of ‘our religion’ with beadbags, the same *tilaka*, the chanting of Hare Krsna, and with Radha and Krsna as their worshipable Lords. So I’m appreciating Vrndavana even as I’m approaching the last days of this visit. Tonight Janmastami dasa, who’s trying to live here as long as he can, said that the local devotees refer to a ‘transcendental boot’ that kicks you out. They’re always fearful it may happen. That boot is easily applied to a person like me who’s just a tender visitor, but I hope there’s something like a return permission and maybe someday in the future, a longer stay for me. Prabhupada angrily denounced one of his own disciples who went to live outside of ISKCON at Radha-kunda with the *babajis* there, ‘Don’t

become a monkey!’ Whatever I do, I want it to please Prabhupada, and I think that means contributing to his movement.”

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pp.495-96

**“February 5**

**“MIDNIGHT**

“Is there something I should try to achieve in my remaining six days in Vrndavana? The program is chalked out. I should try to give several more classes and go on a few outings. My health limits me so that it will take my full effort to fulfill these obligations. I say this is not the real Vrndavana; even in my present neophyte stage I am capable of better worship and residence in Vrndavana. Therefore, we have been planning our return visit.

“But this conclusion, ‘This is not the real Vrndavana where you wear yourself out with group obligations’—is it right? Seems so. Keep Vrndavana sacred in your life for personal development of that which is soft and sweet (as Vrndavana is described in *Caitanya-caritamṛta*). Go to Vrndavana (as Lord Caitanya did) without a crowd. Allow yourself to think that you have paid enough of the institutional dues to worship alone in Vrndavana, concentrating on chanting and reading instead of lecturing and meetings. Then you’ll become a fit instrument to preach when you leave.

“As for ‘doing something’ during these last days, that may not be up to me. At least I can avoid making offenses, and I can seek forgiveness for offenses I’ve made. Don’t take entering Vrndavana for granted. Pray you’ll be allowed to return. Pray to understand the essence of Vrndavana and how you will keep it alive even when you’re not here.”

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From *Japa Walks, Japa Talks*

pp.43-44

**“July 30**

“This morning just before I left for my walk, I wrote an author’s note to a book I have been working on. It came in a burst of inspiration after weeks of thinking about it. My *japa* walk started off with my mentally patting myself on the back, thinking over the phrases of my author’s note, and finding it all very nice and exciting—creative work.

“But what about the Lord’s holy names? It was only by Krsna’s mercy that I was able to write that book or its author’s note. Everything, including creative intelligence, comes from Krsna. I thought, ‘Let me get back to chanting. Calm down, and bring the mind back to the lotus feet of *hari-nama*.’

“This incident brought me back to Govardhana dasi’s question: ‘How can we pay attention to the *maha-mantra* since chanting is such a peaceful process and doesn’t engage the mind?’ I thought about the natural creativity of the mind. Where does that creativity come from? It comes from a nurturing process, from the Lord in the heart, and from prayerful concentration. This process is true for both the devotee and the nondevotee. By nurturing, I mean we sometimes have to wait and let our creative ideas simmer. As for concentration, the atheist’s is not prayerful, not in relation to God. In either case, it is God in the heart who allows or rewards a person with creative results. The atheist-creator is called *duskrtina*, one who is meritorious or brilliant in his work, but whose work is ultimately destructive (an example is the creation of nuclear weapons). Even in psychological terms, we can think of creativity in that way. All creative work will issue forth in a Krsna conscious way only to one who sincerely and

attentively chants the holy names. That doesn't mean we should chant in a fruitive way, thinking that chanting will generate good ideas. We should pray as one who is completely dependent, who is impoverished, but who wants to serve Krsna nicely. Beautiful things, bold and exciting acts, will come from chanting. Therefore, we should pay attention to the peaceful, simple chanting process and remember our constitutional position, not as creators, but as subordinate lovers of the Supreme."

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From ***Prabhupada Nectar***

pp.266-67

**"SRILA PRABHUPADA SAID"**

**"On Restaurants"**

"The other day His Divine Grace revealed in detail his plans for Hare Krsna restaurants, which can be opened anywhere in the world. After his talk most recently, he told me to see that this information is disseminated to all the devotees. He described it as "the next phase of our movement." Please therefore make a newsletter of the information that follows for all-ISKCON distribution.

"Our Krsna conscious farms, like New Vrndaban, are producing much ghee. This ghee should be distributed at a fee to the different centers, and once restaurants begin opening, the ghee will be one of their prime materials. Other supplies, such as vegetables, grains, etc., can be obtained locally.

"The restaurants could be cafeteria-style. The food is kept out on counters and people approach in a line with a tray and take what they want. Prabhupada proposed that there should be one charge, and that if a person takes more than another person, he is not charged more—as much as you like for a certain fee. But there should be no



waste. A person should take what he can eat. One devotee, hearing this, said, “Prabhupada, I think people will be carrying *samosas* home in their pockets.” “No,” he said, “it is a business. Only what they can eat. But they don’t get charged more for eating more, like in a hotel, where immediately there is a bill if you eat more.”

“We can also make home deliveries. Food is cooked fresh, and as it is taken, more fresh batches are put on the counter. Always fresh. There will be about twenty sweet preparations, and twenty salty preparations like *samosas* (made with potatoes, peas, cauliflower, white flour, and ghee) and *kacauris*, etc. The vegetable preps must be served hot. Everything should be so clean that not even a single fly should be seen. After the first batch of *prasadam* is made, it will be offered to Lord Caitanya with *arati*, then the *prasadam* for the rest of the day will be considered offered. Smoking, of course, is prohibited in the restaurant. Tapes can play of our *kirtanas*. The idea is that people who will not come to our temples will come and eat at our restaurants and will be eating *prasadam* and hearing. Also it will engage men, our devotees, in varieties of pursuits—not that without engagement men should eat in our temples in the name of devotional service. “Hare Krsna Restaurant!” The name, Srila Prabhupada said, should also be fully registered so that others may not imitate.”

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From ***Remembering Srila Prabhupada: A Free-Verse Rendition of the Life and Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krsna Consciousness***

**“A VISITOR TO MAYAPUR”**

“Every month  
 a different GBC disciple  
 would come  
 to live with Prabhupada  
 to learn firsthand  
 how to serve guru.  
 One such visitor came,  
 a *naive* incompetent,  
 but made into a swami  
 by His Divine Grace.  
 Flying from Dallas,  
 the visitor arrived—  
 his first visit to India.  
 Carrying his *danda*  
 on the ferry from Navadwip,  
 he finally arrived  
 in the presence of Prabhupada,  
 who was pleased to receive him:  
 ‘Now we have five *sannyasis*.  
 So stay here  
 and chant Hare Krsna.  
 I will give you letters  
 to type and reply.’  
 The visitor stayed

in the next room,  
running in when Prabhupada  
rang the bell.  
Delighting in bananas and yogurt  
and answering Prabhupada's mail,  
the visitor was otherwise bewildered  
in the sweltering heat,  
learning slowly  
the secret of the *dham*.  
Approaching the master  
in awe and reverence,  
he watched how Prabhupada preached—  
always, always, always—  
speaking on behalf of Krsna  
the ever-fresh instructions  
of the *Bhagavad-gita*.

“Slowly, from Prabhupada's  
perfect activities,  
the visitor learned.

Writing down  
a few lines  
from the ocean of Prabhupada's  
philosophic talks,  
the visitor stayed

a few weeks,  
seeing with opened eyes  
the reality  
of the sincere workers for Prabhupada,  
those who stayed on in Mayapur,  
the sold-out servants.

The visitor noticed  
from his sweltering room  
the file of rickshaws  
like a desert mirage  
and people walking  
in the brilliant sunshine  
with black umbrellas.

He was only a bell-ring  
from Prabhupada in the next room,  
but intimacy of consciousness  
had to be earned.

“Prabhupada began  
commenting on *Upadesamrta*,  
and the visiting *sannyasi*  
took the dictation in shorthand.

It was Prabhupada's mercy  
to engage a fallen soul  
in secretarial work

during the quiet, hot days  
of a Mayapur summer.”

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From *Passing Places, Eternal Truths*

pp. 330-31

**“My Purpose While Traveling**

***October 14, 1:30 A.M.***

“By reading Ann Charters’ introduction to *The Portable Jack Kerouac*, I realized better that I am not attempting to write my memoirs in a storytelling kind of way. I rarely retain a memory long enough to describe it at length partly because I have so little physical energy and partly because I have so little time to write. Perhaps it also has something to do with the fact that I have been trained (in ISKCON) to be a preacher, to study and repeat only the Vedic *sastras*. Our own life is not considered important enough to remember. Only Krsna’s message matters. I tell as much as I dare, but then I prefer to drift into preaching or prayer. After all, my identity in this life as Satsvarupa dasa, and especially Stephen, is ephemeral, a bubble in the midst of the ocean. Why spend my whole life trying to write the story of my adventures in this body? It can’t be preserved, even in literary form. Better I use myself as an instrument to repeat Krsna consciousness. I cannot deny my experience as a conditioned soul, so I don’t leave that out of the telling.

“Lost my rhythm of rising at midnight since we left Geaglum two weeks ago. It seems much longer since we left there, now living this life in the van. I miss the regulation of rising at midnight and writing and reading all morning, then chanting

twelve rounds at a stretch. The travel culminates in occasions like last night, speaking to a hall full of Sunday feast guests. They were all sitting on chairs. As I spoke, dusk approached, and they didn't turn the lights on in the hall until the end of my talk. We were all one in speaking and hearing. When I saw two young men not listening but talking to one another, it diverted me. I wanted everyone's full attention. It gave me a glimpse of how Prabhupala lectured tirelessly and considered it an important part of his mission—to speak to live audiences about Krsna. He spoke to his own disciples and to uninitiated audiences, in room conversations, on morning walks. I think my doing that is less vital, although I have done it for many years. I am simply trying to find my place in the vast mosaic of Prabhupada's Hare Krsna movement. I am not Prabhupada but one of his followers. I don't have to do everything he did, but do everything in his service."

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From ***Journal and Poems, Book 3***

p.302

"The *Bhagavatam* verse I spoke on stated that a king should be tolerant with his subjects even if they don't always follow. So I talked about community life in ISKCON. The leaders should be tolerant of devotees who don't follow, and all devotees should be tolerant of the austerity of community life. Or else, how can we qualify for going back to Godhead?

"From behind the movie camera, Paramananda asked a question. He said we each have our subjective viewpoint. 'You have been speaking from the viewpoint of a guru about a disciple's surrender, but a disciple has his own emotions. So isn't it intellectually difficult to accept another's viewpoint about us even if it's our guru?' I

replied that when we surrender to the spiritual master, we accept that he knows how to direct our lives. We may say this is the austerity of being a disciple, but it is for our own happiness. Our guru is he who is leading us back to Godhead.

“I don't know how all this will sit with Paramahansa and his wife. I glanced at them several times while making these points. She looked downward, embarrassed. He was sometimes smiling, pleased with me for making strong and proper replies as his spiritual master. Now let us see how each of us lives up to his words.”

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From *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam, Volume 1*

pp.306-9

**“Bhagavatam 1.1.26**

**“Those who are serious about liberation are certainly non envious, and they respect all. Yet they reject the horrible and ghastly forms of the demigods and worship only the all-blissful forms of Lord Visnu and His plenary portions.’**

### **Comment**

“ . . . *Mumuksavo ghora-rupan*: don't worship the ghastly forms. I want to say more this morning. After all, I'm a writer. It's my duty to be up early, wearing whatever sweaters are necessary, and typing away. I have written my summary of the purport, but that seems to be only the minimum use of my power to speak.

“I think of Rupa and Sanatana going to see Lord Caitanya at Ramakeli. They were dressed as Mohammedan officials. They confessed their bad habits and said that they were ashamed to come before the Lord in that state. It took courage to approach Him

like that. They knew it would mean giving up their old way of life, but they wanted to be delivered by Patita-pavana.

“I'm interested in this passage because it's a moving sequence. They pray with such humility. Their prayers are exemplary for anyone interested in the art of prayer or the practice of humility. To pray as they prayed, we would have to be prepared to change our ways. Those two things go together—sincere prayer and the readiness to become something that we are not at present. We can't go to Lord Caitanya, make a confession, and expect to go away with our life and habits the same. Everything will change, starting with our name, right down to how we eat and how we sleep.”

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From ***Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary***

pp. 121-22

**“Prabhupada's Room, 10:40 A.M .**

“... ‘By distributing my books profusely, you are giving me great encouragement to translate. And you are all helping me to fulfill the order which my Guru Maharaja gave me. So I am so much grateful to you and I am sure Krsna will bless you a million times over for doing this work.’

“That famous ‘million times’ line—all ISKCON knew about it. ‘I hope you all my beloved disciples in San Francisco are in strong health and jolly mood.’

“Prabhupada includes his upcoming itinerary in the P.S.—Jaipur, Bombay, Nairobi, Mayapur, Hong Kong, Sydney, Tokyo, Hawaii ‘and then return to U.S.’ Srila Prabhupada, as I sit here, a young *brahmacari* interrupted me. Said he's been reading *Narada-bhakti Sutra* and likes it. He said he used to be Steve and now he's Sudama Vipra dasa. I remained stern because he was interrupting me, but I said



something. He wants me to look at some of his recent poetry. I agreed. Srila Prabhupada, I will definitely encourage him with words. That's what you want, or what's the use of being a senior disciple?

“The day you came to America, you didn't have any assistant! I could never do what you did. I complain of headaches, but you had two heart attacks on the way to America. In Boston the day you arrived, you felt helpless, but then remembered what was written in the First Canto. *Krsna-katha* will cleanse the hearts of the Americans too.

“I see the light from your desk lamp shining on your lap. Your left hand is touching the mattress. You have fine hands. The mattress is covered with clean white sheets. The bell is tolling eleven.”

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From *The Wild Garden*

pp.43-44

### “Vrndavana”

“When Lord Caitanya wandered in the forests of Vrndavana, a male and female parrot appeared on a tree and began to speak. They spoke with intense *rasa*, the male praising Krsna and the female praising Radha. When the Lord saw the bluish necks of some peacocks, His remembrance of Krsna awakened and He fell to the ground in ecstatic love. Balabhadra, the Lord's servant, sprinkled Him with water, fanned Him, and chanted the holy names. The Lord then gained outer consciousness and began rolling on the ground. He then ordered His friends, ‘*Bol! Bol!*’ and they chanted Krsna's names. The Lord's friends became anxious to protect Him because He was in

uncontrollable ecstasy from one moment to the next. This is Vrndavana as it is, experienced by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

“When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was elsewhere, the very name of Vrndavana was sufficient to increase His ecstatic love. Now, when He was actually traveling in the Vrndavana forest, His mind was absorbed in great ecstatic love day and night. He ate and bathed simply out of habit.’ (Cc., *Madhya* 17.228-29)

“Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami says it is impossible to fully describe Lord Caitanya’s ecstatic manifestations while He walked through the forests of Vrndavana. We read it today and store it somewhere in our empty hearts for future reference. Don’t say I have no taste. I have very little taste. Lord Caitanya has all taste. But what does it matter who I am? Let us hear together of Lord Caitanya and Raghunatha das Gosvami and those great saints to whom Vrndavana revealed all her secrets. They are our solace.”

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From ***Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name***

pp.216-17

“But I am convinced that I shouldn’t wait ten million years before even attempting to approach Vrndavana. I should struggle for Vrndavana consciousness. I should beg for the mercy of *Vraja-dham* and the devotees. They can free me from my distractions and offenses. I belong there with them.

“As soon as I realized this more yesterday, I began to see what kind of things would be more favorable for my meditation. It occurred to me that walking back and forth in the backyard where I could see all the hills and sunshine was not so good. It was giving me more a mood of the pleasantness of the Italian countryside, whereas in my room, there is more concentration. I have pictures of Vrndavana in my room, and I tend to think more about the holy *dham* when I see the photographs.

“Rupa Gosvami also says *tan-nama-caritadi-sukirtananu*: we should think of the name, quality, form, and pastimes when we chant. There is no duality between getting down to the basics in chanting and hearing and connecting Krsna’s pastimes to our chanting. It is not to be done in imitation of advanced souls, and neither is it a false imposition on the mind. What am I waiting for? We are supposed to be doing this now.

“We sometimes ask this question in some rhetorical way, like a poet asking, ‘When will the day come?’ But we have to realize that now is the time to start answering that question. Beg: ‘Let that day be now, please now.’ We won’t be able to make that day come, but we will be able to beg the Lord for His mercy. Nothing will happen without our request; nothing will happen by chance. These two things are connected—the overcoming of distraction and the desire to meditate on Krsna in Vrndavana. We belong in the dust of Vraja.

“What about fervor? Fervor isn’t something we can just create, like inducing a fever. It can’t be artificial. Fervor comes from having a specific request and praying for it intensely. Rupa Gosvami tells us what to beg for from our spiritual master. ‘Please, Srila Prabhupada, make your approval of my direction clear to me. Please help me and assure me, because I know I cannot make advancement if you are not pleased. I am never independent. Therefore, let me read your books with understanding, and then

let me go with confidence to the guides you direct me to, Rupa Gosvami, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, all the *acaryas*. I pray to also get their mercy.

Let me never forget, however, that everything is coming by your direct blessing. Let me refine my love for you; let me distill it until it becomes pure. Let me strive for that goal.’

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From ***Meditations and Poems***

pp.17-19

**“EJW 12: Going on Holidays”**

**“This is Penmanship**

“One of Radharani’s friends told Her, ‘My dear graceful Radharani, Your intimate friend Krsna is also served by His intimate boyfriends. Some of them cut jokes with Him in mild voices and please Him very much by this.’ (NOD, Chapter 41).

*Priya-narma* friends like Subala and Ujjvala do canvassing work on behalf of Krsna, entreating *gopis* to meet with Krsna.

“Krsna’s servant Patri addressed Krsna saying, ‘You have protected us cowherd boys from demons like Aghasura and Kaliya. But I am suffering from Your separation, which is more severe than the hunger of Aghasura, the poison of lake Kaliya and the burning of the forest fire. So why should You not protect me from the pangs of separation?’ (NOD, Chapter 42)

“In the *Lalita-madhava*, Rupa Gosvami explains that the movements of Krsna’s eyebrows are just like the Yamuna, the Yamuna and moonshine come in contact on the bank of the river, the water tastes just like nectar, and drinking it gives great satisfaction.’ (*NOD*, Chapter 44).

“This is penmanship, to write down something from *The Nectar of Devotion* about Lord Krsna and Radha.’ (*EJW 32: Going on Holidays*)”

“If you study the inner form of writing, maybe some inner form will be revealed to you and you will be able to shape it, improve it, flow with it or even abandon it for a different one. Study how it is going, and how it reads, what it is like. The daily round from morning to night.

“Ouch, it is hard, it is long. We don’t know what to say. We don’t think we will be able to say another thing, but you are squeezing and demanding, so I speak. Oh Krsna, do you remember Your father Nanda? Are You coming back anytime soon? Let us know if You are actually giving up Your relationship with Radha, because then there is no use putting the swab in front of Her nostrils. They want to know whether they should give up hope. And yet, they cannot. Hope is their one friend, all else has deserted us, hope for writer’s life. I am imitating the language but without the *bhava*. I’m sprinkling the page with it. Oh, Krsna has not allowed you the faintest scent of *bhava* for His holy names, although you chant them fourteen at a clip and then more. All right, all right, I am like Radha in

that respect, almost given up hope, but hope against hope. (*EJW 32: Going on Holidays*)

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## Writing Sessions

From *June Bug (1996)*

### *June 3, 1996 Wicklow (continued)*

“I spoke foolishly of myself yesterday to the devotees. A clown show. Now leave me alone. When you come into my room, I’ll throw the crisps bag under the desk so you don’t see it. Pause here and see if I can interest myself in *Bhagavad-gita*, even though the light isn’t so great. I argued against that ex-disciple who said Krsna consciousness is sectarian. I said the *Bhagavad-gita* teaches what will nourish any spiritualist. You cannot complete your spiritual life just by eclectic talking and feeling and listening to your heart. I said that’s like trying to reinvent the wheel – why waste time? Consult wisdom teachers in books. *Bhagavad-gita* is one. I should preach this to myself. And neither will I turn to the Second Chapter to read that the soul is eternal. I think I’m looking at the Ninth Chapter nowadays. I want to hear from and about Lord Krsna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the object of unalloyed devotion and surrender.

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The Ninth Chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* is most confidential. I’m reading for myself. I’ll become a better lecturer and devotee. Others may also do this. Some may be better at it than me, but I have to do it for myself. Now, I could say I have to do it because I have so many disciples. They create a pressure of responsibility on me. That’s true. The GBC creates another pressure. An obligation to the

spiritual master is heavy, so for these reasons, I need to keep fresh interest in topics of Krsna. But I'm saying that will all come naturally. Don't read primarily out of pressure. Read out of some natural urge of the self. Take it in that way and read it in that way.

As long as I can function in this way, I will do so, use eyesight and brain to read Krsna's sacred words and Prabhupada's explanations. I won't always have it.

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*“June Bug. Bug it, don't bug me. Go on reading. He's got the bug.*

“I prefer to think of the June bug who bites and rather than takes, gives you a magic charm such as poison/nectar, to last as long as possible and by which you go on reading and writing.

“Krsna is teaching in the Ninth Chapter things more confidential than in Chapters Two or Three or Seven or Eight. He's teaching about Himself, His glories and His unalloyed devotional service. The envious will not be interested and are excluded. It's for devotees only. I wish to enter.

“Wake up and live.

“Yeah, I'd like to do that.

**“6:00 A.M.**

I'm back. Out walking in the rain. Don't try to be too careful. Just tell things valuable, the gift of speech.

There's one man, not so hoary that you call him ancient, but old as I am old, and he's sick. Daruka said the doctors told him he must walk, so he walks with a cane and a long coat down the long road, which is bordered on each side close with pine trees. When a car approaches carrying devotees, he turns away from them so that you see his profiling standing and shunning us as if we were devils. I asked if he does that with people other than Hare Krsnas. I didn't get a clear answer.

Then Daruka said he thinks it's a special behavior he's adopted for devotees. Also, D. said he heard that someone once did get through to him. Mostly, however, if you meet him on foot or in a passing car, you get The Treatment. It's a turning away from you, giving you half of his back. (Maybe he feels if he turned completely, you would attack him.) He remains stationary until you pass, and then he moves on. The whole thing is odd, eerie. No one talks about it. It's a local embarrassment, as in some neighborhoods they have smelly sewers.

"I walked in the rain; my ankle hurt after a while. I am getting ready to open up for a lot of June writing, I tell myself. It can (give a merry smile, old-timer) be the worst junk, it can be the best, it can be the trees moving in the wind, although you have said it many times. The skylight in Uddhava's room, smallness of the house. I have to be open and speak because one thing will lead to another. For example, I didn't want to mention that X said it was a crime to hide the bag of crisps under the desk when someone suddenly entered that person's room, but I said it and it allowed me to say something else. It wasn't important for me to write about the hiding of the crisp bag, but what it led to was important.

"Lousy, words, water bubbles filling up in the toilet room, and I hear it up here. I've described these things before. We return to places.

"I met no one, no one. Sheep in fields and cows. I didn't have time to stop at the bridge and look into the water. Testing my endurance for a headache and ankle ache, a first of the year in Wicklow.

"Rain on the window. Whirring of the washing machine. Come around to Krsna consciousness now. It's part of your life. Manu is steering a swami who is visiting Ireland so that his visit to Inis Rath won't coincide with mine. If it does, that won't stop me from writing. We'll go over the border and get the residency first. Don't even remember the name of the street in Dublin where I'm supposed to live. It's on a second floor, just a preaching center.

"Whirr, whirr.



“You can’t make your life more exciting just to write about it. But that’s possible too. One householder finds life too dull at home with his wife and kids. He wants to get away from it. He wants to preach in the city. Get a restaurant or some opportunity to lecture or talk informally to newcomers. Someone wants to manage on a GBC level. Someone else wants to advertise the presence of Hare Krsna devotees at one of those rock festivals that go on for several days in the Irish countryside, go there and chant for many hours in a tent in the midst of wild and drunken kids. Someone wants to write and edit a children’s magazine. Someone loves to garden. Someone writes.

“Hey Rover, turn over! This  
Yank wants to transfer  
residency. Can you beat  
that, boy?

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**“9:37 A.M.**

“Still experiencing jet lag. Just fell asleep for over an hour, dreaming of vivid encounters with people, some whom I know or knew and some whom I’ve never met, some were pious and worth my attention, seems I was a counselor. I go on searching and meeting. Never alone to find just myself and my relationship with my guru and with Lord Krsna.

“Maybe that’s what I’m seeking and would like to follow up in these writings.

“Wake to hear the wind howling and the noisy rooks. June is cold and wet in Ireland. After waiting so many months through winter and spring, you get more of the same in this country. Better stay indoors and hear *krsna-katha*. Srila Prabhupada said, ‘Krsna is selfish.’ He wants us to hear about Him, not someone else. *Krsna-katha*.

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“Research: June bugs are large brown beetles that emerge from the ground in early summer – May to June. Gardeners meet them when they spade up their gardens. They’re about an inch long. These beetles are related to the ancient Egyptian scarab beetles, which were considered sacred. They usually appear at night in the summer and you can see their big, buzzy, fat, round bodies when they fly into the light.

“June bugs eat the young leaves of trees and shrubs and therefore cause damage as they strip off new growth. They deposit their eggs in the ground, in meadows, gardens and fields. The young larvae are large, white grubs with brown heads. The grubs burrow down below the frostline in autumn and remain in the ground for two years, eating the roots of corn, grains, grasses, and vegetables before emerging as beetles in May or June.

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“In the hut at twenty to 3 P.M. I hear a raw motor in short bursts. Guess it’s a tree cutter, although it could be a young Japanese motorcycle. But only a tree or branch cutter would be used in such short bursts. I recall how we broke our rearview mirror on this road last year – one of the side-impinging branches. But I hoped peace and quiet.

“Faith is very important in the discharge of devotional service. You have to gradually build up your faith in and knowledge of the scriptures. Get enough rest so that when you come to the hut to read *Bhagavad-gita*, you don’t start falling asleep. Hari Sauri says, ‘Okay, I give permission to come back here (from India) and take up your rightful activities. But now we expect you to do a lot of service to maintain yourself in the temple.’

“We are aware of *grhasthas*. What they do in their privacy is up to them. I told them what is ideal and are basic requirements. They were not morose after much hiking. Sturdy lot

**(To Be Continued)**