

Free Write Journal #154

July 30, 2021

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Free Writes

Stuyvesant Falls

We have been living here eleven years and twenty days. It is a countrified agricultural community, with cows. It is very conducive for spiritual life in the modes of goodness. Many people can't handle living here. There is too much a lack of feverish sense gratification and noise and crowds, which is what people are accustomed to. But we like the quiet atmosphere, the long rows of corn stalks growing, and the smell of manure in the air. Our ashram is virtually a temple with many Deities and a high standard of cleanliness and worship. Our ashram is called Viraha Bhavan, a place where separation from Radha and Krsna is cultivated. Living in the modes of goodness is not guaranteed to bring you to the *visuddha-sattva* level, but it is conducive to that. It's a destination spot. We don't have to travel because people come here to get away from the cities and enjoy the rural Krsna conscious atmosphere.

Cowherd Pastimes

In the Tenth Canto, Prabhupada asserts in his purports that the pastimes of Krsna are not mythology or imagination. They are historical facts. All the great *acaryas* would not have written many books of commentaries on the *lilas* if they were mere fiction. But they can only be understood by submissive aural reception. They can be heard from a bona fide guru. Milk touched by a serpent

causes poisonous effects.

Krsna and His friends liked to laugh and joke when they were sitting together for their lunch. Their mothers would prepare food for them at home. One boy would hold up a piece of *prasadam* and say to the others, “Here, take some of my *prasadam*,” and he would laugh. Sometimes a boy’s lunch basket would be taken away and thrown far ahead to another boy. Then the owner of the bag would cry. The bag would be returned to the proprietor and he would be happy again.

Stealing the Garments of the Unmarried *Gopis*

We are now hearing from Prabhupada in *Krsna* book. The unmarried *gopis* in Vrndavana, around fourteen years old, used to go together to the Yamuna River and offer sacrifices and pray to the goddess Katyayani that they could have Krsna as their husband. They performed this *yajna* for a year. Krsna came to the spot where they were bathing and climbed into a tree, holding the *gopis*’ garments. He addressed them, saying, “Please come out of the water one by one. I want to see your naked beauty.” The *gopis* were very pleased to hear Krsna’s words, but externally they were shy and told Krsna that they could not obey His order. They said they had been in the river a long time and they were now getting cold. They begged Him to free them without passing His test. Krsna said He was not joking, but He wanted to see each *gopi* one by one. The *gopis* protested some more, but when they saw that Krsna was very determined, they, as His eternal servants and lovers, decided they had to follow His instructions and come out of the water. Shyly coming out of the river, they covered their pubic hair with their hands. But Krsna told them they had offended the water god Varuna, and so they should also hold their folded palms over their heads and beg forgiveness of their offense to the water god. In Vedic society a woman never goes naked before anyone except her husband. So in this way, Krsna was fulfilling the *gopis*’ desires that He marry them. He returned their clothes and told them in the future they would enjoy with Him as husbands and wives. This would be in the *rasa*

dance. The *gopis* were very joyful at Krsna's words, and they went to their homes praising Krsna's glories.

Loss of Journal

Yesterday I dictated a day's worth of material for *Journal* #154. But when I gave the Dictaphone to the typist, the machine was blank. We tried to search for it on other Dictaphones, but they were all blank. This is a great loss—one-seventh of my weekly *Journal*, vanished—and I have no memory of it. I spoke two spontaneous entries and then picked out selections from my books. And I added a free-write session from the past. But it's all gone, and I'm disappointed. It dampens my enthusiasm for today, but I'll have to dutifully make it up and leave the results to Krsna, being careful not to misplace the recorded Dictaphone. This loss of a day's labor in the *Journal* is a worthwhile event to put into the *Journal*. The only thing not lost was a free-write session that goes at the end of the day's *Journal*. We have more free-writes on hand, and the typist can just continue using them.

The Prodigal Son Returns

The prodigal son, Purusa dasa, was visiting his daughter in Florida and has just returned to living with his brother twenty-five minutes away. Baladeva is very relieved that he's coming back. Baladeva is fully engaged in service, but he doesn't have time to finish his *japa* rounds. This omission in his *sadhana* is troubling him, and he's counting on Purusa to do other duties and allow Baladeva to concentrate on chanting. Purusa himself has to improve his chanting, which has withered down to only several rounds a day. Prabhupada has written that of all the orders of the spiritual master, the instruction to chant sixteen rounds is essential.

He hasn't been chanting sixteen rounds for a long time, but within the last two days he came up to the quota. This gave him a satisfaction which he felt was lacking in his life. He will have to pass many tests. When one first comes to Krsna consciousness, it seems that Krsna gives one an initial boost and everything is blissful. But later come the tests. Prabhupada writes that Krsna gives the sincere devotee the strength to pass the tests. It may be good that Purusa has been away a long time. He has missed the institutional tests, which have driven many devotees away. We can help him avoid controversies and remain a humble devotee.

Extra Workers

We had extra workers in the ashram yesterday. Purusa (the prodigal son) is no longer a mere visitor but a regular worker, part of the crew. Purusa and Bala prepared Sunday lunch, which we call "brunch," waffles with scrambled tofu and peas, with homemade ketchup. He and Bala prepared the meal, and after lunch they cleaned the pots and dishes. Purusa and Amit from Albany cleaned up the kitchen afterwards, and then Amit swept and mopped the whole ashram. Amit did a weekly tuneup of our computers. After finishing his service, Amit usually goes to our ashram temple room and chants his *japa* or has *kirtana* with whomever is around. This week he went to the Albany Hindu temple.

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

pp.19-20

(Comment: *I find PMRB very useful for taking excerpts from. It consists of straight paraphrasing of the Bhagavatam and then free-writing—a nice combination)*

“Pure devotion must be performed in pure consciousness of our spiritual identity.

This implies that until we know who we are, we are not performing actual *seva* but

only going through the motions. Sometimes devotees find such statements depressing, but they shouldn't. *Bhakti* is far superior to materially motivated religion, even religion governed by Vedic injunction. It takes practice and sincerity to perform it. Going through the motions gives us as that practice and provides us with an opportunity to express earnestness. We sweat and surrender and gradually learn that we are unworthy. Krsna sees the dawning of our humility and helps us to approach Him. By 'going through the motions,' we gradually learn of our true identity and enter the stage of loving service to Krsna as who we really are.

“May the *Bhagavatam* protect my
soul. I intend to write
without thinking or prevaricating.
May *Bhagavatam* protect
my wanderings: ‘Leave them alone
and they’ll come home, wagging
their tails behind them.’

“Don’t mind boring lectures.’
When you listen to others—I
can’t say, ‘Don’t fidget’—and
expect you to obey, but don’t
condemn. See the good—as
in the fair blue eyes and
slight smile of that Aussie
who gave class the other day,

who kept saying ‘the Lord’ as
if he knew Him.

“We’ll gradually become elevated by the pure knowledge contained in the *Bhagavatam* if we are not in a hurry and we hear with attention. As Issa wrote:

“Climb Mount Fuji,
O snail,
But slowly, slowly!”

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pp. 25-26

“Just to hear the language of the old brick-colored volume: ‘Oh the expert and thoughtful men! Please know it that *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the mature fruit of the desired tree . . .’ It’s not always easy reading, but there are real gems, such as this one: ‘. . . It is already readily swallowable nectarine juice which is relished. . . .’ I want that juice.

“Prabhupada is sitting at Chippiwada on a thin, straw mat placed on the hard floor, naked bulb overhead the only light, stones placed on manuscripts as paperweights, typing for hours. To reciprocate, I read for hours, for years, and now want to write on his points.

“Prabhupada gives us a long explanation in his purport about the meaning of *rasa*. . . . Typical of Prabhupada’s manner, he gives us an overview of the subject in his purport to the third verse of the *Bhagavatam*. Prabhupada sometimes said that he wasn’t sure he would live long enough to translate the entire *Bhagavatam*; therefore

he put everything into the First Canto, and much into the first few purports.

“ . . . I remember reading it for the first time and mulling over this wondrous new information about a relationship with God in ghastliness, wonder, and conjugal love. No other religion teaches this. For me, the most wonderful thing in the purport comes at the end where Prabhupada tells us about Sukadeva Gosvami. ‘The Vedic fruit which is mature and ripe in knowledge is spoken through the lips of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, who is compared to the parrot not for his ability to recite the *Bhagavatam* exactly as he heard it from his learned father, but for his ability to present the work in a manner that would appeal to all classes of men.’ Something in me responds to the idea that we should be more than parrots who mindlessly repeat the philosophy. We can instead faithfully repeat the philosophy, yet sweeten it with our own understanding.

“The *Bhagavatam* is something that is carefully handed down, a fruit that should not be bruised or handled roughly. Neither should it be kept under sterile wrapping without any sign of human touch. No, the devotees can add their reddened mark of sweetness as they hear from Sukadeva. Prabhupada writes, ‘This process of disciplic succession of the *Bhagavata* school suggests that in the future also *Srimad-Bhagavatam* has to be understood from a person who is factually a representative of Srila Sukadeva Gosvami.’”

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From *Morning Songs*

pp.13-14

“Saci’s Family”

“Saci’s family arrived in the middle of the night,
the children won’t go to school.

His driveway is clear.

“I am waiting for the muse.

The snow is black,

the porridge warm,

you’re thinking of Krsna

as Radharani thinks of him.

‘After all, He is just

a debauchee.’ She doesn’t mean

to hurt Him, and He is not to blame

for attracting all the women in

the world.

“He is the charming cowherd boy

and that makes His flute

enchant by its own power.

“The girls speak a mixture

of blasphemy and praise,

their minds are confused

and that’s how Lord

Caitanya is feeling.

“He saw Krsna and says

‘Here is the almighty Lord!’

Many kinds of moods
fighting like elephants in the field.

The loving affairs are
tangling and wonderful—

“Krsna is the cause
I am feeling it in the
sweet milk. I am able to taste a fragment
of this bliss by hearing
Caitanya-caritamrta from
my enlightened sense.

Pleas stay with me,
Lord. These things
are real and true.”

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From ***Songs from Stuyvesant Falls***

pp.18-19

“Haridasa from Guyana wants to come and stay a
month. I am telling him he can come
on a two-week trial to see if he disturbs the subtle
mood I am trying to cultivate in my Viraha Bhavan
bhajana kutir

“The poem is enacted

daily out of the texture of
my life at Stuyvesant Falls.

It has a melody that
is consistent and jolly.

Krsna is the object of the poem, and I hear of His
activities and qualities every day. By faithful hearing I
maintain my standing as a devotee of the Lord.

My morning *arati* is brief but is the inward high point
of loving meditation of Radha-Govinda I pray to
Srimati

Radharani to recommend me to Krsna because if She
does

so He is bound to favor me.

Devotees in Vrndavana take shelter of Radha, and I do
also in

my mind while waving an
incense stick at Her

lovely form. She

and Krsna are my compact worship offered in
mental concentration

with visual *darsana* of Their forms.”

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From ***Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 1***

pp.227-28

“Prabhupada Smaranam

“L.A., 1969:

“Walking out of his room, he stopped
before a crude painting of Krsna being dragged
through the Vrndavana mud,
as He hung onto the tail
of a frightened calf.

Krsna was in His yard and the
nearby *gopis* watched the fun.

Prabhupada said, ‘For the atheist, God comes
as death, but we see Krsna in loving pastimes.’

“If we were not in good consciousness when we were with Prabhupada, we are not able to leave out our own pains when we give our impressions of him.

“Aside from physical illness, other blockages may come, such as homesickness or false ego. With these human limitations in mind, let me attempt to tell some cloudy memories of days when I was a greenhorn in India, in the association of Srila Prabhupada.

“Srila Prabhupada had many things on his mind, including complicated land purchases, money deals and bank exchanges. Devotees like Tamala Krsna Maharaja, Jayapataka Maharaja, Gargamuni Maharaja, Tejas Prabhu and others were able to relate to him in all these details. But an American *sannyasi* just coming for a visit wasn't able to comprehend it all. You longed for more relatable moments with your spiritual master when he would speak the philosophy which gave you so much relief of the heart, or when you could talk with him personally about simple things. When you

were with Prabhupada in your homeland, America, you were more relaxed for observing him with your mind and senses. In a country where you couldn't speak the language, and you didn't know your way around, the tendency was to feel foreign or homesick. Whenever there was direct contact with Prabhupada, he broke through all those barriers and that was very nice. Godbrothers would also help, by speaking on Krsna conscious topics or Prabhupada topics which were transcendental to time and place.”

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From ***Truthfulness, the Last Leg of Religion***

pp.37-38

“Prabhupada wanted to see as many books as possible distributed, ‘somehow or other.’ The books themselves would speak the truth better than anyone else, and so success was to convince a person to take one.

“ . . . If a *brahmacari* would sell even a one *paise* magazine . . . our Guru Maharaja would be very glad and say, “Oh, you are so nice!” . . . Distribution of literature is our real preaching. Now if you cannot handle the matter nicely, that is your fault. But the success of your preaching will be substantiated by how many books are sold. Anything you want to sell, you have to canvass it a little, so that he gives you some money for the service of Krsna. That is his good luck, when he gets the chance to read some transcendental knowledge. But if you only irritate him, and he goes away, that is your less intelligence.

“The fact is that we have to adopt the same tactics as ordinary salesmen, but the difference is we do it for the satisfaction of Krsna, and they do it for sense gratification.’ (Letter, September 30, 1972)

“When I think of Srila Prabhupada's directions for book distribution, I see him as a general on the battlefield. Prabhupada sometimes described the temples as forts, the devotees as soldiers, and the books as bombs to pour down ‘like anything’ upon the populations in illusion. These ‘bombs’ would not kill, however, but bring transcendental enlightenment and peace. Prabhupada’s advice to his disciples for meeting obstacles in preaching were not classroom theories but urgent messages to the front line.

“*Vaisnavera kriya mudra vijneha na bujhaya*: One can never understand the mind of the *acarya*. We should not try to judge the liberated *acarya* according to ethics and morality. He is ethical and truthful, and it is only our misunderstanding if we don’t appreciate what he is doing according to time, place and persons.”

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From ***Breaking the Silence***

pp.12-13

“Of course, there's also a danger in trying too hard to integrate past and present. *Maya* has her ways of attracting the conditioned souls, and we shouldn’t be titillated by what we were. I just read an essay that was published in 1924 in *The Harmonist* and was later reprinted in *Back to Godhead*. It starts off saying that of the two ways to preach, positive and negative, the negative is more influential. The article gives the example that Rama’s glories were increased more by Ravana than by Hanuman, and Krsna’s more glorified by Sisupala and Jarasandha than by the Yadavas. Although the

article doesn't elaborate on this point, I understood that; because Krsna has to demonstrate His supremacy over demons, He is therefore fully glorified even more than when His faithful devotees praise Him. Interesting concept.

“Similarly, if I talk about something inauspicious of which I have nevertheless become free due to the power of Prabhupada's mercy, then full credit goes to Prabhupada. We can look at it in that way. We don't think about Hiranyakasipu's atrocities and fall into *maya*; we naturally take shelter of Lord Nrsimhadeva. When we read of Ravana capturing Sita, we don't become lusty to ourselves enjoy Rama's wife, but we meditate on Rama. Everything we are and everything we have is meant to inspire us further in our willingness and desire to glorify God. And that means everything.”

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

pp. 10-11

“He is unlimited, but He is perceived in the repentant heart. . . . I am separated from the Supreme Lord because of my being in this material body . . . although I am essentially spiritual. . . . My dear Lord, by Your causeless mercy I am awakened to consciousness, although I am only ten months old. . . . there is no way to express my gratitude but to pray with folded hands. . . . Therefore, without being agitated anymore, I shall deliver myself from the darkness of nescience with the help of my friend, clear consciousness. Simply by keeping the lotus feet of Lord Visnu in my

mind, I shall be saved from entering the womb of many mothers for repeated birth and death.’ (*Bhag.* 3.31.13-14, 18, 21)

“The unborn child sees the Lord in his heart and promises to always remember Him. He suffers terribly and doesn’t want to experience another birth. But as soon as he is born, he is in the hands of people who know neither his physical nor his spiritual needs.

“Bhaktivinoda Thakura describes an entire life in the first song, stanzas 4-7:

“As a fondled son in the laps of my relatives, I passed my time smiling and laughing. My parents’ affection helped me to forget the pangs of birth, and I thought the world was very nice.

“Day by day I grew and soon began playing with other boys. Shortly my power of understanding emerged. I read and studied my lessons incessantly.

“Traveling from place to place, proud of my education, I grew wealthy and maintained my family with undivided attention. O Lord Hari, I forgot You!

“Now in old age, Bhaktivinoda is sad. He weeps. I failed to worship You, O Lord, and instead, passed my life in vain. What will be my fate now?’

“Under the spell of *maya*, most people don’t think of these activities as a waste of time but as the goal of life. Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s life appears successful—he has affectionate parents, a nice world view, a taste for his studies and the competitive edge,

wealth, the ability to travel, devotion to his family. ‘Why is he complaining?’ the materialist wants to know.

“O Lord Hari, I forgot You!”

“He is speaking through the eyes of scripture. A human life is wasted without God consciousness. It becomes no better than the life of an animal (*srama eva hi kevalam*). Even a half-intelligent person can taste the bitterness of his or her own experiences. And when old age approaches, what is left? ‘What will be my fate now?’

“If, therefore, the living entity again associates with the path of unrighteousness, influenced by sensually minded people engaged in the pursuit of sexual enjoyment and the gratification of the palate, he again goes to hell as before.’ (*Bhag. 3.31.32*)”

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From ***My Dear Lord Krsna: A Book of Prayers***

pp. 127-28

“1.

“. . . My realized knowledge of God,
what he’s permitted me to say,
doesn’t go very deep
or clear, but I possess
a simple faith in
Gurudeva and that goes
to my core.

“2.

“Krsna’s pastimes are not mythological stories but actual adventures He performs in Goloka and in Gokula when He comes here. He acts as a little child but shows His mother all the universe is in His opened mouth.

“As an infant, He sucks out the poison and life-air of a gigantic witch, Putana, and His kinsman can’t even believe it was done by their child. They take it otherwise. But sometimes His feats are so obviously, perceivably miraculous that they can’t brush it off as the work of Visnu or the fact that Krsna was saved by His own piety.

“This happened when He lifted

the Govardhana mountain on His left
pinkie when He was only seven
years old. For seven days He
sheltered all the residents of
Vraja, and they were forced
to inquire from Krsna's
father, Nanda, 'What is
the nature of your child? Sometimes
He appears to be a baby in need of
cuddling and instruction but
then we see Him lift a mountain!
Just who is He?'

"Nanda told them what
the astrologer Garga had
predicted at His name-giving
ceremony, that "This child
will be as good as Narayana.'
And so they accepted it
although they mainly reverted
to treating him as their
beloved son or friend or
lover because that was more
believable and relishable
to them.

“I accept Krsna in both ways,
 as almighty and as an
 adolescent, an enchanting
 youth. I pray for
 nonsectarian, deep
 faith. I pray to say His
 names earnestly and
 return to Him to take me
 at my death. Please
 Lord let me be a staunch
 believer in You
 and Radha and a whole
 spiritual realm and give me
 the inspiration to
 join You there.”

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From ***Meditations and Poems***

pp.49-50

“What Does it Cost?”

“You just write don’t worry
 bout nuthin’ whatever you have to say.
 Then he said I want to be a devotee.

“But what does it cost?”

“It costs your whole life.

But how is that to be measured out?

It depends on the case.

Will there be unbearable pain? I heard (in Bali Maharaja) that the Lord will give strength to pass a test.

“Are there sweet moments?”

Of course.

Does it get boring? I know the answer.

I’ll sign my name as when I joined the Navy, but I don’t really know what I’m into.

Please make it possible. Give me enough light to see at least a foot ahead. Or, if I must be thrown into darkness . . . let me remember and have some friends.

“We can’t promise you your way. Just chant Hare Krsna and remember Lord Caitanya and be absorbed in preaching and then whatever happens

you'll get through in the right
consciousness.

Easier said than done. You quote
the perfect scripture, and I've seen it in you,
but how do I?"

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

p. 122

“By spending time chanting *japa*, we may become enthusiastic about chanting and want to tell people about the glories of the holy name. Again, we have to be cautious. Everyone in the world should be given the Hare Krsna mantra, but we should be careful about revealing the intimate glories of the holy name. ‘Intimate’ may mean telling others that ‘Hare Krsna’ actually refers to Radha and Krsna and how They attract each other and enjoy loving pastimes. This area of Krsna consciousness should only gradually be disclosed to others as they become qualified by faith.

“It is good to be willing to take a risk for Krsna, but we have to calculate it carefully. We have to weigh the risks in preaching against our own level of advancement. The more serious we become about succeeding in our chanting, the more careful we will be to consider what is favorable or detrimental. Although we put time into our chanting, we will not want to defeat our progress by committing offenses like preaching the intimate glories of the Lord to the faithless.

“In discussing this offense, Bhaktivinoda Thakura expresses the importance of *sraddha*. People who have *sraddha* should be given the holy name. What about my own *sraddha*? If faith is such an important ingredient, then it is also an offense not to

possess faith. Faithless persons are excluded from the mercy of the holy name. This point is covered even more in the tenth offense, which specifically states, ‘Not to have complete faith in the chanting of Hare Krsna’ is an offense.”

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From ***Japa Walks, Japa Talks***

pp. 67-68

“We can follow Ajamila to the extent of chanting helplessly. One of the symptoms of surrender is to consider oneself very fallen and in need of Krsna’s help. You must call out like that—‘Hare Krsna!’ Lord Caitanya was so kindly aware of the position of the struggling devotee trying to come to the platform of pure devotion. He compassionately revealed this in His own prayer, ‘O my Lord, You have so kindly appeared in Your holy name, and in these names You have invested all Your energies, but yet I am so unfortunate that I have no taste for chanting this Hare Krsna.’ Narottama dasa Thakura also expressed this lamentation of the devotee who wants to engage in Krsna consciousness but who cannot taste the nectar of devotional service due to his material attachments. Narottama says, ‘What good is my life? I know with my mind and intellect and even within my heart that this chanting is everything, but I don’t like to chant. I don’t like to associate with the devotees, and I don’t like to take part in this *sankirtana* movement. I must be cursed. What is the sense of being alive?’ He does not want material life, but he cannot taste the holy name. This is not our permanent despair, but it produces that helpless condition. We don’t chant for any material or even spiritual benefit in terms of liberation, but we know that this chanting is everything—except we just can’t taste it. By surrendering in this way to the holy name—that is helplessness.”

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From *Journal and Poems, Volume 2 (July-December 1985)*

pp.83-84

“I am learning many valuable, detailed natural practices from him. At the same time it is painful sometimes to hear him quote Mayavadi gurus. My policy is to overlook his non-Vaisnava utterings and to extract the gold, as advised by Canakya Pandita. Even when he quotes a Mayavadi, it is often some general statement of theirs about controlling the tongue for health. But sometimes the poison impersonalism comes forth, and it is painful.

“There are many warnings by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His followers that hearing from the Mayavadis (and even hearing their names) disturbs the mind. We hope that by associating with devotees and hearing the holy name, Dr. Sharma may himself become a devotee, and this is gradually happening. It is also difficult for me to explain to him and difficult for him to understand why it is better that he not mention the names of Mayavadis in my presence. In honesty I should explain this to him; it is preaching. As a doctor he can appreciate that it has no therapeutic effect but rather troubles me and even causes me to lose sleep, as I react to his uttering the name or the offensive statements of a Mayavadi. Like many Indians, Dr. Sharma cannot understand why we object, and he sees it as sectarian. It will take a long time for him to understand the basis of the Vaisnava’s purity and the actual supreme position of Krsna. He is in the typical position: he thinks he already accepts Krsna as Supreme. It is also my duty to inform him of these things. Just as he is helping me to be free of material infection and wrong ways, I must from time to time inform him of his actual position.

“ . . . Corn harvesting has begun. Just as we went to see it, devotees were also herding cows from one pasture to another. Dogs running and barking, a man speeding

in a car to head off the cows, men on foot running full speed after the cows—and in the cornfield, Paramahansa driving the big tractor, pulling the noisy corn-cutter, which smashes the whole stalk and cob into a mushy substance, and across the road Bhakta Ray working another loud machine which shoots the corn stuff up a sixty-foot tube to the top of the silo, winter feed for Krsna's cows. Everyone keeps working until it gets too dark to see.

“Bhubhrt dasa sits outside the *brahmacari* farmhouse chanting his last beads of the night.”

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Writing Sessions

From *Dublin Pieces* (June 1996)

“#5

“Ironically Ramanuja said his apartment was in a quiet neighborhood in Dublin, but his upstairs neighbor plays loud music and TV and walks around, and thus we are completely disturbed by that sound. It’s 12:45 A.M. and a foolish TV comedy is playing loudly. How long will he go? I’d like to be able to switch off my attention from him and his Irish TV jokes, canned laughter and live, mirthless laughter. Great austerity to live in the city, for this and other reasons. One joins in on it, making his own noise, fights back or suffers. We each suffer and struggle in many ways.

“We are going to walk to the preaching center this morning for Prabhupada *puja*. I don’t think our ‘noises’ there disturb anyone because all the neighbors are commercial businesses and not there so early.

“I’m prepared to speak on *Bhagavad-gita* 10.8, Lord Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I pray to Him here, and to my spiritual master.

“Krsna, Krsna, Krsna. In any prison or disturbing condition, let me think of You. At least utter Your names in the Hare Krsna *mantra*. Chant because our spiritual master told us to do so. I am not ideal enough to be a spiritual master to others, but I try. Some may accept me that way, out of their submissiveness. I owe it to them to at least act in the ‘role’ I mean deeply. A Vaishnava-ISKCON *sannyasi*.

“Trying here to get beyond the self-centered journal. But one has to cope and turns to journaling. When I write what matters to me, I at least get beyond paying attention to the TV comedy upstairs. What matters objectively? Give people Krsna consciousness. If we can serve Him, avoid illicit sex, etc. In town there are advertisements for a movie, *Personal and Up Close* – man and woman romance. I see it every day. I don’t have to mention similar things. I keep it out of my writing but it runs in my blood.

“Hare Krsna comes straight from Krsnaloka. It’s almost impossible, it seems to convince many people to seriously take up Krsna consciousness. But after spending gallons of blood, you do get a man and his wife like the Dubliners in whose flat we are staying. A few souls join and that’s worth it, plus the knowledge that you are pleasing Krsna and saving yourself and that even a little exposure to Krsna consciousness is very good for everyone. Bg. 10.8 purport is filled with Vedic references asserting that Narayana is the Supreme Person and existed before anyone or anything. We sometimes make fun of theistic meditators who think and feel merely the existence and greatness of God (neutral *rasa*), whereas we actively serve Krsna and think of Him always in that way. But there is something to be said for the deep contemplation on God’s greatness and existence. (I wish I could do it now instead of ‘hearing’ this TV

upstairs.) We may also run around serving Krsna and yet not follow the injunctions.

Smartavyah satatam visnur: always remember Krishna and never forget Him.

Krsna consciousness allows us to be with Krsna by chanting and various services. And by preaching. If you do it right, you contemplate God's greatness and existence. We are not such mystics or meditators that we can sustain any other kind of being with Krsna – not in *Kali-yuga*. There is nothing less profound about the practices of *bhakti yoga* provided you do them earnestly.

“Chanting Hare Krsna is especially so.”

“(June 25, 1996, Dublin flat)”

“#6

“If you are not I-centered, then who shall it be? Krsna-centered would be fine. My (there you go again, to the center of your existence) head was fogged up when you finished the lecture. I discourse with Q's and A's on *aham sarvasya prabhavo*; material and spiritual worlds come from me. I brought up topics and did feel them to some extent. In the Q's and A's they picked up on what wasn't a major theme of the verse or my lecture. Are we broad-minded toward other religions, etc.? Walking back to this flat, Syama and Ramanuja continued talking of Krsna-related topics and things about Catholics. S. is often amused by what he says, by the Catholics' insistence that Jesus is the only way, and by his own lack of Krsna consciousness. He said in *Bhagavad-gita* 10.8, Lord Krsna describes those who accept Him as the origin of all, and ‘They worship Me with all their hearts.’ He said, ‘I must not be truly convinced that Krsna is the origin of all, or I would worship Him with all my heart.’ He said it in

such a lighthearted way. He's young – still in his twenties. Maybe he thinks that although he doesn't love of Krsna now, he'll get it eventually. But I don't have so much time and don't see it as something to joke about. That doesn't mean I'm 'serious' about loving Krsna or that Syama's youthful expression means he's not interested in love of God, but I'm dour, tired, also tired sometimes of just talking. I turn to writing, hoping I can go deeper, at least more intimate and relaxed with myself.

“Women in the streets. I talk light stuff with the two devotee men I walk with. What can you say more than that? Heavy philosophy or personal stuff is impossible while walking, because you have to pay attention at crossings so as not to be hit by a car or a truck. And then *karmis* are moving about you on the street. Still, Dublin doesn't seem dangerous or hostile to me. One feels at ease in a *dhoti*. Such light talk—he says the swan in the park terrorizes the ducks. I say, ‘Is that the concert hall?’ although there is a sign in front that says, ‘Concert Hall.’ I think of Srila Prabhupada walking through a city—he seemed to avoid them.

“The women in the streets in the summertime. You know what that means. *Aham sarvasya prabhavo*. As I lectured, devotees left the room and came back. It was distracting. I talked to keep their interest but it may have been sufficiently boring for them. Some of the lady disciples came down from N. Ireland, but none from Wicklow. Look now at Bg. 10.9 and read it with an outline first and then pencil marginalia.

“Oh, yes, I meant to say, and before I forget . . .

“M. proposes that I go to the bookstore by car tomorrow. That would be okay, I guess. What about the prospect of a *harinama* in the streets? I seem to lack the energy. Anyway, don't berate yourself. At least give those lectures. Krsna is calling attention to Himself. He points to Himself three times in *Bg. 10.8: aham, mattah, and bhajante*

mam. No doubt about it. He's the source of the material and spiritual worlds, and those who understand this worship Him with all their hearts. Abhay said reading *The Qualities of Sri Krsna* helped her appreciate Krsna's personal yet supreme quality. O Lord, let us get beyond myth, theory, 'Hindu God' and those diseases mentioned in Bg. 4.10: fear of being a person, material attachment and anger at theories. Let us get beyond a 'me-centered' universe where one's bodily pleasures and pains are the main thing. One says, 'I don't disagree that the person Krsna is God, but more important than thinking of Krsna is taking care of me-self. Oh, oh, oh.'

"Dublin pieces of the puzzle. What is *atma*? What is the Supreme? Sages agree it is He whom we must worship. Worship God because He's great, because you're meant for that.

"At 7 A.M., as we walked through the streets, a man washing a store window with a rubber squeegee said 'Good morning' to us. We mumble 'Good morning' back. That was a surprise. Did he take us as priests, monks, think we were okay? Good morning. A simple gesture. Ramji, Ramji.

"The van. The time has run out for this piece. I must start the worship of Srila Prabhupada. Hare Krsna. Choose the words as *Uttamasloka*, that will last and look good later and give you solace. 'I am the source of the material and spiritual worlds.'

"One store sells photocards of Ireland's writers. Clothing for women. Dummies in the window not expensive or artistic-looking. Dowdy. Sign crooked in the window: 'Open Sundays.' Bookstore. Olympics swim team. Going to work. Avoid looking at the women's shapes. Just keep on talking with devotees and hoping you get where you are going without too much stress, headache, guilt, fault-finding."

"(June 24, 1996, 10:00 A.M., back at the flat)"