

Free Write Journal #155

August 6, 2021

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Free Writes

Hospital Ordeal

It started the night before. I had chills which required three blankets, and I could not pass urine and was constipated. In the morning Baladeva phoned Ryan Marshall, our primary care provider, and told him I was not passing urine or stool and I was coughing, vomiting and becoming dehydrated. Ryan said I should immediately go to the emergency room of the hospital. Baladeva and Purusa (the prodigal son) took me to the hospital, and the waiting room was filled. We had to wait three hours while one patient was vomiting and moaning on one end of the room, and on the other end, a person was constantly coughing loudly. When the nurse finally called my name, I got personal attention. She took down my data and told me I would have to wait some more. I went back out to the waiting room, and after a while my name was called again and I was given a private room (the best room in the emergency area). The nurses arrived and set me up for examination. But I had to wait another hour until the doctor came and we could proceed with a catheter, blood tests and a CT scan. The nurse who inserted the catheter seemed inexperienced and drove it in until I felt a pain level of eight or nine. I cried out in pain, and she said, "I'm sorry." Much blood came out. I was hooked up to a bag which measured the amount of liquid coming out. Once she was done jamming it, the pain began to go down. At 7:00 P.M. the emergency crew at the hospital went home, and a new shift of doctors and nurses came to work. This caused more time disruption as I had to meet the

new nurses and doctor. The doctor delayed me another couple of hours before they took the CT scan. They diagnosed it that I had pneumonia, but not so bad that it was required that I stay overnight in the hospital. I could treat it at home with various medications and care.

They hooked the catheter onto a small leg-bag and strapped it around my leg. The bag had to be emptied every three hours, and someone had to be on hand to check it. This turned out to be arduous.

The next day was a recovery day at home with no big dramatic changes. I was uncomfortable with the catheter and the pressure wounds on my hip.

On Friday we got an early morning appointment with Dr. Subudhi, the urologist, who was to take out the catheter. Dr. Subudhi's nurse removed the catheter without any pain at all. This confirmed my opinion that the nurse who had put in the catheter had done so inexpertly, causing me so much pain. When Dr. Subudhi saw the compression wounds on my hip, he called for a doctor who specializes in wound care. The doctor was present, and he checked me over. He and Dr. Subudhi talked over what was the best thing to do. After hearing from us, they agreed with our experience that *all* tapes cause me irritation and aggravation to the wound area. So they consulted among themselves as to what would be the best method to treat the wound without involving tape. They had varying viewpoints, but later Dr. Maben, the hospital's specialist on wounds, phoned us at our home and gave us the name of a medicine that would best heal the wound.

Dictating the *Journal*

I am not pumping enough air to speak loudly. This impairs my Dictaphone work for the *Journal*. Prabhupada said for a person like me health is the highest priority. But I am ignoring that and making my usual schedule the top priority. I am denying my illness. Prabhupada didn't give up dictating his *Bhagavatam* until a few days before his departure—but he had six persons as assistants.

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What is my plan? Do I continue to attempt working under all circumstances, even when I can hardly speak and I have other health complications that require a number of assistants whom I don't have?

An alternative to attempting "business as usual" is to terminate my weekly *Journal*. I could do this temporarily until I get better. The work plan I am trying out now is to speak two incidents and then go to my published books from the past and give excerpts. This is the appreciated *Journal-as-it-is*, but is it practical to keep it up right now?

Spanish *SPL*

Yadunandana Swami wrote me about the reception of Sunday's Zoom presentation celebrating the Spanish BBT's near-completion of translating the *Prabhupada-lilamrta* into the Spanish language. (Three volumes will be ready for Srila Prabhupada's *Vyasa-puja*, and the final three volumes will be published for Gaura-purnima 2022.)

Here is what Maharaja wrote:

"Several hundreds of devotees have seen the presentation. I have been told that beside the one hundred or so who were connected by Zoom, there were seven connections in Facebook channels for different Spanish-speaking countries. Devotees were very inspired to hear your answers about the *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*. I think they will be inspired to read the complete version and to distribute it."

Milk Book

Dear readers of *Free Write Journal*,

Mukunda Maharaja has sent me (and others) a request for help in his preparing a book presenting evidence that cow's milk is beneficial for the human brain. Srila Prabhupada made many statements that cow's milk is beneficial for the human brain, and Mukunda Maharaja wants to present a book written by people who have medical credentials, preferably MDs in the U.S. or anywhere who are now practicing medicine with the necessary credentials. People with PhD degrees in diet and nutrition, and related disciplines could also be the authors. It would be in the realm of a physician paper. The writers would have to be initiated devotees or those seriously aspiring to be initiated, or anyone who has a serious understanding of the Krsna conscious philosophy. The book would have to address the concepts of lactose intolerance, raw vs. industrialized milk, etc. Mukunda Maharaja has asked me if I know any devotees or friends of ISKCON who have these kinds of credentials, and who are practicing medicine or working in diet and nutrition. He wants me to put these people in touch with Mukunda Maharaja, but he wants his email address kept strictly confidential. I request persons in the wide readership of *Free Write Journal* who qualify for this kind of service to write to me. I think it will be a wonderful contribution to Prabhupada's movement, to be able to present authorized information about the positive effects of drinking milk as beneficial for the human brain. If you are qualified for this, please write to me as soon as possible.

Yours in the service of Prabhupada,

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Sthita-dhiih Muni

I received a letter from Sthita-dhiih Muni, who reports that he's been working on a book project with a number of devotees; "This project is aimed toward upgrading internal *sanga* discourse pertaining to issues raised by the TOVP project." He has sent me a table of contents and said, "If anyone at the ashram is interested in the topic, I would be happy to send them a copy of the manuscript to elicit their valuable feedback." I'm asking him for a copy of the manuscript, although I'm "retarded" in scientific discussions.

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

pp. 28-29

“Schizophrenic, a toad
 became a prince. I mean Satsvarupa.
 I don't know how
 The Swami picked my name or
 who he really is and was,
 but I didn't make this up, although
 I was a mixed-up boy
 in black sweater and pants.
 I did get a name and 'Steve'
 became the young man who
 gave money out of his socks
 and typed for the Swami.

“You've given me enough to type all winter, Swamiji!”

“Enough,’ he replied, ‘to last you several lifetimes.’

“I remember thinking that I could always leave in a few months if I didn’t like the Swami, just as I could leave a temporary job for the Boy Scouts or the Navy or even home.

“I mean I could leave
any scene I didn’t like—
I learned that from Beat life
and marijuana smoking.
‘I don’t need you, man!’”

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pp.32-33

“O learned and thoughtful men,
please let me read and
be one preacher among you.
Let me serve those whom You have sent
to the world.

“Why do I want to dance and sing?
It’s in me, it’s
a way to spontaneously exult, and
I hope the *siddhanta*
appears in a suitable way.
(I was going to say, suitable for my ragtime notes,
but that’s old jazz, although still
in the dictionary).”

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pp.36-37

“When the meeting began, the chairman read the agenda, which included planning an anti-Vietnam march in Washington, D.C. Then he said, ‘Before we start, we have some minor business to get through first. This man has come to tell us about a Swami.’

“I sat up and spoke to the dozen or so lounging students. ‘I am a follower of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. He is coming to Boston this May, and since he is a significant spiritual leader, I thought it would be beneficial for the students in Boston University to get a chance to hear him speak.’

“I then read the verse and purport to *Bhagavad-gita* 5.29, which Prabhupada refers to as the ‘peace formula.’

“I knew this Christian group was oriented towards activism. Therefore I emphasized that Prabhupada’s mission was also active, and that Prabhupada wanted to overcome evil in the world. This purport also delivers the ultimate activism: chanting Hare Krsna is the means by which a living entity can wake up from false identification with matter.

“I don’t know how seriously the students took my presentation. After they agreed to sponsor Prabhupada and I was out in the coat room preparing to leave, I heard a burst of laughter coming from the room. Prabhupada did speak there, however, and delivered his message of peace and goodwill.”

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From ***Prabhupada Appreciation***

pp. 46-47

“There are two extremes of *wrong* response to controversial items. One is ‘waffling.’ Waffling means to waiver or vacillate on an important issue, to make excuses for a stance or apologize for it, indicating that it is a mistaken statement. Waffling is faithlessness and comes from a lack of conviction.

“For example, if we are challenged about men going to the moon, and rather than represent Prabhupada’s direct statements that man did not go to the moon we choose to repeat *only* his statement that *maybe* men went, but in any event it was useless, that is waffling. Once a devotee waffled about the statement that the moon is farther away than the sun by saying that Prabhupads meant it only jokingly. This is acting independently of Srila Prabhupada and misrepresenting his teachings.

“The second wrong response is to make a faithful but fanatical presentation. Such a presentation is superficial and does not do justice to Prabhupada’s teachings. According to an Indian proverb, it is better to have a gentleman and scholar as your enemy than a fool for a friend. People who bait controversy are trying to imitate Srila Prabhupada. But Prabhupada said, ‘So far the Krsna consciousness movement is concerned, it has nothing to do with the moon journey.’ In other words, it is not one of our goals to create controversy.

“To illustrate this point, Prabhupada once told a pertinent story. There was a famous veterinarian who traveled with his apprentice. On the apprentice’s first day of training, the veterinarian treated a horse that had a huge lump in his throat. The veterinarian took out a hammer and struck the animal in the throat; the lump immediately went down and the horse was saved.

“The foolish apprentice thought to himself, ‘There is nothing to this veterinarian job. Anyone can do it.’ He then left the company of the experienced doctor and set up his own practice. Word soon traveled of the havoc he was creating as he killed all the animals that he attempted to treat. When the experienced veterinarian finally caught up with him, he exclaimed, ‘What are you doing? You are killing all the animals!’ The apprentice said, ‘I saw you use a hammer on the throat of a horse, and so I am simply applying your technique.’ The older doctor replied, ‘You fool, that was for a particular circumstance. That horse had a watermelon stuck in his throat, and so I used the hammer to break the watermelon. That was not the general treatment!’”

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pp.86-88

“Receiving a letter from Prabhupada was the happiest of occasions, and it is something that is no longer available to the devotees. His letters had a special life for the time they were written. If Prabhupada gave an order, we had to carry it out immediately. If he gave encouragement, the devotees rallied around him. If he gave a reprimand, we felt determined to improve. But receiving a letter always created a special emphasis in an individual devotee’s relationship with Prabhupada.

“Sometimes we read the letters and see an instruction which doesn’t seem to fit the current ISKCON scene. Is the instruction obsolete? Maybe. The letters have to be seen according to time and circumstance, and their essence has to be applied to our present situation. This is again why letters cannot be used to justify our own situations as evidence—they were written under too specific a circumstance to allow for that. In his letters, Prabhupada was trying to teach his disciples how to apply Krsna consciousness in different situations and to different mentalities. They are reflections of his thinking and have a certain flexibility that his purports do not. The constants are

always there and never become outdated—chant sixteen rounds, follow the four rules, serve Krsna with full devotion, etc.—but to say that we have to be bound by specific instructions in the letters may be a little sentimental on our part. If we are sensitive to the context, we will understand the essence, Prabhupada’s mood, and we will apply that mood to our own case.

“Similarly, devotees should not use the letters to debate their points. If a devotee reads us a letter to show that something we are committed to is not pleasing to Prabhupada, we have to again look at the context. Prabhupada may have discouraged our particular service for one devotee, while elsewhere he may have encouraged someone to take it up. Although a particular letter may be entered as evidence, the final test is whether that particular instruction can stand up against the *sastra*. Prabhupada’s books are the ultimate representation of his preaching.”

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From ***Prabhupada Nectar***

pp. 267-68

“SRILA PRABHUPADA SAID”

“On Restaurants (continued)

“Foods cooked in ghee, foods cooked in water, all the standard varieties will be there. Foods cooked in ghee are especially wonderful and healthful. People should come and be relaxed, eat, and talk relaxed. See how nice Krsna consciousness is. There will be a small book and record store in the restaurant.

“Devotees will do all the work in the restaurant. We can even import an expert Indian cook if necessary. At the end of the day everything must

be thoroughly washed down, and no leftovers. No *prasadam* will be given away free. At a certain hour, at the end of the day, the leftovers can be sold half price or some even given away. But the venture has to be an economically profitable business.

“Start out the business small and train up men on one restaurant. Then you can expand gradually. You can give them nice drinks. *Masala* milk, made with small quantities of ginger, saffron, pepper, and cinnamon can be served hot, and cold juices. No tea is served. Yogurt can be made from hot milk and, when drunk as whey, it is very good for digestion.

“It is very good idea for people to come to our vegetarian restaurant and take so many nice things, especially the *panir*, fried cheese, and *sandesa*, *kacauri*, *rasagulla*, *samosa*, and in this way forget their meat-eating. If you make a soup like fried *panir* with asafetida and ginger, this will replace lobster soup nonsense. Of course, we are not interested in giving them vegetarian food; we are wanting to give them *prasadam*. Then gradually they will become devotees.’

—Letter of November 9, 1975

“‘I want that all householders be engaged in managing these restaurants.’

—Letter of July 20, 1975

“‘Regarding the restaurant, you should not name it as you have suggested but ‘Hare Krsna Restaurant.’ That should be the name. In each restaurant there should be the picture of Lord Caitanya, and the food

should be offered and distributed to the respected customers. There should also be a tape recorder playing the *sankirtana* in mild voice.’

—Letter of August 16, 1974”

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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***

pp.223-24

“HIS REQUEST FOR A BIOGRAPHY”

“Prabhupada said,
if they write my biography,
have them say
I am like one
who transplanted a *tulasi* plant
from one continent to the other.
It is not easy.
It has to be done
with care and devotion
or else it will die
as you attempt to plant it
in the new land.
To the harsh West-lands of the *mlecchas*,
he carried the *tulasi*

of Lord Caitanya’s teachings
 and placed it in the earth
 in such an expert way
 that it has sprouted
 into hundreds of Krsna conscious centers.

“Conclusion

“To turn a sinful person
 to a life of pure devotion
 is the work of a highly empowered soul.
 The thoughtful scholars of *Bhagavad-gita*
 (like Thoreau and Emerson)
 had never turned to *bhakti*
 nor could they convey it to others.
 The Indian swamis who journeyed West
 (like Vivekananda) regarded the *Gita*
 as a vague treatise on many paths.
 How could they lead others
 to the highest path—devotion to Krsna?
 Srila Prabhupada was the first,
 and he was the greatest.”

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From ***Passing Places, Eternal Truths: Travel Writings 1988-1996***

pp.246-47

“October 1, 1996

1:06 A.M.

“I didn’t get up at midnight. Felt too cold and my mind said I needed my rest because I had to give class again this morning. Life will be different now than when I was staying on my own at Geaglum. In my mind, I saw the faces of disciples I met last night and whom I will meet again this morning, and I felt the pull between wanting to be alone and wanting to serve them. The words I spoke last night bond us together: I am obligated to help my disciples free themselves from the cycle of birth and death. We are all obligated to perfect our lives in order to go back to Godhead. Obligated.

“We can’t escape the grip of time. Don’t live like Dhrtarastra. He sacrificed his dignity just to get scraps of food and a residence. Better to die serving Krsna fully. Death is inevitable anyway, so why risk our spiritual lives? If anything should be risked, risk matter and stay secure in spiritual life. When we travel in the van, we risk theft and untimely death. But death is inevitable. It’s not that by staying home we won’t die. Prabhupada said he wanted to die on the battlefield. He left home at seventy and took all kinds of risks. When he was eighty-two, he said, ‘Bury me on the roof of the Manhattan temple.’ Krsna arranged that he leave from Vrndavana. ‘These days are my last days,’ he said to me and a few others one morning.

“This is the game. I get up a little later than usual because I don’t want to risk a headache too early in the day. Got to give the *Bhagavatam* class. Last night when I looked at today’s *Bhagavatam* verse, I felt happy and privileged to be able to speak on it. It’s a substantial section of the *Bhagavatam*, Vidura’s cutting words to Dhrtarastra in his shameless old age. ‘Get out at once! Your teeth are loose, your liver doesn’t work properly, your body is filled with mucus. These are signs of the end. Get out and make a last-minute attempt to save your soul.’”

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From ***Breaking the Silence: Writing Sessions at Castlegregory, Ireland***

pp.138-39

“I have Merton’s *Desert Wisdom* here and thought it might help my determination for the retreat. The desert monks did not abandon their prayer cells; they met all the mind’s and imagination’s demons and called out to God to save them. But Merton (though I like his personal voice) emphasizes nothingness. You get the impression he really thinks God is Void. How can I be inspired by that desert of hopeless surrender? We can gain something there—the hope against hope, the courage of renunciation and constant prayer (my *japa* seems like that sometimes—hanging in there with no taste, but an undying determination which itself is a sign of God’s mercy).

“But in the limited time at my disposal, I hanker for more direct *rasa*. Better go to Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. The Gosvamis are not only better teachers, but they are my gurus. That’s not true of Merton or the desert monks. Raghunatha and Rupa and Sanatana and Jiva, and Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura and Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Narottama and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Srila Prabhupada—are all residents of eternal Vrndavana.”

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From ***The Wild Garden: Collected Writings 1990-1993***

pp.16-17

“Vrndavana

“I discussed attraction to Krsna’s Vrndavana pastimes with my Godbrother inside Srila Prabhupada’s kitchen at Radha-Damodara temple. Prabhupada, like Lord Krsna,

is *sarva-jna*, all-knowing, and he guides us now, even after his disappearance. We were bereft of spiritual life before Prabhupada came to the West. Krsna knew this and sent us Srila Prabhupada. Now Prabhupada continues to know our needs. He will instruct us what to do further. Let us pray to him and consult his books. What next, Srila Prabhupada? I just heard you speaking the *Krsna* book on the section where Vasudeva preached to Kamsa, He said just as one walks on the street by putting one foot down securely and following it with the next, so we move securely from one life to the next as ordained by Providence. And just as the caterpillar moves from the stem to the leaf, we will know our sure passage—from this life to the next, from *vaidhi-bhakti* to spontaneous love. We want to know what we should do, what is the required work.

“I am also consulting our friend, the Supersoul. Please tell me what to do, inner guide and guru. What is best for a particular follower of Srila Prabhupada? The seas are not always clearly charted for each individual. Even though the seas have been traversed thousands of times, every voyage is unique.

“Emerging from the Radha-Damodara temple, I looked for my Birki shoes. Suddenly, one shoe came flying through the air and landed nearby. A cleaning lady with an unfocused eye who was gathering sticks into bundles had thrown my shoe. But where was the other? We can assume the monkeys stole it. A temple authority came along and calmly suggested I try coming back in a day or two to see if it turns up. Okay.

“Out onto the street, our rickshaw driver is sound asleep, his body curled in an awkward position on the rickshaw seat. Madhu and I don’t have to talk about our visit to Prabhupada’s rooms. Better we chant our *japa*. We silently observe the fantastic panorama of human and divine consciousness all the way from the bazaars to Ramanreti and our ISKCON temple. There is that graffiti again that spells ‘Radha.’ Krsna is in every temple. ‘Jaya Radhe. Hare Krsna. Haribol.’

“Back at the guesthouse I opened *Caitanya-caritamṛta* at random and found this verse:

“All the inhabitants of Vrndavana are Vaisnavas. . . . Even though some of them do not strictly follow the rules and regulations of devotional service, on the whole they are devotees of Kṛṣṇa and chant His name directly or indirectly. Purposely or without purpose, even when they pass on the street they are fortunate enough to exchange greetings by saying the name of Rādhā or Kṛṣṇa. Thus directly or indirectly they are auspicious.’ (*Cc. Ādi*, 5.232, purport)”

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From ***My Relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa***

pp.95-96

“Sunrise in harbor. Stiff roots from sea like artist's artifacts. Beach strewn with pebbles. Buttercups on this promontory rock. This day belongs to Kṛṣṇa. I have nothing to sacrifice or renounce because everything already belongs to Him.

“I don't see Him—I'm blind and lack devotion, although He is everywhere. I want to see Him, but it also seems that I want to keep myself in the center. I don't want to fall in love.

“It's sad, and I don't completely believe I'm like that. Everyone wants Kṛṣṇa's love.

“I want Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Maybe I don't believe it could happen to me. But if I became Kṛṣṇa conscious, it would be wonderful. I like my life now, but it could be increased thousands of times in happiness. Then I could convey the happiness of Kṛṣṇa to others. Anyway, I don't want to remain mediocre. At least I want to allow the possibility to happen—that I can fall in love completely with Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“I will try. I won't shut up my heart like an oyster. I want Krsna's love. I want to convey it to others. As a writer, I want to give up my little life and tell of the greatest one. Instead of writing from the viewpoint of a bumbling, so-called *sadhaka*, I would like to write as the one whose thoughts and dreams are filled with Krsna's attractive and inconceivable qualities, name, and form. How to get there from here?

“Reading books, practicing *sadhana*, adding prayer to my thoughts . . .

“One thing I can say even now, Krsna is always present everywhere. We just have to find Him out. Srila Prabhupada says a geologist can find gold. We can find Krsna.”

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From ***Japa Transformations***

pp.80-81

“Chanting *japa* is an all-around practice. It requires mental and physical alertness. It requires going into the heart and calling to Krsna and Radha. When these things are missing, it becomes anemic. But you always take assurance that the names are potent and that any chanting is beneficial. Take refuge in the fact that you chant your quota, and you chant on time.

“Krsna is kind and lenient, and He puts all His potencies in the holy name. ‘But I am so unfortunate that I do not have a taste for the chanting because I commit offenses.’ Lord Caitanya's lament resonates with us if we do not have a good day. He was so kind to put those lines in the *Siksastakam* and show His compassion and understanding of us chanters. He calls out to be just accepted as an atom of dust at the lotus feet of Krsna. In the *Siksastakam*, He goes on to higher states of chanting, feeling the world all void in the absence of Krsna. These are the sentiments of Radharani. They should enter the mind of the devotee who is properly chanting. The chanting is the

yugala mantra, a chant composed of the feelings of Radha and Krsna. In successful chanting, one enters that mood. Staying only with the outer syllables of the chanting is going through the motions: ‘When, O when will that day be mine? When my offenses ceasing, taste for the name increasing, when will that day be mine?’ Bhaktivinoda Thakura takes the position of a struggling chanter and encourages us who are actually in that position. We aspire to improve and to chant with taste and without offenselessly. One day we will do it by endeavor and the mercy of the *acaryas*.”

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pp. 236-37

“It’s not just a dream, it’s reality to be here writing. It is spiritual reality to see Prabhupada’s picture on the desk. I’m still tied to this world via my body and my identification with its dreams. When my chest feels cold and I can’t sleep, that becomes my reality. The *gopis* of Vrndavana forget everything except Krsna. They think of Him—His pastimes, form, name and qualities. They have no need for ‘soul searching’ or writing methods or performance of *bhakti yoga* as done by Srila Vyasadeva. The *gopis* were in *sahajya samadhi*, natural trance. If they spoke to someone, they were in Krsna conscious *samadhi*. Neither do they perform *sadhana*. They always think of Krsna and their desire for His happiness. They want to make Him happy. Remembering Krsna is their ‘meditation’ or *dhyana*.

“It’s not false to rise and want to write, but I must purify any impure motives. Remember the best pastimes of Krsna; service those *lilas* by faithfully hearing and chanting.

“In a sense, writing is a warmup to chanting. I beg that my mantra chanting may be filled with thoughts of Krsna in Vrndavana.”

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From ***Japa Reform Notebook***

pp.115-16

“Every morning I meet half an hour with the disciples, chant two rounds, and read a selection about chanting. This morning we read that chanting will be tested at the time of death.

“The tendency, as recorded here, is to think and work at chanting in terms of numbers, quota, speed per round, ability, and inability to keep the vow. But chanting the Lord’s names goes beyond that.

“The body is temporary. The soul is eternal, with qualities of bliss and knowledge. Now he has forgotten himself due to the body. The body is the total effect of karma and the modes of nature. We have to endure the body's changes and do our duty. Chant.”

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

pp. 62-63

“7:00 A.M.

“Chilly. My foot hurts, walking, limping, on the white stone paths between farmhouses. The narrow roads lead right up to people’s doors. I avoid approaching their houses by walking back and forth. A buzzing sound comes from a tall steel electrical tower. Dawn arrives and the sky lightens. I spoke what I could and have now gone back

inside. Not a single one of the past nineteen rounds has been attentive or prayerful. It is hard to say what your chanting actually is. But it is.”

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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.’

“10:30 A.M.

“Darkening sky, looks like rain. Reading between *japa* rounds, a few verses of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami’s ‘Appeals for Residence at Govardhana Hill.’ The thought crosses my mind that I wouldn’t want to live at Govardhana Hill nowadays. When I walked through its secluded parts, I noticed no *bhajana-kutirs* there and asked why.

I was told that it is dangerous because of *gundas*. But there are other places at Govardhana Hill where groups of *sadhus* live. Those places are safer.

“But the real point is that if I actually understood how Govardhana can grant me closeness to Radha-Krsna pastimes in its caves and lakes and under its trees. Its dust... Chant in Vrndavana, that is the point.

“Srila Prabhupada answered an American devotee who asked, ‘Is this Vrndavana the same as Goloka Vrndavana?’

“Yes,’ Prabhupada replied, ‘but your mind is in America.’

“It is helpful between rounds to hear the words of the *mahabhagavata*.

“O Govardhana, O King of mountains, O hill whose nectar name 'the best of Lord Hari's servants' flows from the moon of Sri Radha's mouth, O hill that the Vedas declare to be the *tilaka* marking of Vraja, please grant to me residence near you.’

“Although I am a cheater and a criminal, unlimitedly merciful Lord Sacinandana, who is very dear to You, has given me to You. O Govardhana, please do not consider whether I am acceptable or not, but simply grant me residence near You.’ (*Sri Stavavali*, Volume 1, *Sri Govardhana-vasa-prarthana-dasaka*,’ by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, verses 8-10).

“Push on, now that you have declared that it should be *rasika*. It's pitiful. Like a parrot I repeat the word ‘Radha,’ then ‘Krsna,’ then repeat the descriptions of Their pastimes. I have no realization.

“Stay honest, but don't give into that bludgeoning cynicism which assassinates. Fight off degradation.”

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Writing Sessions

From *Dublin Pieces (June 1996)*

“#7

“The corny, macho rock music was playing very loudly in the room above. I couldn't take my post-lunch rest. Aargh. So I went out to the van and rested there. This

world is a busy place. Then I studied the section in *Cc.* about watering the *bhakti-lata*. It's relevant to the discussion in tomorrow's lecture on *Bhagavad-gita* 10.9 [The preceding sentences of Piece #7 were typed. Then the machine conked out, so I will go back to handwriting.]

“Yeah, *bhakti-lata*. I hope devotees from Wicklow come tomorrow. I can usually count on Praghosa raising his hand with a problem. Life is problems. I handed over the defective typewriter to Madhu and asked him to change batteries and see what might be wrong. ‘Another problem,’ I said, aware he's already got a big list of problems in connection with the van. Then I recalled I wrote somewhere that devotional service means to handle problems in Krsna consciousness. Don't expect to come to the end of problems in this world with a big sigh, ‘Whew!’ You can take relaxation breaks in between problem solving for Krsna's cause.

“*Bhagavad-gita* 10.9's items for discussion are: (1) *mac-citta*, his thoughts dwell on Krsna, (2) *mad-gata-prana*, his life is dedicated to the service of Krsna, (3) *bodhayantah*, preaching, specifically among devotees and talking about Krsna. And all these activities bring him (4) *tusyanti ca ramanti ca*, satisfaction and bliss.

“Plenty to talk about. Ideal life of best devotee. Oh, but we are not that. Then let's improve. For example, the *bhakti-lata* is an inconceivable plant. Ours is growing. Fence it from offenses such as disobeying the order of the spiritual master regarding rules and regs. Also, pull up those weeds that grow along with the *bhakti-lata* which look similar to it. Then, even while we are in this world, our devotional plant can grow out of this world.

“Please have faith that this is happening. You'd like to draw from experience? Want to see on a screen, like on a computer, where your *bhakti-lata* plant is? Is it out beyond Mars? Not even above grimy NYC? In the *viraga*? But you are somehow in

touch with Krsnaloka. Give me faith that this happening. Give me a touch to *tusyanti* and *ramanti*. In the beginning you love the service and later you love Krsna. Do what guru says, that is how to please Krsna. I am banking on writing as pleasing to guru and capable of taking me beyond. Hare Krsna.

“Kid’s stuff. That’s who I am. Race to get something written and read before the day’s end. It’s bogus to stay alone, to chant for fame. *Ahimsa* means to do something to help *jivas* who are stuck in *maya*. Your writing may serve in that way. Poets and writers are followed. So why not devotee writing? Don’t claim you are a leader-artist, but tell them that even a milli-drop of *bhakti* (and even a little growth of the *bhakti-lata*) produces *tusyanti* and *ramanti*.

“Walk tomorrow at 7:00 A.M. (5:00 A.M. is even a better time for it) through the streets of the city—before its passion builds. The shops, cheaters and cheated. ‘Good morning.’ Leo Bloom. Patch over the eye. Joyce, *Dubliners*, Oscar Wilde. His drama is now showing in town, *A Woman of No Importance*. Let’s have devotee poems and even this.

“Could this guy please chant an ‘extra’ round and pray? I appreciated he decided not to read ‘Therese books,’ but does he have his Vaisnava version of the Little Way? If he won’t preach boldly, stopping passersby on Grafton Street, will he please pray for this movement and help those already inclined? Preach.

“Now, close it out and go to some poems. We is all proud of you. I won’t call you ‘twerp’ or ‘dork.’ If they offer you a 5:00 P.M. bread or cookie, I’ll say yes. But do realize you are way below. Say, ‘All I know is what the Swami teaches.’ It is good to be forced to study to prepare for a lecture. And good to go there, knowing you have you

some substantial points. It might be better to grope a bit and improvise. But you don't, you prepare. Okay. *Tusyanti, mac-citta, mad-gata-purana.*

“*Haribol.* Don't think of big leaders if it means your head spins with envy. Stay satisfied in your own world and pray there will be a tomorrow for your further progress. Service to Krishna is unending. You agree to this. Even if you have to die, and of course you are very imperfect, then pray (in your pain and distraction): ‘Please Lord, let me be with You and Your devotees in my next life.’ And Krsna will arrange. You are helpless. Pick up pieces in Dublin. Be calm and forbearing. Write and read. My dear Lord Krsna . . . You are the life and soul of the *vrajavasis*. Vaikuntha *bhaktas*. Others don't know You. Please give me strength for faith. Let my master keep me and engage me and may I do something in his cause to spread Krsna consciousness.

(June 25, 1996, Afternoon, Dublin flat)

“#8

“Soap to wash hands. Wrote a list of topics of disciples' meetings at Radhadesa. This Dublin stay is not my whole life. You can easily fall into an illusion like that and not look beyond the present week or half-week. It is also healthy to live in the present like this. *Que sera sera.* Live in today. All I know is that at 7:00 A.M. we will walk to the preaching center. They offered me a car ride, but I said no. Walk through those old streets, so famous by Joyce's and others' stories. Those old Catholic—and now liberal—cobble streets.

“Yes, yes, Nanette. Yes, Molly. Now it's a fact we are warming up to a topic that is Krsna conscious. Please hear from me. The disciple is receptive and hears from his guru better than he hears from others. What is special about the relationship? It can't

be forced. What do I know to say about it? But at least offer the possibilities. ‘Read my books.’ What if they do, but don’t find anything special? Then it’s not for them. But it is for some. Sign over the door (remember in the *Steppenwolf* dream?): ‘Not for everyone.’ Mozart was there. Some thought it was an LSD vision. Hare Krsna. Maybe just one book on the Little Way. Sri Krsna Caitanya.

“Oh, I shall go to Jagannatha Puri and write poems at *Siddha-bakula* and sketches in words. You may do it and share it with others. Edit all those words. Hare Krsna, and do you really want to do ‘mad’ collage works in Vrndavana? Yes, there is nothing to be afraid of. You may scribble there in privacy. Your emotions are sometimes not Krsna conscious. You already know that. Let it come out.

“The scribbled words of automatic writing come from deep within. You can’t write them fast enough. Don’t try to keep it all within Ballon’s bowler. Don’t be so keen to convey clearly to the reader, but strike at what’s hot.

“You are lonely, you are meant to be lonely.

“‘You are best so’ – WCW (William Carlos Williams) wrote, describing himself dancing naked in his house.

“Krsna, this is pitiful little, give us more. Lately I’ve enjoyed reading the private edition books of last year. Good! They are for me, as the first reader. But nothing should detain you in devotional service. New and fresh I want. Not walking-on-hands novelty, but you know. Alive while it lasts, and spreading good news to fellow quiet devotees. It’s not a hackneyed routine—especially prove this in the long run. Vijitatma proves one can distribute books for thirty years or more. I’ll prove whatever I can.

“This will be a testimony they can reveal later. Four days in the Dublin flat. M. gradually takes up more space in the other room. Ramanuja tolerates it. We are taking up his whole flat, and his wife moved into the temple. Last night I told him how I like

his spiritual master's spontaneous lectures. What to say and do? I don't like the noise from upstairs.

“Keep going. The truth is never . . . far away. Everything is a partial truth. I keep quiet and write, but soon I'll be whispering *maha-mantras*.

“One of these days he'll come into the room. It won't be like in Kafka's *Trial*, where at the end two men came for him and took him away to kill him, like the henchmen of death. Oh, yes, you'll have to die, but it should be like a cat carrying kittens. You have some vision, hope, prayer, simple conviction that Krsna is taking you as He promises in *Bhagavad-gita*. I live to convey hope to others, that one person met Swamiji (I'm not the only one, but me too) and stayed with him all these years. I'm jealous and envious. Love only me. Give me attention. Praise me. I don't have this relationship with a wife but want it with—everyone. Develop a relationship with readers who idolize you for being humble and honest. Or—work to avoid that, to destroy that from developing like a weed.

“Feet in shoes in hard heels
of the guys who live above.
I won't be stopped.
Put *japa*
tape on and earphones and keep
going. Krsna's mercy to make
you pay attention to *this*,
hari-nama instead of
that.

“Madhu clears his throat. I worry for our host. Each man for himself.

“Weeds – I was saying – I cut them down but offer you, dear friends, these writings.

“When you chant and your mind wanders, bring it back to hear. The *mantra* has thirty-two syllables. Its meaning is, ‘O Krsna, I depend on You alone. Please, in this one process reveal to me all I need. There is no one but You, *Nama Prabhu*.’ All convictions of Gaudiya *siddhanta*.

“A bus from Calcutta to Mayapur.

“A trip to the moon.

“Your own ear canal shut off from the outside world. Hurried record of a temporary state written down. Who knows? Maybe it will help. Help who?

“McDonalds has a small store on a Dublin street, not like the big arch buildings in the USA. When your mail arrives—that will be in Belgium. You will be free until then. You’ll travel and you’ll tell us everything, day by day in July, and it may be something like this:

Four days given to you in Dublin
with not much responsibility,
lightweight and glad for that.
To walk in the morning on the way
to give a *Bhagavad-gita* class is nice,
a brief, blessed spot of life,
‘I earned it,’ it’s given anyway, so
enjoy it *tusyanti ca ramanti ca*,
devotees aren’t uptight or angry
or controllers. They are satisfied
and happy.

“Now the noise increases upstairs but I have got my weapon, Hare Krsna, and can listen on tape. That guy may never go to sleep tonight. I’ll chant, chant, chant.”

“(June 26, 1996, Dublin flat, first session of the day)”