

## ***Free Write Journal #48***

### **Free Writes**

#### **Rainstorm**

The weather was warm and dry for our entire program at the meeting on July 6<sup>th</sup>. The devotees had just finished honoring Kṛṣṇa *prasadam* when a windstorm arrived, blowing the leaves on the trees. But the devotees managed to finish their *prasadam*. Then suddenly from the sky heavy rainfall came down. There was thunder and lightning. The wind knocked the paintings down, and they had to be gathered up and protected. The Deities on the altar were threatened with getting wet. But in emergency haste, the devotees picked up the Deities and brought Them to a dry center spot in the pavilion. Similarly, my new book, in cartons, was moved to a dry spot. The devotees always make a thorough cleanup after our meetings, but now they had to do it in an emergency manner, dragging in waste from outside the pavilion, bringing it inside and putting it in trash bins. Someone said that rain at the end of the *yajna* was auspicious—but it was dangerous and put everyone into a rushed, panicked, pace. The intense downfall of rain continued for some time. While some devotees said it was auspicious, others remarked that it was like the *samvartaka* clouds that come at the time of annihilation (*pralaya*).

Bala was on the microphone pleading with the devotees to stay and help clean up, while many devotees just wanted to dash for their cars and drive home. Toward the end, the electricity went out and Bala couldn't use the public address system, but by then they were almost finished with the cleanup. The majority of the crowd got into their cars, turned on their windshield wipers and headlights and cautiously drove off, some of them having to make a five-and-a-half-hour journey back to home. Most felt that the day was successful, and they enjoyed the programs. There was much dancing during the *kirtanas*, and Rev. John Endler gave a rousing speech encouraging devotees not to be intimidated by my poetry but see it as heart-to-heart Krsna conscious art. Jayadvaita Swami later wrote me that he liked my lecture on the *Krsna Book*. He said it reminded him of my early writings in *BTG*: "Just straightforward and transcendental. And the 'Waves at Jagannatha-puri' invoked the place." He also wrote, "I've begun reading *Poems*. Bravo for putting aside Coltrane for Krsna!"

**From the Index to *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta***

**Competition in Krsna Consciousness Explained by Srila  
Prabhupada**

pp. 297-298

“Some devotees became confused by their Godbrothers' and Godsisters' rousing calls for competition and rivalry. This seemed like the rivalry of the material world, which they had hoped to leave forever. Srila Prabhupada, however, explained the proper attitude of transcendental competition:

“Competition and profiteering spirit are always there in the living entity. It is not that they can be artificially removed in some matter. Factually we saw in Russia that by removing competition and profit calculation from society the people were not at all happy, and still these things are going on. So we shall not expect that we are any different. Only difference is, that our profit is for Krishna's pleasure, and our competition is how to please Krishna more than someone else. Even amongst the *Gopis* there is competition to please Krishna, and there is envy also. But this envy is not material, it is transcendental. They are thinking, ‘Oh, she has done something more wonderful than me, that is very nice, but now let me do something even more wonderful,’ like that. So I am pleased that you desire for competition with your Godbrothers to spread Krishna Consciousness Movement all over the world by printing our books.”

**Early Days in ISKCON as Recalled by Srila Prabhupada**

pp. 636-637

“At the mention of New York, he began to remember his first days there.

“I was like a street boy. I was going here and there, sightseeing. I was in New York City, but one morning I saw all the walls were white. “How have they become white? Who has whitewashed them?” I thought. I went downstairs, and there was so much snow. I went with an umbrella and purchased a pack of milk in the snow. At that time I was living in a dungeon. It was always dark. But I didn't care’ Whatever difficulty, I didn't care. I only wanted to preach. Sometimes people would touch me, like men on the Bowery, but no one was inimical. Everyone was friendly. Even the bums. When I went to enter my New York building, the bums would get up from where they were lying down and let me pass by. I couldn't understand the difference between friends and enemies.’

“Prabhupada said a friend of his had been shocked to hear that he was moving to the Bowery. ‘Oh, Swamiji,’ his friend had said, ‘you have gone to Bowery Street? It is a horrible place!’

“I passed through many dangers,’ continued Prabhupada, ‘yet I couldn't understand that, “Here is danger.” Everywhere I thought, “This is my home.”’

## **Prabhupada, activities of and health considerations**

p. 725-26

“Prabhupada was in good spirits, however, despite his age and lingering sickness. He appeared strong, and six months in India had tanned him a golden, healthy hue. He always sat straight and smiled often. He walked with a cane, yet upright, with a quick step, tiring his young disciples who attempted to keep up with him. He even mentioned that if his inability to sleep continued, he would have more time for writing his books.

“Gone was the mindlessness of his young followers who had thought previously that Swamiji, because he was a pure devotee, should be let to do any strenuous activities he liked, working all night or singing and playing the m adaiga for hours in the park. Now the devotees had become concerned and protective, trying always to arrange for his ease, suggesting when they thought something was too strenuous for him. Usually, however, Prabhupada would give the last word on what he would or would not do. When Yamuna and Janaki arrived from San Francisco, they decided that if Swamiji were to get well he would require a special diet. So they devised a regimen featuring small servings of boiled vegetables without salt, spices, or ghee. At first Prabhupada gently submitted to their requests. But on trying their meals, he commented, ‘These vegetables are nasty. They are not fit for eating.’ After three days, when Govinda dasi told him of some new reductions in his diet, he roared, ‘Tell the starvation committee to go to hell! You feed me.’”

## Letters from Srila Prabhupada

“Bombay

“9 January, 1973

“Dallas

“My dear Satsvarupa and Hridayananda,

“Please accept my blessings. Your letters dated December 25, 1972, are in hand and I am very much encouraged also to see the nice photos you have sent me. Especially I am glad to hear that Mohanananda has returned to Dallas School for taking charge of things there. Yes, he was the original pioneer member of Dallas Temple, so he has returned to develop now everything just to the perfect standard of completion. One thing is, I am requesting that one of my old friends here in Bombay, one Bengali man named Mr. D. C. Chakravorty, may send his three young children to our Gurukula, probably they will be coming there some time next spring. So you may prepare one letter of invitation to Mr. D. C. Chakravorty, c/o Mogul Line Ltd., 16 Bank Street, Fort, Bombay-1, India, wherein you shall certify that his children, namely Basanti Chakravorty, female 9 years old, Somendra Chakravorty, male, 6 years old, and Satindra Chakravorty, male, 6 years old, that these three

children have been admitted to our bona fide educational institution at Dallas, Texas, U.S.A., and that you have accepted them to study with you for a period of, let us say, one year's time, and that you understand that the tuition fees and other incidental expenses such as boarding and lodging, clothes, medical expenditures, and so forth, that these maintenance expenses will be borne by the International Society for Krsna Consciousness, and then you may give some credentials and financial statements about our Society. This letter will enable Mr. Chakravorty to get visas for the children, although it is understood between us that if there are any expenses, and we shall of course charge something, then he will pay us here in rupees and we shall bear the cost there in Dallas. There are very strict financial restrictions in India for money going outside the country. You may mention that it is understood by you that their round trip air tickets will be paid for in India by their parents, and that you are expecting them to arrive there sometime around the middle of April, like that. If you send the letter immediately to me here at my Bombay address, I shall hand it over to him and do the needful.

“I very much appreciated your publicity material for the *Bhagavata-dharma* program, now go on developing it more and more to perfection. I am very much satisfied by this activity, that is your real work for Krsna. In this way, try to recruit some of the intelligent class of student class to take up this Krsna Consciousness philosophy and study it carefully. Try to recruit some of such men to become our devotees. There is need for intelligent young men to

train them up as future leaders and preachers to go all over the world for spreading the message of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. If we simply go to the college on one night and leave immediately for another place, it will be difficult to make very much impression upon these students. I think it is better to stay at one place for some time, at least one week, or as long as the students are interested, and try to sell as many books as possible. After your lecture in the college you may request if there are any interested students, that they may make further programs for you in their homes, or in some club or hall, like that, so that you may remain some time longer and concentrate on recruiting two or three good men, whoever appears to be the most interested, and by your diligent preaching to them you may be able to persuade some of them to become our devotees. Of course we shall not expect them immediately to come into the temple, like that, but if at least the seed is planted and they begin chanting rounds and following the principles while continuing their studies at school, that is our great victory. And if they like, they may go and live in one of our centers, wherever they like, and learn further. But we shall not present Krsna Consciousness as anything dry or like set of rules and regulations only, no. Krsna Consciousness is the topmost philosophy also, the highest knowledge of educational experience, so try to impress this aspect of offering the perfect scientific understanding of everything as it is, not the temporary and unsatisfactory and incomplete understanding of things. Try to present everything very logically and always quoting our Sanskrit authorities in

connection with the main points, and that will impress them greatly. Yes, and if you also yourselves write something daily, that will sharpen your use of language and you will be able to make your points very clear. And if you dress neatly and conduct yourselves properly, that will help further.

“Upon the recommendation of Satsvarupa, I shall be glad to accept John Partlin as my duly initiated disciple, and his letter is enclosed herewith, along with his beads, duly chanted by me.

“Hoping this meets you both in the best of health,

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

**Comment:** It is interesting that Srila Prabhupada accepted three children in India to come to Dallas Gurukula for education. He wants us to send a letter of their acceptance and saying how we will pay their expenses in Dallas.

Prabhupada appreciates publicity material for the *Bhagavata-dharma* program. We had made a poster with drawings of Hridayananda and myself and the headline, “Two Goswamis in America: *Bhagavata-dharma* Discourses.” He says this is our real work for Krsna. Prabhupada makes the important point that lecturing at a college for one night and then going away is not the best policy. We should try to stay longer at one place and try to find interested students. After our lecture, we may

ask the students to make further programs for us in their homes or in some club or hall. We took up this instruction, and it was profitable. We made several devotees this way. Prabhupada had the right idea of how to preach effectively at the colleges in America. He tells us not to “present Krsna consciousness as something dry or like a set of rules and regulations only. Present KC as the highest knowledge of educational experience.”

I was glad to receive his instruction that we should write something daily and it would sharpen our use of the language. I was very much inclined to do that, and getting this instruction from him enthused me. He even advises us in details, to dress neatly and conduct ourselves properly.

\*

\*

\*

Melbourne

10 February 1973

“My Dear Satsvarupa,

“Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated January 22nd, and 23rd and have noted the contents carefully. I am very much encouraged that you are taking this program of preaching to the college students seriously and this is very important program. Regarding your various

questions. First let us understand that polygamy cannot be permitted in our Society. Legally it is impossible and neither are there many of our devotees who are prepared to assume the responsibility for many wives. Therefore as I have suggested previously as they do in Christian religion they have so many convents where the women stay, and they receive protection. The point is that the women must be protected, and it is the duties of the leaders of our society to see that this is carried out.

“Your program for those who are desiring to take *sannyasa* is approved by me and I request that you make something concrete and distribute it to all the other GBC members and amongst yourselves you may decide who will take *sannyasa*.

“Your question in regard to marriage, we must impress upon the parties involved that Krishna Conscious marriage is not some cheap thing that may be embraced whimsically and at any time thrown off. The boy and girl must be willing to accept each other for life and be prepared to get a job if need be and live in an outside apartment and raise children. These points should be emphasized.

“Regarding your preaching to individuals, you must use your discretion in this regard. But one thing. Those who come to learn must admit that they do not know who they are, or do they know who is God, and they must be prepared to take to this process. If I go to the physician and ask him will you please tell me all about medicine and I will write it down, is that possible? No.

You must take to the process. You must enter the medical school, take your internship and do so many things. Like this if you want spiritual knowledge you must take to the process and follow the principles. So therefore if you are spending so much time with individuals they must first admit that they do not know who they are and they do not know who is God. These two things are completely lacking in modern educational systems. And then after admitting these things they must be willing to take to the process. Then they can obtain spiritual knowledge.

“As far as staying in some boy’s apartment, this is permissible if everyone in the house agrees to follow the principles while you are there. That is, no smoking, no drinking, etc. You may also install a small altar there with a picture of Guru and Gauranga and the Spiritual Masters there and perform *mangala arati* every morning and hold classes etc. Under these circumstances you can live in others apartments. The point is we must not lower our position but we must educate others to come up to our standards. Regarding your writing, you must know that it is the duty of *sannyasa* to write always to save the cripple-minded man and woman. In fact *sannyasa* must do everything.

“I hope this meets you in good health.

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

**Comment:** Srila Prabhupada very much approves our program of preaching to college students, and he says it is a very important program. He gives advice about polygamy, about approval for devotees to take *sannyasa*, and advice about marriage. He writes that the boy and girl getting married must be willing to accept each other for life, and the man should be prepared to get an outside job if necessary, live in an apartment and raise children.

I told Prabhupada that I was spending time preaching to individuals. He replies that I must use my discretion. Those who I talk to must admit that they do not know who they are and that they do not know who God is. And they must be prepared to take to the process of *bhakti*. If I'm spending so much time with individuals they must first admit that they do not know who they are or who is God. After admitting these things, they must be willing to take to the process.

I asked him if it was permissible to stay in a college student's apartment. He says it was permissible provided everyone in the house agrees to follow the principles while I am there. I should also hold a regular morning program with an altar, spiritual pictures, performance of *mangala-arati* and holding classes. "We must not lower our position, but we must educate others to come up to our standard."

I asked Prabhupada about writing. Again he says that it is the duty of *sannyasa* to write always, "to save the cripple-minded man and woman."

\*

\*

\*

“Sydney

“15 February 1973

“Los Angeles

“My Dear Satsvarupa,

“Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated nil and I have noted the contents carefully. I am very pleased to hear of your determination in spreading this Krsna Consciousness philosophy on all these campuses. This is a very important program. Right from the beginning of my mission, I have always stressed and encouraged my disciples to work with the college students. You should not be discouraged if people are not coming to your meetings. We are trying to please Krsna. That is all. We simply must go on with our business, to the best of our ability. We must always sincerely try to do our best with great determination. This is the transcendental position. Success or failure, this is not our business. We leave that up to Krsna. My Guru Maharaja said, it does not matter if anyone comes to hear. You go on with your chanting. If no one hears you, the walls will hear. But this does not mean that we should sit down someplace and simply chant Hare Krishna for our own benefit. We should be always anxious to save the cripple minded people with

the science of Krishna Consciousness. This is the position of a Vaisnava. One disciple of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Vasudeva Datta prayed to Lord Caitanya, please Caitanya Mahaprabhu, take all these people back to Home, back to Godhead and I will suffer for their sins. Like this, this is the attitude of a pure Vaisnava. Actually the true Vaisnava, he is the only true humanitarian in the world today, for he is interested in the well-being of all living entities. So you will continue on and consult with Karandhara and the other GBC men and formulate some program to preach this Krsna Consciousness in the colleges and this will please me very much. I am approving of the initiation of John Favors who is now to be called GHANASYAMA DASA. From your description he is to be a very nice and intelligent boy so please train him up properly. You may send his beads on to Kirtanananda Maharaja for chanting.

“I hope this meets you in good health.

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

**Comment:** At the time I wrote this letter I was immersed in preaching at the colleges. Prabhupada endorses that it is a very important program and one that he has stressed, beginning with his mission. He says that I should not be discouraged if people are not coming to my meetings. “We are trying to please Krsna. That is all.”

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati said if no one hears you, the walls will hear your chanting. But this does not mean we should simply chant Hare Krsna for our own benefit. We should always be anxious to save conditioned souls with the science of Krsna consciousness. He urges me to consult the other GBC men and formulate programs to preach in the colleges, and this will please him very much.

He appreciates the initiation of John Favors. He was a wonderful newcomer to our group. He took part in the college preaching programs and was exemplary in his enthusiasm and in his personal *sadhana*. I wrote to Prabhupada enthusiastically praising John Favors, and he notes it. He approves his initiation and writes that he should now be called Ghanasyama dasa. (Later he would take *sannyasa* and become a great preacher known as Bhakti-Tirtha Swami.)

### **From *Prabhupada Nectar***

#### **“#8 PERSONAL”**

“In height he was maybe 5’5”. A nondevotee would say, ‘a small man.’ Most of his disciples stood taller than he. But we didn’t think like that, that he was a little man. If we saw reporters describe him as a little man, it didn’t make sense. That was obviously the defective vision of the nondevotee. (His

servant once said, ‘For someone who is supposed to be small, it takes all your energy to cover his back to massage it. I can’t understand it!’) His shoe size was 8, his sweater size around 36”. The palms of his hands were soft and boldly lined, with long, firm life lines.

“There was something protective that came out of his disciples in the fact that Prabhupada’s height was shorter. We wanted to be sure to protect him because he was so great, so valuable, our spiritual master. In the company of *karmis* or in the company of devotees, he was regal as he walked with his cane, not at all like a ‘small’ or ‘old’ man. Any person, regardless of his physical stature, would approach Prabhupada respectfully, deferring to him.

Prabhupada was elderly and a gentleman and was almost always treated in that way, very respectfully. Because when he spoke he was very refined and proper, he himself proclaimed his spiritual mission by his every action, and people could see that for themselves.

“Usually accompanying him were his Western disciples, who were very worshipful of Prabhupada; that was also impressive. He was not alone, but with his servants; if he looked small, still he controlled others who were tall; therefore he was taller than they. He had strength; he would say his mind was strong. His face was not small, nor was his aristocratic nose and full mouth; his eyes were large. Again, these contradicted the ‘small man’ idea. He was saint, *sadhu*, not small. He didn’t sit small. His voice was deep, could be gruff, loud, commanding—not small. His control of big men like Brahmananda,

Jayapataka, Bhavananda was complete. His word, the raising of his eyebrows, or the turn of his mouth could humiliate them utterly or drive them running into action. And he wrote so many books. He was not small. But if he chose, he could be like a child and you had to care for him completely; that was his love.”

## “#12”

“A disciple, Satya-narayana dasa, had been advised by other devotees that serious study of Ayur-veda would be important. Satya-narayana was living in Florida, but he planned to go to India to take up the medical study. He had written to a *kaviraja* in Calcutta, one whom Prabhupada also sometimes saw, and the *kaviraja* had written back agreeing to accept Satya-narayana as his student.

“Arriving in Mayapur, Satya-narayana went to see Srila Prabhupada, who at that moment was receiving a massage on the roof of the building. At his disciple’s first attempts to explain the Ayur-veda project, Srila Prabhupada put up his hand and said, ‘Oh, I am very tired now.’ It seemed that he was not only tired but not particularly inclined to hear.

“Within a day or two, Satya-narayana managed to get another interview. This time he entered Srila Prabhupada’s room, offered his *dandavats*, and explained things a little further. ‘I can stay as a *pujari* here in Calcutta. It’s

only a mile away to the doctor, and I can study under him. I have permission from my GBC man.’

“Prabhupada interrupted him. ‘No, this is not very important.’ Then he just looked away. Satya-narayana couldn’t believe that he was just supposed to accept it with no further comment. He wanted an answer and a reason, so he sat silently looking at Prabhupada. Prabhupada kindly turned to him. ‘We are not interested in studying these different sciences. Whatever medicines work, you use it. Actually Western medicine is very advanced, so there is no reason to study this. We want to become *brahmanas*.’ Prabhupada pointed to the *Krsna Book* on his desk and said, ‘You simply read my books. That is what you should do!’

“Satya-narayana felt satisfied and said, ‘Thank you, Prabhupada.’

“Prabhupada replied strongly, ‘Hare Krsna!’ And that was the end of Satya-narayana’s career in Ayur-veda.”

**“# 10”**

“Sri Prabhupada once said that whenever a manuscript of his was printed and published as a book he felt as if he had just conquered an empire, so for his disciples, it was also an opportunity for intimate association to be able to prepare his books for printing and to bring him an advance copy fresh

from the printer.

“When Canto 7, Part 2, of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* was printed, Srila Prabhupada was staying at the New York City ISKCON center. Ramesvara Swami and Radha-vallabha had gone to the airport and received the first two copies by special freight. It was about 2 A.M. when they returned to the temple. Eager to present the book to Prabhupada, they took the elevator up to his rooms on the eleventh floor. The light was on in his sitting room. Quietly opening his door, they found that he was not there. They went again into the hall and saw the light on in the bathroom. With child-like glee, barely controlling their laughter, they each hid a book behind their backs and waited, smiling, to present it to Prabhupada. When Prabhupada came out, he saw them and said, ‘Oh, you are here?’ He noticed they were holding something behind their backs and trying to control their smiling. ‘You have something for me?’ he said, perfectly reciprocating their mood. He then walked ahead into the sitting room, looking playfully over his shoulder, and invited them, ‘Come on!’

“When they handed Srila Prabhupada the books, he exclaimed, ‘Aaah!’ and immediately took one and touched it to his head. He looked at the cover and then turned the book and looked at the back cover. He opened up the front page and read aloud the selected epithet verse. He went through the front matter page by page and then carefully looked at all the pictures. Then Srila Prabhupada started reading the book aloud, from ‘Prahlada Pacifies the

Lord with Prayers.’ The joyful presentation party merged into the ecstasy of a *Bhagavatam* reading by Srila Prabhupada. He read on for about forty minutes, seemingly oblivious to everything else.”

### “32. Personal: Evening Massage”

“Evening massage was not as thorough as his pre-noon one—just massage his legs, squeeze them, up and down from the knee down to the feet, then the feet and toes also. He taught the technique. He said it gave some relief. At these times he was prone to sweet reflections. Was he sleeping? Sometimes. Or he would speak something. The servant might have to stay up a considerable while. Usually it was in a darkened room. In Australia, at the end of the day, after he and the devotees had marched a great distance in the Ratha-yatra parade, Prabhupada complimented his servant on his dancing so nicely in the parade. It was also during a night massage that he told another servant the story of how he got a special pair of shoes as a child from England, a gift from his father. Also, he would bring up the philosophy and the inability of *mudhas* to take to it.

“To us, Prabhupada was a mystical ocean. His utterances were not coming by our dictation. Yet we were also as close as possible, right by his side, touching his body, connected by speech, so he was tangibly with us. And yet he

was like a mystical ocean, and his purity created an aloofness for those who were still impure. One didn't even dare to think, 'What is Prabhupada thinking?'

“In the dark room during the evening massage, his servant used to want to take rest. Now, he may consider what a fool he was. If he had another chance, would he be the same fool? No one likes to be the servant; we want to be the master, but Prabhupada kept us in check. He made us devotees.”

## **Recording Lectures**

As early as 1965 in America, Swami Bhaktivedanta had obtained a large reel-to-reel tape recorder for recording his lectures. He set the machine up beside him and personally operated it. Some people were surprised seeing him so impoverished and lecturing to such small audiences—and yet carefully recording his lectures. It seemed contradictory to their concept of a swami being renounced. But Prabhupada had great foresight and recorded his lectures for the future, when he would have many, many followers who would benefit from his transcendental tracks. While living on 71<sup>st</sup> Street in Manhattan, Prabhupada's tape recorder and typewriter were stolen. He considered this a major setback. But some casual friends of Prabhupada kicked in and bought him a new tape recorder. He recorded his voice even when no one was present, speaking the “introduction to *Gitopanisad*” and playing *karatalas* and singing the Sanskrit prayers of Sukadeva Gosvami, begging for the blessings to

speak the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. He recorded his lectures starting from the beginning of *Bhagavad-gita*. His voice is strong and urgent. Years later, the Bhaktivedanta Tape Ministry was formed, and the precious reel-to-reel lectures were put onto cassette tapes and distributed to all the devotees. The Tape Ministry wasn't formed until about 1972 (in Los Angeles), but Prabhupada was very pleased that his lectures, including the earliest ones from 1965, were made available with good sound reproduction and a system was in place for distributing them to all his disciples.

### **Winter Coat**

For the winter of 1965-66, someone donated a winter coat to Srila Prabhupada. It was a store-bought gray checked coat which kept him sufficiently warm, but he didn't wear pants, preferring his thin *dhoti*. He wore a cloth swami cap and plastic pointy slippers. In later years, Govinda dasi hand-made him a full coat of saffron color with a woolly lining and hood. He liked this coat and wore it for the rest of his life, taking his walks in cool weather wherever he was. Prabhupada traveled with heavy luggage, including the coat, and his Dictaphone machine, his silver eating utensils, etc. In those days you could travel on planes carrying heavy luggage and multiple pieces without having to pay exorbitant fees. He carried a typewriter, and Sanskrit reference books by the Vaisnava *acaryas*, which he used for his translation work.

### **First Edition of *Bhagavad-gita***

Prabhupada managed to get his *Bhagavad-gita* published by the prestigious Macmillan Company around 1969. A clerk in the Macmillan Company ordered Prabhupada's books in response to an advertisement. Brahmananda went to see the man but was disappointed that he was a mere clerk. But while Brahmananda was in the Macmillan offices, a top editorial officer walked in and began talking with Brahmananda. Brahmananda told him about Prabhupada's book, and the man became very interested. He said Macmillan did not have a copy of the *Bhagavad-gita* in their catalogue, and he asked Brahmananda to bring the Swami's book in immediately and said he would publish it! Brahmananda rushed to Prabhupada, and Prabhupada said it was Krsna's mercy. The devotees managed to get surprise favorable prefaces in the book by Allen Ginsberg, the poet Denise Levertov, and Thomas Merton. Prabhupada didn't think so highly of them, but said he would accept it because it would increase sales. Unfortunately the Macmillan editors reduced the book to more than half the size, leaving out crucial purports. The book was small and had a light-purple cover with an illustration on it by Govinda dasi of four-armed Krsna. The devotees were very excited when the book actually came out, and they eagerly distributed them to the public and read them in their own classes and privately. A few years later, Macmillan published the unabridged *Bhagavad-gita*, and Prabhupada wrote in an introductory note that the first edition had omitted much of his writing, and he was satisfied now to see the full book restored by Macmillan. This book became the best selling *Bhagavad-gita*. The second edition had a foreword by the eastern religious expert, Professor Edward Dimock of the

University of Chicago. Prabhupada said that when he published a book he felt he had conquered an empire, and he definitely thought that way about the second edition of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* by Macmillan Publishers.

### **Now Over 50 Years Later, Do I Think It Was Destiny, Good Fortune or Mercy that I Met Srila Prabhupada and Stayed with Him?**

I definitely think it was good fortune and mercy that I came to Srila Prabhupada. The *sastras* say that one should meet a bona-fide spiritual master and surrender to him. They say the spiritual master is not an ordinary man. The Supreme Lord is the worshipable Krsna, and the spiritual master is the worshiping Krsna. "I was standing in darkness with my eyes shut, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge." (*Gautamiya Tantra*) This was certainly true in my case. I was a lost, unhappy soul, but when I met Prabhupada, he completely changed my life history and made me into an aspiring devotee of Krsna. On meeting him, I immediately gave up my sinful activities, began regularly attending his *kirtanas* and lectures, and chanted sixteen rounds of *japa*. It all happened so fast. I became a responsible son, and he reciprocated with me in affection. Over the first weeks at 26 Second Avenue, I learned the basics of Krsna consciousness and became initiated by him, promising that I would attempt to pay him the *guru daksine* (gifts offered to the spiritual master upon initiation) as he directed us by telling others to take up Krsna consciousness. I have made mistakes

in trying to carry out his orders in association with my colleagues in ISKCON, but I am rectified in following his orders in separation from him.