

## ***Free Write Journal #52***

### **Free Writes**

#### **The *Atma***

The soul (*atma*) doesn't die when the body dies. In the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna says as one passes from boyhood to childhood to youth and old age, so the soul doesn't perish at the time of death but takes a new body. Those who are sober are not bewildered by such a change. All soldiers at the Kuruksetra battle who got the opportunity to see Krsna as they were killed were promoted to the spiritual sky for some kind of liberation. Krsna says the souls never takes birth or dies. Only the pure devotees attain the abode of Krsna in Goloka Vrndavana, where they relate to Krsna in four kinds of loving *rasas* in eternity, bliss and knowledge (*sac-cid-ananda*). The whole reason for the International Society for Krsna Consciousness is to train the devotees not to operate on the bodily concept of life but to serve Krsna and the devotees as spirit souls. In association, they learn how to do this as a community.

#### **Vedic Marriage**

*Ksatriyas* could marry many wives. Krsna's father, Vasudeva, had many wives. Krsna Himself married 16, 108 wives who were kidnapped by the demon

Bhaumasura. Krsna arranged 16,108 palaces, one for each queen, and expanded into 16,108 forms so that He could give each wife private attention. When some of Prabhupada's disciples asked if they could practice polygamy, he said no; it was against the law, and the men weren't capable of keeping more than one wife. He was also against divorce and remarriage. We have been reading in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* about the ideal marriage of the *saktyavesa avatara* Prithu Maharaja, and his queen, Arci. Arci lived with the King in the palace and served him faithfully. When he grew older and retired from ruling and went to the forest to practice austerities, Arci voluntarily followed him. As a queen she had always lived in the palace and never touched the ground or wandered in the wilderness. But out of chastity to her husband, she took on his austerities in every way—in ascetic dress, in eating roots and tree bark and lying on the bare ground. When Prithu Maharaja finally passed away in meditation, Arci lamented for a while and then realized she had many duties to perform. She built a large pyre on a hillside, put her husband's body on top of it and set it afire. Then she entered the fire along with her exalted husband.

## **Corn**

The sweet corn season has just begun here in Columbia County. It is a rural agricultural community and is apparently peaceful and idyllic. The local people go

every day and purchase sweet corn, which is so delicious. That is the happy side of the picture of corn-growing. But in reality, most of the corn that you see is grown for animal feed. That is what the miles of tall, wavering cornfields are for. The cows are factory milked, given hormones and antibiotics to increase their milk production. They are impersonally milked in barns and not allowed to come out into the fields. Every drop of milk is squeezed out of them during their peak milking years, and then they are slaughtered. The male calves are chained in little houses to limit their movements so that they don't develop muscles. They are allowed to live a short life being fed milk so that their bodies remain tender. Then they are slaughtered for veal. Veal was considered a prime delicacy in Italy, but because the process was so cruel, it has been outlawed there. One of the recent popes considered his two favorite meals to be lobster and veal. But now the veal industry is outlawed in Italy, but not in Columbia County, New York and many other places. At the Gita-nagari Krsna conscious farm, there is no such cruelty. The cows are milked, but when their period of milking dries up, they are allowed to retire, and they are protected until the end of their lives.

The corn grown at Gita-nagari is both for the cows and the humans. Two kinds of corn are grown at Gita-nagari: sweet corn for the devotees' consumption and corn grown for silage for animal consumption. In the growing season, it is said you can even *hear* the corn growing. It grows ten feet tall and rustles in the breeze. At festival times the devotees lead the ox-driven Ratha cart right into the cornfield. The corn "lays down" as the oxen pass over it, and it appears that the corn is making

obeisances to the Radha-Damodara Deities on the cart. *Kirtana* is going on all around, but you can't see the devotees—the corn is so dense. In the prime season, sweet corn would be cooked for lunch, and all the devotees would enjoy corn-on-the-cob offered to Krsna.

### ***Prabhupada Nectar***

I have been using the book *Prabhupada Nectar* more frequently than other books in the *Free Write Journal*. That is because I find the episodes so interesting and I want to share them, never mind whether I do it frequently.

“#35

#### **“LITTLE DROPS OF NECTAR**

“In Mayapur, especially at the time of the international festivals, different disciples would take the service to guard Srila Prabhupada's door. Their function was mostly to screen visitors so that Srila Prabhupada was not constantly interrupted. The guard also would go out and fetch anything that Srila Prabhupada wanted.

“One time, while Mahabuddhi dasa was guarding Prabhupada's door, Srila Prabhupada called him in and asked for the juice of a fresh *dob*. But even while Prabhupada was talking, his sister Bhavatarini suddenly entered the room. Prabhupada's sister, known as Pisima (or

“aunt”) to Prabhupada's disciples, had free entrance to see Prabhupada whenever she wanted. Besides, no one could really restrain her if she wanted to see Prabhupada, to talk with him or to cook for him.

“As Pisima sat down in the room, Mahabuddhi got up to carry out Prabhupada's desire for the fresh food. But Prabhupada spoke sternly, ‘Sit down.’ Mahabuddhi sat down again.

“Srila Prabhupada began speaking with his sister in Bengali, while Mahabuddhi waited for about twenty minutes, silently chanting on his beads. The talk between Prabhupada and his sister was enthusiastic, until towards the end when Prabhupada became somewhat reprimanding. Finally Bhavatarini offered her respects to her exalted brother and left the room. Prabhupada stood up, and Mahabuddhi started to leave to carry out his interrupted errand.

“As if to explain his action, Prabhupada quoted a verse: *matra svasra duhitra va/ naviviktasano bhavet/ balavan indriya-gramo/ vidvamsam api karsati*. ‘Never stay alone with a woman,’ said Prabhupada.”

“#43

“LITTLE DROPS OF NECTAR

“Srla Prabhupada was talking to an Indian guest and well-wisher. The topic turned to the publication of *Back to Godhead* magazine in various languages. Prabhupada said the Indians would gladly read an English magazine, but Prabhupada said that it would be much more popular if they could publish in Hindi, Gujjerati and Bengali.

“‘That is not possible,’ said Prabhupada. ‘That is for you Indians to do, but you have not time. You are busy with your daughter’s marriage and you simply advise.’

“‘I am busy?’ replied the man with surprise.

“‘Yes, everyone,’ said Prabhupada. ‘Every Indian is busy with his own affairs. He’ll come and advise, that’s all. Advise *gratis*. But he will not do himself.’

“The man protested, ‘No, but – ‘

“But Prabhupada knew better. “No, this is going on,” he said. “I have got full experience that Indians, they will come give some advice, and go away for daughter’s marriage. That’s all.”

“‘Well,’ the man tried to hold his ground, ‘there are various types of Indians, you know.’

“‘That type,’ said Prabhupada, ‘is 99%. You’ll advise, but you’ll never do it. This is going on.’”

**“PRABHUPADA TELLS A STORY**

“There was once a factory in India where all the workers were Hindus and mostly Vaisnavas. The Vaisnavas had freedom, therefore, to wear their Vaisnava *tilaka* to work, and they also displayed other Vaisnava paraphernalia. After some time, however, the factory went to new management and the new proprietor was a Muslim. On taking over the business, the Muslim owner declared that he would no longer allow the workers to come to work wearing Vaisnava *tilaka*. Most of the workers obeyed, and on the given date announced by the owner, they appeared at the factory without their *tilaka*. One employee, however, thought that he would take his chances and depend on Krsna, so he went to work wearing very clear, white Vaisnava *tilaka*. After seeing all the workers assembled, the new Muslim proprietor said, "This one devotee who has worn Vaisnava *tilaka* is very courageous. He may be permitted to continue wearing the *tilaka* to work, but all others are forbidden to wear it any more.”

“In this way, Prabhupada encouraged the devotees to not unnecessarily abandon the markings of a Vaisnava. Where situations forbid it, Srila Prabhupada said that it was not absolutely necessary to wear *tilaka*, although a devotee should at least put water *tilaka* on his

body in the morning and consecrate his body with the names of Visnu. But if the paraphernalia is permitted, then a devotee should not unnecessarily do away with the dress or beads of a Vaisnava.”

### **How Is the Hare Krsna Mantra the Panacea for All Sins?**

Lord Caitanya wrote in the first verse of *Siksastakam: Ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-maha-davagni-nirvapanam*. This declares that the chanting is cleansing the mirror of the mind and the heart, and the devotee loses interest in everything external. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge and increases the ocean of bliss. It may take only one utterance of the Name or many years of practice. The great sinner Ajamila called out the name of Narayana (indicating his son and not the Supreme Lord) and he was saved from being taken to hell by the Yamadutas. But Ajamila had to stay twelve years in Hardwar practicing devotional austerities until he was qualified to go back to the spiritual world. In *Bhagavad-gita*, Krsna states that if one thinks of Him at the time of death, he will attain to Krsna. Prabhupada recommends regular chanting throughout one’s life so that he will be ready for the final exam. King Kulasekhara prays, “Let me die at once now that I am chanting Hare Krsna in good health. If I wait for the time of death my voice may be choked up and I will be too disoriented to chant. So let me die now.”

One doesn’t have to wait until the time of death to realize the potency of the holy name. Even from the beginning, and especially at first initiation when the spiritual master chants on one’s beads, a devotee feels lighter and gets a glimpse into

the power of the holy name. He or she continues to get these glimpses of the Name's saving grace throughout their lifetime of practicing *sadhana-bhakti*. Death is the final crisis, but there are other crises throughout one's life when one can turn to Krsna—if one is lucky—and take shelter of Nama Prabhu. One receives “midterm tests” before the final exam, and one can see the reality of one's progress or lack of progress by the grades one gets on the midterm tests.

### **Local News**

My Godbrother Suresvara is planning to come and visit me for three days in August. He wrote me that he would like me to go outside pushing my four-wheeled walker (he knows how immobile I am), and he would enjoy taking a “senior walk” with me. I wrote him back that I didn't think it was practical. He is coming here mainly to have serious private talks with me. He doesn't know that if I went outside, I would be exhausted pushing the walker and running out of breath (due to my Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) within a few minutes. We would not be able to talk seriously that way. He wrote that it was very important for me to go out and take walks, but I am not up to that in my present condition. I do indoor exercises, walking laps in my room with the walker, doing stand-ups and sit-downs on a chair, and pedaling an eight-minute mile on my stationary bike. That is the extent of my daily exercise. I know that I am too sedentary and the experts say this is not good for longevity, but so far I have had to accept my limits, and I do so without depression. My mind is active as I do writing in my *Journal* and publishing two

books a year, and meeting with visitors. Living within these limits, I leave my longevity up to Krsna. But it will be pleasant to meet with my Godbrother and have “serious” talks for three meetings.

## **Research into Buddha**

In 1986 I was writing the third volume of *Journal and Poems*. During this time I was writing some Krsna conscious haiku poems and reading the Japanese haiku masters in translation. I also conceived of the idea of reading ancient Buddhist texts, ones that contained the writings of the original Buddha, and trying to relate it to the Vedic incarnation of Lord Buddha mentioned in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and in Jayadeva Gosvami’s stanza to Buddha in the *Dasavatara* poem. On our way to India, in London, we picked up some books, translations from the Pali language which were attributed to the original Lord Buddha. I was expecting to find many references to nonviolence and objections to slaughtering animals, because Prabhupada said Buddha’s main mission was to stop the animal slaughter that was rampant during that time on the plea of Vedic sacrifices. In the translations of the Pali texts I found almost no reference to nonviolence or objections to animal slaughter. This made me doubtful, and I questioned my learned Godbrother, Bhakti-caru Swami about this. Here is what I wrote in *Journal and Poems, Volume 3*:

“I have just received some interesting news. According to Bhakti-caru Swami, who quotes as his source Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati

Thakura, the Lord Buddha who is mentioned in the *Bhagavatam* is not Gautama Buddha. Apparently, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati has stated that the Lord Buddha of the *Bhagavatam* was actually born in the Gaya area, but Gautama Buddha was a prince from Nepal who came to Gaya for his enlightenment. If this is true, it means that the accounts given in the Pali texts are about a different person, not Lord Buddha. I did not speak directly to Bhakti-caru Swami, and I will find out more about Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's statement and about the activities of the Vedic Lord Buddha. I suspect that the evidence will be strong enough to abruptly end my research into the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

“This also makes me doubtful about the attempt to connect Lord Buddha to Buddhism as it is practiced in places like Japan, and makes me doubtful about making a pilgrimage in Japan to places connected with Japanese poet-priests. If Gautama Buddha himself is not connected to the *Bhagavatam*, then what to speak of the later disciples of Gautama and Buddhism as it's practiced now. I can still sympathize with the Buddhist poets of recent centuries and how they expressed their monastic life, but it dampens my enthusiasm to pursue it too far. It seems we have made a mistake in the identity of Lord Buddha. This also implies a mistake in being so interested in a path outside Krsna consciousness.

“ . . . I'm actually enlivened by this revolutionary news. One expects such jolts at the annual Mayapur pilgrimage. If it means that I am adjusted back into a more straight and narrow path of Krsna consciousness, then that is my gain.”

## **Bathing**

In Prabhupada's purports, and in his speaking, he frequently mentions that a devotee, especially a *sannyasi*, should bathe three times a day. But this has never caught on as a practice for most of the devotees in ISKCON. When Prabhupada handed me my *danda*, he said, “Preach, preach, preach.” He didn't say, “Bathe, bathe, bathe.” There are a few rare individuals who bathe three times a day, but I do not know if this interrupts the flow of their preaching engagements. Prabhupada took one bath a day (at about 11:00 A.M.) and didn't bathe more on the plea that he was an old man. Maybe in the holy *dhamas* of Mayapur, Vrndavana and Jagannatha Puri, in the hot seasons, the devotees bathe more frequently for relief from the weather, and even in the winter as an austerity. Bathing thrice a day is more in tune with the *bhajanandi* lifestyle, where one is not engaged in preaching engagements.

## **Update on Our Out-loud Reading**

In the *Bhagavatam* we are hearing “The Prayers Sung By Lord Siva.” The ten sons of King Pracinarbarhi were ordered by their father to go and practice extended

austerities. The Pracetas were very obedient and submissive. They took their father's order on their head and started out to find a place to practice austerities in a secluded place. Devotees often go to the Himalayas to do this, but the Pracetas walked and discovered a large lake that was near the ocean, like a bay. It was very peaceful, and all the aquatics who lived in the lake and the birds who stood on its shores and the water itself were all calm and unagitated. The Pracetas were able to enter into the water and practice meditation. Lord Siva, who is known as the greatest of the Vaisnavas (*vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh*) was attracted to come to this spot where the Pracetas were in meditation. They offered Siva prostrated obeisances and wanted to hear from him. He told them he would recite a prayer to them which was a long mantra praising Lord Visnu. By hearing this prayer, there is no doubt that Lord Siva is not an impersonalist but is a pure devotee of Visnu. He declares that Krsna is the Cause of all causes, the *adi-purusa*. He asks the Pracetas to hear his song attentively, and they do so in full consciousness. Lord Siva says he is made great by his favorable association with the Vaisnavas. In another section of the *Bhagavatam*, Lord Siva says to his wife, "Of all forms of worship, the worship of Visnu is the best. But better than that is the worship of the Vaisnava, or things connected with Visnu." Lord Siva begins his song by saying, "Any person who is surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna, the controller of everything—material nature as well as the living entity—is actually very dear to me." Thus Lord Siva explains the reason he has personally come before the princes. It is because the princes are devotees of Lord Visnu. Lord Siva is rarely seen by common

men, and similarly one who is fully surrendered unto Vasudeva, Krsna, is also very rarely seen because a person who is fully surrendered unto the Supreme Lord is very rare.

Lord Siva offers his prayer to Krsna, beginning with the following words: “All glories unto You, my Lord.” In *sloka* after *sloka*, Lord Siva says to Krsna, “I offer my respectful obeisances again and again unto You.” Lord Siva prays that he wishes to see Krsna exactly in the form that His very dear devotees worship Him. Krsna has many other forms, but Siva wishes to see that form that is especially liked by the devotees. He then proceeds to describe the beautiful form of the Lord, starting from His lotus feet up to His smiling face. Lord Siva prays, “My dear Lord, pure devotional service is even difficult for liberated persons to discharge, but devotional service alone can satisfy You. Who will take to other processes of self-realization if he is actually serious about the perfection of life?” We have heard thus far into the song sung by Lord Siva. My Godbrother Suresvara told me that many years ago, before the Fourth Canto containing this song by Lord Siva was published, he had a copy of it in manuscript form for editing. He remembers that he was the Laguna Beach temple and used to recite out loud to himself this song while sitting on the porch facing the ocean and feel great bliss in Lord Siva’s prayers.

## **Peace**

Krsna speaks the “Peace Formula” in the *Bhagavad-gita*. “One who knows that I am the Supreme proprietor of all the planets, the object of all sacrifices and

the well-wisher of all living entities attains peace from material miseries.” (5.29) Prabhupada used to quote this verse and say that world peace could be attained by realizing this verse. But Prabhupada also said his devotees were engaged in a war with maya. For preaching, he sent his disciples into situations of confrontation with the nondevotees. He and his spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, didn't want their disciples to sit aloof in a secluded place. But he wanted them to enter the busiest cities (which were not peaceful) and speak Krsna's message of peace and surrender. If a devotee did this, despite the anxieties he might meet, he would be ultimately peaceful in transcendental consciousness. Prabhupada had the Peace Formula from the *Bhagavad-gita* printed out as a pamphlet, and he asked his devotees to give it out to the public while they were chanting in parks and public places, and to make short speeches about the only way to attain peace.

### **A Castor-Tree Guru**

Prabhupada used to say that when there are no trees, a castor tree is a big tree. So we understood that in the absence of a big tree, like a banyan or a giant redwood tree, a castor tree, which was obviously small, could function as an actual authentic tree. My poem “A Castor Tree Guru” was written at a time when there were rumblings of dissatisfaction by the grassroots members of ISKCON about the GBC policy of zonal gurus, where a disciple would have to accept a *diksa* guru who was assigned geographically to certain temples. A meeting was held in New Vrndavana, before the annual GBC meeting in Mayapur. The grassroots group, who were large in number and vocal in writing position papers, led by Ravindra Svarupa, confronted

the GBC members in New Vrndavana. In my poem, I assert my own position, that I am a castor-tree guru, not big but able to function as a bona-fide spiritual master for “*sisya* birds.” Here is the poem (as it appeared in *Journal and Poems, Volume 1*, January—June, 1985):

“*A Castor Tree Guru*”

“When there are no trees,  
 a castor tree is a big tree.  
 I may be imperfect,” Prabhupada would say,  
 “but if I speak what Krsna says  
 that is also perfect.”  
 And a Prabhupadanuga |  
 is in touch with the *sakti*.

“The tree in the courtyard is also small,  
 but sturdy, even in winter.  
 And in springtime it will bud green>

“Let me grow as I am able,  
 even if I am small.  
 And let me also shelter *sisya* birds.

“I am his foot dust,  
 his boy, his saved, his son,  
 his typist, a bringer of a mango.  
 But I cannot rest on these credits.  
 Today I am also traveling to his Mayapur.

“I pray to stay a small tree  
 since that is what I am,  
 and to deliver these *sisyas* given to me.  
 By chanting and hearing  
 and always living with the Vaisnavas,  
 by preaching and urging myself and them,  
 I’ll help keep these ISKCON places sound  
 until the end of my life.”

So I asserted my own guru-ship, although it was a castor tree. At the annual GBC meeting, the grassroots contingent was able to change the existing zonal guru system, and the restriction imposed by the GBC that only a few devotees could act as *diksa* gurus. The GBC stepped down and accepted the will of the grassroots members. I did not mind the dismantling of the zonal guru system or the expansion of devotees who could perform as *diksa* gurus. I just wanted to be able to carry on as

a castor tree guru with my own disciples working in the shelter of ISKCON.

No one really knew what it would look like after we made the revolutionary changes. There were some awkward moments, but it gradually worked out for the better.

**From *Amrta Vani* by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati**

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura is asked, “We consider doing good to others our religion. What is your opinion in this regard?” Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati replies that welfare work is good, but it has two defects: it directly or indirectly encourages godlessness, and it supports violence to animals and other living entities. Whatever attempts we make to help others while neglecting the Absolute are useless. Ordinary altruism is not the goal of life. There is much more important duty while one is in the human form of life, and that is to serve God. “It is our intention to convert the entire human population to practicing *bhakti*.”

**From *The Radha-Govinda Deity Worship Book***

“The perfection of eyesight is to look upon the forms of Radha and Krsna and Srila Prabhupada and Panca-Tattva and Jagannatha Deities and Lord Nrsimhadeva and the *parampara* gurus, all of whom are on my altar. Cast your glance there, and you will gain what you can’t by looking at anything else. And hear the pastimes of Radha and Krsna, and

you will gain far more than when hearing a psychological-Christian talk. All glories to the Lord of the Universe and the secrets of devotional service, which are revealed only to the qualified and confidential devotees of Vrndavana! May I use my energies for that. Forgive those that have trespassed against me. Spread the word of Krsna consciousness. Do your regular duties every day. Await the mercy of the Lord, no matter what is happening.”

**(Health update in relation to Deity service:** Recently I have been having trouble with my eyes. I cannot clearly see the details of the faces of Radha-Govinda, although They are only four feet away from my chair. Baladeva also has eye trouble, and we have made an appointment to see the optometrist on July 30. We were talking about this at lunchtime with Baladeva’s sister and son Dave. They brought up the subject of cataracts. Kathi has undergone a successful cataract laser operation. My eye doctor has repeatedly told me that I have some cataracts, but they are not serious enough for an operation. But now I am wondering. I don’t look forward to an operation, but I want to clear my vision so I can realize the statements in this Radha-Govinda Worship Book, and realize “the perfection of eyesight is to look upon the forms of Radha and Krsna and Srila Prabhupada . . .”)

***Radha-Govinda Deity Worship Book*** (continued)

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“Cold morning again. Bright lights in this room shine on the walls. Please give us the benediction to use words rightly in His service.

“Now, I’ve run out of good things to say. Well, tell us what you are hearing during Deity worship. I heard a tape, and in the background there are parrots and little birds like finches and sparrows in Vrndavana. Some of us sat together and began reading Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura’s *Prema-samputa*. The opening scene tells of Krsna disguised as a beautiful girl, arriving as if very morose and shy in the courtyard of Radha and Her *gopis*. Radharani comes forward and attempts to show all kindness to this lamenting *sakhi*. That much I heard. It’s the setting of the stage for some wonderful revelations by Radha, as spoken by Radharani Herself. Only an intimate devotee could write this.

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“Lord Krsna, Radha and Krsna, Prabhupada in a big brown blanket-like covering with a light saffron scarf over that, and wearing a brown knit cap (made by Lalita-manjari of Australia and Vrndavana). As the rain pours and dashes against the window. Maybe it is too wet-lashing for me to take a walk even around the house. The bead bag will get soaked. But you could try it with an umbrella—no one will see you. Radha-Govinda in white and pink. Tomorrow Syamananda is supposed

to come and take Their photos. I will ask Them to patiently allow me to change Them in three different outfits. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna. Hurry along. Say what you can.”

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“Radha and Govinda, dressed in burnished brown and gold. I am glad to be alive. I am not nothing, nor do I want nothingness. I want to be the eternal servant of Krsna. May He engage me as He sees fit. Hare Krsna.

“Hearing the confidential pastimes of Radha and Krsna, which we do not deserve to hear. But we try our best to honor Them and not confuse Them with perverted material versions. At least I hear now while bathing, drying and dressing Krsna and then Radha. They seem happy to hear the poetry of Ragannatha dasa Goswami and Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura.”

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“The hour of the day that just passed is very nice because it’s the time I spend most attention on Radha and Krsna. Maybe I should find more moments like this. The evening is another time. And then the two times that I offer Them *prasadam*. Although that’s brief, it’s a chance to receive the vision of Their forms. They wear black chadars today and

black earrings. A new combination. The golden leaning-stick, the golden flute—may Prabhupada permit me. May I serve Him. It was so brief, that time when you paid attention and heard the voice chanting Hare Krsna mantras. You have to keep trying and smiling to Krsna. When will I be allowed better practice? But I don't want to hear, 'It will take thousands of births.' Let me continue to work even in darkness.”

***Remembering Srila Prabhupada: A Free Verse Rendition of the Life and Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada***

I wrote the poems in *Remembering Srila Prabhupada* some while after I had finished publishing the entire *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*. Jayadvaita Maharaja read the poems and said they looked just like prose, but then after a few lines of reading, they turned into poetry. That was the way it was. I wrote them in a free attitude of inspiration, even while traveling and preaching and stopping in motels. It was a high period for me.

***“DISPLEASED”***

*“I cannot change the philosophy to please the Americans.”*

Bruce's mother, Chuck's mother,  
my mother, the Fugs,

the lawyer in defense of illicit sex,  
an upstairs tenant—  
these were not pleased.

Bruce's mother was all right,  
but when they told her about Krsna consciousness,  
she thought her sons had gone crazy.

'Who is crazy?' Prabhupada replied.

'Are we or they? Take it to the platform of reason.

One who lives for the temporary body  
is doomed at death to lose all that he worked for.

Is he not crazy? We live to serve  
eternal Krsna, in this world and the next.

What is wrong with that? Who is crazy?'

She admitted the new, good qualities in her sons,  
social and human improvements  
and no more drugs.

But shaved heads?

At the second initiation  
when Bruce became Brahmananda dasa,  
Mrs. Scharf attended and Prabhupada told her son,

‘Bow down before your mother.’

She was sitting on a metal folding chair,  
and it was awkward. Yet she liked it.

But when Prabhupada asked for a donation, she exploded,  
‘What! I have already given you two sons!’

“Swamiji said, because Krsna said,  
sex should be used as religious only,  
to deliver and raise a Krsna conscious child.

Or else it is fornication like a pig,  
with next life’s karma in the body of a pig.

This displeased many, even the liberal  
who otherwise liked the enchanting chanters.

As Prabhupada had written in his book,  
‘Pornography should be censored.’

A disciple asked, ‘Can this be edited out  
because what will the American people think?’

‘I cannot change the philosophy,’ said Prabhupada  
‘to please the Americans.’

“Proud Americans may think their missiles and dollars  
can save them from suffering and death,

whereas an Indian's philosophy is weird.  
 But down they go, one by one,  
 bowing to old age, disease, and death.  
 And their nation cannot save them  
 and their highways cannot save them  
 nor their mild and high drugs,  
 their uppers and downers,  
 nor can their imagination set them free.  
 Is it really weird or wrong  
 to ask people to have sex like humans  
 as taught by every scripture of the world?  
 Who is crazy?"

### **Karmapa Book**

Kathi gave me a book on a current leader of the Buddhist lineage, the  
 seventeenth incarnation of Karmapa. But I had just read in Bhaktisiddhanta  
 Sarasvati's *Amrta Vani* that a devotee should not divert himself from hearing about  
 Krsna. Baladeva and I noticed the Buddhist book was in small print. So I made a  
 plea to Kathi and her 50-year-old son (both of whom are deeply into Buddhism) that  
 I could not read the book because of the small print. They responded that I could put  
 the book on a Kindle reader and enlarge the print font. They went to the trouble of  
 putting the book on Kindle, along with Prabhupada's entire *Srimad-Bhagavatam*

and a book by Gaura Govinda Swami. I told Baladeva that I didn't want to read the Karmapa book. He said they would be hurt if I did this—I could at least scan it. But I had great trouble operating the Kindle. I was unable to softly touch my finger to make the pages turn. I made slow progress reading the section where the young Karmapa escapes Tibet for India. I found it a fascinating story, but also difficult for me to turn the pages of the book. I also read some pages of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and that gave me solace.

### **Update on Our Out-loud Reading**

We are currently hearing the Puranjana story from the Fourth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The Pracetas are still meditating underwater in the big calm lake. Their father, King Pracinabarhi, is performing many sacrifices in which he is offering animals' lives. The great sage Narada comes to him out of compassion and asks him what does he hope to gain from fruitive activities? Narada shows him a vision of the animals in the sky whom he has killed. Narada tells him that in his next life these animals will be allowed to kill Pracinabarhi. He begins to tell the allegory of King Puranjana, who is none other than Pracinabarhi. Narada tells him that one day Puranjana was walking in the forest and he met a beautiful young woman accompanied by ten servants, many maidservants, and preceded by a snake. Puranjana and the woman are attracted to each other, and Puranjana asks her who her parents are and whether she is married. The woman knows very little of her origin. She says the ten servants are the ten senses, and the snake is her life-force.

There is much description of sexual attraction between man and woman. Puranjana boasts to the woman that he is a great hero, and he desires to accept her as his wife. She responds submissively and praises him, saying he is a great, attractive warrior, and he is “so easily gained.” The two of them get married and enjoy sexual union. King Puranjana lives in a city of nine gates. The nine gates are an analogy to the nine openings in the body, through which one can enter and gain sense gratification. The Puranjana allegory as told by Narada continues for several chapters, where Puranjana enjoys life with his wife but is gradually destroyed with time.

## **Teeth**

In the third volume of my *Journal and Poems*, I wrote, “As my teeth loosen/ one by one/ I transcend death.” My teeth were healthy, but unfortunately I was afflicted with gingivitis, a disease of the gums. Gradually, all my teeth loosened and fell out except for a couple that the dentist pulled out and advised me to get a complete set of dentures. Over ten years ago, at great expense, I underwent surgery and had metal posts implanted in my jawbone and a “high-end” set of dentures prepared. I am still wearing those dentures, but with time they have undergone repairs. Just last week my dentures became loose and they fell out, and when I tried to talk or eat I had to use dental adhesive to keep them in. Then in the course of two days, while eating, two front teeth fell out. My dentist was not so concerned. He ordered new hardware to tighten the dentures and had a lab glue the two teeth in that had fallen out. I don’t know how much

longer or how much more repair these dentures will have to undergo. Some people go to extreme lengths to retain their teeth. They get partial dentures, bridges, caps, root canal work, in an attempt to keep a beautiful smile.

Prabhupada did not go to so much trouble to keep all his teeth. When teeth fell out, he allowed gaps to show, but he had one front tooth replaced with a gold one. Many *sadhus* in India are toothless. One could say that keeping a full mouth of teeth is necessary “for preaching,” but the cost to maintain this standard is so great that many cannot afford it, and they may have to get on with missing teeth, preaching in renunciation. It may be considered vanity to be so averse to having missing teeth.

### ***Japa Book Exerpts***

From *Japa Reform Notebook*:

“I think I would do better to ignore the mind's dwelling on a piece of dirt rather than keep holding it up for inspection, exclaiming, "Gosh, it's still there; and again, look, it's still there; how persistently it stays! What a disease! Will I ever be rid of this before the time of death?" This is like too much of a challenge to the rascal mind. So let me try not to be so worried and instead turn my mind elsewhere, even though the piece of dirt (or mental thorn) remains. There is a Canakya *sloka* which says that mental dirt cannot be cleaned away after hundreds of times of

bathing in a sacred river. And yet the holy name, according to the Siksastakam, can clean away the dirt accumulated for many lifetimes together.”

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

“The tenth offense in chanting is to not have complete faith in the holy names and to maintain material attachments even after receiving so many instructions on this matter. . . . When we think about this offense, we realize that chanting Hare Krsna has to become a whole life's endeavor. It is not limited to the two or three hours of fingering our beads. We are meant to change our perspective and our goals and to surrender to the holy name. That is faith in chanting.

“Bhaktivinoda Thakura tells us that the only way to rectify ourselves is to completely surrender to the holy name. The tenth offense is the sum total of all *namaparadha*. If we are committing it, it means we need a total overhaul. Chanting is not a light activity. It is not meant to be a relaxing meditation. It is not something to be disposed of quickly so we can get on with our lives. This offense is the final statement on the *aparadhas*; total surrender to the holy name is the final remedy.”

From ***Japa Transformations***:

“In my *bhajana-kutir*  
before Radha-Govinda  
I start my daily *japa*.  
There’s no one stirring in the house  
the only sound  
my own vibration.

“I reciprocate with *Nama*.  
My head is clear  
or almost clear  
I pray for clarity  
and push on with the beads.  
the numbers rise,  
a head-start feeling.  
Your heart is calm,  
your mind is clean.”