

## ***Free Write Journal #62***

### **Free Writes**

#### **Visit from Russian *Sannyasi***

I'm receiving a visit from Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, the long-term GBC of Russia. He comes to New York City, where there are many Russian devotees. Dhanurdhara Swami is arranging his visit to see me. Dhanurdhara Maharaja says that Bhakti Vijnana Goswami wants to meet with me because "You are a *sadhu*, and you think out of the box." I don't know how much this is true, but I am honored to meet with him. I read his essays in *Manah-Siksa*, the book produced by Urmila devi dasi, and I thought his were the best of the group. Bhakti Vijnana Goswami had been the GBC for Russia for a long time, but recently he resigned. Dhanurdhara Swami says Bhakti Vijnana Goswami is "intellectual and gentle," and these traits may not be best applied as a GBC. I am looking forward to meeting with him.

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We had four guests for an hour-and-a-half meeting and then lunch. The main guest was Bhakti Vijnana Goswami, who has been GBC for Russia for twenty-one years. He has recently resigned, thinking his intellectual, gentle nature is not suitable for the high-powered managerial service of GBC. The other main guest was

Dhanurdhara Swami. These two men—plus me—did most of the talking. Also present was Japa dasa, one of the first devotees to join Krsna consciousness in Russia. Also present was Bhakti Vijnana Maharaja's *brahmacari* servant. We talked for a while about the people who reject the 1982 edition of the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* and prefer the earlier edition edited by Hayagriva with all the mistakes. We at our meeting agreed that the 1982 edition edited by Jayadvaita Maharaja is more accurate and more true to Prabhupada's intentions. Those who prefer the earlier edition are mistaken and causing confusion in ISKCON. We spoke of many other things, including Bhakti Vijnana Maharaja's recent friendly visit to Harikesa in Florida. For lunch, we had *iddlis*, *sambhar*, coconut chutney, *palak paneer* (spinach and curd) and corn on the cob, and sweet rice for dessert. A good time was had by all.

### **Boston Memoirs**

Giriraja Maharaja has finished writing his book about Prabhupada in Juhu, Bombay. Now he has started writing his memoirs of the early years in Boston. I sent him a memoir of a time we shared in hopes he could use it. It was about the night the gang members broke into our house, smashed all the windows and began beating on the devotees with car antennas. The devotees fought back, and we called for the police on 9-1-1. The police arrested the gang members, but as they left they said they would probably get out of jail and be back the next night to attack us again. There was glass all over the floor, some devotees had sustained injuries, and we were

in shock. Anticipating that there would be an attack the next night, we decided to send the women down to the New York temple. Some of the men also went there, including the devotee who fought most heroically, picking up and throwing one of the gang members out the window. Giriraja and I also decided to go to New York—for safety. As we rode in his red car, we opined that it was not noble to desert the temple in fear of violence. We were not great fighters, but we should at least have the courage to stick to our prabhu-datta-desa and face whatever would come. Just before getting on the Massachusetts Turnpike towards New York, Giriraja turned the car around and we headed back to Boston. Brahmananda and Rsi Kumar had come up from New York to guard the temple, and they heartily welcomed our return. I picked up a two-foot by four-foot piece of wood and intended to use it as a weapon. There was no attack that night, but at 3:00 A.M. a police car slowly cruised by. I went out to meet them. The policeman was alarmed to see me carrying the two-by-four, and he told me to put it down and to get back into the temple. There are many other details to this event and the court case that followed. I hoped my memory would be useful to Giriraja Maharaja.

### ***Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 2***

The four volumes of *Prabhupada Meditations* were written shortly after finishing *Prabhupada-lilamrta*. I felt I was still immersed in Prabhupada consciousness and empowered to write about him. *Prabhupada Meditations* are important books for devotees wanting to know more about the person Srila

Prabhupada.

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### **Meditation #13**

“One time during the 1977 Mayapura festival, Srila Prabhupada called me into his room. I guessed that he may have called for me because we had been associating together for a month while I was his personal secretary, first in Bhuvaneswara and then for awhile in Mayapura. Or maybe it had something to do with his reappointing me to the editorship of *Back to Godhead*. Since I was supposed to be writing essays, perhaps he wanted to give me a special chance to hear philosophy and preaching.

“It was early in the morning, not long after *mangala arati*, and I was chanting *japa* in my room. His servant was Hari Sauri, but there were also men posted outside his room to run errands and be guards. One of them came to me and said, ‘Prabhupada wants to see you.’ I left my room and walked onto the stone veranda. When I descended to the second floor, I walked past the main stairway and straight for Prabhupada’s room. There was a light coming through the lattice window. The guard outside knew that Prabhupada wanted to see me, and so I went inside and made my obeisances before His Divine Grace.

“Srila Prabhupada was sitting at his low desk. The room was dark with only a small desk lamp. He was quiet and serious, but relaxed. He said, ‘I have been dictating this morning from the Tenth Canto about transmigration. I wanted you to hear.’

“‘Yes, Prabhupada.’

“He paused before pushing the switch on the Dictaphone and said, ‘Why can't they understand the philosophy of transmigration? What is the objection? Any intelligent person can understand that the body changes. This is explained very nicely in this morning's *Bhagavata*. You should write articles and vigorously preach and explain this in *Back to Godhead*. Why they don't understand this simple philosophy?’

“‘You have made it clear, Prabhupada,’ I said, ‘and Krsna also makes it clear in the *Bhagavad-gita* that the body is changing. But people are just too dull.’

“Prabhupada pushed the reverse button on the Dictaphone, and then the machine began to play. The Dictaphone speaker was not meant for comfortable hearing, and so it was a somewhat tinny reproduction of Prabhupada's voice. After each phrase you could hear the click of the pause button. As I remember it now, he played me this section:

“‘One's consciousness, therefore, must always be absorbed in Krsna, and then one's life will be successful. Otherwise the

mind will carry one to another material body. The soul will be placed in the semen of a father and discharged into the womb of a mother. The semen and ovum create a particular type of body according to the father and mother, and when the body is mature, the soul emerges in that body and begins a new life. This is the process of transmigration of the soul from one body to another (*tatha dehantara-praptih*).

Unfortunately, those who are less intelligent think that when the body disappears, everything is finished. The entire world is being misled by such fools and rascals. But as stated in *Bhagavad-gita* (2.20) *na hanyate hanyamane sarire*. The soul does not die when the body is destroyed; rather, the soul takes on another body.’ (*Bhag.* 10.1.43, purport)

“Prabhupada then turned off the machine and talked more about transmigration. It was thrilling to be called into Prabhupada's presence and to see him in his essence—the early morning *Bhagavatam* speaker. I felt that he had called me into the inner sanctum, where he dictates the books, by allowing me to hear the playback, so that I could catch some of the urgency.

“By remembering this moment, I wish to impress upon my mind, ‘Please understand the importance of what Prabhupada was saying and

understand the importance of Prabhupada himself. Remember always that he called you into his room and explained transmigration. How can you forget it? Why don't you remember it more?’

“Dear Srila Prabhupada, I want to worship that memory of you calling me in. I want to become fixed in the ABCs of transmigration, not dogmatically, but by understanding all the reasons. Although I may be familiar with skepticism, let me defeat it. As Krsna says, ‘The doubts that have arisen in your heart because of ignorance should be slashed with the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga, stand and fight.’

“As Prabhupada played the tape, I was very attentive because he was right there listening as I listened. I was blissful because he wanted me to hear the philosophy, because he was preaching to me to become serious and to become a preacher myself. All the memories are like that—they are not to be forgotten; they are meant to renew our gratefulness. They are means to help us learn the lessons that Prabhupada was giving us.”

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### **Meditation #5.1: Remembering Prabhupada on Janmastami Day**

“While attending the Janmastami festival at the ISKCON farm in Czechoslovakia, I was asked to give a lecture about the appearance of

Lord Krsna. Afterward, I asked for questions, and an elderly, red-haired lady raised her hand. Since almost all the devotees here speak only Czech, I was surprised when she began to speak in English. She said, ‘Satsvarupa Goswami, could you tell us something about Prabhupada, because you knew him very well?’

“I started out by remembering Janmastami 1966 in the storefront:

‘The room we are in now reminds me of that storefront,’ I said. ‘It was about the same size. 1966 was the first year Prabhupada observed Janmastami in America. In 1965, he left India and observed Janmastami at sea a few days later. By 1966, ISKCON had just begun. So he asked the devotees to stay all day in the storefront and fast.

“His request seemed like a very difficult proposal. Some of us expressed doubt that we could do it, so Swamiji said, “If you get hungry or weak in the afternoon, you can take some fruit from our refrigerator.”

“When he said that, it gave us some hope, because it seemed almost impossible that a living being could go all day without eating. He wanted us to try for it, and yet it was not such a hard and fast rule, that we had to do it or die.

“Fasting was one problem, and another problem was what to do all day? How to control the mind? When

Prabhupada stayed with us in the storefront, reading his manuscript from the *Bhagavad-gita*, then it was very enjoyable. But whenever he left us alone, our consciousness and conversation dropped way down. We began to complain, “I don't think I can do this. How does he expect us to stay like this all day? This is like being in prison, you can't even leave the temple.”

“Even while Prabhupada was present, one of the disciples who was later to be initiated as Janaki dasi said, “Swamiji, I am sorry but I have to leave. I have to go home and feed my cats.” Swamiji said, “No, do not do it. Stay here and you can take care of them later.” Janaki thought about it but then said, “I'm sorry, I have to go and take care of them.”

“The rest of us reluctantly surrendered and stayed there for a whole day, which very slowly turned into afternoon and night. We sat against the wall drowsily and weakly, trying to chant on our new red beads.

“I went on to tell the devotees about the jar of ISKCON bullets that Prabhupada kept in a corner of his room upstairs. Most of his devotees had been cigarette smokers, and almost everyone committed illicit sex. This jar of ISKCON bullets was like the last resort against temptation. If

you became agitated, before you broke any of the principles, you knew you could go up at any time and take a *gulabjamun*, an ISKCON bullet.

“When I finished talking about the 1966 Janmastami, one of the *brahmacaris* raised his hand. He wore a saffron *dhoti* but his hair was quite long, although a *sikha* was also stuck in among his long hairs. This same devotee had asked me several technical questions in lectures I had given on previous days. One of his questions was, ‘How did Lord Siva appear as one of the associates of Lord Caitanya?’ Another question was, ‘Is it true that Lord Krsna was not worshiped before His actual appearance, but that before His appearance, He was always worshiped in the Salagrama-sila?’ When he raised his hand again I thought, ‘Oh, here we go again.’ But the question was, ‘In Czechoslovakia, we do not have Prabhupada’s biography except for the one volume. Could you tell us more about what it was like when Prabhupada went to sing in the park in New York City? Did he bring a carpet? Were you there? What was it like?’

“That was a nice setup. I said, ‘You mention carpet. Yes, there was a carpet. We had an old carpet that someone

had given us. We started out, about ten or twelve devotees along with Prabhupada, and we walked to the park.’

“I told how we went through the streets and people hooted and jeered. Prabhupada was sober and transcendental to it. After all, Prabhupada had said that he was ‘a Calcutta boy.’ In his boyhood, he has seen hoodlums stabbing people, prostitutes on the streetcorners, and had even run away from a man who tried to kill him during a Hindu-Muslim riot. He was not fazed by a few hoots.

“I said that once we got to the park, we were a little shy. I thought that some of my old friends might come around and see me, and I was embarrassed. But when Prabhupada began to sing the names of the previous *acaryas* and then Hare Krsna.... we sat close to him.

“He was like a mother and father. Just as little children stay close to their parents when they are afraid, we stayed close to our spiritual parent. We sat with him on the rug, inside his world, which he had created within the ‘big’ world of Tompkins Square Park.

“I told about the Ukrainians, Polish, old people, and younger Puerto Ricans who lived in that neighborhood, and the middle-class American hippies who had come from

different parts of the country to live there. The hippies came around with their flutes and drums and guitars. Prabhupada sang strongly for an hour and a half, gave a little speech, and then sang again. Then we walked back to the storefront. Many guests came with us, and we distributed cups of sweet rice to them. Then Prabhupada went up to his room and talked some more.

“In Czechoslovakia, I told the devotees how the Swami encouraged us to get up and dance in the park.

Brahmananda and Acyutananda used to do it regularly. One time Prabhupada looked at me and gestured that I should get up and dance. At first I was not sure he meant me, and so I turned around and looked behind me. I looked at him again. Yes, he meant me.

“I was hesitant to dance because I had seen one of my college friends in the crowd in the park. Now they would see me with my arms up and dancing with the Swami. What would they think? What would they talk about among themselves? There I was dancing in the park to this religious Hindu chant. But then I thought, ‘I don't care what they think. I am Swami's boy, Swami's man, and I am going to get

up and dance. It is blissful and I will show my bliss; I'll do it.”

### **From *Shack Notes: Moments While at a Writing Retreat***

*Shack Notes* was intended to be solitary writing exploring the free write process. I wrote alone in the austere summer shack that Samika Rsi had constructed for me in the little woods in his backyard. In addition to writing alone, I used to take several devotees out there with me, and we would practice reading the *Krsna* book and then, on our own, visualize the scene being described in our own words. Here is an excerpt of that visualization with my devotee friends:

**“6:00 P.M.**

“We listened to passages from ‘The Autumn Season in Vrndavana.’ I especially liked the descriptions of Krsna and the boys sheltering inside the cave on Govardhana during a sudden rain. When the rain stops, they come out and sit on a rock, and eat their lunch, surrounded by cows resting in the fresh grass. The cows are tired from carrying their heavy milk bags, but when they hear Krsna calling their names, they become joyful and go to Him.

“In the next chapter, ‘The *Gopis* Attracted by the Flute,’ there is a statement by Prabhupada endorsing our practice of full participation and visualization of *krsna-lila*:

“Persons who are constantly engaged in the transcendental meditation of seeing Krsna, internally and externally, by thinking of Him playing the flute, and entering the Vrndavana forest, have really attained the perfection of *samadhi*. *Samadhi* (trance) means absorption of all the activities of the senses in a particular object, and the *gopis* indicate that the pastimes of Krsna are the perfection of all meditation and *samadhi*. It is also confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gita* that anyone who is always absorbed in thought of Krsna is the topmost of all yogis.

—*Krsna*, Vol. 1, p. 147-48

“Let’s always do this,’ I said. I want to live with at least a few like-minded friends and every day have this kind of meeting where there is love and trust to talk about our feelings for Krsna. We have to feel free to say, ‘I felt my old skepticism tonight.’ Or, ‘Usually I hold back, but tonight I tried placing myself beside Krsna in the pastime.’ We don’t criticize or judge what others say. We can discuss that later, if necessary. Let there be a sacred time to share visualized impressions. Krsna, Prabhupada, may I do this? And if something isn’t proper, will you correct me?

“We are invited to think of the person Krsna in His most lovable form in Vrndavana. We have heard how His parents love Him and see Him, and how the *gopas* play with Him. Now we are hearing how the *gopis* are disturbed and distracted into loving madness when they hear Krsna's flute.

“In the chapter on autumn, we get a picture of how a person is cleared of dirty consciousness. I will need that in order to hear of Krsna with the *gopis*.”

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“Rama Raya said that cloudy, misty days like today seem to be mystical. One senses a presence. He said that he now knows that the mystical-something of a hazy day is the presence of Krsna. As he said this, thunder rumbled overhead.”

## Writing Sessions

*The following excerpts of spontaneous writing practice were done in Vrndavana and Wicklow, Ireland, 1993.*

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“Krsna, Krsna  
 this broken part,  
 this burnt preparation, this

“vegetable in the pot, this sweet-which-is-too-sweet, this salty water—this raunchy, ego-centered song . . . is not fit to offer to You. And even if I do offer it, I shouldn’t be gleeful, ‘Just see, I offered Him a mad, muddy song because I am so free and honest.’

“Yes there is joy  
 in the heart  
 when one attempts it.”

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“Language fails to express the highest things in *krsna-prema*, the beauty of Krsna and the *gopis*. It appears language also fails on the low level when the neophyte devotee hasn’t got a clean heart or *bhava*, but he keeps writing anyway.

“In honesty, he refuses to say something “nice” but insincere for him. He also needs to use his whole self and his creative drive.”

(October 24, 1993

Vrndavana)

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“All branches of knowledge, including the writing art and self-expression, diary-keeping too, may be engaged in the service of the Lord, and then they are factually *hari-katha*. “Unless one is a servant of Krsna and the Vaisnavas . . . . one should not attempt to write *hari-katha*”?

One quote seems to say yes, go ahead, transform whatever you do and its glorification of God; the other says you have to be a top-class devotee.

“This is the way to preach, and we see it does bring good results. There are many ways to convince, assure, inspire people to practice and go on the whole life practicing Krsna consciousness. The story of one who persists over obstacles . . . Find ways to creatively stay young while dying . . . Who is dedicated to Prabhupada? This convinces people. So, it is preaching, and don’t let someone with a limited idea of preaching tell you otherwise.

“Whether I know it or not, it is for self-purification that I write this book.”

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“You could write a book remembering all the years since he’s gone and where you have gone in that time, when you and I were young, Maggie blues, when we blooped and when we recovered, when we blasphemed and had to suffer, when we grew puffed up and the girl

smiled, and the ice cracked, and the Utopia faded and the Coast Guard said, through megaphones, “Go back to shore, this can’t last, this unprecedented extension of the ocean as a walking place. Dear People, we order you to go back before you all sink. (And this becomes an oddity in history, when so many died thinking it was Good Times arrived.)

“Come on baby, let the good times roll. Come on and let me fill your soul with tidings of great joy. Well it’s true, but say it softer now or in a different way.

“I believe Krsna killed demons and lifted Govardhana Hill. I heard the news, He’s the lover of the *gopis*. I heard we can hear about the *kunjās*. We can hear about the *manjaris*.

“Oh, did you hear?

Massa’s gone in hiding.

Did you hear,

Massa’s got a broken leg.

“They changed the rule in the Catholic Church so that if you miss Sunday Mass, you don’t necessarily go to hell. But by then I was going to the temple every single day, so it was all right.

“At *mangala-arati* this self-satisfied righteous soul thought, ‘I am saved,’ and he was, so long as he stayed in the shelter of the guru and the Lord.”

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“On this day, I’m going to remember my spiritual master and speak about it. I’m going to see him in the mandir in his golden form, and I’ll see the Deities he installed. Someone is playing harmonium and singing. I can hear it, and the *chokidhar* blows his whistle. Crime and criminals are here too. But everyone, hoodlums included, chants *jaya Radhe-Shyama!* No place like it, but short visits are recommended lest familiarity breed contempt.

“I don’t know how long you can keep it up.”

(October 4, 1993

Vrndavana)

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“Our beloved spiritual master who traveled all over the world, not with motive of self-aggrandizement. He was regal, had beautiful hands with fine half-moon fingernails, wore a sweater for cold weather in Europe and America. Now Gaudiya Vaisnava *sannyasis* travel as his servants or

some apart from him. We suspect  
of motive other than  
the pure drive which moved our  
Guru Maharaja.

I'd like to read more books of his activities. Do it  
and don't be jealous. Write your own too. That's  
your privilege in life.

Until then I know  
what you want from me,  
serving you in separation.

Tune and words going through my head at night  
while pain and sleepless.

Suresvara doing them a good turn, turning  
them on to writing.

I do it for the same reason. We are all beginners.

Yes, I know what you mean.

End this session at quota. I know how you feel to  
be alive and glad to write. And now be glad to  
chant *japa*.

They've got less to live for  
than you do.

Sandy lanes back and forth

between here and temple  
 my life ain't yours and  
 yours ain't mine.

But we meet.

ISKCON pirates, flags  
 of all nations, in haste.

Bernice Jennings, Cub Scout den mother who revealed  
 to us the feminine charms while we were eight years old.

But you've got to outgrow that.

Now the pigs have the same, and the monkeys and  
 you can see it as you like in the humans too. But  
 you are a *sannyasi* and need to *Nyasa*  
 renounce what isn't favorable.

I forgive you your sex memories but request you  
 to spit

not savor

and get on to your work,

Dreamer!"

(November 1, 1993

Vrndavana)

“Reading Srila Prabhupada’s letter to Raja Patrap, who wrote *Religion of Love*. ‘Your approach is dogmatic,’ Srila Prabhupada says, ‘because you don’t quote the authority of *sastra*.’

“Remember what Srila Prabhupada says and repeat that on all occasions.

Take it easy.

Going alone

the enjoyable and the suffering. Go out now and speak what comes. It will be

fun and good results.

You’re saving yourself for that.

“The present,

the present,

How much can you take?

Take a little, take

shelter of the Lord’s lotus feet.”

(November 11, 1993

Wicklow, Ireland)

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“You can’t expect always peak moments of bliss and enlightenment, accept *that*. Do your duty in a writing retreat. And your duty of regular writing sessions. You keep doing it, you keep going and do it, as we say, from the heart.

“Write the best you can always.

Krsna. Gifts they gave me—a tape recorder to borrow, a meal, a servant.

A budge, a bulwark.

A life to spend or misspend.

The book of the spiritual master.

Teaching.

The whole world is going on

the misconception of the body.

“If one doesn’t know that the self is spirit, then he’s a fool, even if he has a Ph.D., D.D.D., or whatever. He who lives on the body concept is a fool. This is not even the advanced stage of spiritual life. It’s the beginning.

“So take this from Srila Prabhupada. Then you go and tell others. Be enthusiastic to preach the basic message to the ignorant. Yes, I will tell them. Maybe some day I will be enthusiastic, the way my spiritual

master is, to tell people, to help them, and I'll be ready to fight the opposition with reason and logic. Maybe that day will come.

“Yes, maybe that day will come. *Haribol!*

*Alanka-kirtana*, unbroken.

This little fellow put his feet into hot water up to the ankles, a kind of shock treatment because they're usually so cold.

Well, the body has to be serviced. The writer has to write.

Gale winds through

each crack and crevice of the house. My flashing ink under the desk lamp.

Don't be afraid to let loose. This is not an Irish ballad.

Daddy,

I want to be a devotee.

Read to me.

'You read to yourself.'

Who is on the phone?

Daddy, I want to be a

devotee.

Read to yourself.

Why do you write, and what do you expect to get?

“I wuz sayin’ the simple truth, for practice sake, reading for reading’s sake, for the pleasure of Krsna, even if I don’t get some immediate pleasure.”

(November 13, 1993

Wicklow, Ireland)

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***The following are writing sessions I wrote in the van, on the road, driving from Spain to Ireland, where we would take up a Karttika writing retreat. I wanted the writing sessions on the road to be a prelude to the book Karttika Lights.***

“You could make a quota of one hour, or maybe eight pages, which is a little short of that. We used to write timed books in that way. Often we were striving to break through manfully. As in the George Harrison song:

“Got a lot of work to do

Try to get a message through

And get back out of this material world.’

“Now I am more looking to just flow along and let the process just take me, not dynamiting the mountain. I want to flow with the creeks, come down like the rains here. Let me work through.”

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“But what about a more structured book? Shouldn’t you have decided beforehand on a form and a topic, and execute it?”

“No, I have trusted in this process and will continue with this way. The trust increases; the result has come many times. Give us a hundred pages and we will see what comes out of the process to select the best and share it. Even if this writing is an admission of not being able to write, that is also a feeling worth sharing. Other devotees may also think, ‘I am not able to mother, I am not able to teach, I cannot work with the oxen well or distribute books, I am helpless.’ When you feel like that yet you want to serve Krsna, then you can advance to love of Krsna Krsna Krsna.”

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“Lord Caitanya taught the philosophy based on Vedanta to Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and Prakasananda. But to Ramananda Raya, He spoke the highest teachings about Radha and Krsna. This is in Prabhupada’s own writings. Think of him writing his books in Vrndavana. Think of his molding his life according to the instructions of his guru. I truly like the “romance” of his writing in pen on page in places like Jhansi and of course Vrndavana, and using that manual typewriter in Chippiwada. Abhaya, the writer, I am with him. I can tell others about

it. I think about it myself. I'm like a child imitating my father. I get up to write at midnight and write in the afternoon again. But whereas he writes sensible, logical essays convincing in the way of Krsna and the need to follow the Vedic conclusions, I write as his *sisya* but in this personal way, this free-write—don't say 'nonsense'—but you know what I mean.”

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“There are people like me, unhinged, and this is speaking to them. Sri Krsna. It is speaking to my own need, first of all, to let unhampered words of the self come out. You don't know what you are doing, but Krsna, Krsna is coming sincerely out of your fingers and pulse, Krsna, Krsna is coming in waves that can be traced on hospital machines, and this is one—it's coming out in waves of self, words of Krsna, Krsna, the waves of relax and tense, and the rhythm of ebb and flow, and of the literature we found and read all those years, looking for good prose and poems.”

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“You guys have to do your thing for Krsna, and I am doing mine. Be strong in that assertion.”

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“Hare Krsna. Please keep going. The movement of the hand is the heart. The purpose is a dance, and you are not allowed to stop. You will feel better when it’s over. There are trials and duties. The mail is on the way, the editing of books is your source of joy and satisfaction. There are duties. There are triumphs in life, even though things don’t always go your way. So the successful coming out of books is Krsna’s mercy on you, and when those books reach far-off people and they are favorably impressed and they say you have helped them, then you have the fullest satisfaction. That’s your reward, and you should not forget it. Recall it so that you can go on and not succumb to the outer (and especially inner) critics who tell you that you are a bum and your way of writing should be stopped. No, continue it. Write on Krsna’s side and speed out the words of Krsna consciousness through the stories of daily efforts.

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“Snow flies in an Arab desert. The poems, the obscure ones, seeking some relief from the tyranny and stuffiness of words. Take chance and error, surreal game, don’t worry anymore about logical sense and those connections. Yes, but insert Krsna consciousness or live in the K.C. camp. The interrogators believed they could coop up pigeons and snakes to be slaughtered. The man said, ‘Don’t talk of that stuff, but

liberate us from typing mistakes.’

“Go slower if you have to so we can read what you wrote later.”

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“Edgar Allan Poe committed suicide when he was 23 in 1945, after the Nazis retreated from Bern. At that time Poe was a raven living in Baltimore, in black brass form. He asked Allen Ginsberg if it was all right, and A.G. said, ‘I don’t know, I’ll have to ask Walt Whitman.’ I wrote little stuff like that in the attic, with photos of Rilke (and Fyodor Dostoyevsky) cut out and some businessman’s blurbs underneath. A friend, Lenny, said my humor was like that of *Mad* magazine. I hadn’t thought of it that way.

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“Krsna Krsna Krsna, the words come out. The practice of writing, and the first thoughts as taught by Natalie Goldberg. Sounds all right, but how does it fit in with the teachings of Krsna consciousness? You have to accept K.C., and it must come first, no matter what some writing school says. I can say that first thoughts are the honest ones without censorship. I can say that it is an experience that I write as honestly as possible. It is good to do, not only for a nondevotee but a devotee also. Because he can become smug or too righteous, thinking he is always

right in his institution. First thoughts help him to learn his actual mind. I need that. I don't want to be just a group thinker. I want to know where I fall short, where I doubt, what is my lust and anger so I can curb it. And writing practice will help me be a writer who can go past the stuffy, perfect, boring prose and say things as they are. Of course, that will do good, that will flower in a presentation of Krsna consciousness. I can share it. Yes, I want to be a good writer for Krsna, and these are methods. They take a long while; you are practicing many hours. You are trying to get good at it. Then when you find a structure that will take you along, you can pour what you have learned into that. You see? Yes, I can believe this or not. But I think there is stuff in here I can learn.”