

## ***Free Write Journal #81***

### **Free Writes**

#### **Gaura Purnima**

I've been invited to speak at a Gaura Purnima event at Keli Lalita's house on Saturday. I will say Lord Caitanya had an external and a confidential reason for His appearance. First Lord Krsna, in His original blackish form, appeared in Dvarapayuga and sported in Vrndavana with His eternally liberated associates. At that time Krsna killed many demons, but that was done by the Visnu portion within Him. Krsna actually appeared to enliven the Vrndavana devotees who were so anxious to see Him.

When Krsna returns to Goloka Vrndavana, Krsnadasa Kaviraja in *Caitanyacaritamrta* tells us His thoughts. Krsna thought, "For a long time I have not manifest unalloyed spontaneous love upon the devotees. Worship of Me in awe and reverence does not make Me subordinate to the devotee." With this in mind, Krsna decided to descend in the form of His devotee to personally relish spontaneous feelings with His pure devotees. This was the appearance of Lord Caitanya, who is Krsna Himself in disguise as a pure devotee. Prior to the time of His appearance, there was no pure devotional service in Navadvipa. The leader of the Vaisnavas, Advaita Acarya, who is *visnu-tattva*, lamented for the absence of pure devotion. He

thought that unless Krsna Himself appeared, the situation would be hopeless.

Advaita Acarya worshiped Krsna with *tulasi* and water and the Salagrama-sila. He cried out to Krsna in a loud voice, imploring Him to descend. Krsna first sent the devotees who would be Lord Caitanya's elders, such as His father, Jagannatha Misra, His mother, Saci, Lord Nityananda, Advaita Acarya, and so on. Then He appeared in the year 1486 at the time of a lunar eclipse, when everyone was chanting Hare Krsna. The Lord was given the names Visvambhara (the maintainer of the universe), and Nimai (a name given to Him by the ladies to protect Him from witches and evil spirits). In His young boyhood, He was very mischievous and teased the girls His age who came to the Ganges to worship Siva for a good husband. When He grew a little older, He began His studies. He was the most brilliant student of His teacher. In one day He would completely master the lessons of Sanskrit grammar that He was taught. He appeared to everyone to be a very proud scholar. He did not take part in the Krsna conscious activity that was led by Advaita Acarya.

The Vaisnavas saw Nimai Pandita as an extraordinarily beautiful boy, and they wished He could become a pure Vaisnava. The Lord defeated all scholars in debate, including an all-India champion when He was only a young child. When He was of a suitable age, His mother arranged a marriage with Laksmi-devi, who was the goddess of fortune. Nimai then traveled to Gaya to make offerings of *pinda* for the welfare of His departed father Jagannatha Misra.

“While He was there, He met with Isvara Puri, the disciple of the great Vaisnava Madhavendra Puri. Nimai was very impressed with Isvara Puri, and Isvara

Puri became very attached to Nimai. Nimai finally asked Isvara Puri to give Him Vaisnava initiation. This completely changed Nimai's life. He returned from Gaya as an ecstatic devotee of Krsna. He gave up His proud demeanor and His absorption in mundane scholarship. To His students, He taught everything with the conclusion of worship to Krsna. Then He began the nightly *kirtanas* in the house of Srivasa Pandita. He joined with the great Vaisnavas of Navadvipa and held all-night ecstatic *kirtanas*. Everyone who saw Him became a Vaisnava, and thus He fulfilled His mission of spreading love of God through the chanting of the holy names.

In addition to His mission of spreading the holy names, Lord Caitanya had a confidential reason for His appearance. When He previously appeared as Lord Krsna, He felt there were three desires of His which were unfulfilled. This was in His relationship with His beloved Srimati Radharani. Krsna felt He wanted to know the position of Radharani, but He was unable to do so because She is the female reciprocator in Their dealings, and He is the transcendental male. Krsna's other unfulfilled desire was to know the nature of His own beauty which so much attracted Radharani. This also He could not appreciate as Krsna Himself. The third unfulfilled desire was that He wanted to know the bliss of Radharani. When the Divine Couple met, They both felt unlimited bliss. But the bliss of Radharani was much greater than Krsna's. He wanted to know Radharani's bliss, but He could not do it. Therefore, Krsna appeared in Kali-yuga as Lord Caitanya. Lord Caitanya is Krsna Himself but in a golden complexion and in the mood of Radharani. Lord Caitanya experienced all the feelings of Radharani, especially Her mood of separation from

Krsna. These are the external and confidential reasons for the appearance of Lord Caitanya.

## **Book Report**

In our out-loud reading of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, we have just finished the Ninth Chapter, “The Most Confidential Knowledge.” One my favorite verses and purports is 9.30: “Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination.”

In the purport, Prabhupada writes,

“The words *sadhur eva*, ‘He is saintly’ are very emphatic. They are a warning to the nondevotees (and the devotees) that because of an accidental falldown a devotee should not be derided; he should still be considered saintly, even if he has accidentally fallen down. And the word *mantavyah* is even still more emphatic. If one does not follow this rule and derides a devotee for his accidental falldown, then one is disobeying the order of the Supreme Lord. The only qualification of a devotee is to be unflinchingly, exclusively engaged in devotional service.”

In the *Nrsimha Purana*, a statement is given. The meaning is that even if one fully engaged in the service of the Lord is sometimes found engaged in abominable

activities, these activities should be considered to be like pockmarks on the moon. Such spots do not become an impediment to the diffusion of moonlight. Similarly, the accidental falldown of a devotee on the path of saintly character does not make him abominable.

And the following verse is also relevant: “He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.” In Prabhupada’s purport, he states,

“The question remains: how can a person engaged in abominable activities—either by accident or by intention—be a pure devotee? This question may justly be raised. The miscreants, as stated in the Seventh Chapter, who will never come to the devotional service of the Lord, have no good qualifications, as is stated in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in cleansing all kinds of material contamination from the heart. He puts the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, and all sinful contaminations are naturally washed away.

Continuous thinking of the Supreme Lord makes him pure by nature.

According to the Vedas, there is a certain regulation that if one falls down from his exalted position, he has to undergo certain ritualistic processes to purify himself. But here there is no condition, because the purifying process is already there in the heart of the devotee, due to his

remembering the Supreme Personality of Godhead constantly. Therefore the chanting of Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare should be continued without stoppage. This will protect the devotee from all accidental falldowns. He will thus remain perpetually free from all material contaminations.”

(*Bhagavad-gita* 9.31, purport)

### **Visakha d.d.**

Visakha is leaving today after a six-and-a-half-week stay. It has been a great treat to have her here. Almost every day she cooked an elaborate Italian meal. This has been wonderful not only for the residents of Viraha Bhavan but for the guests to our ashram. She was able to stay so long because the vegan restaurant she was cooking for closed down. She has been inquiring about employment in another restaurant, but the scare of the coronavirus from China has hit Italy, and tourism is affected; people are not traveling there, schools are closed, and the big Venice carnival has been canceled. Visakha is returning to Italy with considerable anxiety for finding a job.

She has been a good sport at Viraha Bhavan, cooking and taking turns in the out-loud readings. As a disciple, she has bonded with me in respect and affection.

### **New Book**

Exciting news: the entire shipment of *Meditations and Poems* has arrived from

the printers! We have received them well in advance of the date we will distribute them (at the July 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of disciples). The credit for the early completion of the book goes to Lal Krishna of Oxford. He not only worked speedily but did an excellent job on the layout and covers. The poems appear in neat, stylish columns. The print font is nicely traditional. The covers are colorful, with my primitive art. As for the quality of the poems, I was encouraged by Bhurijana's response. He is deeply immersed in the study of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, having written "detailed overviews" of all the Cantos. Bhurijana said that my poems were written "hipster-style," but he read them "with joy." Coming from such a scholar, his estimation of my poems made me elated.

As for Lal Krishna, I have another manuscript I want designed for publication on my Vyasa-puja day in early December. This is called *Kaleidoscope*, and it has a long section of poems entitled "Exhaustion and Recovery." This section is stream-of-consciousness and is as daring as anything I've done. John Endler is writing an introductory essay to this section explaining its place in world literature and giving evidence that it is definitely Krsna conscious.

### **Closure on an Era of Art**

There are reasons I've stopped doing visual art. Some time ago I was confined in the hospital for a week and a half with pneumonia. My muscle tone became deconditioned. When I got out of the hospital, I was weak, especially in the legs, and I became unable to go up and down the stairs to the basement, where my art space is

located. I also lost faith in my ability and talent to do art under the umbrella of “outsider art.” I looked at the illustrations and the BBT books and I was intimidated. Although my art had been recognized as really good by connoisseurs of naïve art or outsider art, I no longer had the inspiration to do it. I was tired of making my childlike figures of Krsna conscious personalities, and I definitely didn’t want to do mundane persons. At one point I tried to do art in my upstairs room in my chair. We brought together all my felt pens, and I did one picture that satisfied me. It had a portrait of Lord Caitanya dancing, three Jagannatha Deities, and two other persons who aren’t devotees. I was satisfied with it; it seemed good. But I didn’t have the heart to do more. I am satiated and don’t seem to be able to do more *krsna-katha* at my level of craftsmanship. I have a stock of paintings in storage, but there is no one to distribute them.

At the same time, I’ve been driven to increase my writing. I’ve been working with Rev. John Endler and producing retrospective books of poetry and prose that I did 20 years ago in *Every Day, Just Write*. We are publishing four books in 2020, and I am fired up to do it. I like the hip style of the poetry. It’s Krsna conscious and full of improvisation and stream-of-consciousness. I find it exciting. I’m happy to publish this work from a period when I was writing with great freedom and confidence. But the visual art seems to be a thing of the past, unless some extraordinary change were to take place within me.

## **Doomsday**

I received an email from a disciple in Canada: “Dear Gurudeva, the comet is coming. Buy food. The supermarkets in North Italy got cleaned out in two days. At least think about it.” This reminds me of the year 2000 and Y2K. The GBC of Gita Nagari took it seriously and “made preparations.” They asked me what I thought about it, and I said,

“We each have our own doomsday, our time of death, and we should be ready for that. Maharaja Pariksit was cursed to die in seven days, and he took it without panic. He sat down on the bank of the Yamuna, surrounded by sages, and heard *Srimad-Bhagavatam* from Sukadeva Gosvami. He said, ‘Let the snake-bird bite me. You just go on singing the glories of Visnu.’” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam*, 1.19.15)

This is how we should respond to predictions of disaster—remember Lord Krsna’s words in *Bhagavad-gita*: “Declare it boldly, O Arjuna, My devotee will never perish.” (Bg. 9.31) If there is ever a time of mass annihilation, Krsna’s devotees will transfer to His *sac-cid-ananda* abode.

## **Painting**

There is a large painting in my bedroom which portrays a stocky, bare-chested *sadhu* (like Bhaktivinoda Thakura?) sitting cross-legged and fingering his *japa mala*, held in two hands outside of the bead bag. The lettering in the upper right-

hand corner reads: “The *sadhu*’s chanting chases away the evil man.” There is a long skinny demon running, afraid, out of the picture. Additional lettering reads, “To Jaya-Gopala d.d.” She was a good distributor of my books and was influential in bringing students at Penn State University to a serious interest in Krsna consciousness. But Jaya-Gopala is challenged. She is often in duress mentally and physically. And she has a tendency to find fault with devotees. Despite her handicaps, the devotees are sympathetic to her because she is so sincere. Therefore I dedicated the painting to her, wishing the dedicated chanter of Hare Krsna would drive away the evil spirits that trouble her.

## **Govardhana**

When Sastra returned from Vrndavana, he gifted me with a panoramic picture of Govardhana Hill. The first impression is how reduced the Hill is. It appears to be merely a low collection of rocks. According to the story of Govardhana, long, long ago He used to be a lofty mountain said to be 80 miles high. One time Pulastya Muni, a mystic sage, asked to carry beautiful Govardhana to his home in Kasi to perform austerities. Govardhana’s father Dronachal reluctantly agreed, on the condition that Pulastya wouldn’t put Him down along the way. But if the sage did put Him down, then Govardhana couldn’t move any further from that place.

Things were going along all right, but then the sage suddenly felt the call of nature. He couldn’t delay but had to briefly put Govardhana down to tend to the call of nature. He put the Hill down in the area of Vrndavana. When the sage came back

from his call of nature, Govardhana wouldn't move, according to their original agreement. The sage became angry that Govardhana wouldn't move and cursed Him to reduce in size every year by the size of a mustardseed. This reduction has been going on for many centuries, and now what once was a lofty mountain is a pile of rocks. But it is still sacred and glorious, and devotees circumambulate Govardhana Hill and hold Govardhana Puja once a year.

***Writing in Gratitude: Collected Poems, 1992-1994***

“Time in ISKCON passes fast because  
our whole time with Prabhupada took  
place in a little over ten years.  
Now 30 years has gone by in a flash.

“When Krsna appears, it's always good.  
A prisoner in Colorado detention wrote me,  
'At night I think over events of the day and feel  
grateful to Krsna and Prabhupada.' I wrote him  
back and said he was as good as a monk in a  
monastery; the world of prison forces him to

find shelter in the blissful Krsna conscious realm  
of Vrndavana, spiritual thoughts, *maha-mantra*.

“In ISKCON temples, in the evening  
only a few attend the last *arati*  
when Radha and Krsna stand in Their nightclothes.  
After the *arati* the *pujari* puts  
Them to bed. He may be tired,  
but if he's attentive and doesn't feel angry,  
("Why am I on the altar at night?")  
he's grateful and moves,  
clean in thoughts and body, under the lights, his  
careful hands arranging for overnight,  
he says goodnight, recites prayers from the book,  
turns out the lights, locks up. By then he  
may be the only one awake, except some  
late-comer begging for *maha-prasadam* or a  
*sankirtana* devotee returning from the streets.  
Maybe a mouse.  
I'm leaving this altar in the same way.  
‘Good night, Lords. Please allow me to come back  
and serve You early in the morning.

May it never end, from  
 this world to the next. May You always  
 enjoy Your pastimes in this temple, inconceivably.  
 May I be worthy.'

The *pujari* steps off the altar and  
 in front of the carved doors, bows and offers  
 prayers for relief from offenses committed during worship.”

\*

\*

\*

*“Matchless Gifts*

“The heater is humming.  
 We are back from our walk.  
 I could have talked out loud on the  
 lonely sea beach; it's a vast theater  
 all to myself. Ideal for poets.  
 But I preferred to chant Your names,  
 two rounds.

“I look out at the ocean breakers, dawn  
 hasn't arrived yet. I could talk, something  
 would come day after day, creative

in this lonely, grand place.  
I think about that but decide  
I'll go on chanting and hearing.  
Later perhaps I can remember some of it.  
“I walk for as long as I can—less than an hour  
before my ankle gives in and  
I start remembering  
how I broke both heels 30 years ago—  
the doctor in the hospital looked at me  
sympathetically, but as if I were crazy  
and had jumped out a window.  
Thank God I didn't die then.  
I thank You, Lord Acyuta,  
for immense fortune, the matchless gifts  
You give me every day.  
You are giving them to all of us  
if we can just wake up  
to receive them.”

***A Visit to Jagannatha Puri: A Pilgrimage Journal***

## “THE KING OF ORISSA AND HIS DEITIES

“Yesterday Narada Rsi and Baladeva went to see the king of Orissa. He maintains a large house right off Grand Road, near Jagannatha temple. His secretary admitted the devotees but said the king was engaged that day. Behind the secretary's desk is a large photo of the Jagannatha Deities at New Jagannatha Puri in Berkeley, California. The secretary was friendly, and he invited the devotees to return the next day. He also informed them that the only remains of the original king's palace are his Deities, which are maintained by the present king in Their original place.

“On this cue from the king's secretary, we went to visit the Deities, which supposedly have been worshiped since King Prataparudra's time and were seen by Lord Caitanya. This little temple, known as Radha-Kanta, is on the other side of the Jagannatha temple from the Gundica temple. The small ruin was originally built from large bricks still manufactured in Puri. We mounted the few steps up to the entrance, but an elderly *brahmin* stopped us there. ISKCON devotees were allowed in the day before but by a different *brahmin*. From the entrance we could see the brass Radha-Krsna Deities in the darkness of Their inner chamber. An old woman lying at the entrance told Narada Rsi that this

was the king's palace and his Deities. Next door to this ruin is a small temple with Siva-lingas, the outside of the building painted yellow, with a few figure decorations. Lord Caitanya supposedly also visited here.

“We walked toward the Siva temple, but the same *brahmin* ran ahead and locked the door, I then went to the window and looked in, but the *brahmin* objected to that also. I then petted a calf who was rummaging nearby in broken pots—just to do something that the *brahmin* might not object to, if that was possible. Another man came-up and asked if we were from ISKCON. He said he knew of Mayapur and seemed surprised that we were barred from this temple. The elderly *brahmin* had now mounted the stairs to his temple again to stand guard. He gestured to us to indicate that if we got a letter from the king of Orissa, then we could enter this temple.

\*

\*

\*

#### INTERVIEW WITH SRI SRI GAJAPATI MAHARAJA DIBYA SINGH DEV

“Baladeva and Narada Rsi were allowed to see him at the scheduled time. He is a cultured young man, educated in the West. He was pleased to receive the devotees.

“They asked him questions about King Prataparudra, but the king didn't know much. The kingship of Orissa is an office, and the present

king isn't in the same family as Prataparudra (the royal lineage has changed due to revolutions and other circumstances).

“They asked if he could help us dispel the myth that Prataparudra became weak after becoming a devotee. The king had heard scholars interpret it that way, but he said that others believe Lord Caitanya's advent came at a crucial time and started a renaissance of spiritual culture in Orissa. The present king said, ‘If King Prataparudra lost a few kilometers of territory, still, the gain in the spiritual field was more because that gain was eternal.’

“He explained his understanding of Jagannatha as universal. No other Deity in the Hindu pantheon, he said, has received such a wide review, and the king attributes a good deal of this to ISKCON's influence.

“To our questions about why ISKCON devotees can't enter the temple, he replied that Puri is the seat of *brahmin* orthodoxy. It's one of the most conventional places in India, where the same rituals have been followed for thousands of years without any reformation. He said there was great opposition by the priests to the introduction of electricity in the temple, what to speak of a change such as allowing foreigners, which is something that wasn't even conceived of until fifty years ago. He said that Jagannatha is emanating mercy all over the world and we simply have to tune in from wherever we are. It's not necessary to see His form

in the temple, but we can go about our devotional service based on our devotion to Him. And we can see Him when He comes out once a year.

“The king said that his own office has been stripped of all secular power and responsibility, and even though he is the chairman of the temple board, that position is also one of a figurehead. But despite all the political changes, he said, the religious connection of the king to Jagannatha remains. ‘I feel I’m not the king. I’m a servant of Lord Jagannatha. He’s the king.’ At most religious functions connected to Jagannatha, the king or his representative performs the rituals. And the main one is sweeping the road before the chariot during Ratha-yatra.”

***From Copper to Touchstone: Favorite Selections from Caitanya-caritamrta***

*SELECTED VERSES FROM CAITANYA-CARITAMRTA*

*murkha tumi, tomara nahika vedantadhikara*

*krsna-mantra japa sada,—ei mantra-sara (Adi 7.72)*

“Srila Prabhupada would often quote the first phrase of this verse—*murkha tumi*—‘you are a fool,’ and explain that Lord Caitanya took this position in order to teach us by His own example that no one should

think they are wise or competent to study Vedanta in this age while neglecting the holy name.

“Then Lord Caitanya told Prakasananda that His spiritual master had praised the glories of the holy name with the following verse, which He should keep within His throat:

*“harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam  
kalau nasty eva nasty eva nasty eva gatir anyatha*

“In this age of Kali there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative for spiritual progress than the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.’  
(*Brhan-naradiya Purana*)

“This is one of my favorite sections of *Caitanya-caritamrta*. In it, Lord Caitanya tells how He chanted Hare Krsna under His spiritual master's order and how He felt great bliss. He thought He was going mad. His spiritual master assured Him, however, that He was actually experiencing love of God:

“It is very good, my dear child, that You have attained the supreme goal of life by developing love of Godhead. Thus

You have pleased me very much, and I am very much obliged to You. My dear child, continue dancing, chanting and performing *sankirtana* in association with devotees.

Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting *krsna-nama*, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls.’ (*Adi* 7.91—92 )

“We can form our own decisions on the relationship between *bhajana* and preaching, but here is a *sastric* reference to support both. Prabhupada’s purport lifts the discussion of balancing *bhajana* and preaching off the relative plane and onto the level of *sastra*. The only question that may arise now is how to understand this verse and purport. Srila Prabhupada makes it clear, however, that we should both practice our *sadhana* and go out and preach.”

\*

\*

\*

## **Writing Sessions**

**Manu’s House**

**Gealum, North Ireland**

*June 12, 1996 (continued)*

“Ha! We are not this body. Some things are too horrible to mention. The stones turn soft when Krsna plays the flute. Prabhupada says the “horrible” things are due to our identification with matter. If we can believe and realize that we are not these bodies, then it need not affect us, either with our own suffering or the sufferings of others. We’ll understand that suffering is a mirage. The real self is the soul. Teach this to the ignorant masses; they are in need of it. Hare Krsna.

The Christians want to simply convert people to their own religion. Do we want to do the same? No, we want to teach the science of God, we want to be aware of that. This is a fine point—how Prabhupada himself never thought he was a Hindu but that Krsna consciousness was a nonsectarian teaching. In the ordinary sense it appears to be the claim the others make, that only our religion should be followed. At least we don’t condemn anyone else’s bhakti practices, but we approve those practices in their own religion. We do claim that there is more bhakti in Lord Caitanya’s flow than anywhere else.

“These thoughts in the early morning before you go on your walk. Be convinced in religion and *sanatana-dharma*. Krsna consciousness contains all that is taught to others. Krsna is the most relishable form of God.

“Chant a few rounds and then get out there on the trail. Leave

theology behind. You don't leave Krsna consciousness behind, but you try to get off the discursive platform and try to hear the holy names. As you give some care to the old carriage, this body, chant and chant. I know so many thoughts will come, and they are not bad thoughts, but it is better just to chant. Chant Hare Krsna, the prayer of calling out to God directly, calling His holy names, calling to Srimati Radharani, wanting to be the faithful son, pleasing the guru. 'To one who has unflinching faith, all the purports of the Vedas are revealed.' Go for that. The petty things that prevent you, such as the fact that English is a secondary language and that he sometimes makes mistakes in it, are not to be taken seriously. You expect him to also overlook things that are wrong in you. In the spiritual world, you will speak the same language.

“All despondency is caused by not directly glorifying Krsna. Open up and pour it on. Krsna dwells in Vrndavana and Mathura and Dvaraka. People who don't know who God is argue against them. Go ahead. Then we have to stop and not talk of 'Krsna' right away. (Srila Prabhupada: 'Krsna is far, far away.')

Talk first about the soul, even that they don't want to know. They're interested in working to research God's laws but not God Himself.”

\*

\*

\*

**June 13, 1996**

“Here are some points that occurred to me during my morning walk for a talk I could give at a disciples’ meeting in Belgium:

“1) I’m fascinated by the subject of subjective and objective truth.

“2) In academic philosophy, this is discussed, and in the history of Western philosophy, it is said that Nietzsche and Kierkegaard were the first to look at philosophy from a subjective viewpoint. They thought it was more important for them than discussion of subjects such as mind, eternity, or whatever—how the individual person receives these things. In other words, if there is God, that is an objective statement, but the really important thing is how we feel about God and what our personal relationship with Him is.

“3) Some may say that this is actually the study of psychology rather than philosophy.

“4) Applying this to Krsna consciousness, we have the subject matter of Krsna as objective truth, as seen in the ‘absolute subjective’ viewpoint of devotees and *rasas*. In other words, objectively, Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the

source of everything, the Almighty. But the devotees who insist on seeing Krsna by their *rasa*-vision see Him not as the supreme truth but as their son, lover, etc.

“5) I also pursue this in my writing. I honor and follow the objective or absolute truths of Krsna conscious *siddhanta* as given in the scriptures, but I want to make my own statement on how I feel about these things, and that’s my diary-type of free writing, and so on.

“6) Also, let us discuss about relationship in terms of guru-disciple truths. They may also be discussed subjectively in terms of the scriptures. Who is a bona-fide guru, who is a bona-fide disciple—we may try to measure and analyze whether I am a bona-fide guru or whether I am less than that. You may analyze the same about yourself. In our relationship, however, it seems more important that we discuss the purity and truth of our relationship. Are we honest with each other? Are we doing the best we can? Can we improve it? Let’s discuss that.”

\*

\*

\*

“I think I may be spending less time on this diary, and I’d like to explain why. The diary began spontaneously when I felt there were some things I wanted to express outside the realm of *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam*. It has been running a week like that. I’m on a two-week writing retreat, and this is a rare time for me. I take seriously whatever I do during this time and try to make the most of it. So the *Geaglum Free-Write Diary* has become important to me, even though it may not be considered an ambitious literary project. As I’ve been writing it, I’ve been looking forward to reading it later, and though I haven’t had the full time for it, I feel that it was a good place for honest attempts at expression.

“But while writing in *PMRB* this morning, I felt that I’m not giving it enough attention. Especially my free-write pages are down to two or three sometimes, and I detect a perfunctory spirit in my whole attitude towards summarizing the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse and answering the questions. When I saw that, I said to myself, ‘Wait a minute, I don’t want to write that way.’

“So maybe it’s time for me to try to bring these parallel rivers into one stronger current. Or at least without stopping this diary, let some of the private thoughts and writing, *especially some of the scheduled time during the day*, go into increasing the length of *PMRB* free-writing.

“That’s my proposal.

“I’m writing the diary for myself, but at the same time I think of

readers. I'm offering here an explanation, in case the diary from here on appears thinner. I am really not in control of the whole operation. Fortunately, there's a kind of process underway, and I just try to stay sensitive to it, flow where it's going and add my weight to it without resistance."

\*

\*

\*

**June 14, 1996**

*(Geaglum, North Ireland*

*4:30 A.M.)*

"In twenty-five minutes I'm supposed to leave, get in Manu's car with him and drive two and a half hours down to Dublin. One-day interruption of my writing retreat because the customs agents won't release 'my' van to Madhu. I have to go in person.

"But things are auspicious for writing *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam*. I'm feeling a renewed conviction by Krsna's grace. It's bogus to say it's too methodical or to have any objections.

"One objection was that I couldn't write freely enough. I felt too confined to follow the purport's themes. Actually, it's good to be able to pick up cues and springboards from the *Bhagavatam* verse. I can go as freely as I like once I take off from it. Neither is it a sacrilege treatment of the *Bhagavatam* to write freely. Neither will it be boring.

“I think the big thing that made me stop recently was that I felt I couldn’t fully confess there and get relief the way I can in writing—the way writing can help you cope. Or there may be a case when I just want to write something down in my hardbound diary. Go ahead. There is such a thing as writing outside *PMRB*, but don’t sell *PMRB* short. I can almost do anything I want in here.

“The only little reluctance I have is toward this *Geaglum Diary*. It’s not going to fulfill itself as full writing, but it is a good sacrifice. Most of my energy is going into *PMRB*. And daily poems, thank God.

“Of course, all of this measured only by what pleases guru and Krsna. Otherwise, how long can anything last? Again and again we hear Prabhupada say that we should preach and that we should be Krsna conscious, and that we can only approach Krsna through the guru. I’m trying to do it in this way.

“Now I have to stop and resume my looking out the window to see if the devotees have arrived to take me. I hope we go with good speed there and back, and I can do at least five remaining days, and on and on, even when not full time. *Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam, ki jaya!*

\*

\*

\*

“I’m in Dublin waiting at the docks, trying to get the van out of the clutches of Irish bureaucracy, internal revenue. M. told them that I’m out in the car, lying down with a migraine headache. The guy said his brother in America gets them. I’m ready to go when he calls me to show

my face and papers. M. brought him some sweets. He says, ‘We’re making gradual progress.’ Two faxes had to be sent today from the U.S. to satisfy them, plus tons of forms already handed in were shown to them. The agent has to cover himself, that’s what it gets down to. If he makes a mistake and lets us get in too easily, he’ll pay for it. So M. is a little optimistic that at least he’s on the same wavelength with the guy who is telling us what we need so that he is covered. Until today, we were not speaking so frankly.

“The diary has no theme, responsibility? It will still have reasons to exist. I could continue with *PMRB* now, but I need to look up some scriptural references, and I don’t have the books in the car.

“Hot and sunny Dublin, twenty to 4:00 P.M. Will they release the van today? I’m trying not to be attached to the outcome. If it’s not today, it will be in a few days. But I do want to start up north as soon as possible so I can get back into the rhythm again of the retreat, at least for a couple of days.

“Heigh, ho, derry, derry. I talked with Arjuna dasa regarding various Irish devotees. Each of us has his bit, and I have mine. Manu said my disciples are tuned in to my books. I hope so. That’s where I can be intimate. Hard otherwise to relate to so many.

“I’m thinking of a remark Baladeva made months ago, or a year or so ago. I said I realized a devotee must be compassionate, and that means preaching. He said, ‘You are compassionate by sharing your inner

thoughts with us.’ I hadn’t thought of it that way. I liked that angle: my preaching.

“Get the van for that purpose. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna.

“I’m with you, Madhu. May the fax arrive, and may you somehow satisfy all the demands of the Irish agent. May he finally give us our property.

“Hit a black-  
bird on the  
way here.

“Getting thirsty and  
tired.

“No headache  
yet.

“No haiku either.  
And no van.  
No tickee, no shirtee.

“Eat hay, thanks for the diary.  
Don’t mention it.”

**June 15, 1996**

“I want to read only Prabhupada’s books and Gaudiya Vaisnava books. When reading *Bhagavad-gita* yesterday, I thought this: ‘I don’t want to be diverted.’ Besides that feeling, I felt faith, especially in the unique reality and superiority of Krsna. Why should he absorb himself in something else?

“We don’t read to become better scholars or well-rounded humanists or for some entertainment. We should restrain these impulses. The only reading extra I can justify is when I see that it directly helps me as a writer, as a book on writing, maybe a diary, something about solitude or poems from which I springboard. But too much of anything, even poems... Keep focused on Krsna. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare. Krsna jumps out of the page to meet you when you read submissively. I don’t need to study comparative religions. Moreover, there are warnings not to do it in Lord Caitanya’s teachings to Sanatana Gosvami. Bhaktivinoda Thakura seems to be saying that also: don’t divert yourself, drink from the pure fountain of *krsna-katha* of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. I don’t want to dig into that either, to read authors other than Prabhupada and get a different drift. It is maybe too much to expect me to read only his books, but I am going in that direction. I may read good books prepared by his followers, memoirs of him, and books they may prepare. But the problem is I get envious when I read them, I’m embarrassed to admit.

“Yesterday morning when we were turned away by the Internal Revenue people and not given our van, it was depressing. I’ve come all the way down to Dublin, interrupted my writing retreat for a day, yet we could not get what we wanted. What to do? I went to the Dublin preaching center in the midst of the city. I had none of my clothes or paraphernalia, but I had a room to myself, and I did some reading and writing. I was thinking, however, ‘When can I return to my schedule in the retreat house, and when can we get the van out?’ Now by Krsna’s grace, what seemed impossible became possible. We got the van out sometime after 4:00 P.M. on a Friday afternoon, and I got back up north after a three-hour drive and was able to take rest and rise at midnight, back into the free flow of my retreat. I have five days left. I went through the whole day yesterday—an over six-hour car ride—without a headache. Only toward the end of it a headache came. I took a pill and it went down. Hare Krsna!

“Use your strength while you can. Back to trying to write the *Diary*, but mostly *PMRB*. Get another shot at it later this morning. Soon time to go for a walk. Take time to read today in *Cc*. also.

“I’ll repeat myself here: Yesterday I felt a little guilt, as usual, that I’m not preaching. Then I wondered, ‘Why all this endeavor to get a van? What do I want or need with this van? And why the European travel?’ But as Madhu and I began to pray for the van, it occurred to me that this is my preaching—to write, find remote and varied places, and

specifically now do *PMRB*. It is a work from which devotees can find directions and nourishment. It will bring us into *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It is a good thing, and a helpful addition to the Krsna consciousness movement. It is tiny, I suppose, but anything can be seen that way.

“Everyone is enthusiastic about their own preaching field, and so am I. I don’t go into the streets. I don’t do so many things, but now we have our van, with a very small inner area, yet two desks, one for a typewriter, one for a pad and pen, Prabhupada’s tapes to hear, and Prabhupada’s *murti* to worship. Madhu cooks and drives wherever we want to go. I shall not complain. I shall rejoice and try to write poems and true evocations. Keep practicing at that, keep getting into the heart of things, and Prabhupada and Krsna will reveal themselves to you.”