

## *Free Write Journal #94*

### **Free Writes**

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### **Lecturing**

I am obsessing over the lecture I have to give on Zoom on June 6<sup>th</sup>. Since I rarely lecture, it takes me a lot of time to prepare one. For this one I'm going to tell Prabhupada stories. The first one will be of his attempt to acquire land and build a temple in Vrndavana. First he had to find some available land. He heard of a pious Hindu couple, Mr. and Mrs. S., who had a plot of land and wanted to give it to a worthy cause in charity. Prabhupada went to them and asked that they give it to his Society for building a temple. Mrs. S. folded two pieces of paper. On one she wrote "Yes," and on the other, "No." She folded them up and put them at the feet of her Radharani Deity. In the morning she unfolded one piece of paper. It stated, "Yes," and she took this as an indication from Radharani that she should give the property to Prabhupada. Only a few devotees were living on the land, and money was slow coming in. Guru dasa was the temple president, and he wrote Prabhupada optimistic letters saying that the temple would be open soon, whereas in actuality, it wouldn't be open soon. Then Prabhupada had a problem with the land. Guru dasa informed him that Mr. S. wanted to take back the first fifty feet of the land. He wanted to use it for shops, and maybe a petrol pump. Prabhupada was alarmed. If Mr. S. took the

first fifty feet back, it would ruin the temple scheme. It would make a farce of the gift. What good was land without proper access? Prabhupada wired Mr. S. when he was out of Vrndavana, telling him to fix up the front piece of land as agreed. Mr. S. wired back, “The front piece shall be used for other purposes, as agreed. Letter to follow.” Prabhupada was greatly disturbed. It seemed he had another Bombay case on his hands. (To be continued)

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Devotees in Boston have asked me to lecture on the early days of ISKCON Boston, and the vice-president of the Brooklyn temple has asked me to join with others and give a Zoom lecture on Ratha-yatra day (June 14<sup>th</sup>). But I am excusing myself from these extra lectures because they cause me too much anxiety in preparing. I prefer to communicate by writing, such as in my weekly online *Free Write Journal*, and by publishing books. I will publish two books of prose and poems on July 4<sup>th</sup>. We’ll try to distribute them by mail, since there won’t be a gathering as usual for my disciples and friends in Stuyvesant Falls—due to the coronavirus restrictions. We’re trying to get the devotees to order the books by mail. We’re trying to publish the other two books to distribute on my Vyasa-puja in early December. This was also meant to be a distribution event at a gathering of my disciples and friends. Also, Nitai in India is scheduling to reprint ten books by the end of the year 2020. He has selected some of my old favorites and is distributing them, mainly in India. They will also be available online on two of the websites that

devotees are operating for me.

This is where you can find my books when they become available:

[www.sdglegacy.com](http://www.sdglegacy.com)

[www.satsvarupadasagoswami.com](http://www.satsvarupadasagoswami.com)

I am also available for letter correspondence: [sdg@satsvarupadasagoswami.com](mailto:sdg@satsvarupadasagoswami.com), or Satsvarupa Maharaja, P.O. Box 233, Stuyvesant Falls, New York 12174.

## **Garden Party**

Five adults and two children came to plant flowers, pull weeds and spread mulch in our gardens. They observed social distancing and wore masks. It was a lovely spring day. Krsna dasi, Atindra, Lalita-kaisori, Vidvan, his wife and two children, and Amit worked hard in the garden. They planted many marigolds (and other bulbs from different plants like gladiolas, hyacinths, day lilies and stargazer lilies). Then they had a picnic in the shade of the woods around Krsna dasi's house. The guests brought "doubles," a Trinidadian specialty made of chickpeas, *subji* and many special chutneys between two *urad dal* puris. After the picnic, they all walked down to observe the beautiful sight of Stuyvesant Falls. Then the men fixed up the air conditioners to our two houses in anticipation of the heat wave that is supposed to start today (May 26). The heat wave is supposed to last a week. Usually we're not prepared, and the heat wave stays while we scramble to get prepared for it. Vidvan has as his profession the fixing and installing of air conditioners, so he was just

what we needed. I did not see the guests because I was in isolation, but I appreciated very much that they came to make Viraha Bhavan summer-ready. We look forward to all the fresh flowers that will bloom all summer long. Krsna devi dasi and Bala like to make fresh garlands for Gaura-Nitai every day, and when the flowers bloom they will be able to do it—provided the Trinidad airport opens and Bala can come home.

The neighbors approached us and asked us if they could plant some vegetables in our “community garden.” They know that Bala is not here to do it, and now is the time of the year that it has to be done. Our garden is ideal, with fencing and water hoses that reach the planting spots. One lady has a Havahart trap to catch the groundhogs that inevitably come. So our gardens are doing well, and the Deities will receive fresh garlands throughout the summer.

### **Remembering Keshava Dasi on Her Birthday**

My disciple Syama dasi wrote me a letter with an homage to Keshava on her birthday, which occurred today. Remembering a Vaishnavi’s birthday is not mundane. Vaisnava relationships are eternal because they’re based on loving service to Krsna, which is eternal.

“He reasons ill who tells that Vaishnavas die  
when thou art living still in sound!

The Vaishnavas die to live, and living try  
to spread the holy name around!” (Bhaktivinoda Thakura)

Syama dasi wrote me this memorial:

“Remembering my dear friend and guide Keshava; it was her birthday today!

“My first impression of Keshava was of a very welcoming and friendly person, a person of integrity. The other word that comes to mind when I think of her is fervent. She was fervent in her desire to practice Krsna consciousness to the highest standard in her own life, with chanting the holy name, reading and trying to understand *Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta*, fervent in her desire that people experience the joy of *kirtana*; fervent to please Krsna through cooking wonderful preparations; worshiping the Deity form; making tasteful arrangements for Radha-Madhava’s festivals. Fervent to give the bliss of Krsna consciousness to others in a very personal way, helping, guiding and encouraging them. Fervent to discuss topics about Krsna. I pray that I may also have a little drop of that fervency in my practice.”

### **Prabhupada’s Lecture**

I listened to Prabhupada lecturing on the pastimes of Prahlada Maharaja. The demigods sacked the palace of Hiranyakasipu when he was away practicing severe austerities. They were dragging his wife off when Narada Muni came to the scene and demanded to know what they were doing. Indra told him that they were taking this woman, Kayadhu, who was married to a great demon, and they would keep her

until she gave birth, and then they would immediately kill the direct offspring of Hiranyakasipu because he would be a demon. Narada Muni told them, “No, you cannot kill him. He is a *mahabhagavata* devotee of the Supreme Lord.” Kayadhu was so much anxious for the return of her husband, and distracted worrying about the welfare of the child in her womb. So she was not able to concentrate on Narada’s Krsna conscious teachings to her. But the baby in her womb, Prahlada, heard all of Narada’s teachings clearly, and it affected him, up to the point where he became a *mahabhagavata*. When Prahlada was actually born, he demonstrated such a great love for the Supreme Lord, He demonstrated tolerance in the face of his atheistic father’s objection to his devotion to Visnu. Hiranyakasipu actually tried to kill Prahlada, but the half-man, half-lion incarnation of the Lord, Narasimhadeva, leaped out of the palace pillar and killed Hiranyakasipu.

Prahlada bowed down before Narasimhadeva to appease His anger after all the demigods, and even Laksmidevi, failed to make Him peaceful. Prahlada was innocent and faithful, just a five-year-old boy, but not afraid of Narasimhadeva in His fearful feature. Prabhupada said the boy may have been shaken by the ghastly scene that had just occurred, where Hiranyakasipu was torn into pieces. But as requested by Lord Brahma, Prahlada went forward and bowed before Narasimhadeva, his Lord. Prabhupada quoted the *Bhagavad-gita* verse *man-mana bhava mad bhakto mad yaji mam namaskuru*—just become My devotee, bow down to Me and worship Me. Prahlada followed the request of Lord Brahma and went forward and made his obeisances to Narasimhadeva, unafraid, even after all the

other demigods and Laksmidevi herself had failed to make Narasimhadeva peaceful. Prabhupada said that this is all that is required: bowing before the Lord in faith and devotion, seeking His protection. Narasimhadeva touched the head of Prahlada and assured him, “Don’t be afraid. I am here.” We can all be like Prahlada, following in his footsteps, bowing down before the Lord, becoming His devotee and being unafraid. Then He will accept us and give us protection.

Lord Narasimha told Prahlada to pick a benediction for his humble submission and courage. Prahlada asked only that his father be liberated and not enter a body for birth, death, disease and old age. Narasimhadeva said to Prahlada that fourteen generations of his family line were all liberated just by being born as associates of Prahlada.

### ***Kirtana***

I listened to the Govardhana Retreats. It was Sacinandana Swami’s turn. He didn’t speak at all but led a lead-and-response *kirtana* for 30-40 minutes. Like Madhava, he asked the audience to “chant from the heart,” and he was chanting from the heart. I don’t get a chance much to join in *kirtanas*, since I stay in the house, and, anyway, with the coronavirus restrictions there are no *kirtana* gatherings. So it was nice listening to this very sincere *kirtaniya*, Sacinandana Maharaja, pouring out the *maha-mantra* and encouraging devotees to chant louder and more focused. It was as good as any lecture. Often he talks about the holy name and its importance, but now he was demonstrating it by actual chanting. I settled

back and joined the chorus. On and on in waves of bliss. Sometimes he'd say, "One more time," but then he would not stop. He kept on going. He had the microphone, but you could hear the large crowd of devotees in the background, men's and women's voices.

Years ago, I traveled throughout my GBC zone, making a presentation of *kirtana*. I played a recording of Prabhupada leading a *kirtana* with his standard tune and the devotees responding. In each place I went, the devotees there responded live to Prabhupada's recorded *kirtana*. Everyone enjoyed it, and some said it was the best *kirtana* they had had.

Prior to the *kirtana*, there was a dramatic presentation by Jagattarini Mataji about the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas* going to Krsna in the woods, bringing Him food, and asking that He allow them to live with Him. Krsna greets them very warmly and affectionately. This is the first time they have met Krsna personally, and they are ecstatic at His warm welcome of them and His affection. But then He tells them to return to their husbands and children. He says intimacy with Him is not gained by physical proximity. The wives are broken-hearted to hear these words from their beloved. Jagattarini's voice becomes emotional as she expresses the pain and disappointment of the wives as they plead with Krsna, saying they can't go home, their husbands have rejected them. Krsna assures them that their husbands will receive them lovingly. They return to their homes, but He has taught them how to always be with Him, by meditating upon Him in the heart.

*Kirtanas* are different nowadays. For the sake of history, Prabhupada would

sing the same tune, and he would start off slowly and very gradually pick up the tempo. He didn't go so rapidly that he had to stop and start it again. He just went for half an hour or so with an unbroken *kirtana*.

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Then Sacinandana Swami spoke about the *uddipanas*, or stimuli, to thinking of Krsna. For example, Krsna's flute, His buffalo horn, peacock feather, His yellow dress, and so on. Sacinandana Swami then spoke of the hierarchy of places in Krsna's pastimes. He said higher than Vaikuntha was Mathura, higher than Mathura was the forests of Vrndavana. And highest of all places was Radha-kunda. This was because Radha and Krsna bathed there together daily in amorous sports. When Lord Caitanya visited Vrndavana, He searched for Radha-kunda, but the residents told Him there was no such *kunda*. He then found a small shallow pond and dove into it and bathed in ecstasy. Later the Gosvamis excavated this pond into its present expanded shape. Anyone who bathes in Radha-kunda one time achieves love of God. So Radha-kunda is the chief *uddipana*. But Maharaja said the devotees should create their own *uddipanas*, places that remind them of Krsna so that they can never go without thinking of Radha and Krsna. These stimuli to love Radha-Krsna are called, in *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*, *uddipanas*.

### **Out-loud Reading**

In our group reading we are beginning the Fourth Canto of *Srimad-*

*Bhagavatam*. We are hearing the *yajna* arranged by Prajapati Daksa to which all the demigods were invited. Lord Brahma, Lord Siva and everyone else was gathered. When Daksa entered the arena, his bright effulgence outshone everyone else's. The demigods got up to receive him except for Brahma and Siva, who are the controllers of the universe and are not required to stand up or worship Daksa. But Daksa became very angry when he saw that Siva did not stand up to receive him. He began an uncontrolled diatribe of angry talking against Siva. Siva was married to Daksa's daughter, Sati, at the request of Lord Brahma. But Daksa did not approve of the marriage. He blasphemed Siva in the assembly, saying he had eyes like a monkey, and he associated with ghosts. Siva is actually flawless, but Daksa saw only bad qualities in him. Then he finally cursed Siva, and he cursed him not to receive his portion of the offering in the sacrifice along with the other demigods. In a fury, Daksa left the assembly, although everyone begged him to remain. He was an example of the destructive nature of uncontrolled anger. Lord Siva said nothing to counteract Daksa's attack. But Siva's follower Nandisvara spoke up, insulting Daksa and cursing him to be devoid of transcendental knowledge and be given the face of a goat. There was cursing and counter-cursing, and the harmony of the whole sacrifice was in disarray.

(To be continued)

## **Introductory Essay and Afterword**

John Endler wrote an introductory essay to *Seeking New Land*. He compared my book to the sixteenth-century quest novel *A Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan. To this I added an up-to-date paragraph about the character in *Seeking New Land*:

“Hemanta Swami discovered a college in Greenland, and he rented a house for use as a preaching base. The faculty was favorable, and many students attended his talks. A few of them became seriously interested in his lectures, and they pooled their money together to rent a kind of dorm. Hemanta Swami called it ‘The Vedic Green House.’ I describe this more in the actual pages of *Seeking New Land*.”

John wrote a brilliant afterword to another forthcoming book, *Kaleidoscope*. It begins with a quote from *Caitanya-caritamṛta*. In the words of Lord Caitanya:

“I can only remember that I saw My Kṛṣṇa, but only for an instant. He appeared before Me, and then, like lightning, immediately disappeared.’ (*Cc. Antya*, 14.78)”

John compares the spontaneity of the Lord’s appearance and flight with the many brief *darsanas* of Kṛṣṇa in the collection of poems that make up *Kaleidoscope*:

“Turn the kaleidoscope, receive new shakes and colors over and over again, and Krsna’s glance mercifully appears.

“That is the kaleidoscope: with a twist and turn, shapes and colors appear before the eye if but for a moment, a lightening of the urgent voice of Satsvarupa Maharaja, urgent in his unbridled flow of words and images.”

### **Letter from Dinanatha and Ayatakshi Devi Dasi**

I received a letter from my followers Dinanatha and Ayatakshi in Italy. Ayatakshi had a flourishing yoga teaching business. It was expanding. But with the coronavirus pandemic, the authorities have stopped all her yoga activities. She writes, “So we have to see if it will be at all possible to continue with activity any more, or maybe we will have to create something new. We are confident in Krsna’s plan.”

They send me a sizeable donation coming from the sale of two of my paintings which they had bought from me for their home. They write: “The devotee who saw your paintings literally fell in love with them. They were part of our private collection, but since we live in small apartment and we already have other of your paintings and don’t have enough space for all of them, we thought to make him happy.”

This affectionate couple visited Viraha Bhavan about two years ago. Ayatakshi cooked healthful meals, and Dinanatha did cleaning. They worked together over two

summers in organizing my many paintings. It's nice when devotees make the effort to come to Viraha Bhavan to render practical service. They are very welcome.

## **Tolerating**

We have been tolerating the parade of heavy-duty manure trucks passing by constantly on the road outside our window. Now, it may have stopped. But yesterday we had to tolerate the onset of a heat wave. I had fans and an A/C unit in my room. But downstairs when I went for "Krsna lunch," it was 90° (32° C) in the kitchen. People are always complaining about the weather, and every season there's something wrong. Prabhupada writes that the enjoyment of material life and living in Krsna consciousness go ill together. So devotees practice austerities such as fasting on Ekadasis and days of the Supreme Lord's appearance like Janmastami, Gaura Purnima and Rama Navami. Many of the qualities of a Vaishnava involve tolerance and austerities, peacefulness, control of the senses and the mind, etc. Prabhupada commends women for their tolerance during pregnancy and for their patience and forbearance after the children are actually born.

## **Visitors**

I phoned Kirtan Rasa to see how he was doing. He said he was all right. As a lawyer, he's happy to have gotten two criminal cases, which is his forte. He doesn't like family court, where the people come to him with high expectations, thinking the other party is completely guilty and demoniac. He prefers the criminals who admit

their guilt and are looking to him for damage control, and he likes to work with such persons. He also likes it when clients come to him who have been abused by police.

Muktavandhya came by with an abundance of flowers that he gets from the wholesaler. He has bought flowers from this man for over thirty years. Mukta is one of the few devotees who's allowed to leave the temple lockdown to gather flowers for the Deities. He also brings flowers to us on a regular basis. Mukta has health issues (two serious heart attacks) so he has to be careful how he pushes himself. But he goes out regularly to get the flowers and to clip them and put them in the fridge. When Mukta comes, we dedicate one small room without windows and with an air conditioner, and in this way we preserve his fresh flowers. They last for a week or ten days.

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

**“As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.**

“COMMENT: This verse and the preceding two were quoted by

Prabhupada in his poem '*Markine Bhagavata Dharma*' which he wrote at Boston Commonwealth Pier in 1965. Prabhupada expressed himself humbly to Krsna: 'Why have You sent me to this terrible place?' He didn't see how he would be able to convince the people of Krsna's message, since they were so materialistic. But Prabhupada took courage from these verses, and then he felt confident that hearing the *Bhagavatam* would cleanse the dirt from their hearts and attract them to *Uttamasloka*.

“Verse 1.2.19 specifically mentions how this will happen: the modes of *rajas* and *tamas* (so prominent in Boston) would be broken up or would disappear from someone's life when he or she heard the transcendental vibration of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and the Hare Krsna mantra. The devotee could then comprehend the mode of goodness (*sattva*) and become happy.

“And it's true. We've seen it happen, even to Americans. Spiritual bliss is the innate nature of the living being. It is expressed as activity in Krsna consciousness. Therefore, Prabhupada engaged us in chanting the Hare Krsna mantra and in cooking, typing and many other activities. Spiritual life—*brahma-bhuta*, or *atmanandi*—would manifest and be channeled through the senses, mind and words.

“Thank you, Prabhupada, for thinking of these verses and for persistently trying to give us your Lord's message. I am personally

thankful because I was lost, purposeless, without You. I was swirling around like trash in water, about to be swept down the gutter of a city street and into the sewer.

“When the conditioned soul mixes with matter, his activities become disease, and they are expressed as lust, foolishness, sleep and so on. Devotional service eliminates this disease and brings us above even material goodness to *suddha-sattva*. ‘Only in this *suddha-sattva* state can one always see Krsna eye-to-eye by dint of pure affection for the Lord.’

“To be a devotee requires a thorough change. We can’t claim to be devotees of Krsna and still be fools and rascals, cruel or passionate. A devotee develops good qualities if he is genuine and actually engages in the practices of *bhakti*. All this starts and is maintained by ‘regular attendance in the *Bhagavatam* class.’”

### ***Here Is Srila Prabhupada***

“They say walking up hills can have a positive psychological effect, like getting above your problems and ascending to a higher state of consciousness.

“Sages sit on top of hills too, although if I think too much like that it will just seem like a cliché to me. Brahmananda once asked

Prabhupada, ‘Is it better to live in the mountains? It seems that all the great sages live on mountaintops.’ Prabhupada scoffed at the idea that the top of a mountain had a more spiritual atmosphere just because of its elevation.

“O Prabhupada, I thought by coming out here and walking in these hills it would be somehow easier to focus on you. Meditation on you is elusive. It's not that *you* are elusive, but my honest devotion for you seems to ebb and flow. I continue serving you out of duty, but I am hankering to serve you out of a steady love.

“I know, ultimately, duty is performed out of love too. That's *vaidhi-bhakti*. I get out of bed early in the morning not out of spontaneous love, but because I want to please you. I try to surrender my intelligence to you because I trust you to lead me forward in Krsna consciousness. You are not forcing me, I am forcing myself. But, Srila Prabhupada, isn't this a sign that I love you?

“I am searching for you, Srila Prabhupada, just as the Six Gosvamis searched for Radha and Krsna. You told us that the Gosvamis were never fulfilled in their search for Radha-Krsna. They never felt that they had finally seen Them and the goal had been achieved. But rather, they were always thinking, ‘Where is Krsna, where is Radharani? Are they over on Govardhana? Are they by the river Yamuna?’ In intense anticipation they were always crying out, ‘Krsna, Radhe!’

“I am not saying that my feelings are the same as the Six Gosvamis’, but at least I can recognize that they are spiritual. They are feelings of separation. Sometimes my feelings of separation take the form of feeling separate not only from the beloved person, but from my feelings about the beloved person. I mean, sometimes my groping is actually out of forgetfulness of the true love and the true connection that I do have with you, Srila Prabhupada. I can see with regret that I have chased yet another illusion rather than pursuing my love for you.

***Journal and Poems, Book 1 (January-June 1985)***

“Life is more dangerous now than ever before. We are more easily wrecked in car and plane, mugged, broken by drugs, by illicit love affairs, by pressure to conform in work and career—and now our total existence is threatened by war as never imagined in past centuries. Of course, the basics—birth, death, disease and old age—were always there and always will be.

“I am a surrendered, obedient soul. I have taken refuge from the fearful storms of life. People who fancy themselves rebels against all superior control deride surrender to Krsna.

“I remember in 1966 some boys dropped by the storefront, and after hearing from us, they said that Krsna consciousness sounded like a

‘cop-out,’ escapism. I replied that to be a devotee took courage. Are you willing to shave your head and appear before your fellow men so strangely dressed as proof of your conviction of the truth? Both conservatives and radicals think devotees are odd. Therefore we have to become callous to their opinions.

“I am not impressed by anyone’s thought even a fraction as much as I am impressed by the teachings of the sages in *parampara*, all of whom are personified in my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada.

“Thinkers do not come to grips with death or with spiritual reality. They say there is no spirit, or they are vague, or they blindly follow some dogmas. They become disgusted when the devotees demand such surrender. People are also envious of our knowledge about God. They think He should remain unknown. ‘If you don’t accept Krsna as God,’ says Srila Prabhupada, ‘then bring forward who you say is God. But if you admit that you don’t know, then accept Krsna.’

“There is no science of the soul beyond Krsna consciousness, and all speculators are finally vanquished.”

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***My Vision of Krsna***

**1**

No *hatha-yogi* introduced me  
to Krsna's form or the *maha-mantra*.  
I first woke to the sound  
from the lips of His pure devotee—  
unalloyed, powerful, *parampara*—  
Prabhupada sitting on the thin straw mat.  
Even that took time.  
“I knew words like Christ,  
cruller, cripes, Kris Kringle,  
and at first all the sounds had to sort out  
through an abused brain.  
I had to get an inkling who I was.

That's why the Name has to be heard  
from one who is a worshiper,  
an expert to free you.  
Otherwise the sound—Hare Krsna  
—may pass you by.

**2**

Then His form appeared.

God is a cowherd boy.

He is not Indian, but He appeared there,

a beautiful young boy,

the flute to His lips.

He sports in the fields; He stands by Radharani,

His youthful best devotee.

It all made sense

in Prabhupada's presence.

One day, walking to the office

enjoying summer breezes,

my shirt open, my tie in my back pocket,

I was thinking how Krsna

goes to the fields to play.

Like Swamiji described

the true stories, the facts—

in the morning Krsna gets ready to go out.

The boys are waiting.

His mother is dressing Him,

while playfully He hits His pals.

He swallows dirt.

“No! Look in My mouth, mother!’

And she sees there all the universes,

all time and space

in the mouth of her son.

Then came devotees’ paintings,

crude but sublime, Radha and Krsna.

Even Prabhupada said it wasn't expert,

but it was Krsna,

our Supreme Personality of Godhead.

We began to tell others:

“He married sixteen thousand wives.’

He spoke the *Bhagavad-gita*,

He lifted Govardhana Hill,

He is the greatest, Yogesvara,

master of Siva and Brahma.

Prabhupada told us,

and we chanted,

offered Him  
*prasadam* in ISKCON.

Now it is steady going  
 but also slow,  
 difficult to fully surrender.  
 Now I'm latched onto Him,  
 by grace of Prabhupada,  
 but how to get closer?  
 How to plunge beyond my fears,  
 beyond ridiculous sense gratification?  
 And the doubts—  
 I thought they were so easily overcome,  
 and the sinful acts committed—  
 I thought I could easily forget them  
 but they haunt me now  
 as I try to clear from my vision  
 the last garbage.”

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*“March 10, Inis Rath*

“Today I am giving *harinama* initiation to five devotees and brahminical initiation to nine others. The spiritual master has to teach the disciples all about Vedic knowledge and devotional service to Krsna. And he also has to teach them to worship the spiritual master as *saksad-dharitvena*, the direct representative of Lord Krsna. Yet the spiritual master should think himself a humble servant of the servants of the Lord. Rupa Gosvami states in *The Nectar of Devotion* that no one should think of himself as a great, empowered preacher. Rather, we should think of ourselves as instruments serving the purpose of the previous spiritual masters.

“Thus today I was thinking of my duties as guru, of the simple but critical function that I have to perform. It is a function similar in a certain sense to the tasks performed by welders and locksmiths. To forge a disciplic link for the devotees, a guru has to be strict and pure in *sadhana*, and he has to repeat the instructions of disciplic succession without any change. Beyond that, he does not have to aspire to be a very exalted person, yet the task he performs is a profoundly exalted one for human society. In material life also, if the welder or the airplane mechanic makes the slightest mistake, he could be responsible for the deaths of hundreds of persons. Although such workers may be humble craftsmen, they must take their work very seriously. Of course, the guru should be honored above all occupational workers, yet he should always

think of himself as a humble worker, accepting honor only on behalf of Lord Krsna.

“While looking through Prabhupada's books for an appropriate verse to speak on, I found this explanation of why a spiritual master sometimes gets sick:

“A disciple should be sympathetic and consider this:  
 “For my sinful activities, my spiritual master will suffer.” If the spiritual master is attacked by some disease, it is due to the sinful activities of others. Don't make many disciples. But we do it because we are preaching. Never mind—let us suffer—still we should accept them.” (*Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers*, pg. 59)

### ***Vandanam: A Krsna Conscious Handbook on Prayer***

“We should regret not only sins we committed before we took initiation, but our general failure to be a better, more surrendered devotee. If one does this earnestly, consideration of one's offenses can produce tears and real sorrows, and this is purifying. As stated in the *Padma Purana*:

“My dear Lord, there is no sinful living entity who is more of a sinner than myself. Nor is there a greater offender than myself. I am so greatly sinful and offensive that when I come to confess my sinful activities before You, I am ashamed.’ (*Nectar of Devotion*)”

“Srila Prabhupada comments, ‘This is a natural position for a devotee.’

“Of course, we are warned not to keep committing sins, but we shouldn't think that we are perfectly satisfying to Krsna if all we do is follow the four regulative principles. It is also a failure to not love Krsna, to not have full faith in scripture, and not to be a bold preacher. Once we start thinking about it, we will find ourselves full of shortcomings and reasons to be sorry.

“Personal praying is therefore not a complacent or easygoing activity, yet it always produces good results. In the Fourth Chapter, we will go into detail of how to proceed through a personal prayer session, and we can then again consider the categories of prayer in practice.”

## **WRITING SESSIONS**

## ***Wicklów Writing Sessions***

### **Session #3**

12:05 A.M. July 28, 1996

*“Why write of Krishna? Hand writ, list; discussing some writing (and publishing) options; I think it’s right to write and hope that good in KC comes from it; September project, ‘Life in the Van, At Last’ – But Usually Writing With no Theme; Serious purpose of KC in life and writing.*

“Now we have the blessed speed of this sort of writing and have some faith in it. Didn’t want to rise at midnight, didn’t. So, the need of a discipline to do it is deeply engrained.

“One does not want to prove oneself a good man, writer, devotee, etc. Rousseau says that when he wrote his *Confessions*, he tried to be as honest as possible and erred on the side of presenting his faults and not his good points.

“Why be so concerned to present the good self or the bad? Yes, we should present Krsnaas we’ve heard about Him from Vedic lit. He will help us to do so.

*“Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna Krsna he.*

“Free-write – the perpetrator

the traitor

List

“Fire House, fire hose, captain is dead. Bala went to Great Kills Fire House and no one had heard of Steve Guarino decades later. They said ‘F--- this’ and ‘F—that.’ That word shocks your ears but that’s firemen and Navy men talk. This is resolved – the picnic should be called off if it rains. Manu cheers on the writing that doesn’t accommodate the reader. ‘Ah, it’s be nice,’ he said

“if in a trice

my mommy and I

repair to the house...

“so many songs lead to the sexual conclusion in innuendo. Spell right. Vedic lit. tells us a Vaishnava should avoid ordinary lit of men and women. Clear the decks for action.

“Hold up the presses. The man has gone astray.

List words:

antidisestablishmentarianism (longest word).

“Then a dream I told on the record. Much to learn. Long poles put into the van. Some didn’t know where we were going. It was like a trip into the next world and I was lucky to be included. We’d have to hide in the van and endure each other’s company crowded together, no seats,

but on the floor of the van. I heard Harikesa Swami saying to himself something about private prayer in which he humbled himself. I was curious to see his habits like that and struck up a conversation.

“Oh, listen. Oh, listen,

“you’d like to have friends? You could write to someone like Prabhupada dasa in Colombia but we all don’t have time. Some are bashful to do it. You could instigate that with someone who appreciates it. Go over a list.

“In this way build up allies for your case or for your ego, ‘See, I’ve got friends.’ No, for a better reason.

“The critic is active and we thank him.

“But it’s better to just hear of great Vaishnavas and what they do. Hare Krsna comes straight from Krsna-loka

“and with chanting you ought to improve. I’d like to but how? You put it this way. Just chant but avoid deliberate inattention.

“A favorite topic with devotees – *pramadah* is like quicksand.

“Praghosa will say (after my lecture), ‘How is it possible? Is it not dangerous what you propose?’ Point out danger of extremism and what I presented. Yes, that’s always possible. His mind works in that way but I didn’t present it in the extreme.

“Just take what I said. You may say, ‘How is it possible for a fallen householder to be like the saints you describe who are so introspective?’

We do admire them but . . . ’ The ladies won’t raise a hand because that’s their code.

“Oh, gorse bushes. Another bush stung me. M. went out and picked a rose for me to offer to SP.

“Only the gardener can fully comprehend how the garden is an offering to God. Remember Prahladananda saying, “Think of Krsna with every bite.” Reach out to friends, Ammanda, Armada, French Revolution. The truth is we had better get...

“This is light. The hand is moving like a typist’s. Belie. I’m trying not to get a headache so I can give a lecture today, and not be a wise-guy, be Vaishnava-like in KC. Not a notch down.

“You may lead from Writing Session into another type of writing but it has to be by writing this out full:

“‘The horse runs in the summer field.’

“Stay here another week? We are invited. I would do something like camp somewhere in Ireland in the van? No, it’s too small in there.

“Get used to staying here but try to accomplish something as your life runs out. Try to write a better book.

“Publishing plans – make a book of selections from your writing, an *SDG Reader*, volume two, three, four, five. Selections based on what is the best, paragraphs and sections of the best promise.

“Good we took from it while we could, those *rasika* books otherwise forbidden and lost. I did put my heart into them and they had an interesting theme. *Before It's Too Late* – the theme was that I wanted to write but people were interrupting me from it, etc.

“And M. says he liked *Journal and Poems* for the way you get a poem after reading some journal. I can still do that.

“Go, O merry days  
 and hair days  
 the palaver crept up.  
 The hairy stem did  
 make a rod, his sticky feelers  
 trod upon  
 no bats. I saw a badger  
 run, and a deer and child  
 who bounded away hard hoofs  
 when I went to  
 the woods.  
 This is the story a man  
 who writes.

“You are ‘seizing’ this summer in a writing life by writing as much as possible. A preacher, a preacher.

“Sanatana Goswami lost in service to Radha-Gopal, Madana-Gopal I mean. Then (the author, O.B.L. Kapoor says) he was reminded by LC that he had duties to do, and so he prayed to the Deity to relieve him of Deity worship. He was in *lila-smaranam* so much but he had to work to do in this world. O.B.L. quotes some authorities and tells stories. I’m not always sure they are authorities that SP or BSS would accept. He’s a scholar and draws from the story sources. But who you draw from is of utmost importance so it not be *sahajiya* or made up, etc.

“Anyway, we are reading him.

“I’m sailing along as the clock moves. Will this take you somewhere worthy? You question the process. You limber up.

“Krsna Krsna, I seek to know

“what You want of me. I’m not like Sanatana was, deep in *lila-smaranam* in Vrndavana and have to be called from it by SCM. But I am into this writing now, f.w. writing practice. So, if you want me to “come out” from this you’d have to let me know. I hear or see or dream of duties my brothers are doing and it convinces me I’m doing what I want and is best for me.

“There’s a place for me.

“You could write a book, but what’s the use if it wasn’t you entirely. Editing my poems (now third draft) gives me pleasure – to see

them improve. Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, that's their nature. Gems they become. So, please write more 'rough drafts' including some of a private nature with criticisms, controversies, etc.

"Write in any circumstance. NYC poems and South Street look good now. Extend yourself to do them whenever you can.

"Maybe a 6:30 P.M. shot.

"HK comes straight from Krsnaloka  
you chant nowadays with new lamp.

"Hark, go deep. I have no theme like a firefly little lights come

"frights

bouts

beers, fears, he will write in prison.

"Now, here are tiny drops to comfort you, you write down asserting I'm the best. I have the wherewithal. Krsnadoesn't desert me as long as I can send my message.

"underwear

"out to the world – who will edit. Matthiessen got back alive from the Himalayas to tell his story--which will outlive him but he delivers nothingness and I have more than that.

“Conception of college exam written in exercise book. Dig? Yeah, you get an exam question: ‘Explain Voltaire’s attack on the philosophy of Leibniz in *Candide*, etc.’ And you have to get it right, say what the teach wants, don’t sympathize with the Church. Regurgitate and write creatively best in the last minutes, the budding intellectual in search of an ‘A’ and academic career.

“Ear of corn  
 ear for poem, pain  
 no more  
 saint lies prostrate  
 book on virginity for the sake of  
 God’s Kingdom. Amen  
 stuff it in.

“Well, I am not about to write a thematic book on virginity or a parody of the college exam books. It’s lucky if I do hit a theme but I want to continue for a while, just room to keep it in.

“*The September travels of Satsva* – I’m thinking of that one. It may be good. *Life in the Van, At Last* (1996).

“He he

“There is no time for drawings. I will end this short of an hour so I have time to chant *japa*.

“You write while you can and the money will follow. Seven habits of industrious ants. Six follies of gartered women. Two outmoded deeds. Three *sandesa* that caused me indigestion. Five careers gone down the drain. Dictators who killed millions of people and I think I escaped to live in the moneyed West but SP points out (*Bhagavad-gita* too) that if you enjoy now past pious credits and spend it on sense grat, you waste your life. Use it to become KC – while you can and tell others.

“The West will fail  
world plunged down

“Write this morning seriously as befits the duty of an SP and be a witness in writing for future people.

“Take to KC, I did,  
is your theme.

“Be aware. Now it’s time to stop this. We were going forty-five minutes and could go longer but need to follow the schedule.

“Last word: Put KC in writing. After pleasure and duty. Remind them there is a next life. Plan for it. Don’t forget it by your absorption in present duties. *Sravanam kirtanam*.

“Creeper grows  
even in this world it reaches Goloka  
for saints

ordinary people weed out *anarthas*.

Amen. Do it.

*“(45 minutes in pleasant slavery to WS; I had no theme, Wicklow on Sunday, hope I don’t get a headache – have to give lecture at 9:30 in the schoolhouse.)”*