

Free Write Journal #96

Free Writes

*

*

*

Changes in *SPL*

A *sannyasi* has written to the BBT suggesting a possible one-word revision in a passage in the *Prabhupada-lilamrta*. The BBT has written to my assistant Baladeva asking him to respond to the *sannyasi*. I have gone through two extensive revisions (changes) to the first edition, and I don't want to make any more changes. A contract should be made between GN Press and the BBT that no more changes should be made. I am almost 81 years old, and I may not be around much longer. After I am gone, there may be a field day in making changes in the authorized biography. I don't want that to happen, and I want to stop it here.

Similarly, I don't want my GN Press books changed. Editors may use passages from my books, but they should not make changes.

Sabha Questionnaire

I received a questionnaire from Sabha, the auxiliary committee of the GBC, asking questions about what the gurus want done at the time of their departure. These are the questions and how I answered them:

1) QUESTION: Which year did you start to initiate disciples?

ANSWER: 1978 (rough estimation: 200)

2) QUESTION: Do you have a Living Will with advanced health care and medical directives?

ANSWER: Yes

3) QUESTION: Do you have a durable power of attorney for health care in which someone

makes health care decisions for you if you are unable to do so?

ANSWER: Yes

4) QUESTION: Have you assigned assets in your will (bank accounts, property, personal property, etc.)?

ANSWER: In the process. No assets except books and paintings.

5) QUESTION: Have you given instructions regarding the disposal of your body (Samadhi, cremation, where it should be, costs, payments, who coordinates, etc.)?

ANSWER: Yes

6) QUESTION: Have you communicated which picture(s) you want your disciples to use while worshiping on ISKCON altars?

ANSWER: In the process.

7) QUESTION: Have you given directions on whether or not to distribute your remnants (personal effects, clothes, equipment, hair, etc.), and if so, how, what is distributed and to whom?

ANSWER: No.

8) QUESTION: Have you given directions regarding the payment of personal outstanding debts?

ANSWER: Yes.

COMMENT: No personal debts.

9) QUESTION: Have you given directions regarding the inheritance of any personal real estate and personal property?

ANSWER: No.

COMMENT: No properties.

10) QUESTION: Have you given over your login user names/passwords?

ANSWER: No.

COMMENT: My secretaries have that information.

11) QUESTION: Have you given documented directions regarding how your personal money is to be managed?

ANSWER: Yes.

COMMENT: The small amount available will be used to cover cremation expenses.

12) QUESTION: Have you ensured that the above instructions (you have given so far) are enforceable?

ANSWER: Yes.

13) QUESTION: In the case of any authorship, have you given anyone the right to edit (other than obvious mistakes and errors) your books/articles posthumously?

ANSWER: No.

14) QUESTION: How well have you prepared your disciples to fully cooperate and follow the GBC in general?

ANSWER: 6 out of 10.

15) QUESTION: Have you prepared your disciples to fully cooperate with and follow the GBC even when they disagree with one or more of their decisions?

ANSWER: 9 out of 10.

16) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples not to create factions in ISKCON?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

17) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples not to create factions among themselves?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

18) QUESTION: Have you instructed disciples not to open temples or projects that conflict with or are opposed to the interests of ISKCON, the GBC, and/or the wishes of Prabhupada?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

19) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples not to exploit their position if they become gurus or leaders?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

20) QUESTION: Have you prepared your disciples to have a good understanding of Prabhupada's books, mission and mood?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

21) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples to at least maintain their current spiritual practices and standards in your absence?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

22) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples to understand their foundational relationship with Srila Prabhupada as their pre-eminent *siksa-guru*?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

23) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples to remain ISKCON devotees throughout their lives?

ANSWER: 10 out of 10.

24) QUESTION: Have you instructed your disciples to become initiating gurus?

ANSWER: 5 out of 10.

25) QUESTION: Have you given over your login user names/passwords?

ANSWER: No.

26) QUESTION: Do you want your disciples to construct a Samadhi?

ANSWER: Yes.

COMMENT: Small and simple.

27) QUESTION: Do you condone your disciples purchasing land off ISKCON property for your Samadhi?

ANSWER: No.

Health Report

I have been extremely exhausted after intensive preparation for last Saturday's Zoom lecture and the actual delivery. I've decided that I can't give any more of such lectures, although they were well-received and I derived joy in serving the devotees.

Recently my right kneecap has been giving way with pain when I walk. I'm wearing a knee brace to stabilize it while walking and doing exercises. But I'm not able to do my exercises due to exhaustion; I only do a small portion of them.

Philosophically I take these handicaps as more signs of old age. Birth, death, disease and old age—the sufferings of all conditioned souls. I don't let them depress me but go on with my writing of the *Journal* and producing new books.

Jagannatha

Steven Rosen (Satyaraja) sent me a 48-page essay he wrote on Lord Jagannatha. Since the Ratha-yatras are all being canceled this year, it was a good upliftment to have this essay about the Lord of the Chariots. Satyaraja wrote deeply yet accessibly. He told of the two versions of the origin of the Deities. In one version, King Indradyumna commissioned Visvakarma to carve the *murtis*. Visvakarma agreed, but on the condition that he would not be interrupted while he was working. The royalty grew impatient and burst into his room. Visvakarma disappeared, and the Deities were left incomplete, without hands or feet. But They were accepted by the devotees as worshipable. The other story of the Deities' origin is that Krsna-Jagannatha overheard His childhood pastimes being discussed by Rohini. He and Subhadra and Balarama became so ecstatic that They changed Their bodily forms. When They were discovered this way, They were accepted as worshipable Deities of Krsna, Subhadra and Balarama.

Satyaraja goes on to tell of the routine worship in the grand temple at Orissa. He writes that more *prasadam* is cooked for the Deities there than at any other temple in the world. There is a strict rule that no one but Hindu Indians can enter the temple of Jagannatha. Satyaraja writes that

this long tradition seems opposite the view that Jagannatha is the Lord of the whole universe, and any fallen souls can come and see Him and receive His mercy.

The grand Ratha-yatra is described. Jagannatha and the other Deities get on 40-foot high massive wooden carts and are taken out in the public and pulled on long ropes from the temple down Grand Road to Gundica several miles away. Gundica is symbolic of Vrndavana, and the Ratha-yatra is the bringing of Krsna back to His home in Vrndavana *dhama*, where Radharani and all the Vrajavasis love Him best. Jagannatha stays in Gundica for seven days, taking part in *kirtana* and honoring *prasadam* before He goes back to the main temple. Lord Caitanya took part in these Ratha-yatras during His time, and He displayed wild ecstasy in dancing and moving the carts.

Satyaraja brings the Ratha-yatra right up to the modern times. He tells how A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada found small wooden Jagannathas in San Francisco in 1967. He ordered his disciples to build full-size Deities and take Them out in a procession in San Francisco. This started out small, but in succeeding years it grew to a grand festival followed by ten thousand people proceeding from San Francisco to Golden Gate Park. Since then ISKCON has instituted Ratha-yatras in many, many cities around the world.

Satyaraja is also beginning writing a full-size book on ISKCON in New York. He will trace out beginning with Prabhupada's arrival in America, his moving to Henry Street, Brooklyn, and then 55th Street, Manhattan, and back to Brooklyn, then the Bhakti Center, etc. He is interviewing many people involved and wants to make it a full celebrative account.

Trinidad Baladeva's Return

Baladeva returned from Trinidad last night, too late to see him. I am a little displeased with him for not returning sooner. If he had caught a plane as soon as he officially heard the Ratha-yatra was canceled, he would have had a full week's time while planes were still flying to America. I instructed him to come at once, but he didn't obey my order. He stayed with his aging, ailing

mother, who was very afraid of the worldwide pandemic. He pacified her and bought vegetables for her. He dragged his heels and waited a week, and by then the Trinidad Airport was closed. He had to stay there for three months with no hope of traveling home. We missed him very much. Now we are glad that he's back in the fold so we have four inmates in our ashram. We expect him to take up his regular duties, and I hope he's glad to be home.

He'll be following a strict quarantine routine, not being allowed to come up to my room and keeping social distancing. He will wear a mask in the house and will have to eat in a separate room and then come back to the dining room to hear the out-loud reading. I hope he'll be glad to be back and take up his routine services—the garden, cleaning, kitchen and Deity worship. It will be good to see even half of his face (above the mask) and his dancing eyes and his shiny head.

Bhima dasa

I received a phone call after many years from my disciple in Vancouver, Bhima dasa. He's loyal to me, and he reported in optimistically about what he is doing. He's seventy years old, but he has a job as a security man on a very large movie town, with taverns, houses, etc. It's a set for filming in western movies, and he and another fellow patrol the large property to keep it secure. He's married and says it's good for his marriage that he spends most of the day at his work. He asked me if I wanted to talk about events in the world, but I told him I preferred to keep aloof. He agreed with that and said it was all controlled by the materialists and ultimately controlled by Krsna. He told me good news about Vancouver ISKCON. The congregation is largely Indians, and they support the temple without devotees having to go out and sell paintings or candles, and so on. They are just now planning to build a new temple. Architects have made their plans, and they are ready to start construction.

I had heard Bhima wanted to talk to me because he was in distress. But this was misinformation. He was in good spirits. He chants many rounds while he's driving in his van doing

his security work. He keeps me posted with regular correspondence. When devotees keep regular correspondence with me, it keeps the relationship alive. Bhima reads my *Journal* and writes letters to me, but this phone call was something extra, especially since he was so optimistic and friendly.

Out-loud Reading Update

In our out-loud reading, we are hearing of Dhruva Maharaja. As a five-year-old boy, he tried to climb upon the lap of his father as his stepbrother Uttama was doing. But Dhruva's stepmother Suruci forbade the boy and spoke to him in harsh words. She knew she was the favorite wife of the king, and she addressed Dhruva within the hearing of the king. She said, "You cannot go on the lap of your father because you were not born from my womb. You should take shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and pray to be born in my womb in your next life, and then you can ascend the throne of the kingdom." Dhruva Maharaja, although a five-year-old boy, had *ksatriya* blood in his veins. He was highly insulted by Suruci, burst into tears and ran to his mother, Sunita. Sunita had already heard the details of what had happened, and she cried before Dhruva and told him there was nothing she could do to help him because she was a neglected co-wife of the king. Sunita counseled Dhruva not to think ill of others but take complete shelter of the Supreme Lord. He asked her how he could do this, and she answered that she had heard great souls used to go to the forest and find Lord Visnu there in meditation. Dhruva obeyed her words and went to the forest to find Lord Visnu.

Meanwhile, Narada Muni had received word of Dhruva's dilemma and went to him in the forest. Narada tried to stop Dhruva from his proposed austerities to reach Visnu. He said Dhruva was just a young boy and that he should wait until he grew up before attempting severe austerities. He should go home and play like an ordinary boy. Dhruva told Narada that his brahminical instructions did not set well with him. He was a *ksatriya* and could not follow the path of

goodness. He asked Narada to show him an honest way to attain Visnu and petition Him for a kingdom greater even than his great-grandfather, Lord Brahma. Narada was testing Dhruva by his words, and when he saw the boy's determination, he gave him initiation and instructions in chanting the mantra *om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*.

Narada told him to go to Madhuvana in Vrndavana by the River Yamuna. Dhruva went there and began his devotional meditation. For the first month, he ate only berries and the fruit edible only by monkeys every third day. In the second month he ate only dry grass and leaves every six days. In the third month he drank water every nine days as he meditated on the Supreme Lord in trance. By the fourth month, fixed in his worship, he had completely mastered his breathing and only took in air every twelfth day. By the fifth month he was able to stand motionless on one leg like a column and completely concentrate his senses on the Supreme Lord. The pressure of his toe pushed down half the earth and constricted the breathing of the whole universe. The demigods were suffocating, and they went to Lord Visnu for immediate relief. He told them not to worry; this situation had been caused by the austerities of His devotee Dhruva, and Dhruva had no malice toward the demigods. Visnu would go to him at once and relieve the situation.

Visnu then arrived at Madhuvana and broke the meditation of Dhruva, who was seeing the Lord in his heart. The Lord now appeared directly before him. Dhruva was too overcome to make any words, but in awe and reverence he looked upon the lotus feet of Visnu and desired to kiss them and hold them. When Visnu mercifully touched him on the head with His conch shell, he became enlightened with *jnana-sakti* and could make beautiful prayers and comprehend the purpose of the Lord.

*

*

*

Later on we read how Dhruva Maharaja decided to give up his rulership of the world. He turned over the kingdom to his son, who was worthy to be emperor. Then Dhruva went to the

forest. Shortly after that, two effulgent associates of the Lord from Vaikuntha came to him in a great effulgent Vaikuntha airplane. They said they had come to Dhruva to take him to Visnu's planet, where he would live in eternity, bliss and knowledge. Dhruva was in awe about the beauty of the Visnudutas, and he bowed down to them in love.

The Visnudutas told Dhruva that Lord Visnu Himself had sent the plane to him. It was the most beautiful, transcendental vehicle, which traveled at the speed of mind and was as big as a house. Prabhupada comments that there are three ways of air travel. One is the mechanical means such as we know in the material world. This type of travel is uncomfortable and inconvenient for the passengers compared to the aerial mansion created by the mystic power of Kardama Muni. Another type of air travel is by riding on pigeons. And then there are transcendental airplanes made of gold which don't require fuel. These are subtle and transcendental, not visible to the eyes of materialists.

The two expert Vaikuntha pilots, Nanda and Sunanda, were in the plane, and they welcomed Dhruva to board it. Dhruva, overwhelmed to see the plane, offered his obeisances to it and to Nanda and Sunanda. He didn't rush onto the plane but performed his morning duties of bathing, etc., and he asked the *rishis* at Badarikasrama to give him their blessings for his journey. Although he had attained such perfection of going back to Godhead, he remained humble and respectful toward the sages. As he was about to board the airplane, he saw Death personified approaching him. Dhruva stepped on the head of Death personified and boarded the plane. When he touched the plane, his body turned into a spiritual body, and he became all-effulgent.

Then Dhruva thought of his poor mother, Suniti, and how he was leaving her behind. She had been his *vartma-pradarsaka-guru*, the guru who first shows one the path back to Godhead, and so he felt indebted to her and did not want to leave her behind. Nanda and Sunanda knew Dhruva's mind, and they assured him that Suniti, on the order of Visnu, was also going to Vaikuntha in a separate airplane.

On their journey to Vaikuntha they passed through all the planetary systems and were greeted with honor and showers of flowers by the demigods and residents of higher planets.

The *phala-sruti* verses of this chapter tell the benefits of hearing the history of Dhruva Maharaja:

“By hearing the narration of Dhruva Maharaja, one can fulfill desires for wealth, reputation and increased duration of life. It is so auspicious that one can even go to a heavenly planet or attain Dhruvaloka, which was achieved by Dhruva Maharaja, just by hearing about him. The demigods also become pleased because this narration is so glorious, and it is so powerful that it can counteract all the results of one's sinful actions.

“Anyone who hears the narration of Dhruva Maharaja, and who repeatedly tries with faith and devotion to understand his pure character, attains the pure devotional platform and executes pure devotional service. By such activities one can diminish the threefold miserable conditions of material life.

“Anyone who hears this narration of Dhruva Maharaja acquires exalted qualities like him. For anyone who desires greatness, prowess or influence, here is the process by which to acquire them, and for thoughtful men who want adoration, here is the proper means.” (*Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.12.45-47)

By hearing of the success of Dhruva Maharaja, one can follow in his footsteps and go back to Godhead in his present lifetime. Dhruva Maharaja is the great-grandson of Lord Brahma and the grandson of Svayambhuva Manu. He is the first human in disciplic succession to be graced with love of God and transfer to Vaikuntha in his present body. Thus he is our hero. Narada Muni was very proud of his disciple Dhruva Maharaja for his outstanding success in devotional service.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Maharaja said if only one of his disciples could attain perfection, he would consider his entire mission a success. Our Srila Prabhupada said he was fallen, but if one of his disciples could become perfect like Dhruva Maharaja, he could attain the spiritual world.

Govardhana Retreat Lectures

Bhurijana told of Sukadeva's explanation to Maharaja Pariksit about how Krsna rests after He becomes tired from playing. Thus He provides service opportunities to His infinite number of cowherd friends. One set of them make beds for Krsna out of soft flowers, and they feel close to Him. Although the flowers are very soft and fragrant, Krsna prefers even more to lay His head in the lap of Sridhara, the brother of Srimati Radharani. Another set of boys make fans out of joined leaves, and in the hot summertime they create a gentle breeze to cool the Lord's body. Again He expands His forms to give service to the many boys who want to fan Him.

All this service is done lovingly by the boys without a tinge of sense gratification, just to please Sri Krsna. Another set of boys massage Krsna's feet, and again He expands Himself to accommodate all His servants. The boys are in ecstasy just to please Krsna and bring Him transcendental comfort. Sukadeva says that another set of boys serve Krsna when He is tired by singing songs. Krsna doesn't sleep but hears the boys' sweet songs, which describe the many childhood pastimes of Krsna.

Sukadeva says only after many, many lifetimes of pious activities have these boys earned the privilege of such intimate service to Krsna. No powerful or influential king of the world can make soft beds for Krsna's rest. No sages or yogis can fan Him with leaves. No one but the *gopas* can massage His lotus feet. And no one but the ever-sinless cowherd boys can massage Krsna's feet. All these privileges are reserved for the confidential *gopas*, and Sukadeva Gosvami takes great pleasure in speaking these pastimes.

*

*

*

Dhenukasura

Bhurijana Prabhu told the story of Balarama killing Dhenukasura. Dhenukasura had been a rich, enjoying man with thousands of girlfriends. He used to play with them near the place of Durvasa Muni. Durvasa became annoyed by their loud frivolous noise and merrymaking. He cursed the rich man and said, “You have the intelligence of a donkey, and you’re making donkey-like sounds. I curse you to become a donkey. You will have to remain that way for hundreds of births until Balarama will kill you and bring you liberation.” So Dhenuka became a very powerful donkey, and he inhabited the Talavana forest. He was very envious and demoniac. He would not allow anyone to enter the forest and eat the *tala* fruits which were growing abundantly there. He was also a man-eater. Everyone was afraid to enter the Talavana forest. Krsna’s cowherd friends pleaded with Krsna and Balarama to go into the Talavana forest and get them some fruits because they felt very greedy to eat them. The acaryas say that the boys were not actually greedy for themselves but wanted Krsna to enjoy the tala fruits, and they wanted to see Him acting out chivalrous pastimes to expand His fame. Balarama and Krsna agreed, and They entered the forest with the boys. Krsna put Balarama in front. Krsna felt sorry that He had killed many, many demons, but Balarama had only killed one, so He wanted to give Balarama a chance to kill the as-demon. Balarama ran into the forest and grabbed the trunk of a very big palm tree. He shook it violently with His mighty arms, and the *tala* fruits all fell down. Dhenuka, hearing the noise, ran out enraged that someone had entered his territory and had shaken down all the fruits. He went to attack Balarama. In the fighting nature of a donkey, he placed his back toward Balarama and raised his two strong rear legs in the air to kick Him. Dhenuka violently hit the chest of Balarama, but the Lord was not at all affected. The donkey then began running around braying. He came back for another attack at Baladeva. This time he raised his rear legs and was about to hit the

chest of Balarama when Balarama, with one hand, grabbed the demon's two feet and twirled him around violently in the air. By the centrifugal force of Baladeva's twirling him, Dhenuka gave up his life. Balarama then threw the dead body of the donkey into the tall top of a palm tree, which crashed down to the ground. Then Dhenuka's many donkey associates, who are as powerful as Dhenuka, came running out to attack Balarama and Krsna. The two Supreme Lords dispatched all the donkeys in the same way, grabbing their rear legs and twirling them around until they lost their life-air. The Talavana Forest was finally clear of domination by the donkeys, and people could come and enjoy the fruits.

*

*

*

The Wives of the Yajnic *Brahmanas*

On Krsna's order His cowherd boys run happily to the women's quarters where the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas* are staying. They find them having cooked for the *yajna* and sitting, meditating on Krsna. When the boys enter their quarters, they become alert seeing the *gopas* dressed in cowherd attire and see them as Krsna's associates, that they are very dear friends of Krsna and Balarama. They say that they have not eaten all day and they are very hungry, and Krsna is hungry too. Hearing the name "Krsna," the wives swoon at their good fortune. They are so overwhelmed that Krsna is nearby that they remain inactive, in trance. The boys are disappointed that the women don't get into practical action. But finally the ladies break out of their trance and become fully engaged in preparing food for Krsna. They take *all* the foodstuffs they cooked for the brahminical sacrifice and put it in golden pots and wrap it with white linen. Although it is heavy, Yajnapatni and her friends stack the pots of food on their heads and shoulders, arms and hands.

Just as they are about to go out and search for Krsna in the woods, their husbands burst onto the scene. When they understand that their women are bringing food to Krsna, they become furious and forbid them to do it. They say, "You can give some food to the boys, and they can

bring it to Krsna, but on no condition can you leave the house and go out to see Krsna, who is another man and not your husband.” Yajnapatni and her friends pull themselves free of their husbands’ grasp and say, “We must go! We must go!” Other people connected to the *yajna* come around and also try to stop the ladies, but they pull away from their husbands and relatives and leave the house, thinking they will never return.

Jagattarini apologizes here and stops her narrative. She says she will complete it on the following day, telling us about the ladies meeting Krsna in the forest and how He receives them with love. It is a real cliffhanger, and we are a little frustrated to stop here. But we make ourselves patient and wait for the next day, when she will complete the wonderful pastime.

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

“We should look upon the criticisms of the agnostic intellectuals as a challenge. Let us not ourselves be dogmatic or fanatical. Rather, let us prove in our life and works that we can see the world as it is and with fresh, individual vision. Let us assert that we are trying to see Krsna in all things, and let us explain logically and philosophically why He is actually the ultimate Truth. And as we advocate our cause, let it be by works of art. Let us honestly express our own failings while at the same time explaining why we are committed to Krsna conscious truth.

“*On April 8th*

In the afternoon I walked with Baladeva
to the entrance of the *dhama*
and back to Radha-Damodara,
fingering my beads.

Imagine, in some temples like Tirupati
 I could never go alone in my own rocking chair
 to sit before the Deities as long as I liked—
 just to travel to India would cost me half my life.
 But here in this decorated room
 at 5:00 P.M., I'm the only one present
 beholding Their red-gold and green.
 I sit at Their feet
 and intend to come each day now
 walking to the *darsana*.”

*

*

*

“We bring charges against all poets, writers and philosophers who are not Krsna conscious. All their literary endeavors are like decorations on a dead body. As Sankaracarya said to his students of logic, ‘So we say to all creative artists and thinkers: “What good will your grammatic jugglery do you at the time of death? Better worship Govinda, worship Govinda, worship Govinda.”’ It is bad enough to mislead oneself, but to make a big hullabaloo out of one’s imaginations and gropings, to lead others into darkness, is a great disservice. The *Isopanisad* condemns such cultural leaders, stating that the so-called educators of humanity are worse than the merely ignorant sense-gratifiers. The challenge is not whether a devotee can be an artist. The real challenge is whether an artist can be a devotee. The burden is on the ‘artist’ to learn to surrender at the lotus feet of Krsna and then write for Him, paint for Him, praise His glories. Otherwise, the artist and his patrons and audience will all be vanquished. Who will not be vanquished? And who can say at the end of his life

that he has actually contributed to the liberation of humanity? And if he has not contributed, what was his use?”

*

*

*

“I have not gone to the Ganges this year, but like a prisoner I have kept myself in this room. When I do go out, whoever I meet makes my head hurt too much. At Mayapur you’re supposed to chalk out your year’s work. Mine: take the year to recover my health. An inglorious assignment, but what can I do?

“When I look over my shoulder, I can see the Ganges River winding its course. Around me the air fills with the sounds of bicycle horns, and incongruously, the noise of a nearby lawnmower. I can hear the sound of Shenai music playing. It is four days until Gaura-Purnima. But I won’t be here. On that day I will probably be penned up in a London airport hotel.

(COMMENT FROM 2020: *I actually changed those plans and joined with the devotees in Ireland at the Inis Rath temple.*)

“On my last night, as I sit under the revolving fan with the curtain pulled shut, I can find nothing significant to say. We don’t generally hear writers talking about their aches and pains, except perhaps in their private diaries. In their public works, they transcend and write of ideas or life beyond their own pains. Or they transform their pain into art, like the crippled saxophone player I once heard playing one night on the Lower East Side.

“The great Vaisnava writers speak directly to Lord Krsna, whereas I tend to complain about how badly I am getting on with others and with this body. Endless complaining. But a devotee is meant to be pure and fearless and tolerant. He accepts pain as he accepts the events of this world, which come and go like the seasons.

“I lament to be leaving Mayapur without seeing and touching the Ganges or seeing the terracotta artwork at Prabhupada’s Samadhi, or visiting the ISKCON Sri Jagannatha Mandir. At least I saw Radha-Madhava and went to some meetings. But I did not attain pure *bhakti*, and my Godbrothers have now seen firsthand how ill I am. And they have seen my spiritual imperfection as well, judging from the contributions I made at the meetings. They forgive me, and I forgive me, but where is the great progress? If now I turn to chanting for solace, won’t it be the same, mediocre? But I’ll try, I’ll try again. It may improve, I hope.”

*

*

*

“THE ATTRACTIONS OF PRABHUPADA’S PREACHING

“I was listening to a tape of Prabhupada explaining to an M.A. philosophy student the nature of *atma*. Prabhupada explained it so nicely that I became very happy just hearing it. He explained that the *atma* is *sac-cid-ananda*. The nature of the self is to feel blissful. ‘Why do I like this flower?’ Prabhupada said. ‘Because I enjoy it. And why have you become a philosophy student? For knowledge. And why don’t we want to die? Because we are eternal.’ Prabhupada’s masterfully attractive handling of the questions and his gravity as guru made me very happy and proud to be his disciple. When the philosophy student interjected and tried to ask more questions, Prabhupada said, ‘Just hear, just hear.’

“Certainly I cannot explain anything as expertly as Prabhupada. But on the other hand, hearing from him makes me confident that my duty is to go on explaining things as he has taught me, just as long as I don’t act as if I am surpassing him. Prabhupada surely didn’t want us to be silent but to expand the message as he

taught it. So I have to continue writing in that mood, explaining the nature of *atma*, *sac-cid-ananda*, in Prabhupada's footsteps, and reminding others whenever possible of the particular attractiveness of His Divine Grace, Srila Prabhupada."

*

*

*

"Subhananda sent me an essay of his to review. At the end of his letter, he wrote, 'I hope this finds you well, and if not, tolerating it with good cheer.'

"Yes, I am cheerful, especially at certain times of the day. Today after my morning exercise, I felt 'good.' I felt a sense of accomplishment when I dictated a rough version of my monthly column 'Notes from the Editor,' for Back to Godhead, and while on my noon walk I spoke into the tape recorder some thoughts about Krsna consciousness and other religions that also left me in good spirits. That's how *I* feel, but how does Krsna feel about me? How does Srila Prabhupada feel about me? I can't say, 'When I'm pleased, they are pleased.' But what is true is that if, by my actions, they are pleased, then I'll be pleased to such a degree there will be no mistaking, and all other desires will vanish. *Svamin krtartha'smi varam na yace*; 'My dear Lord Visnu, now that I've seen You, I have no other desires. I am completely satisfied.'"

*

*

*

“STEADINESS AND VARIETY

"We are encouraged to pursue variety in spiritual life. But this is different than mere fickleness or a lust for novelty. In the spiritual world, the eternal associates of

Krsna see endless varieties in their worshipable friend and lover, Sri Krsna, and thus life with Him is described as ever-fresh and infinitely blissful.

“Along with the infinite variety of experience in the spiritual world, life there is also infinitely steady. The cowherd boys and *gopis* do not seek out a friend or lover other than Krsna. In fact, the *gopis* infinitely prefer Krsna to stay in Vrndavana, and when Krsna goes to Dvaraka they are no longer attracted to Him in the same way. They want to be with Krsna in Vrndavana, and they don't wish their life with Him there to be disrupted.

“The boys also want Krsna’s constant association. When taking rest at night, they count on seeing Krsna in the morning. They want to go to His house early in the morning and see Him dressed by Mother Yasoda, and then they want to go out to the cow pastures with Him and play and watch Him kill demons and take part with Him in all kinds of sports. Nor do they expect this life with Krsna to be disrupted.

“As we train ourselves in Krsna consciousness, we too should cultivate variety, steadiness, and loyalty in our devotional routine. A steady devotional routine is not necessarily cause for boredom or restlessness for a devotee. Rather, such a routine is a reflection of the blissful peace and security of Vaikuntha, where Krsna is always present and where one is always engaged in one’s *rasa* with Him through infinite, diverse and yet familiar exchanges.

“So I do not despise the fact that the same sun rises each morning, or that I am greeted by the same songs of the birds every day. And neither do I wish that a Deity other than Radha-Damodara appear on the altar at *mangala-arati*. But what I despise is my own dullness and lack of devotion.”

Wild Garden--Collected Writings, 1990-1993

“A COLLECTED BOUQUET

“Vraja *bhajana* in the West— a *bhajana* that recognizes the downpouring rain as life-bringing; a *bhajana* that savors the cool air; a *bhajana* that acknowledges the gray clouds in the blue sky.

“It will also rain in Vrndavana, and I can write more devotionally there. I won’t write farcically—‘I am in the land of Krsna, and the rain appears to be the *gopis*’ tears.’ If Vraja means love of Krsna, then why not feel it here and there with this rain? Feel separation. Chant while you have physical energy and facility.

“The rain is crying, crying, ‘Krsna, Krsna’—it is doing that all over the corrugated tin roof and the plastic greenhouse and into the earth, into the calves’ soaked skin, into the flowerpots brimming over, into the fresh streams on the road, the ability in man. Easing off now, only to come on strong in another wave, like waves on a beach, like waves of calling to Krsna.

“Regardless of the increase of *bhava* that will inevitably come when I go there, or rather, being happy for that future time—let me beg for a tiny drop of mercy here, today. Let me go to Vrndavana now, giving up fear and doubt.

“I almost wanted to go out and dance in the rain, and feel it soak and chill me as I dance my primitive dance to God. But I don’t. And now it is slowing. It could never keep up for long at such a pitch. Rivulets and drips and drops and new puddles. And the earth breathes in, taking in water. A fresh aroma . . .

“I am a child of the rain. I hope this is somehow connected to Krsna’s pastimes, that I can convey the same to my readers. This is what I feel now. It is this moment, the rain, my senses, and it is connected.

“It is possible to feel Vraja’s sweetness in a cool summer shower in Erie. You have to be captured by the Queen of Vrndavana and the narrations of sweet Krsna. Otherwise, it is only rain. I am here to unite two worlds.

“Cry out, ‘Krsna! Radha! Gurudeva!’ When the rain falls harder and harder, my own blood pumps hard. I don’t feel like a 52-year-old man anymore, but like the spirit soul, ready to fly. It is the *kirtana* of the inarticulate nature, and Srila Prabhupada himself said the waves at the beach are like the pounding of the *gopis*’ hearts in separation.

“It is a secret world. You don’t tell others about it. Under an umbrella you might scurry back to the house and say, ‘It’s sure pouring!’ That’s all. You might add, ‘It swept into the shed, but then the door shut to protect me.’ No more.”

*

*

*

“WRITING

“The big thing is Krsna consciousness. That’s my saving grace. I don’t have a philosophy of my own; I have Krsna consciousness. I’m a struggling human being, but more than that, I’m a struggling devotee, a *sadhaka*. If I didn’t have Krsna consciousness . . . don’t even imagine it. Preserve what you have.

“Yes, I want to write here and not just talk about it. But I have to talk about it also.

“And if I get loose to write, what will I say? I will respond to *sastra* and to Krsna in my life. I will include portraits, descriptions from my little life, direct experiences as a human being. I long for the day when I can write honestly as a human being and it will coincide with *krsna-katha*. Until then, when I have to think

‘real hard’ before I write of Krsna, and be very careful I don't make a mistake or write something against the *siddhanta*, then I am writing as a student, and maybe as a preacher.

“But I want more than that. I want to write as a simple, fallible human being who loves Krsna and who sees Him in daily life.

“A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them.’

(*Writing the Australian Crawl*, William Stafford)

“Combine this with Krsna consciousness and you've got a winning, revolutionary program. It can be done. It is accepted under the premise of *yukta-vairagya*. We devotees do have something to say. We are struggling to achieve the most wonderful thing. We are dealing with the most interesting phenomena. What we are trying to do is the most important thing in human society. Honest, genuine news from the life of a *sadhaka* is good writing and good reading—as long as he doesn't spoil it with ‘officialdom,’ impersonalism, and an illusory covering of his real self. When a devotee breaks through the false covering, he gives more than a nondevotee can ever give—he gives the soul and his loving relationship with Krsna. Of course, only other devotees will believe it and be interested, but it is still preaching.

“Some people talk about writing as if it's penmanship: you take dictation from your own psyche that has already done something. Well, I'm interested in the psyche that hasn't done something and then does

something. . . . So I always try to get people to relax enough to pay attention to the things that actually occur to them during the process of writing. . . . I think writing is itself educational, exploratory, and worthy of trust while you're doing it.' (*Writing the Australian Crawl*, pp.73-4)"

Japa Walks, Japa Talks

"I realize I can take a negative or a positive viewpoint when I assess my *japa*, but that's not an arbitrary choice, is it? I mean there has to be a factual base to the assessment. If I take fifteen minutes to chant a round because I keep falling asleep, how can I say that the chanting is nice? Of course, that's an extreme example. An ordinary state is subtle and hard to ascertain. Anyway, since I do have some choice about how to look at things, I prefer to be hopeful. Hopeful doesn't mean leading myself along a primrose path of unreality, thinking that I have no problems in chanting at all.

"I have already written two books about *japa*, and already admitted in them the grimmer side of things. I have a reputation among some devotees as one who is willing to admit problems. Therefore, they submit their problems to me. They generously think that I might be exaggerating my difficulties in order to speak for all strugglers.

"Narada dasa, echoing my own laments, asks me if Krsna is even present when he chants. 'When I chant inattentively, my mind wandering, etc., is Krsna present or only His shadow? If it is only His shadow, will I ever reach the breakthrough point?'

"Dear Narada dasa, all I know is what I read in the *sastra*. I can repeat it to you with whatever experience I have had. Your question hints of despair, but don't

despair, don't abandon the ship. We have a good captain, Srila Prabhupada, and the Hare Krsna mantra is the most favorable weather because this is Kali-yuga, the time of stormy inauspiciousness. *Hari-nama*, the most general and liberal form of God consciousness, is our only hope. It allows for us to be inattentive rascals, but it still gives so much benefit. Even when we chant offensively, we get relief from all our miseries and sins. Therefore don't be depressed. After all, you are under the shelter of the holy name, and you are chanting. Krsna will not appear in the holy name unless we can chant purely and with attention.

“As to how long it will take or when you will break through, I can't say. Prabhupada said it could happen in a minute or fail to happen in millions of births. My only advice now is to please take it seriously. Don't imagine you are suffering from a terminal disease, but take it seriously as a positive engagement in your life. Give it priority in a practical way in your daily schedule. You know your daily rhythms, so when you have strength and peace of mind devoted to the holy name, always be sure to chant your quota without fail and in a peaceful place. If you do all of that and still can't control your mind, then keep on chanting and praying to Krsna. You'll break through one day or another. In fact, you are already breaking through bit by bit. As the *hari-nama* verse says, there is no other way. Take that verse personally. There is no other way but to keep striving, and in that striving you can feel a kind of righteousness. You are performing the *yuga-dharma*. Give it your best.”

Breaking the Silence--Selected Writings 1991-1997

Chapter Three

A Song Is You

“Metaphor is song. Explain it, but I know the particulars may not seem interesting or profound to readers who want structured books.

“Wait a minute. Don’t pander to readers or concepts of Art.

“But the Krsna conscious criteria is important and must be followed.’

“If your little splayed-out life-thoughts are all Krsna conscious, no problem. To seek a metaphor when you are already Krsna conscious in a multifaceted way is not required. It’s *maya*. Who needs it? ‘Tell us your actual Krsna conscious life, or your sincere struggle,’ as I did in *Journal and Poems*, saying, ‘Here I am, living at Gitanagari for the year because I have headaches and I’m trying to cure them, and I’m discovering the birds and plants in a Krsna conscious way, and I’m discovering the genre of a Krsna-conscious practitioner’s diary.’ That was structure enough, I didn’t need an allegory.

(Nor do we need one on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra. Lord Krsna is actually there as the Supreme Person, talking to Arjuna. The Pandavas are not symbolic of the five senses, and Kuruksetra does not symbolize the body. It is an actual field.)

“Hmmm, you got me there. But song still says things I can’t say ordinarily. At least I break looser there.’ But wait a minute before you go to sing on the paper. Let me ask you why should you want to ‘break looser?’ Why not stay tight and more or less orderly in Krsna conscious thoughts? Why this breaking away like a wild horse from the gate? Why this running through the meadow? What purpose does it serve?

“Well, sir, it lets us open to say things that maybe we can’t when we are oh-so-careful to say at every step the perfect truth. Maybe we can use a big house for all our thoughts to live in.”

Truthfulness, the Last Leg of Religion

“Truth and Illusion

“Discussions of what the Mayavadis say and what the Vaisnavas say are more than armchair philosophizing. Depending on what view one accepts, there are very practical consequences. The Mayavadi’s conclusions are similar to the atheist’s, as described in *Bhagavad-gita*:

“They say that this world is unreal, with no foundation, no God in control. They say it is produced of sex desire and has no cause other than lust.’

“Following such conclusions, the demoniac, who are lost to themselves and have no intelligence, engage in unbeneficial, horrible works meant to destroy the world.’ (*Bhagavad-gita* 16.8-9)

“Formerly, Mayavadi *sannyasis* were strict ascetics. But in Kali-yuga, impersonalism and voidism—with their avoidance of obedience to the Supreme Personality of Godhead—are used as supports to hedonism: ‘Life is just a dream, so do your own thing,’

“To live in a world without truth, or any possibility of reaching truth, is to live in chaos and darkness. One may advocate this as freedom—‘We can do whatever we like!’—but it is more like hell.”

“One day while Srila Prabhupada was in Bombay, he simultaneously had visitors from Vrndavana and Mayapur. This was during a period when temple construction was going on in both places. Prabhupada expected his disciples in those places to come and ask him for money. The disciples knew that Prabhupada would be expecting and demanding results from them on these important construction projects. When these disciples visited from distant places, however, Prabhupada always first welcomed them according to Vaisnava etiquette. Prabhupada had said that his mission was like a war on maya, so he received his soldiers from the field by first offering them sweet words and relief. He asked them if they had taken prasadam and suggested that they might want to rest. At least for a few minutes, the immediate pressing problems were put aside, as Prabhupada's disciples basked in the sweetness of his *darsana* and his kind welcome.

“When, however, Srila Prabhupada did ask Gargamuni and Jayapataka the reason for their visit, they said that they needed 150,000 rupees to continue construction on their respective projects.

“I just gave you!’ said Prabhupada. ‘All the time you are asking for money, but when it is going to be finished?’ The disciples remained silent while Prabhupada inquired and criticized their demands. Surabhi Swami became anxious and thought, ‘If they can't even get Rs. 150,000 for Mayapur, then what will Prabhupada say when he hears me ask for Rs. 250,000?’

“Prabhupada argued that in neither Vrndavana nor Mayapur was sufficient collection going on, but they were simply coming regularly to him as the money supplier. After speaking for some time, Prabhupada agreed to give the Mayapur men 70,000 rupees, which they accepted gratefully.

“So, Surabhi Prabhu,’ said Prabhupada, ‘what can I do for you?’

“Surabhi had a more systematic presentation, listing all the needs for construction to continue in Vrndavana. Hearing attentively, Prabhupada then asked, ‘This adds up to how much?’

“‘Two and a half *lakhs*, Srila Prabhupada.’

“Prabhupada then turned to his secretary and asked that a check be made out for two and a half *lakhs* (approximately \$3300). Two checks were made out and presented to the devotees. Surabhi was about to leave the room when Prabhupada called him back.

“‘How much does it cost to take a *ricksha* from our temple in Vrindavana to the Punjab Bank and then back?’ Surabhi replied that it was about Rs. 1.25. Then Prabhupada asked his secretary, ‘Brahmananda, how much does it cost to send a registered letter from Bombay to Vrndavana?’ The answer was seventy-five *paisa*. Srila Prabhupada then took back the check from Surabhi and said, ‘We will send the check by mail.’

“Just to save fifty *paisa* out of a sum of two and a half *lakhs* of rupees, Prabhupada preferred to mail the check to the bank rather than have Surabhi carry it by hand. Srila Prabhupada was ultimately willing to spend whatever was required to build his important temples in India, yet he nevertheless instructed his disciples that as far as possible, they should save every *paisa*.”

My Relationship with Lord Krsna

“How do I know that Krsna is listening? What does He think of my prayers? We know what Krsna thinks because He tells in His own words in the scriptures. He says, ‘If one offers Me with love and devotion . . .’ (*Bhagavad-gita* 9.26) He also

says, ‘Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My very dear friend.’ (*Bg.* 18.65)

“This means we go to Krsna not only at the time of death, but whenever we become fully and favorably absorbed in Him. Lord Krsna is not far away or difficult to reach: ‘To show them special mercy, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy with the shining lamp of knowledge the darkness born of ignorance.’ (*Bg.* 10.11)

“Prabhupada says that if we go one step towards Krsna, He comes a hundred steps forward to meet us.

“We shouldn’t doubt that He hears our prayers, and we should hear His response in the *sastras*, His own self, as *caitya-guru* in our hearts, and from the words of the bona-fide gurus and *sadhus*.”

*

*

*

“Dear Lord,

“If this were a ship’s log, I’d write, ‘May 17, stuck in the water.’ I have hit a block in this writing. I needn’t explain it here, but how could I have come to the end of this topic?

“Obviously I haven’t. Yesterday I wrote myself this note: ‘The questions, topics of complacency, and the relationship—fear of even wanting to know what is lacking or fear of coming close to Him, or to be approached once again, even if gently and without conclusion.’ This indicates that there is still good material to write about. Maybe I don’t like feeling confined by the topic. It seems to exclude other topics.

“It can be intimidating. You are everything, and I want to acknowledge that. You are more important than I am, but sometimes it appears in my writing that I am more important. I’m trying to approach You in the only way I know, through the self.

The self reads *sastras*, hears from guru and tries to assimilate it. But yes, You are *vibhu* and I am *anu*. You are first and I am last. I am Your eternal servant.

“Why don’t I surrender to You? I don’t know. My dear Lord, as I write I hear M. downstairs clearing his throat. It’s a signal for me to go on writing. My tugboat of writing desires sails through the black waters. My lights are on, and the engine is running smoothly. You are with me as the ship’s eyes and as the eyes in my head.

“I can’t force You to appear in my writing. Maybe I don’t have a strong enough desire to know You, and I want to hide that fact from myself. I just heard Srila Prabhupada say how one could be stifled by remaining in the mode of goodness. Such a person might think, ‘I am a very learned man.’ He doesn’t feel the need to go further and surrender to You. Since surrender to You is the only way to be liberated from birth and death, the man in goodness remains bound.”

WRITING SESSIONS

Wicklow Writing Sessions

“**Session #4** (continued)

“3:02 P.M. July 28, 1996 (*Uddhava’s hut*)

“We are already past the halfway mark on the beads on his order. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna. The actual words need to rescue the page from . . . and please Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, means Radha and Krsna when we say it. That’s why this mantra is better than others. It is given by our *acaryas* and we are told by them—Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati and Srila Prabhupada—to chant this Hare Krsna mantra

and your desires will be fulfilled. At the same time, prosecute other duties in the *sankirtana* movement as we did on *pada-yatra*. Now, we are actually filling a page and it is another way. I hope you will consider it that way. Sri Krsna Caitanya.

“Ireland is that way, rain and then sun and then rain. The cows stay out. Listen to it, listen to your hours go by. Then man, what are you doing for serving in the preaching capacity?

“That’s a fair question. I don’t have an answer. How about saying that it’s like chanting *japa* and so I am learning to express myself in a way that will lead to books? The writing here may not be the book you want to read to help yourself. But this is leading me to it.

“I don’t claim that a higher being on another planet is writing this for me. I am pressing the keys in a KC direction. But this is within a process to try to flow and it will help you to write a book.

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

“No, I have trusted in the process and will continue it 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.

“Srila Prabhupada said that first you actually have to know who Krsna is. He reveals Himself in the *Bhagavad-gita*. Then you can know of His intimate family

dealings. I don't claim to know Krsna so well. I'm saying I want to be His devotee. All glories to the Lord of the universe.

“They didn't sell many books at the Ratha-yatra. They didn't have a good location. People had to walk over there to see them. They weren't right in the path. Anyway, they sold some books. Now let's hear what's happening over at Ranch XYZ. They are just about to free the cows. In the mind we are studying the Cc. so that next week we may give another presentation of the teachings of the Lord with His devotees. How He tends the plants and it goes to Goloka Vrndavana, and there it fructifies in love of God. We want to end this page chanting until the end, praising God: please let us gain the basic information of Krsna that comes by repeating *Bhagavad-gita* and chanting its meaning.

“Breakdown. Krsna is bluish. He is the Lord we want to talk of, but we say we know ourselves better than we know Him. But you should know Him too. Krsna, please be kind to me. Reveal Yourself. They say, 'I see Christ in some bum.' He said, 'Feed my sheep and then you will know me.' But we have to know Krsna the way He teaches His followers. Arjuna knew the way. Listen to him and Vaishnavas like Vyasa and Narada and of course, the Vrajavasis. They are the very best devotees. Try to hear what they say. They say love Krsna, serve Krsna by serving the bona-fide spiritual master. And he says it must be done by going through Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. And that also is done by going through the Six Gosvamis. That is the way. Hare Krsna Hare Krsna. The Lord is telling us how to do it.

“Now we are reforming and tightening our schedule so that there will be three full one-hour writing sessions in the day and perhaps another shorter one.

Keep at it safely. Keep yourself in shape so you can do that. There is no force in terms of justifying the action but preach and serve and worship. I like the image of one page being a round, and at the top of the page you can signal, 'Here is the start of another page.' It is like a string of beads. The *mala*, the fingering of the beads, is like the fingering of the keys, the writing of the words . . . One might say, 'But the Hare Krsna *mantra* is only sixteen words over and over and you are using many words.' But actually, when we chant the Hare Krsna *mantra* our minds go through many words, right? So, this page is like that. It captures only a small amount of the words that pass through the mind, so it is less wordy than the *japa* rounds in which the mind is more uncontrolled. The writing controls the mind, perhaps better than the chanting does. But true, it doesn't vibrate out loud, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare. So, in that sense the *japa* does have the absolute edge over the writing. I do both and hope to reach a synthesis so that writing will help me to chant and the chanting will be something I can write about. I can say I chanted and experienced the Lord in my chanting. It was nice chanting, looking up at the skylight at 2 A.M. Thus, the chanting writing page is a direction through the page or *japa mala* round. You can say you finished it and that means you stayed in KC for ten minutes. We are forcing ourselves to do it and it is good for us. An effort to be a devotee that ends this way, Hare Krsna. The Lord is the shepherd, Govinda playing the flute, attracting the *gopis*.

Top of last page

Give me eight minutes to do this one.

O Lord, we play the flute

and we are the boot of the heel
 we are the happy fool, play with us please
 and deliver us from sin and errant thoughts.

Please give us they key to enter Your abode
 we are Krsnaites and want to be.

Let us read and walk again with our guru
 as in early days when we were young
 and he was traveling to spread the Hare Krsna movement.

Let us share the history of it with him again.

Do you remember those days?

Yes, I do. I remember we would go walking in Hyderabad and it was very hot, I was skinny and his servant. Can't recall how I grew so restless then. Couldn't control the mind, that's all I could say. Regret it. I don't have to go back to that now. Just try to do the right thing and make the best of each situation. You may not be doing as well as you think you are. You may have to go back and work on chanting the *mantra* in the proper way. You will be humbled to do it over again, things you thought you had mastered. I answered the question to the best of my ability and then let it go.

“Then I gave out little carob balls and now it is over. The ladies and kiddies have returned.

“I said, ‘Now you have a new generation of *bhakti-latas* to raise.

“The dad says, ‘We sometimes think of them as weeds.’

“No,’ I said, ‘they are gems in the rough.’ The children sat quietly when I talked, they behaved well although I doubt my talk held any interest for them because of its intellectual, non-kiddie nature. But we did hear Srila Prabhupada say

several times, ‘Bow-wow, bow-wow,’ imitating the materialist when he’s asked, ‘What is your next life?’ Maybe the kids liked the ‘bow-wow.’ I did. I didn’t like the carob so much nor the rhubarb sweet, ugh.

“So, some books were sold at Gita-nagari but not so many as last year. That’s all right. We will get there, chanting Hare Krsna. These writing sessions will help us. They can be folded up like newspapers and thrown at cottages in the suburbs. He’s doing something, and the future will see. The Lord’s names will be chanted in every town and village. You are not a nonentity. You would be bashful if you could see the good you are doing. I would just as soon not see it. Here it is, amen and finish.

“(58 minutes, nine typed pages, backyard hut, Sunday afternoon.)”