

Free Write Journal #114

*

*

*

Free Writes

Random Memories of Tamal Krishna Maharaja

I read poems from *Soul Eyes* on the Towaco Zoom channel on Saturday. But I worried about my Zoom appearance on Sunday at the memorial gathering for Tamal Krishna Goswami. I thought it was wonderful that the disciples and friends were holding this memorial meeting to keep alive the presence of this glorious Vaisnava. Yet I timed my talk, and it came out to only ten minutes. I couldn't think of more to say although we were close friends. So I asked for questions and answered them in order to extend it. There were different meetings going on by Zoom on different continents where his disciples reside. Our group spoke to the European continent.

Here's what I said on Zoom: I did not see him much while he was GBC for India. When he returned to the USA and headed up the traveling bus *sankirtana*, I developed a close relationship with him. This lasted until he went back to school. Then he didn't travel to the places where we used to meet, and he was absorbed in his academic studies. I respected him for his academic career, and I admired him. I like what his tutor wrote in his collection of undergraduate essays published while he was at Southern Methodist University. His tutor said that the University did not give TKG any quarter, nor did he expect any. He had to sit in crowded classrooms with all the other students, although in the Dallas temple he sat on a large *vyasasana* and had many disciples.

Before he entered the university, we used to meet privately wherever we were, in Vrndavana, Mayapura, and he would come to see me annually in Gita-nagari, or I would visit him in Dallas.

We would meet, just the two of us, and I would make up an agenda of what to talk about. We spoke of the state of our *sadhana* and how we could improve it. He gave me managerial advice. For example, he suggested I form a traveling party to go out and sell paintings to increase our much-needed income. We remembered Srila Prabhupada, talked about writing projects and our spiritual aspirations. I told my favorite stories about Swamiji in 1966, and he told me all of his interactions, especially the last year when he was Prabhupada's caretaker during his final illness.

Some devotees called TKG "Hot Tamale" because he could have a hot temper and reprimand a devotee with a show of anger. But he was never like that with me. He was always gentle and friendly.

The Gita-nagari Deities, Radha-Damodara, were originally in the possession of Visnujana Maharaja and TKG on their bus. Finally They were installed on the altar at Gita-nagari to give Them a more stable base. Later TKG kindly arranged for two *murtis* to be carved of Lalita and Visakha, and they were placed beside Radha-Damodara. They were so beautiful that TKG regretted that he had broken the mold on the Deities.

For three years TKG, myself and a very few Godbrothers explored topics of *rasika-bhakti*. It grew controversial, and the GBC ordered us to stop. But during the time we were reading the books of the Gosvamis and discussing them, I formed an intimate bond with TKG.

When I received the news of his departure, I cried. I had lost the *vapuh* of a dear friend. But we have his *vani*, his instructions, and he has a worldwide community of disciples, especially in Dallas, to keep his presence alive. Everyone acknowledges he was one of the greatest leaders in Prabhupada's mission. Just last month I associated with TKG by hearing his VIHE seminar on the glories of Vrndavana. He read a verse from Prabhodhananda Sarasvati's *Vrndavana-mahimamrta* and then he commented on it. He was well-acquainted with *vrndavana-katha*, and I was very enlivened to hear from him. I felt like I was with him.

“He reasons ill who tells that Vaisnavas die
when thou art living still in sound!
The Vaisnavas die to live, and living try
to spread the holy name around!”

The Nectar of Devotion

As a result of a vote by the devotees of our ashram, we are now hearing *Nectar of Devotion*. I have read the book many, many times, but I am expecting new lights as we go through it again. Devotional service is auspicious. Rupa Gosvami writes that devotional service is the best welfare system for all humanity. Therefore Rupa Gosvami and other scholars recommend that propagation of Krsna consciousness is the best welfare program for the entire human race. Prabhupada writes that even a young boy who comes to Krsna consciousness quickly gives up the prime sinful activities: illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling.

The rarity of devotional service:

“Krsna can easily award a person material happiness or even liberation, but He does not agree very easily to award a person engagement in His devotional service. Devotional service can only be obtained through the mercy of a pure devotee.” (*NOD*, “Characteristics of Pure Devotional Service”)

Out of millions of persons seeking perfection, only one may attain perfection, and out of such perfected persons, only one or two may know Krsna.

“By the mercy of the spiritual, who is a pure devotee, and by the mercy of Krsna, one can achieve the platform of devotional service. There is no other way.”
(Cc. *Madhya* 19.151)

As we read submissively, we feel purified and new. Prabhupada said that *The Nectar of Devotion* was the lawbook for his devotees for the next ten thousand years.

“To perform devotional service means to follow in the footsteps of Radharani. Devotees in Vrndavana put themselves under the care of Radharani in order to achieve perfection in their devotional service. In other words, devotional service is not an activity of the material world.”

It is directly under the control of Radharani:

“Krsna is known as Madana-mohana, because He can defeat the beauty of thousands of Cupids, but Radharani is still more attractive, so She can even attract Krsna. Therefore, devotees call Her Madana-mohana-mohini, the attractor of the attractor of Cupid.” (NOD, “Characteristics of Pure Devotional Service”)

*

*

*

In our out-loud reading of *The Nectar of Devotion*, we are hearing about different ecstasies in the category of alertness:

“When Srimati Radharani first saw Krsna, She suddenly became conscious of all transcendental happiness, and the functions of Her different limbs were stunned. When Lalita, Her constant companion, whispered into Her ear the holy name of

Krsna, Radharani immediately opened Her eyes wide. This is an instance of alertness caused by hearing the sound of Krsna's name.

“Once Krsna said to Radharani, ‘I am going to give up Your company.’ Upon saying this, He immediately disappeared, and because of this Radharani became so afflicted that the hue of Her body changed, and She immediately fell down upon the ground of Vrndavana. She had practically stopped breathing, but when She smelled the flavor of the flowers on the ground, She awoke in ecstasy and got up. This is an instance of transcendental alertness caused by smelling.” (*NOD*, “Further Features of Ecstatic Love”)

*

*

*

We hear about the qualities of Krsna. There is a list of sixty-four qualities, of which Krsna has four qualities that even Lord Narayana or any other incarnation does not have. These four are:

1. He is the performer of wonderful varieties of pastimes (especially His childhood pastimes);
2. He is surrounded by devotees endowed by wonderful love of Godhead
3. He can attract all living entities all over the universe by playing on His flute.
4. He has a wonderful excellence of beauty which cannot be rivaled anywhere in the creation.

In another scripture, an additional fifty qualities are mentioned. His qualities include extremely pleasing, effulgent, strong, ever-youthful, wonderful linguist, truthful, pleasing talker, highly-learned . . .

Actually Krsna's transcendental qualities are unlimited. Ananta-Sesa, with his thousands of hoods, has been glorifying Krsna's qualities for a million years, and he has not come to the end of them.

A special favorite quality of Krsna is *bhakta-vatsala*: He is particularly inclined to His devotees.

Out-Loud Reading News

Yesterday Ayutaksi dasi joined us on the out-loud reading from Italy. She speaks fluent English. Lalita-kaisori and her husband Atindra Mahajana from Massachusetts took part in the reading too. We invite other devotees to join us in our *sanga*, provided they can meet the times we read. (7:30 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. EST; 12:30/6:00 P.M. BST; 1:30/7:00 P.M. CEST; 2:30/8:00 P.M. MSK; 4:30/10:00 P.M. ISK)

Another List

- 1) Draupadi called out, "He Govinda!" Krsna says by this helpless surrendered cry, "She has purchased Me." He saved her from the Kurus' stripping her naked by supplying her with unlimited cloth.
- 2) Uddhava saved the *gopis* from dying in separation by going to Vrndavana and repeatedly reading and explaining the letter from Krsna. He uplifted their spirits by evoking the pastimes of Krsna. He was overwhelmed by the *gopis*' pure love for the Lord.
- 3) When Narada visited Krsna, he was amazed to see Him expanded into 16,108 forms and dealing with His queens in different ways.
- 4) Uddhava prayed to be born as a bush in Vrndavana so that the *gopis* might step on him and leave the imprint of the dust of their lotus feet on him.

Chiropractor

I've had a pain throughout my back for the past three weeks. Baladeva has been massaging, but it hasn't brought relief. So I thought of a chiropractor. We called him, and when he heard of my physical condition (difficulty in walking), he agreed to make a house call. He goes by the name Mike. He has a background in attending the Sivananda Ashram and met his wife there. His intention was to remain a *brahmacari* in the ashram, but as a "late bloomer," he married at age 44.

We have a professional massage table, so that convinced him he should make a house visit. I lay face down, and he first tapped my pressure points. He diagnosed me as having a spinal torque caused by problems with one neck vertebra and another with two lumbar vertebrae. He has a couple of machines. (Formerly a chiropractor used to use his hands only, but now they use these pneumatic machines.) One of them produced rapid tapping—it sounded like a woodpecker but didn't cause discomfort. I told him the pain was mostly located in the bottom half of my back, so he concentrated there. His second machine was bigger and produced a thumping sound as it covered more ground. He worked on me for 45 minutes, and then he was finished. He said he wanted to come back and see me in a few days.

After he left, I noticed my back still had the same pain. Maybe by repeated work I'll get relief. I already had a little relief, and no pains at all in my shoulders and neck. So this is just another malady in addition to my others, and we are dealing with it.

*

*

*

Mike the chiropractor came yesterday. He had worked on my aching back and front. He used his mechanical tapper and thumper along with manual manipulation. I found some immediate relief from the session. The pain came back later, but it wasn't as severe as it was before his visit. We are hoping that by repeated treatments, the symptoms will gradually disappear.

Mike is coming around to Krsna consciousness. Now instead of saying *namaste* as a greeting and a goodbye, he feelingly says, “Hare Krsna” and holds his hands together in *pranams*. He was initiated by the name Visnu and received a *visnu-mantra*: *om namo narayana namah*. He chants this daily as part of his *sadhana*. Yesterday after he left, Mike phoned Baladeva from his car. He said he was just talking to his wife, and she had just come from a place where there are many wonderful marigolds. She wished that she could have a beautiful marigold garland. Mike said to her that we had just given him a garland for her. (It was given to us by Muktavandya. It was Prabhupada’s garland from the Boston temple and was still fresh and wonderful.) He gave it to his wife, but instead of wearing it, she put it on their altar next to Jesus and Sai Baba. We also give Mike cookies for his children, and yesterday Baladeva asked him if he knew about *laddus*. Mike remembered them from years ago when he went on pilgrimages to India, and he gladly took some from us. So far my back pain hasn’t cleared up, but we’re still trying with the chiropractor.

*

*

*

Supersoul

In Jayadvaita Swami’s lectures on the Second Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, he has been talking for several days on verses about the Supersoul. He said the Paramatma is very beautiful, with four arms bearing symbols, a brilliant yellow *dhoti*, beautiful face and cheerful countenance. It is much better to meditate on the Supersoul than on the impersonal *brahmajyoti*. The Supersoul is in every heart and in every atom. He is the witness and the permitter. It is described that the soul and the Supersoul are in the same heart of the living entity; they are compared to two birds on a tree. The *jiva*-bird is eating the fruits of the tree, while the Paramatma is witnessing him and giving him direction. He is called the *caitya-guru*, or the guru within the heart. Somehow I wasn’t very interested in all the talk about the Paramatma. But after three days of talking on this subject, Maharaja said, “Meditating on the Supersoul was for yogis long ago.” By this statement I felt relief.

He said in this age the prescribed method of meditation is *harer-nama harer-nama harer-namaiva kevalam / kalau nastyeva nastyeva nastyeva gatir anyatha*: “In the Age of Kali, the process of meditation is chanting the holy names of God. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way.” (*Brhan-naradiya Purana*)

*

*

*

Jayadvaita Swami wrote an email and said he’d like to come back to Stuyvesant Falls on October 31 and stay a few days. For this visit, he’ll be staying in Keli-lalita’s “Swami Room” under the yoga studio. He’ll spend his time seeing me and Ravindra Svarupa.

Pinda or Not?

A disciple of mine phoned me and says she was confused about what a senior *sannyasi* spoke in a Hindi class which she heard. He said that the *Puranas* and *Upanisads* recommend following *pinda*, or offering sacrifices to the forefathers. This involves staying at home and not going to the temple or visiting friends or having guests. Just cook nicely for the Deities and offer it to the deceased forefathers. But the Hindi speaker told the audience that they should check with their own spiritual master about this, so she was calling on me with some doubt and some attachment to following the *pinda* practice, which she did in her youth.

I told her that Prabhupada has several times written in his books that devotees of Krsna are not obliged to perform ritualistic ceremonies as obligation to the forefathers. Just by worshiping Krsna we absolve all our debts, including debts to the demigods. So she needn’t think she has to do the *pinda* the *sannyasi* was recommending. She also mentioned there were other rituals the *sannyasi* spoke of, such as worshiping Narayana for good fortune. But these things are not in our line as Gaudiya Vaisnava aspirants.

Offending Devotees

Unfortunately many devotees speak and act offensively toward fellow devotees. I just spoke with one offender. If you know the devotee is an offender, you should avoid their company or talking with them. Hearing offensive speech is also poison, and one should stay away from it. The remedy to all offenses is to chant Hare Krsna constantly, but if we offend devotees, the holy name may not allow us to chant. Neither can offenses to devotees be made up by engaging in other services such as book distribution. The offender should follow the instructions of his or her spiritual master and immediately stop *sadhu ninda*, or offensive behavior, toward devotees. Offending Vaisnavas is one of the worst of all offenses and should not be taken lightly.

Tulasi-devi

Krsna's favorite plant.

Lord Krsna is very fond of *tulasi* leaves and buds. Because *tulasi* buds are usually offered up to the lotus feet of Krsna, a devotee once prayed to the *tulasi* buds to give him some information about the lotus feet of the Lord. The devotee expected that the *tulasi* buds would know something about the glories of Krsna's lotus feet.

The Deity of Vrndadevi, the personification of Tulasi, is located in Kamyavana. Kamyavana is a 45-minute ride from Vrndavana, but it is not easy to get to. There are huge potholes in the road, and the driving distance is long. Vrndadevi is merciful in granting benedictions that the devotees may pray to, but we are warned to be careful what we pray for. I went and prayed for inspiration for the next book I could write. A few days later the idea came to me to write the series *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam*. I took it as a blessing from Vrndadevi because I had made my request to her in Kamyavana.

We have several large, healthy *tulasi* plants at Viraha Bhavan. I keep one always in my room.

I like to chant my *japa* before her. We place her near the altar of Radha-Govinda and take *darsana* of both of them while chanting. It is very beneficial to our *bhajana*.

Vyasa-puja

I spoke with John Endler yesterday. He said that Sraddha dasi had volunteered to set up our Vyasa-puja Zoom program as she did for Ravindra Svarupa's Vyasa-puja. Bala would get in touch with the disciples and secure their commitment to take part. I would speak to them and then hear them give homages. This would be on December 5, one day before my natural birthday. We would try to get participation from disciples outside the USA.

John is transcribing a book containing my writings on Karttika themes. We want to publish it for the summer of 2021. Then the devotees can obtain it by mail order and read a little bit each day as they approach the Karttika season. The Karttika book will be compiled from several books I've written, such as *Karttika Lights*, *Karttika in Exile*, *The Karttika Papers*, etc.

Prabhupada Meditations Volume 4

p. 238-240

“Vaisnavera Kriya Mudra

“Devotees sometimes try to guess what was on Prabhupada's mind. Whenever this question comes up, someone inevitably quotes the familiar saying *vaisnavera kriya mudra vijneha na bujhaya*, “One cannot understand the mind of the Vaisnava.” Prabhupada sometimes added, “Nor should one try to inquire into his previous life.” The meaning of this verse can also be extended to mean one should not criticize an *acarya* or try to give him advice. Prabhupada makes this point in *Nectar of Instruction*: “The spiritual master must not be subjected to the advice of a

disciple, nor should a spiritual master be advised to take instruction from those who are not his disciples. (NOI Text 6, purport)

“It is especially important for disciples not to try to second-guess their guru. I remember in the beginning days at 26 Second Avenue devotees sometimes wondered, ‘When does Prabhupada actually talk to Krsna? Maybe he does it in his sleep.’ For a while there was even speculation whether Prabhupada was actually Krsna Himself. The disciple can only understand things rightly when they are explained by the *acarya* according to *sastra* and *sadhu*. It is stated in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta*, ‘Although I know that my spiritual master is a servant of Lord Caitanya, I know him also as a plenary manifestation of the Lord.’ (*Cc. Adi 1.44*)

“ . . . We do not know how Prabhupada chants, although we can hear the sound of his chanting. Neither do we know what he thinks about when he chants. He was not obliged to reveal these things to us. He sometimes quoted Jesus Christ’s statement, ‘There are many things I have to tell you, but you cannot bear to hear them now.’ Prabhupada said, ‘Yes, the *acarya* knows things, but he does not tell everything to his disciples.’ Lord Caitanya also followed this principle. Although He was so deeply immersed in the conjugal *rasa*, He spoke about Radha and Krsna’s pastimes to only a very intimate few. We can be certain Prabhupada did not reveal everything on his mind to us. Even if we were to ask him, ‘What do you think about when you chant, Prabhupada?’ it is unlikely he would reveal his innermost state.

“There is a *sastric* statement that when the pure devotee appears in the world, he is not really seen by people. His appearance is compared to a cloud in relation to the moon. The moon is actually stationary in the sky, but it appears to be blowing across the sky with the clouds. It is an optical illusion. Similarly, a pure devotee often appears to be an ordinary person moving through the world, but actually his mind is

fixed only on Krsna.

“One should not try to understand the mind of the *acarya*.’ This should be a stabilizing reminder to us. Although we want to know our spiritual master as deeply as possible—we will listen to him and pray to him and study his books to find out exactly what he wants from us—we should be careful not to look for so many hidden meanings or to speculate on esoteric principles. Prabhupada will give us what we need to know. We have to trust him to reveal himself to us as we qualify ourselves and know that he understands each of our hearts in this regard. Let us first digest what he has given us, and let us increase our remembrance and love for him by studying his writings and activities as told in his biographies and memoirs. Let us first understand him as he has revealed himself to us, and then, by service and inquiry, trust him to give us more.”

*

*

*

Prabhupada Meditations Volume 3

p. 127-129

“A Letter to Prabhupada

“Dear Srila Prabhupada,

“Please accept my humble obeisances. I worked on an essay this morning for two hours. It was knotty, but it is happy work. I want to make something attractive and strong in Krsna consciousness, and it is a challenge to do it in words. You once said that writing about Krsna and speaking about Him are some of the best ways to meditate on Him; we are forced to think of Him at every moment.

“This morning I was preaching against the rebel authors I read in my youth. It was difficult to present the right attitude—I did not want to seem over-righteous or too moralistic. However, Krsna consciousness is righteous and true, and I took pains to express it in a way that would be both correct and appealing. I was especially trying to address young people who are so prone to rebel.

“ . . . You gave such a good twist to my wrongly directed life that I am still aimed in the right direction. I know you are saving me from many, many lifetimes of hell. I only wish that I could contribute more to my own progress. It would be pleasing to you to see another disciple finish up his business and go back to Godhead.

“ . . . Since I am speaking about writing, let me appreciate your Bhaktivedanta purports. They are proving to be the matrix for schools of art, philosophy, and science. Sometimes devotees say that you did not organize your writing into divisions as in an encyclopedia. You wrote everything as it occurred to you and the previous *acaryas*, when speaking in the context of each *Bhagavatam* verse. The way you wrote is perfect in itself, but you allow us to keep ourselves creatively engaged in mining the jewels from the Bhaktivedanta purports.

“While writing this letter, I have stopped several times and almost lost heart. Cynical voices tell me that I have no right to speak to you of my little activities. If any letters are to be written to Srila Prabhupada after his disappearance, they should concern serious matters affecting the whole ISKCON society. These thoughts make me want to stop, but then I realize that that is not right either. As I am writing my letter, hundreds and thousands of your disciples may also write you. Somehow you are receiving them all. I know from when I was your secretary that you can answer a lot of mail. You can speak to each person if necessary. It is especially hard now, Srila Prabhupada, to go without writing to you at least occasionally. I am not expecting

you to answer with a return letter. I mainly want the assurance that you hear me and accept me, and that you will always give me your guidance toward the ultimate goal. If you like, I can take up that secretarial service, helping you to answer letters. It was something I was able to do by your grace. Only, everyone prefers to hear from you directly. Me too.”

*

*

*

“Grasping at Ways to Be with Him

p. 157

“Each day is a new chance to be with Prabhupada. One way to do it is to see him in your present activities. As you go out on your morning walk, you see a three-quarter moon, and the puddles from last night’s rain reflecting the sky that is just beginning to turn blue—and you share the joy of it with Srila Prabhupada. You do this by thanking him and being with him in the present moment. You do it also by correcting any errors in your point of view. For example, I may be intoxicated with the animal sensations in my body, the tingling of health at being outdoors. So I gently remind myself, ‘This is only Krsna’s material energy. The thrill and beauty here is only a fraction of Krsna’s splendor.’ I thank Prabhupada for guiding me on an enlightened morning walk.

“We also may go back in time to be with Prabhupada. Maybe it takes a little imagination to get started, but once you give yourself a prod, you can live in the past again, right now. The past is as real as the water running now in the stream or the surf from the ocean, or the gull’s calls. Why can’t you remember?

“You went on a walk with Prabhupada. Ducks started quacking. He said, ‘They

think we are disturbing them, and we think they are disturbing us.’ Devotees laughed with Prabhupada. We were all close to him. Since his departure, we have not been able to gather around a great soul like that.

“You can mix the past and present. Take a walk with him today, just as he used to walk.

“We might say, ‘Prabhupada, this is the countryside of Ireland. They divide the land with rock walls so the sheep can graze. Ireland’s role in the European common market is to supply beef.’

“How would Prabhupada reply? I cannot say for sure, but according to his teachings, he might say, ‘Beef is their industry, and therefore their young men are being slaughtered in the warfields of Iraq.’

“Actually, Prabhupada, not many of the Europeans were killed in Iraq. It was the Iraqis who were killed.’

“Then? You will not be killed?

“Not yet.’

“What is this “not yet?” Someone is killed today, and someone is killed tomorrow. According to your karma, you will have to suffer next life whether in Europe or Iraq or America, whether as a human or bird or beast.’

“But Prabhupada, some people don’t seem to suffer as much as others. For example, the Europeans . . .’

“Everyone suffers!’

“Perhaps I should not imagine Prabhupada, yet it gives me solace. It is a kind of madness, I suppose. I am grasping at ways to be with him.

“We can be with Prabhupada just by being quiet, without clever attempts to recreate his presence. Be confident he is with you as you walk. Hear the cries of the gulls, earthy and primal. Just think, the same birds have been singing like that, generation after generation for many centuries, back to when Krsna was here on earth. According to *Bhagavad-gita*, everything we see here is earth, water, fire, air and sky. It is all Krsna’s energy. Everything reminds us of Him. It is Prabhupada who points this out. We can be philosophers and meditators on Krsna consciousness wherever we are, thanks to Prabhupada.

“Try This . . .

“It is a challenge . . . but why not try it? Wherever you are, be with Prabhupada now.”

*

*

*

p. 187

“Staying in Love

“Turn to Prabhupada.’ What do I mean by that? You are facing in one direction, and you hear a sound; or your mind tells you that you want to look in another direction. Physically you move your neck and head in order to see the desired object, or you turn your whole body. At least you turn your attention.

“When we turn to Prabhupada, what do we see? Like dawn, at first we do not see much. We strain our eyes and wait as outlines start to become clear. We see the peaks of hills and clearly distinguish the horizon. The sun is not up yet, but we desire

to be with Srila Prabhupada—so we talk with him.

“Way off in the mind’s eye, we seem to see him going out on another walk, and we run to catch up. Abstractly, but in truth, we think again of how our lives have been made fortunate by meeting a great devotee of the Lord. He gives us salvation and turns us to the next life without so much fear. As Christ says, ‘To those who have been given, more is expected.’ Because we have been given his association, there is an obligation. This is *guru daksine*.

“People who have a relationship bound in love are obliged to continue it. One reason relationships dwindle is that people do not communicate. The same thing can happen in the guru-disciple relationship. One can continue to perform the rituals, but lose the sense of it being out of love. When the guru-disciple relationship begins, it is romantic. One is swept off one’s feet in adoration. You promise to give everything. However, we have to learn how to stay in love with Srila Prabhupada.

“We do not think of Prabhupada as similar to Yamaraja. He is not someone who is going to smash us. We feel assured that he loves us, even though we can do only insignificant service and we have many faults. He has a right to reprimand us, and that is also a part of love. When reprimands come, we go on serving and loving. We take it on our heads for our wrongs. We have faith that he is always trying to help us. Prabhupada says, ‘I will take care of you. I can bring you back to Godhead if you will follow.’

“Sometimes in his lectures Prabhupada said, ‘These disciples are working twenty-four hours a day, and why? Out of love.’ It reminded us that he saw our loving attitude toward him. It was not forced. He did not bribe us. It was not fear, it was love. Now, how to stay in love?

“By Prabhupada meditation and by right acts, we are trying to stay in love. In

the relationship between the servant of God and the Supreme Lord, obedience is one of the first requirements. A disciple has to be obedient, and that must be given freely, from one's entire self. This is the obligation of the eternal disciple. He humbly knows that he is always in need of instruction. He keeps trying to please Srila Prabhupada and ask for his mercy."

*

*

*

The Wild Garden--Collected Writings 1990-1993

p. 236

"What is the difference between theoretical knowledge and realization? Realization has to descend as a *sakti* on the practitioner. Lord Krsna taught Brahma everything in the *catur-sloki* of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but is that *jnana* or *vijnana*? Vasudeva knew that same knowledge, but not until Narada told him to meditate did the Lord reveal Himself and His energies to Vyasa in his *samadhi*. Similarly, Rupa Gosvami learned directly from Lord Caitanya, but only when the Lord empowered him did it become realization. Similarly, Sanatana Gosvami heard from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, yet Sanatana begged that the knowledge become realization. Sanatana said,

"The conclusions that You have told me are the ocean of the ambrosia of truth. My mind is unable even to approach a drop of that ocean. If You want to make a lame man like me dance, kindly bestow Your transcendental blessings by keeping Your lotus feet on my head.'
(Cc. *Madhya* 23.121-122)

“When you gain realization in attachment (*asakti*), then you don’t notice whether it’s cold or not. You don’t find satisfaction in long spells of *tamasic* sleep. You don’t notice the clothes you are wearing. You always think of Krsna and serve Him and weep.

“It’s like the difference between thinking about quenching your thirst and actually drinking water. We can therefore conclude we are thirsty and unsatisfied. We can only repeat what we have heard. But we have faith.

“Can we attain realization by keeping company with those who have realization? Yes, to some extent. But we have to practice and one day, in some lifetime, attract Krsna’s mercy.

“On this last day of Karttika, I want to make this prayer. ‘O goddess of the month of Karttika, I praise you with flattering words and beg the following boon from you: may Krsna, knowing me to be yours, give me more mercy .’” (*Utkalika-vallari* by Srila Rupa Gosvami, text 20)

*

*

*

p. 294

PRAYER

“O Lord who is beyond my petty broadcasting, O Lord who is accessible to the pure at heart, You dance and play with Your best devotees. We who don't love You enough, who are absorbed in our illusions and attachments, have to rot in this world

of *samsara* and be satisfied with our own attempts for supremacy. Your pure devotees are kind to come and fish us out.

“O Lord of supreme bliss, we pray to be roped into the circle of those who hear *krsna-katha*. O handsome, polite, soft Krsna, only in Vraja do You serve Your own devotees.

“O Lord as time, as fate, as death, as nature, You appear as mountains and sky and sea and planets. The impersonalists contemplate these as part of Your universal body, and that's the first step in God realization. But I want to hear of You and see You as Govinda. Please protect me.”

Here Is Srila Prabhupada

p. 129

“After he finishes speaking the questions are good—all appropriate inquiries from sincere spiritual aspirants. Questions on how to serve and love and appreciate Krsna consciousness. Questions about the actual nature of Vaisnava life and how to go forward into the higher stages.

“We open doors against the surprisingly warm evening; he opens the windows of the spiritual world by associating with us. He assures us that he is always with us, and he tells us exactly how to find him and Krsna. Krsna is in the heart, in the Deity, in His name, in work for Him. We have heard this before, but tonight it feels truer. We think, ‘I need Prabhupada’s association so much. I have been living for years on the equivalent of a drop of water a day. Everything was just theory.

“We take him to his room when he finishes speaking. I go into his room with his milk, make last adjustments, close the curtains, answer some questions, reassuring, I hope, about his departure tomorrow. He asks, ‘Is everything all right?

All questions answered?’

“Yes, Srila Prabhupada, everything.’

“His secretary and I each massage one of Prabhupada’s legs while he lies in bed. He speaks a few amazing things about the daily little happenings in Krsnaloka. He says it’s village life there. Krsna and His friends, simple boys and girls, and they all love Krsna. While he speaks and drifts off, we are there with him. *Now* I’m satisfied. Whatever problems I haven’t yet resolved in terms of how to get rid of tenacious *anarthas* and excess baggage and the vain glory of thinking myself a special devotee—I know it will all work out in my remaining days. Maybe I won’t be going back to Krsnaloka at the end of this life, but I’m satisfied that I have work to do for Prabhupada. ‘I’m sorry, Srila Prabhupada, that I’m not better than I am. But you have shown me the spiritual world and assured me that one day I will go there. I am satisfied.’ Prabhupada is asleep.”

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

p. 202

“A PANDAL

“It is not so easy to hold a *pandal*.

“When Prabhupada first introduced the idea to his followers in Bombay, they didn’t want to say no, but they wondered:

Where could they collect so much money?

How could they erect such a big tent?

Where would they get so much food?

And how would they be able to cook it?

Prabhupada smiled and said, ‘If you are going to hunt,
go after the rhinoceros.’

“A *pandal* is a triumph in preaching

The helium balloon hovering over the city . . .

And in the newspaper

a beautiful picture of the Founder-*Acarya*,

superimposed over a globe,

and the words, ‘*Bhagwat-dharma* Discourses . . .’

“A *pandal* is anxiety

a chance to work hard

and surrender to Krsna.

“A *pandal* is a marriage of two disciples onstage—

A boy from Sweden and a girl

(with a red *sari* and a nose ring)

from Australia.

“A *pandal* is a particular event,

and it is also a symbol

of a great endeavor

to convince people
 by cultural presentation—
 a mass festival. Ratha-yatra or
 any big preaching is similar,
 and Prabhupada wanted it.
 ‘Don’t be satisfied that you have understood.
 This knowledge should be distributed.’”

*

*

*

p. 200

“TRAVELING THROUGH INDIA

“To Amritsar's Vedanta Sammelan
 you went with nine disciples to demonstrate Hari Nama.
 When the train stopped at Kuruksetra station,
 you stood up, saying,
 ‘They say this is a mythical place.’
 But you proved Kuruksetra does exist,
 by arriving there at sunset.

“At the Sammelan they gave you a small room.
 It was very cold at night, and the devotees huddled
 for *mangala-arati* in your candle-lit room.
 Attending at least six engagements a day,
 you showed your prowess,
 accepting *prasadam* and speaking at each place,

without break from morning till night.

“On a side trip, you visited Ram-tirtha Sarovara

and stood at the edge of the lake.

From your lotus mouth

your disciples heard

how Sita had been banished by Rama

and how finally she had entered the earth.

“At Indore’s Gita Jayanti Mahotsava

you argued with a man who said,

‘We do not subscribe wholly

that Sri Krsna is the sole God.

There is a power behind Him.’

“‘What kind of Gita Jayanti is this?’ you asked.

‘The *Gita* declares Krishna is the highest truth.’

At Indore you also swung your *karatalas*

near the face of a man harassing your devotees

while they danced and held *kirtan* on stage.

And at Indore you began your lectures

on the life-story of Ajamila.

“In Surat you showed your devotees

a glimpse of the spiritual world;

the streets were lined with all the residents,
 chanting and praising the Hare Krishna Movement.
 A simple *kirtan* by 20 of your disciples
 became a major parade, a city-wide holiday,
 as your followers were repeatedly worshiped
 with *aratis* and offerings of spiced milk and *prasadam*.
 Thousands gathered wherever you went
 and would not go away until they saw you.
 And in the mornings you spoke
 on the life of Ajamila.

“At Allahabad Kumbha-Mela
 your devotees were bewildered
 by the practices of ascetics and naked yogis,
 by the huge crowds and crude conditions,
 until you arrived, answering their prayers,
 explaining the Mela's real meaning:
 a chance to preach.
 You led your followers
 on a walking *kirtan* through the camps,
 bringing joyful *bhakti* to the seekers of liberation.
 Thousands came to see the Radha-Krishna Deities
 and to accept *prasadam* at your ISKCON tent.
 And in the mornings you spoke on Ajamila.”

Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary

pp. 94-95

“Prabhupada, today we are going to Mathura to the Kesavaji temple where you received *sannyasa* initiation. It’s an interesting history, but aside from all history, you are still with us. You’re not dead. You’re in the spiritual (*aprakṛta*) existence, and we don't know what that means exactly. We still know you as a *sannyasi*. We remember your *sannyasa* dress—the saffron cloth, the *tulasi* neckbeads, the beadbag and white *brahmana* thread and *tilaka*.

“Srila Prabhupada, you gave us the exalted titles ‘Goswami’ and ‘Swami.’ Sometimes Indians laugh at us. Sometimes they also say that you made a mistake when you named Deities, but what do they understand of your mood? You were triumphant when you installed Radha-Kṛṣṇa in London after centuries of British oppression in India. You called the Deities Radha-Londonisvara. What can they know of your playful name for playful Radha-Parisvara?

“I’ve come here to report to you that we are going to Mathura today and to get your blessings for the *Bhagavatam* lecture I will give first at Kṛṣṇa-Balaram Mandir.

A few devotees are circumambulating the temple and chanting *japa*. The air is a soft breeze in your room.

Please, keep me until I die.

Whatever I do,

please let me chant

a breath-mantra of
 thanks, praise, and dependence
 on Srila Prabhupada. Hare Krsna mantra is the best
 and ‘Srila Prabhupada, please help me.’
 And going inside oneself,
 fingering beads—
 and being a friend to everyone,
 a worker in ISKCON
 for Prabhupada,
tapasya for him.
 If I can do it.”

***From Imperfection, Purity Will Come About: Writing Sessions While Reading
 Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Saranagati***

p. 39

“After judging my sins, You should punish me, for I desire to suffer the pangs of rebirth in this world.’ (*Saranagati* 2.2.3) “I think, ‘This doesn’t apply to me.’ Am I a sinner in need of punishment? I don’t know, but I do know that I’m ineligible at present to go back to Godhead. Why? Because I don’t think of that place. I don’t think of the *yugala-kisora* and Their pastimes in Goloka Vrndavana. Neither do I sacrifice everything in this world to serve my guru’s mission. You could call me a sinner, but I think of it more as incompleteness. That is also a kind of sin. ‘I only pray that, as I wander through repeated births and deaths, my mind may ever dwell at Your lotus feet in the company of the Vaisnavas.’

“I want to be with Krsna. I want to be a servant of the Divine Couple. I want to

hear from the *acaryas* and get the *samvit-sandhini-hladini sakti* from Their hearts to mine.

“This is the spirit I want to enter in my writing. I should go back to bed, but what’s the use? *Manasa, deho, geho, jo kichu mor /arpila tuwe pade, nanda-kisor!*

‘Whatever may be mine I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda.’ This is one of the best songs of all. It stands out among the others.”

Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name

p. 137

“When I came back from my walk, I stayed outside in the backyard, pacing and chanting. I was mostly focused on the job of getting through another round, and I was taking in the first signs of a clear sky after several days of rain. The brown hills were thoroughly soaked, and I imagined how the farmers were reacting to so much rain. I wondered what it would mean later in the summer if no rain came. Then Mahavakya opened the shutters from his second-floor room. He looked out, and we greeted each other.

“The rain is finished,’ I said. I told him about a big puddle that had made one of the roads impassable. He said he takes another route until it becomes dry. We both fell silent, and I walked out of his sight so he could look at nature while chanting.

As I continue chanting *japa* in the driveway, I looked into their out-building at their collection of firewood. I imagined MV asking me what it was like for me when I chant. I thought I might admit to him that I don’t feel anything; I’m not able to pay attention. But I have plenty to say about *that*. I am concerned about it. I think about

it. I read the *sastras* on the subject. I listen to the order of my guru regarding the importance of chanting. I imagine myself preaching to MV in a lively way. In fact I have so many little things to say about this topic that I could write a book about it. But if you catch me by surprise while I'm chanting in the driveway, I will admit that I can't even hear what I am chanting.

Another point: Italy is not the same of Vrndavana. When you are here, you think of Italian countryside thoughts, whereas in Vraja, underneath the Kali-yuga covering, lies the heart of the chanting movement. It is here that Krsna led the gopis in the *rasa* dance while they chanted His holy names. It is described in the *Sri Visnu Purana*,

“Krsna sang the glories of the autumn moon, the moonshine and the lotus river, while the *gopis* simply sang His name repeatedly.’ (Quoted in purport to *Bhag.* 10.29.34)”

Japa Transformations

p. 169

“I kept waking up during the night almost every half hour, coming out of dreams. I got up at 3:00 A.M. and started chanting. After about the fourth round I got a headache but subdued it. My chanting was on track, clickety-clack. But I wasn't crying out, 'O Radha, O Krsna, please engage me in Your service. I am fallen, please accept me.' Instead it was a rigid kind of chanting, paying attention, moving speedily at six and a half minutes per round. I was chanting but not chanting deeply. It has to go to the heart and not just to the lips and chest. You have to take it out of the mechanical realm and put it into the devotional realm. Nevertheless, I am pleased

with the accumulation of the rounds and the attentiveness to the sounds.

“Chanting Hare Krsna is a simple thing,
 but it’s difficult to chant with *bhava*.
 You need to surpass the mechanical stage
 where your mind is absent of devotion.
 Be eager for Krsna as you call His
 name, be eager for Radha. *Laulyam*
 is the price for pure *bhakti japa*.
 The mechanical will disappear
 and you’ll be merged in bliss.

Writing Sessions

My Purpose at Isola di Albarella (continued)

“October 23, 1996

“1:41 A.M.

“Just began reading the Sixth Canto. It takes me awhile to pay attention and then to faithfully receive and feel the purports and verses. Maharaja Pariksit is asking about the path of liberation from repeated birth and death. The canto was called *posanam*, or protection by the Lord. Bhurijana is reading SB to see how it is all connected. I can’t seem to do that. But if I read carefully, maybe gradually I’ll receive the same purpose.

“See devotional service as the prime goal of life and take to it. Be serious about going back to Godhead. Pray to Krsna.

“Skepticism is the ‘gift’ of this age. We are born into it. Religion is generally scorned as inferior knowledge. SP promises that reading SB will cure us of this.

“We think (outrageously) that there is no God who created and we don’t have to worry about sinful acts because there is no life after death – SB is simply an old myth. This has been taken in by us. We need time and prayer in SB and Krsna’s grace. Unless He awards His mercy, no one can understand Him.

“Dream – living as objects of scorn and threat, members of Hare Krsna. A Godbrother was the main character in the dream and I was there. He was living in a place where he was always gauging the nature of this threat and whether it would be carried out. People mostly didn’t carry it out but periodically threatened, with knives, and once broke down the doors. My Godbrother seemed equal to the challenge, brave. I didn’t want to necessarily give up my life.

“Life went on without much violence or incidents but always threats and awareness of the fact that the attack could take place.

“What does the dream mean? I can philosophize in a general way about it. But dreams are usually more personal – something to be felt by me now. But maybe a devotee’s dream-producer is preaching to him the general message of KC philosophy: We are threatened by time. Better clear yourself of karma and get ready to die. A devotee is in that sense marked out, whereas others are not. They are unaware.

“In reality, Western society is not so prejudiced against devotees, not to the point of constant threats of physical attacks against us just because we are devotees. But it could come to that. Or is there a symbolic meaning in dreaming it?

“What did it feel like? You simply have to live with that condition. My Godbrother had one attitude toward it. He perhaps provoked more than was necessary. I might have lived with it in a different way.

“Another unsolved puzzle. But it seems right to mention them. Don’t let them get completely lost before you mention them and allow them to enter waking consciousness with whatever they want to say. I’m not trying to shut out the voice of the unconscious.

“Gradually attaining time for reading and writing in this health retreat. It came to us as a kind of gift-situation. It was Nanda-kisora dasa who suggested it when we were in the doctor’s office. The doctor may have said something about it. The main improvement is to give up the allopathic pills. That took inspiration and mental decisiveness. But by Krsna’s grace, it’s already been achieved. One might say that there is no need to stay on here. But devotees paid for us to stay four weeks. Neither am I up to spending the weeks in Italy traveling to temples. We already said that we have finished by a one-week visit to Prabhupada desa. Whoever wanted to see me came there then.

“So, it’s yours, two more full weeks here and then ten or so days in Avignon. Try to use it to read and write. Return to SP in the feeling of appreciation, whatever you’re capable of right now in your life. Overcome prejudice and fault-finding toward your great well-wisher. Find the time of loving service to him and improve yourself. Then give it to others.

“6:50 A.M.

“Reading and nodding but hanging on to the thread of interest. Maharaja Pariksit passed the first test of his guru when he refused to accept atonement as the solution to sinful reactions. Atonement doesn’t remove the desire to again commit sinful acts. So, Sukadeva Goswami suggests *jnana*. But we will see that’s not good enough either if it lacks knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His devotional service.

“Love your littleness. (Your fallenness?) Be a servant of the Lord. Read, cram, think it over. One is meant to read the scriptures. I don’t know what the others are doing.

“Trust open confession.

“Do better. But nothing too stressful on the head. Therefore, I stopped reading and nodding because when you keep falling unconscious and regaining wakefulness, when the neck and head fall forward and you catch it, it’s a trip. Stay smooth and ready. But don’t waste time.

“O Sukadeva Goswami, it is true what you say that if one doesn’t rid himself of bad karma, he’ll certainly have to suffer hellish miseries. We can think we are free of them – but are we? Keep on chanting, *ceto-darpana-marjanam*. And work to help others. That is the spirit of the Vaisnavas.

“Standing in the backyard chanting rounds by the little fence near the canal – suddenly I had a feeling of yearning. What was it?

“At first, I thought maybe it was a yearning to be back into the heart of ISKCON temple life like I used to be. That complete confident security of purpose within Prabhupada’s mission, Prabhupada’s heart.

“And so, I thought somehow, I’ve alienated myself from it and that I should find a way to get back into it.

“But then I thought, no, it’s not there anymore, it’s gone. Certainly, I’m an ISKCON member, but for me I can’t find that anymore the way it used to be.

“Then I have to accept this loneliness. Staying on my own, writing and reading. But is it satisfying?

“Or is the yearning just a yearning to be again clear about my connection with Prabhupada and to feel full appreciation for him in the innocent way I used to? Is it simply that I don’t have any taste for the holy names and I’m yearning for that?

“Is the yearning good or bad?

“Now that it’s over, I think the most significant was that it was not clear to me what I was feeling. My life is not even clear as to what I want and what I don’t want. And despite so much self-expression in writing, I don’t seem to know who I am.

“9:45 A.M.

“Externally, the purpose of my stay on this island is to monitor my health. Even though I seem to have passed through the first dramatic stage easily enough, it’s still my purpose to emphasize health repair. Therefore, I’m not plunging into a reading or writing marathon. Also, a dim kind of diffuse head-fog is always nearby. So, I’m not clear. This stay in Albarella cannot be a test of my strength but a building up of it for when I do go out.

“So, I should not feel frustrated that I don’t have a hot theme for writing and I’m not reading as much as I would like to at top form.

“Did so far today:

1) Discarded all allopathic pills, *fait accompli*.

2) Looked at the Portable Kerouac and Merton and Lax's Anti-Letters, as much as I wanted, put them back in the van.

3) Began reading Sixth Canto, SB.

“Oh, never-mind, you can't quit writing, you can't change so much.

“Can't go back into an ISKCON of the past. Complex computer COM debates and more schisms and more institutionalisms and me more alienated in a real way, not nursing so much specific grievances but it goes far, that I speak a different heart language almost. I don't even know what 'they' are like anymore.

“I'm older to a point where I can't truly relate to 'it.'

“Or maybe I'm exaggerating, imagining it – the difference between me and them, the distance of my alienation. Maybe I'm just near where I should be and similar to them (everyone is different anyway.)”