

## ***Free Write Journal #12***

**October 28, 2018**

This is the twelfth week of the *Journal*. Hare Kṛṣṇa, the *maha-mantra* for deliverance. Krishna-kripa is proofreading my compilation of poems. When I actually got down to proofreading, I omitted the explicit name-dropping of jazz musicians but kept the rhythm and improvisation of the music. All the poems are steering to Kṛṣṇa in content. They are my prayers to remember Him now and at the time of my death. My projected audience is the new generation of devotees and those who I call seekers, who are open to hearing. All the *avatars* mentioned (in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*) are parts or plenary parts, but *kṛṣṇas tu bhagavan svayam*; Kṛṣṇa is the source of them all, the whole, original Supreme Personality of Godhead. The poems state straight from scripture and from the voice of a struggling *sadhaka* who surrendered his independence to Srila Prabhupada and tries to write in an honest way. The result is a big collection of Kṛṣṇa conscious informal art. They are not as straight and accurate as Arjuna's arrows, but if you follow what Bhaktivinoda Thakura called "the zig-zag path of truth," you can succeed. (He meant in your ascent to reach the Lord you may be stopped and have to detour to the left or right. You do it rather than go back

to the beginning and again make the impossible task to go straight up with no impediments. [Strictly speaking, the way to reach Kṛṣṇa is not an ascending process. His mercy *descends* upon the sincere practitioner. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's model remains valid, as he always follows the nine principles of devotional service: *sravanam, kirtanam, visnoh-smaranam*, etc. Bhaktivinoda Thakura's way is authentic because he emphasized chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and practicing the nine principles of *bhakti*.])

We have finished our group reading of *Brhad-Bhagavatamṛta*. The conclusion is that the love of the *gopis* for Kṛṣṇa is the highest perfection of all. Now we four inmates of Viraha Bhavan have to vote democratically to decide which book to read next. If we can't get the vote together by tomorrow morning, I am going to suggest that we first read Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Saranagati*, which is short and wonderful.

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### **October 29, 2018**

The votes are in as to what book we will read next. I suggested *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* (Second Edition). Bala separately made the same choice, and the other two devotees went along with it. We can expect it will

be faith-building. Prabhupada repeatedly emphasizes that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that His words should be accepted without interpretation as the absolute truth. Unless one accepts Kṛṣṇa's "song" in this way, *Bhagavad-gita* is useless as authoritative scripture. Unfortunately, most editions of *Bhagavad-gita* try to avoid Kṛṣṇa and screw out some malinterpretations. Prabhupada's edition literally presents Kṛṣṇa as He is and as previous *acaryas* accept Him--as the Supreme Brahman, the chariot driver of Arjuna, as He who we must surrender to, putting aside all other religious obligations, etc. One prominent scholar in India, commenting on Kṛṣṇa's command, *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto--* "Think of Me, become My devotee, bow down to Me . . ." writes, "It is not that we have to surrender to Kṛṣṇa but to the undying, impersonal spirit within Him." Prabhupada condemns this interpretation and asserts that Kṛṣṇa is a *person*, full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. Get ready for eighteen chapters of *Sri Bhagavan uvaca*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead said, and Srila Prabhupada's purports, his "personal ecstasies."

We started a breakfast hearing of the First Chapter. It is such a privilege of being in the company of Arjuna and hearing the direct words of the Supreme Lord. Prabhupada's purports are clear and forceful. Arjuna has spoken the famous verse where he addresses Kṛṣṇa as Acyuta

(infallible), and he asks his friend to drive the chariot between the two armies.

We are in the middle of the Second Chapter. Kṛṣṇa is teaching Arjuna about the soul (*atma*). He says the soul never came into being, is existing at present, and will continue to exist. Arjuna should not lament for his teachers like Bhisma and Drona. If their bodies are destroyed, they will get fresh, rejuvenated bodies and be promoted to the spiritual world or the heavenly planets. If, out of cowardice, Arjuna does not fight, his fame will be ruined; and "Dishonor is worse than death." Arjuna admits that he is confused about his duty, and he surrenders to Kṛṣṇa, asking Him to become his spiritual master and give him direction.

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### **October 30, 2018**

I have finished writing my Vyasa-puja speech. I focused on the fact that I am embarrassed hearing the homages praising me. For solace, I quoted from the speeches given by two great gurus, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and our Srila Prabhupada, given on the occasion of their Vyasa-puja. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati starts out by humorously mocking himself from the viewpoint of a critical outsider: "Who is this egoistic brute

sitting on a high chair above all others, listening with his own ears and with great pleasure, to bombastic laudations of himself?" He said no one condescends to give him good advice, so he brought his situation to Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. Mahaprabhu said, "Tell everyone you meet about Kṛṣṇa. Become guru and save the people of this land. If you do this, I will always be with you." This reversed the opinion of the critical outsiders. Despite the outward appearance, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was not acting out of pride but was remaining humbler than a blade of grass in carrying out the order of Mahaprabhu and his own spiritual master. This lecture gave me confidence that I could hear the homages spoken on my birthday without becoming proud but maintaining my humility.

Another lecture I consulted was given by our Prabhupada on his Vyasa-puja in 1972. Addressing a large crowd, he begins by saying his students understand this ceremony but visitors may think, "Why is a man being worshiped as God?" Prabhupada replies, "Don't misunderstand: 'This person is sitting very comfortably and taking all honors and contribution.' It is needed just to teach them how to respect the representative of God." I also included the homage Abhay Charan De wrote to his spiritual master in 1932. It is a poem which contains the lines, "Absolute is sentient,/ Thou hast proved/ Impersonal calamity/ Thou has removed." This couplet so

much pleased Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati that he used to show it to his disciples and visitors. I am ready to give my talk and hear the homages.

Write ten minutes on Vyasa-puja. Hear the homages as a humble *cela* of Srila Prabhupada. He gave the grave charge of initiating disciples to his own disciples and said they should become "a regular guru." From 10:00 A.M. to 10:30 A.M. you hold *kirtana*. Then you speak for half an hour. Then they speak homages for about 45 minutes. Then *puspanjali* and *arati*. Then at 1:00 P.M. we honor *prasadam*. I try not to leave the hall so that devotees won't leave. At 2:00 P.M. I present my new book, sign copies and distribute them. Soft *kirtana* goes on while I'm distributing. The ceremony is over by 3:00 P.M. When presenting the book, I'll read my retelling of *The Love Locket* by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura. This reveals Radharani's love for Kṛṣṇa uncovered from the duplicity of love-play, jealous anger, etc.

Everything will be all right. At the time of death, I will pray to Prabhupada to guide me--go to where he is. Pray that your weakness and material desires don't come up. Ask for an easy journey to the topmost planet. Goloka Vrndavana, to join Srila Prabhupada in whatever form he is in or to wherever he is, to serve him.

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## **October 31, 2018**

We have numerous guests and residential members. Today is All Saints Day and the 67th birthday of Baladeva. His sister Kathy is coming to visit. Manohara from Italy is here for a few weeks. He is teaching seminars in a school. He is cooking a special Italian meal for Baladeva's birthday. Lal-krishna and Shyama from Oxford are still here. Bala is experiencing pain from his surgical operation. Kṛṣṇa-dasi is tending him. We are planning to all go out to the ice cream place this afternoon.

Garuda sent out a wonderful piece of writing by his wife Kṛṣṇa-kantha devi dasi, "Entering Karttika." She described the change of seasons and how, in autumn and winter, we live in more darkness. In contrast to the darkness, we offer Karttika lights (ghee lamps or small candles) and sing "*Damodarastakam*" together. Kṛṣṇa-kantha d.d. focused on the fact that Karttika is Radharani's month; Radharani, who has Kṛṣṇa under Her control. If we worship and serve Radharani by following in the footsteps of Her *sakhis*, Radha will recommend us to Kṛṣṇa and we will receive His blessing. "Entering Karttika" tells us more than Prabhupada revealed to his neophyte disciples in the autumn of 1966. He didn't even mention the word Karttika. He simply gave us birthday candles in his apartment every night

for a month. We lit them and placed them on his marble worship altar. He simply said, "This is to increase your devotion," and that was sufficient. We felt it was working. Now we know more about Karttika, and we can go deeper. But the pure devotion that Swamiji instilled in us in 1966 was cleansing and permanent.



There was a Deity of Kṛṣṇa that Prabhupada liked and kept in the San Francisco temple. Kṛṣṇa is standing alone with His hand on His hip and carrying a stick for herding cows. The Deity was called "Kartama-sayi." Prabhupada said the meaning was something like "the Boss." Kṛṣṇa was the leader of all the cowherd boys, and the one most devoted to caring for the cows and calves. Was there anything missing in Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the boys? No. He fed them palatable food, and they followed Him in His favorite games. Seeing Him nonchalantly destroying all the big demons who came to kill Him, the boys grew fearless, happily safe under Kṛṣṇa's protection. Their friendship was so intimate that Kṛṣṇa allowed the boys to play equal with Him, and sometimes even defeat Him. They climbed on His shoulders and said, "What kind of a big man are You?" In the *sakhya-rasa*, there is no awe or reverence, only camaraderie and love. Sridama (Radharani's brother) is very close to Kṛṣṇa. He is sometimes boastful and challenging. Sridama declared that Kṛṣṇa learned to play the flute by taking lessons from Srimati Radharani, Sridama's sister. Sudama is also intimate, and he is sometimes involved in the *madhurya* dealings between Radha and Kṛṣṇa. But it is the exclusive privilege of the *sakhis* and *gopi-manjaris* to personally serve Radharani and to protect Her from any unwanted

advances by Kṛṣṇa. (Conversely, the *sakhis* also help to break Radharani's jealous anger and bring the two Lovers together.)

The devotees bought a funny birthday card for Baladeva. On the cover is a picture of a spaceship and the words, "Long, Long Ago . . ." When you open the card, it reads, "You were born." And music comes on, an orchestra playing the theme from Star Wars. All the devotees in the *ashram* (about eight now) have signed their names and expressed their love. I wrote, "With love, your Guru Maharaja." It's nice that on his birthday so many are coincidentally gathered--except for his sister Kathy, who has specifically driven from Maine to be with him.

When the great yogi meditator heard the ankle bells of Menaka, his trance broke, his eyes opened, and he saw the beautiful woman standing before him. The yogi became attached to Menaka and engaged in sex intercourse with her. As a result, the girl Sakuntala was born. Prabhupada contrasts the falldown of Visvamisra to the example of Haridasa Thakura, who went on chanting undisturbed even when approached by Mayadevi herself. Haridasa Thakura converted Mayadevi into a chanter of Kṛṣṇa's Names.

I ate so much for lunch (including two kinds of lasagna and a chocolate cake baked for Baladeva) that I've lost my appetite for going out

with the group and having ice cream. I could do it, but I don't have hunger. I told this to Baladeva and he said, "Yes, but for the sake of the outing we should go."

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### **November 1, 2018**

You are just doing practice. Go on doing it for ten minutes. Hari-Sauri wrote me and said he is writing a brief overview of Prabhupada initiating disciples in ISKCON. He wrote that he has no information on when Prabhupada started second initiations and asked if I could supply information. I told him that Prabhupada began awarding brahminical initiation during a visit to the Boston storefront temple in 1968. He initiated myself, Pradyumna, Gaurasundara and others. When the devotees in New York City heard that Prabhupada was giving second initiation, a group led by Brahmananda came to Boston and received sacred threads and the Gayatri mantras personally given by Prabhupada. At first he said he would not award second initiation to women. But his secretary, Govinda dasi, protested, and Prabhupada relented and gave brahminical initiation to Govinda dasi and Jadurani. It was during this same visit to Boston that Prabhupada changed his name. Since 1966 his disciples had affectionately addressed him as "Swamiji," and he accepted it. But in Boston 1968, in an

interview with his secretary Govinda dasi, he admitted that "Swamiji" was a third-class name for a guru. Ever-alert to what pleased her spiritual master, Govinda dasi asked, "So what should we call you?" He replied that a guru is generally addressed by names like "Visnupada" or "Prabhupada." Govinda dasi asked, "May we call you Prabhupada?", and he replied, "Yes." The news spread quickly, and except for a few who were attached sentimentally to "Swamiji," all the devotees were glad to address their spiritual master by the more appropriate, honorific name Srila Prabhupada.

I weigh 183 pounds; Baladeva weighs 180. A *brahmana* should not be fat. Prabhupada told us that his spiritual master used to criticize his overweight disciples. I am somewhat overweight, and I find it very difficult to lose pounds. I ask the devotees to serve me small portions of *prasadam*, and I skip all desserts. Still, I have a big globe of a belly. I won't give up my attempts at weight watching.

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### **November 2, 2018**

"There is no difference between the spiritual master's instruction and the spiritual master himself. In his absence, therefore, his words of direction should be the pride of the disciple." (*C.c., Adi-lila, 1.35*)

What does this mean, that the guru's order is the pride of the disciple?

It means the disciple has received a treasure, and this is the cause of his satisfaction. He is not boastful about it, but undeniably, his guru's order is a cause for self-congratulation. He is confident that a great soul is leading him back to Godhead. He is no longer downtrodden. The disciple of a bonafide spiritual master has won the prize, the cream, the flower.

Such a pride exists even in the Supreme--Lord Kṛṣṇa is proud of Srimati Radharani, and She is proud of Him. Srila Prabhupada was proud of his Guru Maharaja, who was never defeated, and his Guru Maharaja was proud to be the son of Bhaktivinode Thakura. All the devotees of Lord Caitanya are proud to belong to the Gaudiya Vaisnava *sampradaya*. Material existence crushes us and makes us ashamed. Our relationship with Srila Prabhupada makes us transcendental. Yet this pride doesn't work against humility. We always remain a fool before the spiritual master.

One time I wrote to Srila Prabhupada that I did not think myself a very bold preacher. He wrote back that he too once thought he could not speak, but by practice he gained confidence. Moreover, he said, we are not cheating anyone when we speak, so you should not be hesitant or ashamed. Prabhupada compared the devotee of the Lord to a servant of the king. As the king is most honorable, so is his servant.

The spiritual pride in the guru's orders implies a grave responsibility.

One has to discharge Prabhupada's orders for the benefit of the whole world. The pride of the elite must be preserved at all costs. Arjuna was proud of his friendship with Kṛṣṇa, but when Arjuna wanted to renounce the *ksatriya's* duty, Kṛṣṇa warned him not to dishonor their glorious relationship. And so it is stated that the spiritual master will always keep company with a disciple "as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master."

Let us be proud of the knowledge in Srila Prabhupada's books. Never take it as a minor event that we have come to accept them as scriptures. Who can understand these things except the devotees themselves? People will take it as vainglory. But even at the risk of being misunderstood, we have to speak and write of Prabhupada's glories. The world should see splendid architecture in his memory: the Vedic planetarium, his *samadhis* and museums. Most important of all, we should consider ourselves blessed by his devotion, and so in pride we bow down at his lotus feet. By the causeless mercy of Prabhupada, even the lowest-born and most fallen can now aspire to the topmost bliss, Kṛṣṇa in Vrndavana. May we always remember that we are the servants of the true servant of the Supreme.

Why Didn't I Keep a Diary in 1966?

(In the mood of Satsvarupa dasa Brahmachary)

Swamiji, they want to know why

I didn't keep a diary filled

with the life of those days.

I thought everything was in your words,

and they were in books and tape recordings.

I also made notes of them.

What is it I should have saved for the future?

Should I have kept notes like,

"He has brown eyes . . . ."

"Today Hayagriva made a joke . . . ."

"I feel happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

haven't smoked pot in two months?"

Maybe I thought it was *maya*.

But I'm sorry now

I didn't keep a journal of it all.

I had no presence of mind--

For me the main thing

was that you were restoring me to life--

I was fully occupied  
holding onto your lotus feet.

Maybe I thought there was no need to write it down  
because we would never forget  
everything that you did and said.

No, there's no excuse for it.

Please bless me now, Master,  
to live in those days  
remembering your *kirtanas* and  
the time I met you  
on the street and bowed down  
on the sidewalk before you.

As I rose you touched me with your hand.

You were in ecstasy!

On your morning walk--  
and I proceeded to the welfare office  
to break through the line  
of angry workers on strike.



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### **November 3, 2018**

He Gave Us the Gayatri Mantra

*Aim gurudevaya vidmahe Kṛṣṇanandaya dimahi tan na guroh*

*pracodayat.* "Let us try to understand my spiritual master, who is always in blissful Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Let me meditate on him being enthused as he enthused us."

The Gayatri mantra provides us with a meditation on the spiritual master which may be applied to Srila Prabhupada. There are actually two mantras to the spiritual master in the Gayatri. The first is *aim gurave namah*: "I make my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master." This means we should approach Srila Prabhupada not as a buddy, but as we would approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead, bowing down and offering obeisances. Srila Prabhupada actually is a most intimate friend, but he should not be taken as an ordinary person.

The Gayatri mantra advises us "to meditate on him being enthused." One time, when he was commenting on the word enthusiasm (*utsaha*) as used in Rupa Gosvami's *Upadesamṛta*, Srila Prabhupada gave himself as an example. He said, "How could I have come to America at such an old age

unless I was enthusiastic?" He was enthusiastic to come to America because his guru ordered, and when for a whole year he got almost no response in America, Srila Prabhupada remained patient but still enthusiastic. That enthusiasm can be heard on tape recordings of Prabhupada lecturing on the Lower East Side, where his voice often cracks with earnestness to deliver the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prabhupada was so enthusiastic to write *Srimad-Bhagavatam* that he would rise at 1:00 A.M. in the morning to do so. His composing of his purports was the perfect example of combined patience and enthusiasm. As he said, "Little drops of water wear away the stone. In this way, I have written all these books."

"Let us meditate," the Gayatri mantra advises, and so one can continue on his own, or in the association of devotees, to think about and discuss the enthusiastic moods and activities of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada. Prabhupada's translation contains a particularly interesting phrase, "Let us meditate on him being enthused as he enthused us." A genuine disciple has become enthusiastic in devotional service, and he knows that this is due to the enthusiasm of his spiritual master.

We may meditate on how our enthusiastic spiritual master has transferred this *sakti of utsaha* to us. Prabhupada said that the mother of

one of his disciples, Acyutananda, complained that her son used to lounge around the house all the time and was unwilling to go on errands. But since he had come to live with Swamiji, he was always enthusiastic to cook and run any errands asked by his spiritual master. Srila Prabhupada was also fond of a pamphlet produced by a Christian minister in Boston which made reference to Srila Prabhupada's enthusiastic disciples. This minister wrote that he met a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee giving out literature in the neighborhood of the church. The priest said, "These are actually our boys, but previously they were never interested in going to church. Now they have become mad after God." Srila Prabhupada also said that it was only by the enthusiasm of his disciples that the Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement was spreading around the world.

When we do not feel enthusiastic, let us meditate on the enthusiasm of Srila Prabhupada. Let it ignite within us our natural enthusiasm to serve Kṛṣṇa. This is *Kṛṣṇa-ananda*, which motivates all the thoughts and activities of a pure devotee of the Lord. Whether he is grave and silent, or dancing in the *kirtana* of Lord Caitanya, whether he is being honored by many followers, or treated as an outcast, the pure Vaisnava is always merged in enthusiasm and bliss. Let us meditate upon him being enthused, just as he enthused us.