

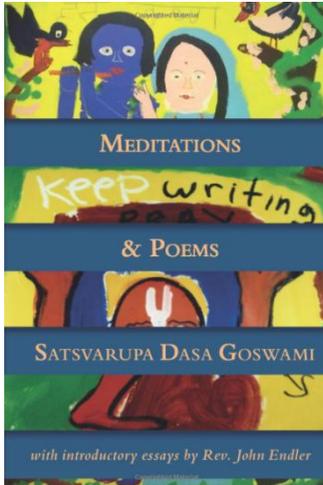
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**DEAR DEVOTEES: A MESSAGE FROM SATSVARUPA MAHARAJA.**

**“I was very disappointed that our July gathering was cancelled. But I earnestly ask my disciples to order *Meditations and Poems* and *Daily Compositions*. The price is \$10 for the former and \$12 for the latter. Please be aware that *Daily Compositions* must be ordered from Amazon. To order *Meditations and Poems*, please send your home address and a check for \$10 made out to “GNP” to Baladeva Vidyabhusana dasa, PO Box 233, Stuyvesant Falls, NY 12174. John Endler will mail the book to you. This will bring us close together as guru and disciples. These are new books and I expect a big response from my disciples to make up for the cancelled summer meeting. Please don’t disappoint me—order these books.”**

**An excerpt from *Meditations and Poems*:**

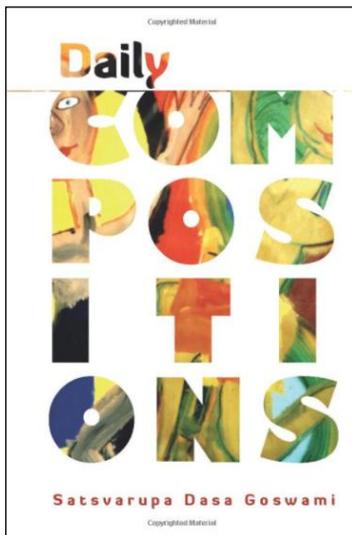
“I sat and stared into the fire



at chimeras I didn’t want  
to consort with lower spirits  
give me God or nothing  
but cement walls.  
Give me the ending as he did it  
in kind of blue. Calling us home,  
get ready to pick out tomorrow’s  
clothing for Radha-Govinda and  
accept this leads to  
your service in the spiritual world –  
a dresser of Radha and Govinda.

“A procurer of new clothes for  
Them. And Narottama dasa Thakura’s hands.”

**An excerpt from *Daily Compositions*:**



“O Krsna, when You return from the pasturing ground with the animals, we see Your face covered by Your curly hair and dusted by the hoof dust of the cows. We see Your mildly smiling face, and our desire to enjoy You increases. O dear Krsna, You are the supreme lover, and You always give shelter to surrendered souls.

“Light snowfall. Hope it doesn’t gather for our looked-forward-to getaway on Sunday. You came and surprised them, and soon you’ll go. Hope I can give two talks on Saturday. The first one is about seeing Krsna even when He is within the cloud. The verse describes the cloud of dust made by the cows’ hooves, and I want to mention the cloud caused by our ignorance.

“Find time today to study and think of the wonderful verse of Krsna coming home covered with dust, but they can see it is Him. Start by relishing the *lila* itself. Then your angle on it as a neophyte who can’t see Him but trusts that He is there.”

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## ***Free Write Journal #120***

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### **Free Writes**

#### **Nandarani devi dasi**

Nandarani devi dasi, an early pioneering disciple of Srila Prabhupada, has passed away (brain cancer). She and her husband Dayananda opened the first temple in Los Angeles, and Prabhupada was very pleased with them for that. Prabhupada wrote, “I had a great desire to have our center in L.A., and by grace of Krsna you have fulfilled my desire.” They stayed in L.A. for some years and then moved to London to contribute to the early preaching there. Next they moved to Dallas center, where Dayananda was the headmaster of the *gurukula*, and Nandarani worked with the children. That was another pioneering assignment. Later, at the invitation of Atreya Rsi, they moved to Iran. There were only several devotees, and Dayananda and Nandarani headed up the underground preaching there. Iran is a Muslim country, and it doesn’t tolerate other religions. But the devotees succeeded by holding dinner parties and teaching yoga. In this way they made friends and tutored them in Krsna consciousness. Prabhupada complimented Nandarani on being very intelligent and imbibing the Krsna conscious philosophy. Even when devotees stopped doing direct service for Prabhupada while he was still with us, he kept a special place in his heart for the early pioneers who helped him spread the movement all over the world. Nandarani dasi is one of those special gems.

#### **Lord Caitanya Takes *Sannyasa***

Visvambhara’s *sannyasa* guru Kesava Bharati, gave Him a new name—Krsna Caitanya. When the Lord had His head shaved, this one act caused supreme grief to all His devotees. They

longed to see His beautiful hair. Krsna Caitanya understood the sadness of His devotees. Mother Saci had not eaten in twelve days, and other devotees simply cried tears or lay unconscious. Caitanya Mahaprabhu decided to meet with them again. He asked them to gather at Advaita Acarya's house, and they were all very happy to go there. Lord Caitanya embraced His devotees and engaged in ecstatic *kirtana* with them. Mother Saci was convinced to cook and break her fast. After some time, Lord Caitanya said He decided He wanted to go to Jagannatha Puri. Responsible persons told him it was very dangerous to travel there. There were great tensions at the border. Pirates, military rogues, thieves, crocodiles, tigers. The rogues had booby-trapped the roads with spears, and the whole situation was unfavorable for travel. But Advaita Acarya told Lord Caitanya that if He wanted to go to Puri, He would be able to do so. Lord Caitanya found a highly-placed military officer named Ramacandra Khan who had a boat that he gave for Caitanya's use in crossing the Ganges. Mukunda accompanied the Lord, and he began to sing sweet *kirtana* songs as they crossed. But the boatman was in great anxiety and asked Mukunda to stop singing. Lord Caitanya allowed the singing to continue, and they crossed the river. Lord Caitanya said, "Do not worry. Chant the glories of Krsna. Don't you see Sudarsana guarding us?" They were able to cross the river and the border without confrontation or any difficulty. Vrndavana dasa Thakura writes that Sudarsana always protects the devotees. So Lord Caitanya, along with some confidential associates, was safely able to enter the sacred land of Orissa.

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Yesterday our out-loud reading group finished *Caitanya-bhagavata*. It is filled with the ecstasies of Lord Caitanya and His close associates chanting *kirtana*. When they sing the holy names, their bodies transform, shedding tears, hair standing on end, etc. The extent of their symptoms was never seen by anyone before, and it is confidential even to the Vedas. The author, Vrndavana dasa Thakura, says that more on this subject of Gauranga's ecstasies will be written in

the future by Srila Vyasadeva. Our ashram board cast secret ballots in an election to determine what book we would read next. The result was unanimous: four in favor of *Caitanya-caritamrta*. We will read all the verses by Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, and all the purports by Srila Prabhupada. As wonderful as *Caitanya-bhagavata* was, we were left unsatiated and wanted to hear more about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Nityananda and all the great devotees who served Them.

Many years ago, when Prabhupada was deciding what book to write next, Jayapataka Swami suggested he do *Caitanya-bhagavata*. Prabhupada said he preferred to do *Caitanya-caritamrta* because it has “more philosophy.” Prabhupada writes in his “concluding words” that he is certain that his spiritual master is pleased that he has rendered Cc. into an English edition so that a worldwide audience can gain access and appreciate it. Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami was humble that he was asked to be the author of Lord Caitanya’s life and teachings. Our Prabhupada is also humble. He writes that he is not a great scholar or a great devotee, but he is just trying to carry out the order of the spiritual master by presenting a book like this for the benefit of the world.

### **Kadamba Kanana Maharaja**

I just listened to and watched a YouTube presentation by Kadamba Kanana Maharaja. For a while he was reading and commenting from my book *One Hundred Prabhupada Poems*. I was very honored that such an important preacher and guru was paying attention to my book in a favorable way. He read a few poems, and then he made commentary on his own. He read carefully and made astute observations on everything in the poems. He had tested positive for COVID-19 and had to spend a lot of time resting on his couch. Maharaja has a long personal history of living in Vrndavana, but this year at Karttika he cannot go there because of the restrictions and his health. He’s living in separation and recommended watching Bhakti Caitanya Swami’s videos on Vrndavana. He roamed over many topics in a thoughtful, gentle way. It was an intimate video

*darsana*. I like him very much.

### **Prabhupada's Lectures**

When I was Prabhupada's secretary in 1974, he kept me busy with many tasks. When it came time to sit and listen to his *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lecture, I would sometimes doze off momentarily. I was exhausted and fought to pay attention. Prabhupada noted my behavior and he mentioned it to me without much reprimand. I felt terrible that he pointed out my sleepiness.

Every day, just after lunch, I listen to one of Prabhupada's *NOD* lectures given in 1972-73 in India. Yesterday I did the same thing as I did when I was his secretary. My mind wandered off for brief moments, and I became sleepy. Nevertheless, I still paid attention, although on the next day, when I wanted to write about what he had said, I couldn't remember anything. Listening just after eating lunch is not the best time to expect to be attentive and awake. The next day I usually can't remember what topics he spoke on. Nevertheless, I love the practice of listening to his lectures, and I look forward to it every day. While listening I feel great comfort and protection, being surrounded by the sound of his voice. Technically, I could be using my time to do something more "valuable," but this hour spent with Prabhupada has a special sweetness. I curl up and listen to the sound vibration of my spiritual master. Yesterday I recall he became emotional, and in a loud voice chastised the *sahajiyas*. Somehow I'm getting the benefit of listening to his recorded transcendental words.

After listening to his lecture, I do other devotional things. I listen to a lecture on *Srimad-Bhagavatam* by Jayadvaita Swami, who takes questions from his audience. I select poems from my recently published books to read to the devotees on Zoom as part of my Vyasa-puja speech. Prabhupada says we should always be engaged in Krsna conscious thought, and I try to do that faithfully.

## **Prabhupada's Nectar of Devotion Lecture**

Pradyumna read out loud from *NOD* in a section that mentioned the *rasas*. Prabhupada spoke up and said the word *rasa* means taste or mellow. In any interaction, there is some taste that drives the persons on. Prabhupada said in Gaudiya Vaisnavism there are five main *rasas* and seven temporary ones. The first one he mentioned was neutrality. He said he was sitting on the *asana*, and the *asana* was rendering him service, but it was indirect and not personal. The next *rasa* was *dasya*, servitude, such as that expressed by Krsna's servants Raktaka and other friends who fanned Him, bathed Him and helped dress Him. This is personal devotional service. In the more advanced stage it is called *sakhyam* or friendship. This is when the boyfriends see themselves as equal to Krsna and play and wrestle with Him without fear. It is more intimate. In the next further stage, it is called *vatsalya*, parental love, such as that experienced by Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja, His mother and father. All the *rasas* are absolute, but by objective analysis, the *madhurya rasa* or conjugal love is the highest. In this *rasa* Krsna engages with His consorts such as the *gopis*, of whom Radharani is chief. Among the consorts there are two divisions, the wedded wives of Krsna who are known as *svakiya*, and His loving relationships with His beloveds whom He is not married to, which are known as *parakiya*. *Parakiya* is the highest because it has the most enthusiasm, since it involves risk and greater surrender. His queens and *laksmis* are expansions of Radharani in *svakiya*. Prabhupada didn't talk much in detail about *madhurya rasa*. Because it is so confidential, it can easily be misunderstood for mundane sexual affairs.'

## **Jayadvaita Maharaja's Lecture**

Maharaja focused on Srngi, the son of the sage Samika Rsi. When he heard that his father had been insulted by Maharaja Pariksit, he became furious and uncontrolled. Although a small boy, he had *brahma-tejas*, the power to curse, but he lacked humility and culture. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, in the items of knowledge, the first one is humility. Srngi should have first gone to

his father in his complaint rather than taking matters on himself independently. When he finally went to his father after cursing Maharaja Pariksit, he saw that his father did not take the king's insult very seriously. And so Srngi then cried tears of remorse. He was simply showing off in front of his immature playmates. Maharaja called Srngi a "twerp." Srngi dared to call Maharaja Pariksit a "crow" and a "watchdog," and he cursed him to be bitten by a snake-bird after seven days. Maharaja Pariksit was informed of the curse by a disciple of Samika Rsi. The message was conveyed so compassionately that the king did not want to go the sage and beg pardon because it would put the sage into further embarrassment. As for Maharaja Pariksit, he was not only a king but a great sage himself.

The incident can only be explained by saying it was the will of Krsna. Maharaja Pariksit was already a pure soul, but by being the emperor he was attached to worldly affairs like family and nation and ruling. Krsna manipulated the situation so as to bring the king out of all attachment to worldly affairs. The king took the curse as good news and went to the bank of the Ganges and sat down to fast completely. Many great sages gathered there to be with him. They had different opinions as to what he should do, but when the young Sukadeva Gosvami arrived, they all deferred to him. The king asked Sukadeva, "What is the duty of a human being, especially one who is about to die?" This question provoked the answers and the discussion of the entire *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Srngi's arrogant act showed that he lacked culture. His act was the beginning of the downfall of the *brahmanas* in Kali-yuga.

## **Medical Update**

I have a busy schedule of medical appointments. On Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, I give a urine sample to make sure the urinary tract infection is gone. On Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 P.M., I go through a drive-through test to see if I have COVID; the test location is next to the hospital. On Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> I have my Zoom Vyasa-puja, with participants from different countries. On

Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 A.M. I go to my primary care nurse, Ryan Marshall, and his assistant nurse Christine, for a pre-operation physical and EKG. On Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, I have cataract surgery, done by Dr. McPherson. On Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, I have a post-operation checkup at the ophthalmology office at 1:45 PM. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December I go to see the urologist, Dr. Subudhi, who will open up a stricture in my urinary tract. I'm scheduled January 13<sup>th</sup> for my left-eye cataract surgery. My friends tell me my cataract operation is easy, not painful, but after it's done the vision is blurry for some time. All these medical treatments come within the misery experience of disease and old age, some of the inevitable miseries every conditioned soul has to face.

### **The Sankhla Family**

The Sankhla family has been preaching enthusiastically in the Baltimore area and at the University of Maryland for decades. During COVID I can't mix with them, but I have a virtual relationship with Jahnvi Sankhla, who writes me emails. She has a seven-year-old son, Kanu, whom she is homeschooling and who loves to go out on *harinama* and book distribution at the university. His mother tells him if someone even touches one of Prabhupada's books they are blessed, and Kanu is very happy about this. Jahnvi's mother Karunamayi is my disciple also, and has been the Hindu chaplain at the University of Maryland for thirty years. Her other daughter Vrinda and her husband Caitanya also go out to the university and preach. When Jahnvi comes back from a day of *harinama* and book distribution, she and her son cook something special for the family members like *gulabjamons* and *samosas*. They have much affection for me, and I am grateful for their loyalty.

Jahnvi personally organizes the Festival of India, which presents Prabhupada's teachings and distributes free *prasadam*, every year at the seven campuses of the university. She secures permits from various departments and puts up advertising for the event. Prabhupada and Krsna

must be very pleased with the Sankhlas for their determination to spread Krsna consciousness. Even though some of their venues are shut down due to COVID-19, they carry on as best they can and maintain a Krsna conscious presence in Baltimore and at the University of Maryland.

## **Thanksgiving**

We missed Ekadasi according to the computer calendar system, and so we observed it a day late, according to the Vrndavana calendar. Today we observed Thanksgiving, inviting our few regular guests and serving a small feast. Lalita-kaisori dasi made an apple crisp preparation. We also served stuffing with gravy, succotash, mashed potatoes, green beans and cider. We avoided the turkey-killing and intoxication and sports on television. We honored Thanksgiving in gratitude to Lord Krsna, who provides all our needs. Without offering our food to Krsna, feasting is sinning. And we thank Him every day, not just one day of thanks in the year.

“ . . . Now let us take this *prasadam* to our full satisfaction and glorify Their Lordships Sri-Sri Radha and Krsna, and in love call upon Lord Caitanya and Prabhu Nityananda to please help us.”

## ***Prabhupada Meditations, Volume IV***

p.120

### **“Letting Go with Srila Prabhupada**

“One of my favorite memories of Prabhupada is how he spoke in his very last days and how he lightened one of the heaviest moments of all. At that time the devotees were in great anxiety because Prabhupada said he wanted to go on an oxcart *parikrama*. When some of the devotees pleaded with Prabhupada, to please not go, Prabhupada agreed because they were in so much anxiety. Then Tamal Krsna

Maharaja said, ‘Actually, Srila Prabhupada, we are so much attached to you that you practically drive us to madness sometimes. Tonight, we’re becoming mad.’

“No, no. I shall not do that,’ said Prabhupada. ‘Babaji Maharaja,’ Prabhupada turned to Niskincana Krsna dasa Babaji and said, ‘Just see how much affection they have for me.’

“‘Srila Prabhupada,’ said Tamal Krsna, ‘The way you deal with us simply deepens our attachment every moment.’

“‘It is my duty,’ said Prabhupada.

“This remark is almost the climax of Prabhupada’s life, and the explanation of his relationship with all of his disciples. It is a profound and final statement. ‘That is my duty.’—it was his duty to draw us to him in love. But Prabhupada followed this remark immediately with a lighthearted remark: ‘That is my duty. . . . My Scottish professor used to pronounce the word “duty” as “*juti*.” Prabhupada wouldn’t refuse a sweet, light moment whenever it occurred to him, or a reminiscence or a touch of humanness, even in the middle of deep and transcendental talk.

“Prabhupada never behaved loosely. No one ever questioned his restraint, and he never acted inappropriately. He was a perfect gentleman. Being elderly, he was also restrained in his physical expressions. Yet one can see in photos of Srila Prabhupada how he sometimes swung a fist or made exuberant gestures with his cane during a morning walk. He would burst into a radiant smile, and all the devotees around him would also smile. Even at these times, however, Prabhupada always seemed to be in control. His manner was refined, as was befitting a world *acarya*. He wouldn’t even sit down on a chair at an outdoor cafe in Paris because liquor was served at that place.

“Prabhupada never overate, and he always kept his diet simple. But perhaps

‘letting go’ might be expressed when he ate a few extra *samosas* or a few extra sweets. None of this was ever seen as excessive by his devotees; but rather it gave them extra delight.

“When Prabhupada wasn’t in public, he would relax more. There is a nice photo of him in his Mayapur room where he’s leaning back and has his feet up on the low desk. In most formal photos, Prabhupada sits in the half-lotus position, but this photo shows a ‘down-home’ intimate moment, with his servant Srutakirti sitting nearby.

“Prabhupada was also relaxed with some of his Godbrothers or contemporary *sadhus*. There are pictures of Prabhupada with Hanuman Prasad Poddar and with other aged persons, and pictures of Prabhupada with Sridhar Maharaja of Navadvipa. Prabhupada and the other persons present are breaking into huge grins, and everyone seems to be shaking uncontrollably with laughter at a shared joke. Prabhupada’s disciples certainly considered themselves part of a rare moment when they were included in such scenes, even if they didn’t know exactly what was going on.”

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p. 231

### **“Noticing Prabhupada**

“One psychologist was talking about the importance of noticing things. If you notice when you get angry, or you notice when you are acting, you can curb these tendencies. He recommended a simple technique of just paying attention to your own breathing and noting how your skin or eyes feel. In order to work deeply, the noticing should be kept very simple. It is not a matter of thinking of concepts, but the

primitive act of noticing. When I read of this technique, I thought of applying it to my Prabhupada meditations. I think it's something anyone can do.

“For example, someone pronounces the word ‘Prabhupada.’ You become alert. You don't have to think about it. You can just feel, ‘Prabhupada’s name was just spoken.’ On another occasion, say you are taking *prasadam* in the association of devotees. Suddenly, you notice that you are among devotees, that the *prasadam* you are eating has been cooked in a particular way, that the child of the couple to your left has a Sanskrit name—everything has been taught to us by Prabhupada. You may feel this in an overall way, or you may notice particular details. It doesn't require a verbal acknowledgment, but you want to feel the awareness of Prabhupada in everything you do.

“This act of noticing is not intended as a substitute to the more discursive methods of glorifying Prabhupada with our intelligence and words; but it can supplement our present meditation. Sometimes we are tired of talking, or we realize that words will not be able to capture our experience. Perhaps we are with people who have no interest in Prabhupada, or we ourselves don't feel inspired enough to speak. At times like this, this ‘awareness’ technique can be fully utilized. We stop in the midst of outward activities, perhaps starting by becoming aware of our own breath, and then turn up the ‘awareness’ volume until we perceive Prabhupada’s blessing and presence.

“If we are fortunate to live in a society of devotees, then, whether we ‘notice’ or not, we are regularly being exposed to Prabhupada’s lectures, books, *kirtanas*, and way of life. Even when we don’t actively remember him, we can be assured that our inner self is benefiting by exposure to Prabhupada. If an iron rod is placed in fire, gradually it will become hotter and hotter, even if only by imperceptible degrees.

Prabhupada used to give the example that a preoccupied airplane passenger may not notice when the plane takes off, but, after a while, he will be surprised to see that he is thousands of feet above the earth. Similarly, even if we sometimes fail to notice the benefit of living in Prabhupada's shelter, eventually, Prabhupada will bless us to become more aware.

“The scriptures inform us that the association of devotees gives the greatest benefit and is the only solace in this material world. More important than techniques meant to bring us into greater awareness of Prabhupada is to first situate ourselves solidly in the association of devotees. In this way, our hearts and minds will automatically fill up with Krsna consciousness. But when we do become situated, we will want to develop our abilities to remember and love Prabhupada. We will want to fill our minds only with positive impressions of Prabhupada's presence in our lives. This will not only help us come closer to Krsna but will give us even greater appreciation for Prabhupada's other followers. It will help to eradicate envy from our hearts, which in turn will give us a stronger desire to absorb ourselves in Prabhupada consciousness.

**“Try this . . .**

“You might want to practice this technique of noticing small things in your life and how they are connected to Prabhupada. For instance, right now as you read this, what do you notice in your external surroundings that is there because of Srila Prabhupada? Pictures of Krsna? An altar? Even the absence of certain things could show Prabhupada's influence in your life. What about internally? As you were reading this essay, did you notice any feelings you wouldn't have had before meeting Prabhupada, such as a genuine desire to remember the guru? Can you think of

anything else?”

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p. 273

### **“He Likes My Company . . .**

“Some of Srila Prabhupada’s servants really relished Prabhupada’s company. Prabhupada said that about Brahmananda once. When I was with Prabhupada in 1974, I asked if I could transfer to another service. He asked me who I thought could take over my duties as his personal servant, and I suggested Brahmananda, and Prabhupada assented, ‘Yes, he likes my company.’

“It hurt at the time to think that Prabhupada might doubt my own liking for his company, but I also recognized it as an affirmation for the person he spoke about. ‘He likes my company.’ We should all like his company, even if our false ego is strained by the constant pressure Prabhupada puts on it.

“Prabhupada was the symbol of self-sacrifice. He was not overbearing, just pure. He had no desire to win respect for himself. He simply wanted people to recognize the supremacy of Krsna. This came out especially in Prabhupada’s writing. Walt Whitman said that everything one is will come out in one’s writing. If you are the kind of person who likes to have a servant stand behind you at the dinner table, that will come out in your writing. If you are cruel to your wife, that will come out in your writing. Even if you try to avoid these topics in your writing, still they will find their way into your expressions. In Prabhupada’s case, we see every phrase saturated with his faithful desire to present Krsna’s message. His writing is not outstanding because he was a great Sanskrit scholar or because he used polished prose. These

things asre also true, but the outstanding feature is his presentation of Krsna as He is. This is very unusual for commentators of *Bhagavad-gita*. Most *Gita* commentators cannot resist using the *Gita* to propound their own philosophy.

“Being in the presence of someone who has no other desire than to serve guru and Krsna is intense. It puts a lot of pressure on you and your own wishy-washy surrender. You keep wondering where your own needs fit into the picture. You want to surrender, but you can’t fake it. Prabhupada demanded our surrender. You were the menial servant. Therefore, it is not a light statement to say that someone likes his company. It means that that person was able to remain the menial servant of his guru. It means the disciple was able to take instruction and to be reprimanded. It means that the person was able to stand seeing the difference between his own false-ego platform and Prabhupada’s pure one. All the servant’s demands for material comfort and sense gratification were exposed. Could you give up your precious sleep in order to serve Prabhupada? The willingness to give up sleep—a whole book could be written on this sign of surrender. Prabhupada gave up his sleep; his servants were expected to do it also.

“Until each of us can honestly say we like Prabhupada’s company, how will Krsna bring us to Prabhupada in the next life? Krsna looks deep into our hearts at the time of death. As Supersoul, He fulfills our heartfelt desires. He also gives us what we deserve. We may say we want to go to Prabhupada, but if we do not deserve it by our surrender and service, or if we do not really desire it, then Krsna will reward us accordingly. Of course, Prabhupada will not forsake us, and he will return in some form or other to awaken our Krsna consciousness and bring us back to His service. Our duty is to realize Prabhupada’s mercy on the heart level and then to serve the pure devotee. We cannot realize his mercy only philosophically. As we advance more,

we will come to relish his company.

“One aspect of Prabhupada’s mercy is that he allowed people to approach him in different ways. Some devotees liked to be close to Prabhupada and to engage themselves directly in his personal service; others preferred to serve his order in other ways. There is not necessarily any difference in each person’s affection for Prabhupada. While Prabhupada might praise his servant for his nice cooking, another devotee serving away from Prabhupada may receive his encouragement when he hears of that devotee’s preaching. Prabhupada himself said that the preacher is more important than the ‘oil-smearing secretary.’

“There are different ways to express loyalty and love for Prabhupada. By Prabhupada’s grace, we can all find a way to like his company.”

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### “October 27

“Devotees gather from different parts of the world in Vrndavana. Some are seeking to rise above mechanical devotional service and enter the higher appreciation. At the same time we have been appreciating how Prabhupada himself taught us higher realization. Today I was appreciating how Prabhupada provided us the means to deal with the very basic doubts of a neophyte.

“It occurred to me that when we read the literature of the Six Gosvamis about *raganuga bhakti*, they are mainly addressing those who have dealt with their skepticisms and doubts. If the reader experiences too many doubts, then he shows himself ineligible. It means he lacks the greed and purification for *raganuga bhakti*. In that case he is encouraged to continue practicing *vaidhi-bhakti* until he becomes more qualified.

“But the fact is, although we may be seeking higher stages, we do (at least I do) still get visited by skepticism. I occasionally have doubts even of the existence of the spiritual world and the Personality of Godhead. Now that we are discussing Krsna’s intimate entourage, we can doubt whether Radha-Krsna affairs are really taking place and are the complete goal of all spiritual life.

“Where should one go with such shameful doubts? Therefore I appreciated that Prabhupada was always available for us to hear our most basic, obnoxious doubts. We often expressed them on morning walks in what appeared to be a mock debate. He often invited us to take the roles of scientists and theologians. Prabhupada would say, ‘What do they say?’ He was inviting us to bring out our own skepticism. In the name of giving scientific arguments, we eagerly expressed our doubts. Then Prabhupada would directly confront them and defeat them. He defeated us with direct, simple logic and *sastra*. Prabhupada never shied away from dealing with us, even when we were doubtful; he never told us we had no right to be doubtful, but instead dismantled our skeptical thoughts and built our faith. It was refreshing.”

***Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 3***

p. 138

**“As Good as God**

“It is Krsna who makes the beautiful material world with its oceans and mountains. You cannot thank Prabhupada for the creation. Yet I feel, ‘O Prabhupada, thank you!’ What I mean to say is, ‘Thank you, Prabhupada, for enabling me to see the creation as the work of Krsna. Thank you for giving me the eyes.’

“I remember being in Prabhupada’s room in 1966 and thinking of him ‘as God.’ He was talking to a group of us. I suddenly thought, ‘He is God for me,’ but I did not

say anything. I had never had a direct experience of God, just talked about Him. However, the Swami was a person who knew love of God. Therefore, God was in the room when you were with the pure devotee.

“What I felt that day was something I could not put into an essay. When it is time for expressing things in writing, then we must make it very clear; there is an eternal distinction between the individual soul, who is a pure devotee of Krsna, and the Supreme Soul. Krsna is the complete whole, and all the devotees, including the liberated souls, are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord. Everyone serves the Lord. No one is the supreme *isvara* except Krsna. This is all very clear, and the *acaryas* are the ones who make it clear for us. Fortunately, we also have spiritual-emotional moments when we feel so grateful to the pure devotee that we utter, at least within ourselves, ‘You are God to me.’

“By his grace I meditate on the spiritual master, who is one of the individual expansions of the Lord. His perfection is his intimate service to the Supreme Lord and the Vaisnavas. I meditate on that spiritual master, who is described distinctly in each verse of the ‘*Guruvastakam*.’ He soaks us with rain from the ocean of love of God. He puts out the forest fire of *samsara*. When he chants the holy name, he sometimes dances and sheds tears in ecstasy. He teaches us to worship the *arca-vigraha* of Lord Krsna and Srimati Radharani. He teaches us to prepare food and to give it to Krsna. The spiritual master is happy to see his devotees honoring *bhagavat prasadam*.

“I meditate on the spiritual master, who is always engaged in the pastimes of Radha and Krsna, assisting the assistants of the *gopis*. He is able to do this by his intense devotion to his own spiritual master, and this has enabled him to enter the pastimes of Vrndavana. The spiritual master is accepted in all the scriptures to be as

worshipable as God Himself because he is the confidential servitor of the Lord. When we please him, we please Krsna; when we fail to please him, our destination is unknown.

**“Try this:** What in this world do you find beautiful? Return that awareness to Prabhupada, and thank him for giving you the intelligence to understand and appreciate it rightly in Krsna consciousness.”

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

**1.**

“Yogi Bhajan, Swami Chidananda,  
and several prominent Sikhs and Jains  
visited Prabhupada in Berkeley  
to invite him to their Unity Convention.  
‘I told you before,’ Prabhupada said,  
‘There is not going to be any unity.’  
And they laughed  
because he was so candid  
and spoke the truth.  
Unless they accept *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*,  
no unity  
but all agreed to attend

The San Francisco Ratha-yatra  
and with Prabhupada  
they sat and took *prasadam*.

It was the largest Ratha-yatra in the West;  
some trouble with the cart wheels  
but finally Prabhupada was smiling,  
and the sun came out.

**“2.**

“To Los Angeles,  
where the marathon he ordered  
was underway  
to produce seventeen books  
in two months.  
He answered all their questions,  
the Bengali-Sanskrit editors,  
the artists, the publishers,  
why did he order the ‘impossible’ push?  
Because time was limited,  
and for years manuscripts were piling up;  
how could he write more  
if nothing were published?  
So the BBT was working 24 hours a day,  
the entire *Caitanya-caritamrta*.”

***ISKCON in the 1970s: Diaries***

p.507

**“March, Mayapur**

*On the Roof*

“Symptom of an advanced devotee is that he is always thinking of Krsna and how to spread Krsna consciousness all over the world. (‘All over the world’ also means cooperate with ISKCON, the established worldwide mission.)

“Cooperate.

“Enemy within: competitive jealousy and envy. I can offer humble suggestions to my Godbrothers (giants) who form the policies of book distribution:

“1) Please try to find a way to do it with cleaner lines and cleaner money exchange.

“2) This is the one thing that is actually harassing gentlemen who are inclined to us.

“3) It used to be that purity provided impetus to leaders who applied a whip. We have to apply the whip and at the same time, inspire confidence that we are directly in touch with Krsna.”

***Shack Notes: Moments While at a Writing Retreat***

“The trees—how hard it is to believe they are souls being punished. It sounds like a Grimm’s fairy tale. But what do we know? As Prabhupada said, we are ‘wet behind the ears.’ Life is hard to believe. It is inconceivable beyond our grasp. Who

can say what a tree is? It stands with many others, grows straight up to get its bit of sunlight. It is a mystery. And why do different birds sing the way they do? Why is the sky blue on clear days? I don't want to hear the explanation scientists give about light refraction and gas and stratosphere. I want to know why it makes us happy to see the blue sky. Why do artists especially love Nature? Why are they moved to paint pictures and write music?

“You ask what is a tree; then, what is a human? Once you start thinking about the wonder of things, then the Vedic expressions make good sense. They accommodate the fact that existence is wonderful, *acintya*. They explain it all within a context of ultimate knowledge. It solves all bewilderment. I can look at a tree and accept the Vedic conclusion—a tree is a soul with very low consciousness, with a thick, heavy bodily covering, waiting out its karma. You can chant to the trees and they will benefit.

### ***Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name***

“I saw a farmer out in the middle of his browned field, inspecting it. I don't know if he has already seeded it or what he is looking for. It takes a long time, waiting for the plant to grow up through the earth. A man is small compared to an acre. He stands in the middle of it and looks down at the earth. What does he see? What does he think? Did it pain his heart? There is only so much he can do—the rest is up to nature, the sun, the sky.

““The result of chanting is that one awakens his love for Krsna and tastes transcendental bliss. Ultimately one attains the association of Krsna and engages in

His devotional service, as if immersing himself in a great ocean of love.’ (Cc. *Antya* 20.14)”

***My Dear Lord Krsna: A Book of Prayers***

“My dear Lord Krsna . . . .

“I am glad that You accept my service, even though I am not an all-star. As Lord Caitanya, You are happy to drink water from the broken pot of Kholaveca Sridhara. But Sridhara was an all-star in his devotion to You. He used to constantly sing Your holy names, so much that his neighbors complained that he kept them from sleeping at night. When Lord Caitanya was showing His divinity to His devotees at Srivasa Thakura’s house, he asked the devotees to go and fetch Sridhar. The Lord was asking the devotees to express what was their heart’s desire, and He awarded it to them. Sridhara expressed that he wished to remain a poor seller of banana leaves and engage in friendly quarrels with Nimai Pandita over the price of his commodities. These were purely affectionate exchanges with Sridhara, and Sridhara wishes to maintain them rather than accept any other boon the Lord may offer Him.

“What do I want from You? I wish to love You with intense devotion. “This is not something I have already attained, as Kholaveca Sridhara has already attained his friendly quarrels with the Lord. It is something I am aspiring for. My devotion is not so strong. I am not willing to take daring preaching services on behalf of guru and Krsna. I do not engage in constant *hari-nama*, as did Kholaveca Sridhara, who appeared like a madman to his neighbors. I pray, therefore, from a wish list. I would like to attain *krsna-prema*. This comes, however, only with great effort by the

devotee. You see him serving and hear his cries of supplication. In the *Bhagavad-gita* You say, ‘As they approach Me, I reward them accordingly.’”

### ***My Relationship with Lord Krsna***

“Devotional service is the best boat for crossing the ocean of nescience, but I seem to be moving so slowly. I don’t know how far I will get before death comes. After death, I will no longer make progress in this body. I will have to pause for six months. If human life is next, I’ll wake up in the womb. I don’t know when again I will be so well situated, with my guru as the captain of the ship, my human body chanting and hearing, and the favorable winds of *sastra* comprehensible to me. This is a rare opportunity for good sailing, but I am so slow.

“Dear Krsna, I pray to You to rescue me. I have read Your statement in *Bhagavad-gita*: ‘ . . . Those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Prtha—for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean birth and death.’ (*Bg.* 12.6-7) You can deliver me, Lord. You say, ‘Chant Hare Krsna, and that will attract Me,’ so I do: Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

“Dear Lord, You bring a devotee back to You provided he is fully engaged in Your devotional service. I’ll ask You to adjust my own program so that it is more pleasing to You. I may not say these words with full sincerity, but I want to be sincere. If You make it clear to me what I have to do to please You, I could direct myself toward Your instruction and surrender. Please direct me, or at least inform

me. You are *caitya-guru*, and I await Your order. My spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, is already directing me, but I need strength to carry out his order. He approves that we turn to You for help.”

### ***Entering the Life of Prayer***

p. 22

“The main thing is already chalked out for all of us devotees: surrender to Krsna. Exactly how do we do it, though? Agrani Swami likes to go onto a populated street with his harmonium and chant and chant, and Sesa Prabhu wants to manage, and now he wants to go to law school and show the world an ideal *grhastha* of a certain type who goes to the morning program and then goes to work and does something for Prabhupada's movement. As difficult as it is for him, I think Ravindra-svarapa Prabhu likes being chairman of the GBC and handling the different crises. I am a *sannyasi*, traveling around the world, writing, but even that is changing now. The state I am thinking of, that I want to reach, is a life practically devoted to and actually *attaining the taste and development of the inner qualities*. I want to do the things that all devotees do. We bow down, we chant the holy names, we are supposed to read. We see other persons as part and parcel of Krsna. Then, in order to carry this out, we preach a movement which teaches this, we distribute the books which tell about this. However, have we actually attained that which we preach? So, I want to work on attaining it.

“The failure would be that I would arrange a life just to develop inner life, and I couldn't develop it at all. I would get dry and people would say, ‘Just see, he is trying to reach *samadhi*. We are just supposed to work. We are not supposed to develop this inner life so much.’ Or critics might say, ‘He is into this Christian thing of

praying all the time. He is trying to be another St. Francis.’ These are the accusations, but I cannot be intimidated by them. Prabhupada says if one person can become a pure devotee, everything will be worth it.”

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

pp. 42-43

#### **“A GARDEN IN AITOTA**

“After our visit to these two places we traveled a short distance to another part of Aitota. By doing this we followed in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya: ‘After offering obeisances to Lord Nrsimha, whose temple was nearby, the Lord entered a garden. In the garden, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu sat down with the other devotees.’

*(Madhya-lila 12.152-3)*

“Some of the nicest gardens in Aitota are disappearing due to the construction of a bus stand by the Puri municipality. As we sat in a garden, under the shade of a cashew tree, our peace was disrupted by the rumbling of an old steamroller which was tamping down the ground for the bus stand.

“The Gaudiya *brahmana* who lives here says that Lord Caitanya rested and feasted in this spot during the nine-day Gundica festival. There are small ponds here and there, and naked boys swimming in them. Villagers are passing on the soft dust footpaths. A few calves and cows are helping themselves to wild grass. These rural scenes seem just like it must have been five hundred years ago.

“Prabhupada stated that India is meant for preserving the simple village life of living in a small hut, chanting, and worshiping God and the cow. What do people gain by constructing a bus stand and running the latest Luxury Video Coach and

other buses to Bhubanesvara and further points? Of course, it's impossible to convince them not to go ahead with material progress. The rest of the world, which has been quick to invade or exploit India, is gaining all amenities, so why should India lag behind? But Prabhupada said she will be left behind materially despite all efforts. Like the *brahmana* who lost his caste by eating at a Muslim's house, Indians will lose their spiritual position but remain half-hungry. ISKCON is meant to use the wealth, energy and ingenuity of the West to help spread Vedic culture. The blind man and the lame man should walk together. So let us do it. In the meantime, a few gardens still remain in Aitota.

“Brown-black heifer,  
 you are lucky there is grass left  
 in Aitota  
 and your owner allows you fresh pasture.  
 He wears Gaudiya Vaisnava *tilaka*,  
 and he has no objection  
 to Western devotees  
 sitting under his tree.  
 But he doesn't like us  
 to take snapshots,  
 and he is right—  
 ‘It's a sacred place.’  
 He doesn't mind *kirtana*,  
 so let us sing the holy names.”

## ***Japa Transformations***

p. 68

“Take the *maha-mantra* seriously. I tend to think of writing as being more vital. Writing lasts: it’s preserved, it’s me. *Japa* doesn’t get preserved; it’s something I do. But even a small quantity leaves me broke (without capital). This attitude of minimizing my chanting isn’t good.

“Writing about my problems in chanting is valuable. Don’t ask whether it will make interesting reading. I have to write to help myself and not worry about whether it’s repetitious.

“When I notice that one round has taken eleven or twelve minutes, I should immediately do something. Don’t stay in the same chair, or even the same room. Where are other places I could go? The hallways are so cold! Outdoors means putting on a coat and walking around and around the house in a heavy wind, but it might be good. Let’s try it in the late morning or afternoon when the ‘drowsies’ hit. Chant faster outdoors.

“Chant faster, even if you think it seems mechanical. It’s better than sleepy-slow. Rapidly, rapidly. Other things fall away, and I’m left with concentration on the energetic, rapid chanting. I hope it works that way.

“I just told myself to write to help my *japa*, and immediately I came up with a practical plan—going outdoors when drowsy. This idea never came until I wrote it. The writing has such power.”

## **Writing Sessions**

***My Purpose at Isola di Albarella (continued)***

***“November 1, 1996 (Continued)***

*“11:50 A.M.*

“Aches, pains, you are either a hypochondriac or sensible to note it. Felt, ‘How can I continue writing like this?’ That came from a headache; it depresses your spirit. We say the spirit can’t be affected. Then it’s my mind? My poor self, conditioned. He’d like to write cleverly and go along in KC and not stop – and reach new places. But hampered and held back.

“Doubts, doubts,

lack of love for master,

it’s been so long.

(my words don’t have to make clear sense).

You are putting into it, your cries. That’s more important the product. I will read it later and appreciate, ‘I was surrendering here, confessing truly, trying my best.’ I’ll appreciate it although others may not. Audiences are fickle. See what you put into it, not how it looks as the end result to the general reader.

“And you must overcome. Thought, ‘At the end of the line you’ll be partly relieved to die and give up such a troublesome body.’ Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati was disgusted to stay in the world because of neophyte disciples.

“You would do better for the time being to keep pushing your pen. It’s a very nice black ink on the white page.

“My master. My head hurts ‘cause I can’t love. Krsna, please reveal Yourself.

“Hare Krsna nickels and dimes, cat’s meow in the backyard looking up to me in the second-floor room. He wants food. Tabby of orange and black and white. He’ll get something from one of the houses. Doesn’t look skinny. Ree, ree the colossus...

“You know Stoka’s always late  
because he’s Italian – that’s  
a cliché. Italians are fast  
too, *stiletto* is an Italian  
word.

But he’s slow, low blood  
pressure. We don’t mind if lunch  
is forty minutes late. We just  
wait and if the bread is too hard  
by then we have worked up an  
appetite  
and we become philosophical,  
‘Food isn’t so important.’

“The body is the conditioned side;  
the self is pure within the person  
never dies.

“Let’s all be celibate  
and give up this world.  
But marriage is important too.

SP said, ‘Birth, marriage and death are important – a father spends a fortune for the first two and the son spends on death.’

“So, we’ll go downstairs and take three spoons of pre-lunch digestive drink.

We pray to give up speculation.

Admit you don’t know.

*Sastra*

tells truth. Swami was pushing arguments to convince those who wouldn’t accept *sastra*

but ultimately, it’s *sastra*

he says, Vyasa says.

I don’t claim I’m better than them.

“Please allow me,  
please free me,  
please let me see I am made  
of your mercy.

“One more. This is the truth.

I am a soul and the ache is only

the body. I am a Gaudiya Vaish  
 practice. I am a fool,  
 it doesn't matter.  
 Eat and pray.  
 You'll be okay one day and get out.

**“Afternoon in the Backyard.**

“You can't be happy in this world. KC is teaching we are not this body. The body is the covering of the real self, the spirit soul. Don't expect happiness in this body. My pains are data for the truth. You could say you'd like to get clear of aches so that you could write and read and chant in a normal state. But what is 'normal' in the body means aches. *Adhidhaivika, adhiatmika, adhibautika*. One misery or another is at work upon you. Then you get thrown out of the body in the most fearful suffering at death. Where do you go next? Who is in control of this?

“They say KC is sectarian, is myth, is dogma. We say you are *mudhas*, rascals.

Pheasant walking by. They get very nervous and fly off making awkward squawks and alarms.

“The same thing, the same examples, Srila Prabhupada says. He repeats them again and again, tirelessly. Sometimes we get tired of them. You can't know who your father is unless you ask your mother. And I resort to the same things in my own personal expressions. The repertoire can be expanded, but unnaturally. Stay with what you actually have and know.

“Yellow No Nonsense pen in blue gloved hand. Greenery of the backyard in bushes, spare clover on brown, moist earth and moss. The calm canal drags green reflections of the trees.

“You are not living with devotees in a temple. ‘Can you live outside and practice Krsna consciousness?’ Someone asked SP after a lecture in Melbourne. He said, ‘Yes, this is just an example (what we are doing in our temple). You can do it in your own home.’ He said that. Practice KC wherever you are.

“Miss, miss. The jet plane scratches through the sky. Soft sound of car tires. You’re safe in the backyard of House 304 with its green, wooden gate and private hedges. No residents on either side of you. Tomorrow I’ll be all alone as Madhu goes out to send mail at the post office, pick up Bhakti-rasa at Marco Polo International Airport and pick up a package and return Stoka-Krsna to Vicenza. I’ll sit here throughout the day.

“*Dharmam tu saksad bhagavat-pranitam.* It’s confidential Vedic knowledge, transcendental to material religion in *karma-kandiya* sections of the *Vedas*. Yamadutas were not aware of it so their master taught them.

“Here is ‘Song #47’ from Sri Narottama dasa Thakura’s *Sri Prarthana*:

“I have no devotion for either the Vaisnavas of my own spiritual master. How is it possible for a rascal like me to attain devotional service?

“My mind is always drowning in illusion. I have not even the smallest fragment of devotion for the Vaisnavas. I have become blind by constantly meditating on the objects of the senses. The Maya witch has placed a hangman’s noose around my neck.

“Even if I can cure my blindness and defeat the Maya hangman, I cannot become free from material illusion without the mercy of saintly devotees.

“O master, O purifier of the sinful, O savior of the fallen souls, please rescue this Narottama dasa.’

“Oh, I can’t do it, write anything...

SP sitting on a blue pad

me, me,

you, you

it’s getting near Christmas again,

first, election day then

slit the turkey’s throat.

*Bhoktaram yajna-tapasam.*

“You don’t want to hurt people

even by harsh words like

‘Slit the turkey’s throat’ but

mainly you need to imitate

your master. I mean follow his

commands. Do you love him?

Do you love his words?

Do you like the orders he gives?

Are you living with them in

ecstasy

or struggle to be true to him

but the heart isn't there?

Tell me.

I can't all at once.

A bit at a time.

"I like the *murti* worship,

the little bit of reading I

do each day. No doubt

about that. Read Narottama

dasa Thakura singing of *his* guru and turn

to yours.

"I'll answer those questions

bit by bit, I'll fight my

way and do what I want.

Master, please accept this riot of words,

these words of mine

I never showed you in pre-November 1977.

### **"5:45 P.M. Night Notes**

"Singing *namamisvaram*...Madhu leads one-two, one-two. Me and Stoka sing the chorus. The birthday candles are stuck into the side of a pineapple juice carton. The pictures are Radha-Damodara of Gita-nagari and the five gurus in our *parampara*. While we sing, I think of what I just read by Bernard Cooper about his

father. I justify it because this is my service, writing. If I were finished with it, would I just chant somewhere alone? Not likely. Still getting input from writers to make my own. Yet we recite the verse, *sanga-tyagat sato vrtteh*, the devotees should avoid associating with nondevotees. I do avoid like anything the nondevotees, but I read their poems, Al Young and that one who comes across my way. For my service.

“The three candles burn down, our souls we say. Madhu’s burns down first because he lit his first in order to sing with the harmonium. O Lord, the Deity of Prabhupada, I will come through.

“We’ve been talking a lot about mid-December when I have to fly alone from Spain to Belfast. Shall I carry Prabhupada? Madhu will go ahead by van. He will carry Prabhupada, we decide.

“So, these notes, this darkening night...tomorrow I’ll be alone and probably won’t light the candles. No one to see me do it. Skip the ceremony as nice as it is, when you are alone. Hope I don’t get the chills. Ask him to show you where the thermos bottle is for hot drinking water and the hot water bottle for hugging. O Lord, it would be nice to always think of You. Memorizing those verses and reciting them back, *tadera carana-sevi-bhakta sane vas janame janame hoy ei abhilas*. Do you know the verses?

“Now another day is done, November 1<sup>st</sup>, All Saints’ Day, the first day of this month, this mesa, this start for the book you do for your own . . .”