

Free Write Journal #131

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Free Writes

Vaccine

Ravindra Svarupa's secretary managed to get him and his wife Saudamani appointments to receive vaccine shots against COVID-19. This isn't an easy thing to do. She had to spend hours on the computer before she got the appointment. Sraddha then volunteered to do it for Baladeva and me, who are both qualified by age. She got back on the computer and secured an appointment for us within a few days. We're scheduled to go to a Walgreens in Albany, an hour's drive away. We don't look forward to the long trip, but we're excited that we've got this appointment for the vaccine, which gives protection against the deadly disease of coronavirus.

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Baladeva and I spent 40 minutes driving to an Albany Walgreens that gave out the vaccines. Once in Walgreens, it was pleasant, and both the patients and the employees were polite and gentle. Ahead of us was a large Black family consisting of two young boys, a youngish mother, a man and a grandmother figure. I speculated that only the grandmother was there to receive the vaccine. There was a sign up that everyone should keep six feet apart, but the family were snuggling up, and especially the boys were touching each other and playing. One husband and wife had showed up at the wrong Walgreens. They tried to insist that they receive the vaccine, but without the proper papers there was nothing the Walgreens people could do, so they sent them away. The man came up to my wheelchair and grumbled his complaints. The Walgreens lady with the needle insisted on coming over to me rather than me going to her. She very quickly gave me the shot with a thin needle, and it didn't hurt at all. We spent four hours with driving and paperwork

from chair to chair. Our second shot is due in 28 days, and we already have our appointment date at a more nearby facility.

Elephants, etc.

In scripture, a pretty, graceful person is compared to a baby elephant. In Krsna's *pauganda* age (six to ten years old), Krsna's thighs are compared to a baby elephant:

“When Krsna arrived at the age of thirteen or fourteen years, His two arms and chest assumed an unspeakable beauty, and His whole form became simply enchanting. When Krsna attained thirteen years of age, His two thighs were challenging the trunks of elephants, His rising chest was trying to come to peace talks with doors of jewels, and His two arms were minimizing the value of the bolts found on doors. Who can describe the wonderful beauty of these features of Krsna? The special beauty of Krsna's body was His mild smiling, His restless eyes, and His world-enchanting songs. These are the special features of this age.” (*Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter 26)

Getting Up Early

For two mornings in a row, our alarm clock hasn't gone off, and we have slept an extra hour. This disturbs me very much, although Baladeva doesn't mind sleeping in. Anyway, we have thrown the defective clock out, and we're using a backup one. For two years I used to get up extremely early, at 11:00 P.M. My doctor advised me to sleep longer, for my health. Now I am very determined to get up at 2:00 A.M. I feel cheated and rushed when I get up later. Some days we run late because we can't think of topics for the *Free Write Journal*. Some days we skip my morning

foot and leg massage. Rupa Gosvami has stated that one of the symptoms of steady *bhava* is utilization of time. A devotee is very mindful that he's not wasting a minute outside of Krsna conscious activities. Also, the early morning hours are conceived of as the best time for spiritual practices. Everything is calm and best-suited for chanting and hearing and writing and reading. Unless it's your service as a preacher to stay up late and do preaching programs, it's better to go to bed early, and early to rise.

Bala to Trinidad

Today Bala flies to Trinidad. He will have to stay in quarantine for a week there before he goes home. He is in anxiety because he has to get an exemption from the government to enter the country. The borders are officially closed to regular travel. He had to get a COVID test before entering, and he'll have to get another one when he arrives. His mother is terminally ill and about to die. He's obliged to be there to take care of her last affairs, to arrange for her cremation, funeral, last will and other technicalities. He'll be gone for quite a while, and it will be very hard on us at Viraha Bhavan in his absence. Baladeva Vidyabhusana and Krsna dasi will have to double up and do Bala's service. Krsna dasi gets especially anxious when her husband is away. Baladeva has to do all the cooking in addition to taking care of me, starting by dealing with snowstorms today and tomorrow.

Out-Loud Reading

In our group out-loud reading, we heard the sages at Naimisaranya ask Suta Goswami, "Now that Krsna has departed from the world, where can we find the Absolute Truth?" Suta replied, "This *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, which is as brilliant as the sun, can give you all enlightenment into the Absolute Truth." Prabhupada writes in his purport that there are two *bhagavatas*, the book *bhagavata* and the person *bhagavata*, the pure devotee-spiritual master. Both of them can deliver

to the submissive student. “The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the transcendental sound representation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus it is the full representation of transcendental knowledge and religious principles.

Can Installed Deities Be Moved to Another Temple?

Yes, it can be done if it is authorized by the GBC and there is actual improvement in the move. I installed Radha-Madhava in Belfast in the 1990s when the temple had ample *brahmanas* and devotees. But gradually the devotees began to leave until there were only two left, a *brahmana* named Nitai Sacinandana and a widow named Syamamayi dasi.

Radha-Madhava in Their new temple in Leicester were an immediate success, whereas the Belfast temple was left with a large picture of the Panca-Tattva as their worshipable Deity. There were always sufficient devotees at the *aratis*, and the standard of *prasadam* offerings and Deity dress were much improved. Syama dasi eventually moved to Mayapur, where she absorbed herself in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* studies. While there a devotee proposed marriage to her, and she surrendered. Belfast was left with just Nitai Sacinandana, who was a stalwart *brahmacari* living on his own. Nitai Sacinandana is my disciple, and I’m proud of him. His health is not strong, but he’s not in depressed spirits. He is living like an ideal hermit until Krsna sends him more devotees.

LIST

- 1.) Baladeva sleepily asked me to give him a brain. I made *mudra* gestures at his head. He woke up, said I had given him the brain of a gorilla, and moved aggressively toward me with bared teeth.
- 2.) Yesterday after lunch, the five devotees began excitedly talking about monkeys in India who had stolen their possessions, and how children had gotten the possessions

back by trading with the monkeys. The devotees then had to pay the children back with 100 rupees. I was disgusted and bored by the conversation and didn't say a word.

3.) We finished our out-loud reading of *The Nectar of Devotion* with Rupa Gosvami's discussion of favorable and unfavorable overlapping mellows. An example of unfavorable overlapping mellows is as follows: "My dear friend Krsna, my youthful beauty is as temporary as lightning in the sky, and therefore my possessing attractive bodily features is unimportant. I've never met Krsna, so I request you to please arrange my meeting with Him immediately." In this statement there is the incompatibility of a neutral mellow mixed with conjugal love. An example of favorable overlapping *rasas* is as follows: "Although Krsna was invincible to any enemy, the cowherd boys of Vrndavana became almost blackish with astonishment upon seeing His wonderful royal garments and His feats upon the Battlefield of Kuruksetra." (*NOD*, Chapter Fifty) In this statement, although there is a mixture of chivalrous activities and dread in devotional service, there's no perverted reflection of mellows.

4.) When someone wanted to show Lord Caitanya a drama or poem, he first had to show it to the Lord's secretary, Svarupa Damodara, and only if he judged it as favorable, it could be shown to Lord Caitanya. If sometimes a work was rejected, but if the poet was repentant and submissive, he could be instructed and reformed by Svarupa Damodara.

5.) The parks and forests were undeveloped 500 years ago, and the pastime-places of

Radha-Krsna were being discovered by the Six Gosvamis. It developed into something much like the way it was when Krsna was here.

Wheelchair

We are in the process of getting a wheelchair. Formerly, I used to use a walker, which was a smaller, lightweight vehicle. On the one hand, I feel more safe in the bigger wheelchair. But it makes me look more like a cripple. When people look at me I feel a little embarrassed. I'm partly in denial that I'm so much dependent that I actually need a hospital-style wheelchair. My legs are weaker, and my condition is more intense. My actual situation is that I can only walk a few steps from my wheelchair to a hospital examination table.

Prabhupada Lecture

He distinguished between spiritual and material life. If you're pursuing spiritual life, then you're always jolly, but material life means you're in anxiety. Material life is temporary and anxiety-producing. Even if one rises to the platform of Brahman realization, free of the material modes, he will have to fall down again into material life because he has not developed devotional service to Krsna.

Family Miseries

I received a letter from disciples who live with their grown-up children who have children of their own. Although these children had sufficient years of *gurukula*, they are now away from Krsna consciousness and embroiled in material life. This causes great pain for all the persons involved. As long as one continues to identify oneself as a *grhastha* rather than a *vanaprastha*, a new cycle of anxieties begins. There is something to be said for the extended family, where support is given to

all. (The extended family includes cousins and their children.) The senior parents should not feel obliged to live with their grown-up children and the inherent problems of family life. Practice of *sadhana* should be emphasized for all. The senior parents who wrote me should not feel it's their responsibility to take care of their grown-up nondevotee son, his girlfriend, and their little child. They should live as *vanaprasthas*. The senior couple should give up their attachments and move on.

Madhumangala

A disciple of mine named Madhumangala was my servant and right-hand man for thirteen years, from 1987 to 2000. He joined me at a time when I was a traveling *sannyasi* visiting temples, especially in Europe and Ireland. He was the ideal driver. He used to be a truck driver in Europe, and he knew the roads, where to park overnight (and where not to park overnight), how to cross the borders, somewhat fluent in most of the languages, and a good companion. He accompanied me in being a *siksa* disciple of Narayana Maharaja, and withdrew when I did.

Madhumangala was a strong influence in searching out a cure for my 25 years of chronic migraine headaches. He managed my diet, following Dr. Sharma's naturopathic regimen. I was not so enthusiastic to follow naturopathy, but Madhumangala and my editor Kaisori dasi were very much against allopathic medicine. I came under their control. I kept to naturopathy for years and did fasting/cleansing and other restrictive diets, none of which cured my migraines. But my advisors thought allopathic medicine was "demoniac." The theory of naturopathy was reasonable, but the results were nil. I just lost weight and strength. The migraines were so persistent and dominant for decades that the natural diets were a desperate attempt to find a way out. My readers may have wondered or been skeptical of why I wrote so much about migraine, but it was a test from Krsna and a major influence in my life. It hampered my ability to lecture and preach.

Nevertheless, during the 1990s I continued to write books whenever there was an open opportunity, and in that respect it was a golden period of literary output.

Madhumangala became absorbed and distracted by playing traditional Irish music. He had several instruments and a lovely voice. He composed his own songs and won some recognition in competitions and among the devotees at festivals. Unfortunately, he was also attracted to another man's wife and two children, and went off to live with them, causing a disgrace in the Irish *yatra*. He broke away from the devotees and went back to school, studying psychology for a career. Many years have gone by, and he is now a professional psychologist with little association with the devotees. I felt brokenhearted when my long-term assistant left my company and broke off all relations. We were so close; it was a shock to me. But now that many years have passed, he has become something like "ancient history," and I no longer feel hurt. Madhu hasn't responded to any of my attempts to reach out to him as a former friend.

Letters/Narayana Maharaja

A video just surfaced of Narayana Maharaja talking at Gita-Nagari to Baladeva Vidyabhusana dasa and other devotees. They mention letters that Prabhupada wrote to Narayana Maharaja and then said there were "over a hundred." He said some Indian messenger from Satsvarupa Maharaja came and took them. However, I believe all this is unlikely. I never saw any letters by Prabhupada to Narayana Maharaja. When Baladeva went to interview Narayana Maharaja for the biography, Narayana Maharaja showed him about sixteen letters, but he wouldn't give them to Baladeva even to copy. They were written in Bengali. This video has surfaced many years after the fact. It was circulated and shown to me on February 17, 2021. The followers of Narayana Maharaja are still making propaganda that Narayana Maharaja received many, many letters from Prabhupada, but they were taken by Baladeva Vidyabhusana or some Indian messenger. It is annoying that this misinformation is still being churned by the followers of Narayana Maharaja. Much later,

seventeen letters from Prabhupada to Narayana Maharaja were “found” and circulated by his followers.

Sri Caitanya-daya

Yadubara Prabhu sent a letter to Baladeva Vidyabhusana yesterday, mentioning that Yadubara was reading *Sri Caitanya-daya* in the *Stories of Devotion* series by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami. Yadubara writes, “I assume you are familiar with the book. I am finding it fascinating to get that first-hand account from devotees who lived during the time, and the wife, at least, seeing the Lord . . . Maharaja’s name is on the book, but I am not sure how he participated. Maybe just because he started the *Stories of Devotion* series. Please clarify.”

Actually *Sri Caitanya-daya* was purely fictional. I created characters who lived five hundred years ago at the time when Lord Caitanya was present on the earth. Many devotees got the impression that *Caitanya-daya* was a strictly historical account, and not fiction. They thought it was taken from a diary written five hundred years ago. This is ironic and amusing to me. Good Vaisnava fun.

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Every Day, Just Write, Volume 1: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life

pp.25-26

“Prabhupada said that his duty was to draw us to him in love. He lectured in Vrndavana and told us that in Vraja, all entities are individuals but have one common purpose: to satisfy Krsna. He said it dramatically, as an orator, in the outdoor *kirtana* hall, until the bell rang nine. At the end, he said, “The guru should not cheat his disciples. *Gurur na sa syat.*”

“Later, I heard him lecturing on Rsabhadeva entering a forest fire created by the wind. He said it was just like we sing each day in ‘Gurvastakam,’ *samsara-davanala*. As he lectured on that, I thought, ‘When I have to lecture, I can remember these techniques and ways to shift to vital topics regardless of the topic of the verse.’ He said he saw a fire high on a hill in some station in India. No one wanted it to start, and no one could put it out until the ‘mercy rainfall’ came.

My words, my . . . firecrackers. Fingers burnt off words that lose control. Now preach and lecture and tell us, dogmatic saint, what you really mean. I mean to be in favor of Krsna consciousness and never against it, but we speak honestly, and sometimes you may think I’m putting down ISKCON or worse, our master, when really, I can’t do that. I’m only trying to dig under the official surface. Sometimes worms squeeze out or roaches escape, or even mice or rats have been known to . . . And I want to return to safety, singing, *krsna he . . . raksa mam, pahi mam*—please save me and protect me. Ten minutes per round. ‘Please accept me’ is all we pray.

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Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary

p. 49

“Today’s letter on your desk is from 1970 to Advaita dasa, the ISKCON Press manager. Advaita had left the association of devotees, and Prabhupada was relieved to hear that he was back. Srila Prabhupada writes, ‘I know that Satsvarupa has got too much other engagement to be able to devote the requisite time for managing the press department.’ At least Prabhupada mentions me as busy in his service. Srila Prabhupada told Advaita he didn’t have to attend the *aratis*. In other words, he didn’t have to be under my complete authority as temple president. Maybe I overdid

it. Those were rough days. Advaita loved to work printing Srila Prabhupada's books, but he had little taste for anything else in Krsna consciousness.

“Those days are gone now. The worries are gone too, faded into ISKCON's history. Some of your instructions and estimations seem different to us now twenty years later. You encouraged Advaita and said that you were confident he would not get ensnared by *maya*, but he did get ensnared. Somehow, working on your books wasn't enough. You told him later in New York that he had to attend the *mangalaratis* or else the Press could be closed.”

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Entering the Life of Prayer

p. 25

“Dark and gray this morning. I am wondering whether I have a clear purpose. When I read about St. Therese, I see how she is so overwhelmed with love of God. She knows what she wants and is so willing to suffer and plunge herself into dependence on God, who she approaches through Jesus Christ. I am just bewildered, though, before such a manifestation. Of course, I am not expected to imitate anything, but I am not even sure of my purpose or what I am willing to do. Anyway, I shouldn't overdo my lamentation. I am thankful that I am fixed up in some connection with Srila Prabhupada and the Krsna consciousness movement, and, as a *sannyasi*, I am able to travel with my assistant, lecture in the temples, and see the Deity. That's all very wonderful. There are so many opportunities for chanting and hearing, and I am somewhat detached; but the deeper or the interior lacking is serious. I can't just be diverted from that lack by my satisfaction with the appearance of following *vaidhi-bhakti*.”

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Every Day, Just Write Volume 1: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life

pp. 93-95

“3:40 A.M.

“This morning I was listening to a tape of Prabhupada speaking in his room to devotees in Paris, 1974. He was talking about the guests he had been seeing and how they were not devotees. He said that he strongly believed in Krsna’s statement in *Bhagavad-gita* that if one is not a devotee of the Lord, he’s in one of the four categories of *duskrti*: *mudha*, *naradhama*, *mayayapahrta-jnana*, or *asura bhavam asritah*. Then Prabhupada asked that this purport be read from his *Bhagavad-gita*. ‘It is very interesting,’ he said. Then he said, ‘Where is Satsvarupa?’

“Someone said something, but I couldn’t hear it on the tape. Maybe they said I was typing. I remember that I sometimes didn’t attend Prabhupada’s meetings because I had so much typing to do. Also, I lacked sufficient interest to stay with him hour after hour hearing him say ‘the same things.’

“I want to make up for that shortcoming. Srda Prabhupada, Satsvarupa is listening to your purports from *Bhagavad-gita*.

“The truth is vibrant images. The truth is Prabhupada saying people have made wine and women their masters. Raya Rama dasa left because he said we do not allow the bare necessities of life. Oh, that’s true. They laughed in the room. That one young devotee was talking so much, repeating Prabhupada’s instructions and his own opinion and much news about U.S. politics and sins—sins of the nondevotees. I wonder where that devotee is now or who he was. I tend to put them all down and say I am the good one, the quiet one, the faithful one, but how can I make that claim?

My actual place is different. Now I'm chronically ill and chronically unable to taste the nectar of the holy name, chronically a faultfinder, and chronically not found in the front ranks of the preachers.

“The book on chronic illness says that one who has it must acknowledge he can't move with the fast-action crowd. He can do the best he can, but he has to admit that some days are slower than others. Maybe he cannot meet with people—I can't. The chronically ill should not try to forget that they are actually ill. One injured man said that for a long time he kept thinking he would be cured; one day he would wake up and everything would be all right. Now he moves within his actual limits. I know people often ask me, ‘Do you still have headaches?’ They think it's going to go away. When I say that I still have them, I feel as if I'm prolonging something that should have been finished by now. There is a tinge of something inside me that thinks I'm making it up, or why would they keep asking? The question seems to imply that my pain ought to have diminished by now, and it's unbelievable that headaches could last twenty years. Don't they know some things last for a lifetime? Perhaps we will each find out as we each enter old age and its accompanying diseases. I write this so that people who read it will understand me, and also to find self-acceptance. The fact is, I get at least one bad headache (lasting over twenty-four hours) a week, and if I push myself, I get headaches every day. Face it and move one step at a time. And I have to face the fact that the illness shapes how I read, how I chant, and especially how I write.

“I imagine a greater hero than myself overcoming the pain or being able to ignore it and serve through it. I just can't do that anymore. Instead, I find myself moving slowly on the wooded path or staying in a room where it's quiet, not even going to the temple every morning. And so it goes.

“This image came to mind: a lily has no thorns like the rose or horns like the ram. It is beautiful without giving others pain. Can I be like that? Give others the best? But I give them the pain of reality in my writing. At least let it be a sleek song and interesting and of ultimate value.

“WHAT KIND OF A POET

“What kind of Vaisnava poet
 is this who lives in North Ireland,
 doesn't stay in Vraja, Uttar Pradesh?
 What kind of blasphemer is this?
 Throw him out, some say.
 Others recognize my worth as
 I ardently, silently walk in the woods.
 I can live peacefully
 chanting the holy names and
 not see anyone and gain
 a good reputation and
 keep writing, keep reading,
 sometimes with others,
 from Prabhupada's purport on four kinds of men
 who don't surrender to God.
 I can also listen and listen to *Caitanya-caritamrta*
 regarding Ramananda Raya's talks
 This is what you get

if you ask me for a poem.

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Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name

pp.190-91

“10:50 A.M.

“The *japa* from 9:00-10:30, what is your estimation? It was better than it has been; I kept them going at a steady clip of 8.5 minutes. Didn’t get up to change my position and didn’t fall asleep. That is an accomplishment in itself. I was frequently aware that I should be hearing the Names, but it seems each time I try, I get quickly thrown off. It’s like wrestling with a giant—one of those *asuras* that Bhima used to take on. The two of them would fight every day for weeks, but Bhima could not tire out the demon.

“I am not Bhima, but I am armed with the *maha-mantra*. Sometimes I surrender a bit—put a good wrestling hold on the demon of my mind—but then he flexes his shoulders and throws off my full-nelson. Again. Anyway, I am willing to fight. I refuse to be defeated.

“Krsna, dear Lord, I cannot win You over in this way. If only I could get past all those thoughts—so many useless memories, and so many concerns for the present—if only I could get past them and surrender.”

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Every Day, Just Write, Volume 3: A Sojourn in Tapo-bhumi

pp. 331-32

“Don't wait. Remember that Hindu man in London who ran after the devotees carrying Londonisvara out of his house?

“Wait, I'll bring them to you in the right way.’

“No, they couldn't wait. In writing, words don't wait either. They are like *gopis* running out in the night to the sound of Krsna's flute. Their brothers and husbands call, ‘Stop!’

“No, we won't stop. We're going to Krsna. No one can stop me. I'm going to the Lord of the horizon, the darkish one.’

And they go.

and my words go

west and east in taxis

not stopping for

Thomas Wolfe

or cleverness or

bounce.

They want to be with Krsna.

“How brilliant the rhetoric, the arch-enemy, the faultfinding critic who scathes when I don't seem to make sense, when I just keep pressing the harrow down into the earth, hoping the words will catch me later.

“THINGS TO DO IN PURI

- 1.) Scratch yourself.
- 2.) Hail your face.
- 3.) Say goodbye to Kay Adams

- 4.) Say hello to Christ—can you face implications of his head with crown of thorns?
- 5.) Say hello to free writing and Peter London
- 6.) File your nails and a report.
- 7.) Think seriously about what to do with the remainder of your life—the boldest Krsna consciousness
- 8.) Think of a Godbrother's question about whether to do *bhajana* or constant preaching.
- 9.) Read Srila Prabhupada's books
- 10.) Check yourself with reference to Gaurakisora dasa Babaji
- 11.) Order books.
- 12.) Write poetry
- 13.) Fly your own plane
- 14.) Recall frogs, Basho's.
- 15.) Get ready to die.
- 16.) Answer letters.
- 17.) Pray.
- 18.) Say, 'Krsna, Krsna, Krsna'.
- 19.) Draw pics of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra.
- 20.) Draw pics of Radha-Krsna.
- 21.) Draw a pic of Lyndon B. Johnson.
- 21.) Ha-ha, your face in the mirror.
- 23.) Resolve to read no more books except Prabhupada's.
- 24.) Be pure, grave.
- 25.) Give up all else.

- 26.) Recall W.C.W.'s *Imaginations*
- 27.) Drop names.
- 28.) Get bitten by tiny gnats.
- 29.) Wave incense.
- 30.) Try to look good.
- 31.) Try to look bad.
- 32.) Believe it and recall the name of Navy aircraft carriers.
- 33.) Be crafty and dumb.
- 34.) Control your tongue.
- 35.) Behave.
- 36.) Be nice.
- 37.) Eat rice.
- 38.) Go to Siddha-bakula.
- 39.) Go to Tota-gopinatha.
- 40.) Go to Gambhira, but watch out for the tough guys. . . .”

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Every Day, Just Write, Volume 2: Search for the Authentic Self

pp. 242-43

“THINGS I NEVER MOURNED

- 1.) My father's innocence, his ignorance.
- 2.) Death of love in that family. Did it ever exist?

“Blessings I Forgot to Count

“I didn't forget to thank my guru for taking me as *sisya*, but say it at least three

times a day.”

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Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name

pp. 174-75

“I put Scotch tape on the corners of my valuable paperback books like *Harinama-cintamani* so they don't get dog-eared. Some books I cover with paper. These measures are means to achieve longevity. During the temporary existence, why let your books get dog-eared? The message of Bhaktivinoda Thakura is eternal and I am *sanatana* also, a servant of Krsna.

“God is eternal, and His instructions and followers are also eternal The more one glorifies Krsna, the more enthusiastic he becomes in glorifying, glorifying, glorifying. . . . this Hare Krsna *maha-mantra* can be chanted twenty-four hours daily, and one will still feel fresh and enthusiastic. . . . It is a spiritual sound that comes from the spiritual world.’ (*Teachings of Lord Kapila*, p. 208).

“Yes, you have millions and trillions of ‘miles’ to go before reaching the goal of direct service in Vraja. Life after life you can increase your greed. Chanting. So why not learn to chant as well as you can right now so that you will do better with it in the next life? It doesn't get lost from one life to the next. It's not like your bodily organs that finally break down until the soul has to move out of the body. Chanting can go with you to the next life. Learn how to cry for Krsna. You will be needing that ability

for the next life.”

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From Copper to Touchstone: Favorite Selections from Caitanya-caritamrta

p.138

“When Jagadananda’s name is mentioned, the Lord focuses only on him and does not address what Sanatana has proposed: that he return to Vrndavana. Lord Caitanya immediately refers to Jagadananda by an informal nickname, Jaga. Seeing this, Sanatana Gosvami says:

“I can now understand the fortunate position of Jagadananda. I can also understand my misfortune. No one in this world is as fortunate as Jagadananda. Sir, You are making Jagadananda drink the nectar of affectionate relationships, whereas by offering me honorable prayers, You are making me drink the bitter juice of *nimba* and *nisinda*.’ (Cc. *Antya* 4.162-63)

“Too much formality and honor offered in a relationship keeps a relationship distant. When Sanatana states this principle, the Lord becomes embarrassed.

“My dear Sanatana, please do not think that Jagadananda is more dear to Me than you. However, I cannot tolerate transgressions of the standard etiquette.’ (*Antya* 4.166)

“Disciples of the same spiritual master will naturally all have different relationships with him. We cannot intrude on anyone’s relationship with the guru, nor can we demand that our relationship be the same as the relationship he has with another person. We have to allow the spiritual master to express himself within a variety of relationships.

“Although one has affection for many persons, different types of ecstatic love awaken according to the nature of one's personal relationships.’ (Cc. *Antya* 4.171)

“Therefore, we should be confident of the relationship we have with the spiritual master, the service that we have, and the way that we are recognized for our service. We should always protect the individuality of that relationship without comparing it to other relationships.”

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Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name

pp.326-27

“Krsna’s power and attraction is greater than *maya*’s, so although it is not easy for the mind, we have to coax him, sometimes sternly, and preach to him about the wonderful effects that will come from hearing the holy name in faith. So *manah-siksa*, to instruct and pray to the mind is a central part of *japa*.

“One way to practice *manah-siksa* is to talk to the mind during *japa* (or at other times) and ask his full cooperation. We also have to ensure that the mind does not become absorbed in other things, either during the *japa* hour or during the day.

We have to protect our minds from mundane engagement. Then, if we become enough of a friend of our mind, we can become aware of our mental activity. We can become conscious. The mind will begin to signal to us: ‘Now I am thinking nonsense, now I am chewing the chewed. What are you going to do about it?’ When the mind gives that signal, then we can immediately preach to our minds: ‘Wake up! Hear the holy names!’ Therefore, dear friends, let's follow the previous *acaryas* and instruct our minds in a friendly way, always conscious of the goal we want to attain—attentive, devotional chanting.”

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Journal and Poems, Book 2 (July-December, 1985)

p.84

“I must be intent to experience real devotional service. That means intent to serve the Lord with love by serving His pure devotee and performing any ISKCON task as ordered.

“Disciples offer me obeisances. I want to be worthy. Many say it should not be done to the degree it is now.

“I say order me to renounce and I will be grateful to you. Order me to continue my present duties and I will be grateful. Give me the authorized direction, for I am a menial to Srila Prabhupada’s movement. My tendency may be whimsical. So I need your order, Vaisnava Godbrothers. I am recovering my health to follow that direction. I am an impressionable fool and a head-strong free thinker—from these dangerous tendencies I need protection. But if I place my life in your hands, direct me with intelligent compassion.

“By guru, *sastra*, and *sadhu* I know what I am supposed to do. There are choices, but Srila Prabhupada’s will must be done.

“Prahlada Maharaja said, ‘O my Lord, I am Your unmotivated servant, and You are my eternal master. There is no need of our being anything other than master and servant. You are naturally my master, and I am naturally Your servant. We have no other relationship.

“**Purport:** ‘... The real master commands, “You must do this,” and the real servant immediately obeys the order. Unless this relationship between the Supreme Lord and the subordinate living entity is established, there can be no real happiness.’ (*Bhag.* 7.10.6, verse and purport)”

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Every Day, Just Write, Volume 1: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life

pp.2-3

“5:00 A.M.

“Reading *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta* on Prabhupada’s disappearance. It is well written and contains plenty of quotes from those who were present. In those days I would never have dreamed of writing so freely and about myself as I do now. It’s another symptom of ‘craziness’ from being separated from him. We have nothing left to do but lament and push on, and we each do it in one way or another, while we all suffer from his lack of presence. Someone says, ‘Why lament? He’s right here with

you at all times.’ Others claim equally, ‘It’s not the same without him.’ *The Nectar of Devotion* describes how Mother Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja had differing attitudes toward Krsna's absence. Mother Yasoda constantly reprimanded Nanda Maharaja’s calm appearance in Krsna’s absence. She wanted him to do something to bring Him back. Nanda Maharaja asked, ‘Why are you acting crazy and disturbing my home? Can't you see that Krsna is right here?’ Both of them were right—He was there and He was not there.

“We should feel something, recall the spiritual master, tell others about him. I’m hoping today that my health will hold up so that I can do just that—go over to the temple, get through the liturgy of songs and worship, and then be able to speak my piece. I will not give the world’s greatest speech, I know, and the devotees who hear it will probably not change much. Each of them will still have to contend—the mothers with their children, the sick with their afflictions, the restless with their minds—with themselves. At least I will have made an attempt to glorify Srila Prabhupada. I can feel that much. I too, after speaking, will have to return to my day and its lack of intensity of love in service. Still, I’m not going to write myself off as a non-lover or as an offender. Rather, I’ll stay active and read about Prabhupada, or read his book, then write as I know how.

“In my talk I plan to mention that Prabhupada departed in a perfect way. He was in the perfect place, Vrndavana, surrounded by devotees chanting the holy names. He taught the perfect lesson of how to die; he was inspiring and instructive up until his last breath. Even after his disappearance he remains with us in our service in separation. In that way, he is open to everyone.

“It wasn’t easy for him or for us in 1977. Now we talk about it in a philosophical way, but then it was real raw suffering and grief. Crying, crying, our best friend and

guide was gone. Everyone felt it. Then the leaders moved in and to top positions, sincerely, but with some motive, no doubt. They were the chosen ones. I am bitter about it now, myself one of the leaders of those days. I'm gradually backing away from it so I don't commit more mistakes while sincerely trying to maintain and push on his movement. I am pushing on now with the pen and the typewriter, with 'wild mind' and honest, unrehearsed feeling.

"I want to find again what I actually think. I want to face doubts. This is the time to do these things because these are my last years. Be who you are and then improve. Hare Krsna."

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Every Day, Just Write, Volume 1: Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life

p. 110

3:36 A.M.

"Possible topics of a new book:

What it is to be a guru, how I feel about it.

Or a repeat: my relationship with Srila Prabhupada, tackled fresh each time in directed free-write sessions. I already wrote *My Relationship With Lord Krsna*, and I've reviewed the books I have read in my life. At the end of the month Baladeva will come and I will give most of my time to discussing memories with him. I have three weeks in which to shift gears if I want to.

"Whether or not I shift gears, the more important thing to me is to speak in my own voice. Sometimes I feel physically small (an *Alice in Wonderland* trick), and

that's me too. Beyond me, however, there are the modes of nature, especially the mode of goodness, which is the gateway to the *suddha-sattva*. That's me too, but I don't know it yet. Prabhupada is leading me toward that identity—I'm eternally his *sisya*—and I could write a book on that.

“Last night I told Syamananda that surrender means to give up things unfavorable to *bhakti*, but also to use things—good things and talents—in the Lord's service. Like your own voice. That's my surrender.”

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My Dear Lord Krsna, A Book of Prayers

pp. 144-45

“My dear Lord Krsna,

“I am writing to You on a rainy, gray Friday. We're reading *Brhad-bhagavatamrta*, and it's almost amusing how the cowherd boy Gopa-kumara travels to see You in Your different Visnu forms on different planets. He's initially ecstatically satisfied to associate with You in Your form as Jagannatha in Nilacala, as Upendra in Svargaloka, and then in Maharloka. But each time, for various reasons, he becomes dissatisfied and wants to be with You somewhere else, in another form and situation of worship. I am satisfied to worship You as Govinda in Vraja, in Your Deity form, and in accounts of Your pastimes in that form. But I do not have the fortune of Gopa-kumara to come so close to You and render direct service. In other words, I am fixed in my choice of You as Govinda, my *ishta-devata* (worshipable Deity), but I am far away from You in advanced, loving service.

“How can I get closer to You? By my desire. My desire will be

shown by my actions. As I preach on Your behalf, praise You, serve You in the nine processes of devotional service, You will show me Your mercy. I do desire to know You better. I want to think about You more, talk about You more, and gain greed to be with You. Gopa-kumara could gain Your audience on a particular planet just by desiring it and chanting his mantra in private. A chariot would appear before him and take him to the place of his desires. I chant, but no chariot comes. My desires are not so strong.

“I wish to make them stronger. All I can think of practically is to remain steady. I can't think of spectacular increase. By steady service, with time, I may improve . . .”

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Japa Transformations

pp. 154-55

“Please, Lord, let my
chanting improve. I
want these hours to be
my best.

“Please don't let old age or
sleepiness set in and ruin these
last-chance years. I yearn to
chant as I did when I was a
young man, passing the red
beads through my fingers.

“I pray for help in
attentive *japa* and will
try to do my part

“When you get attached to performance, then it’s not good. What is it I want? Worship . . . I want to chant better. I’m not ashamed to ask it again and again. You see, that’s performance-worry, when I think, ‘I have already written here that I want to improve my chanting. If I keep on repeating it, it will be tiresome to the reader.’ That’s nonsense. It’s important for me to keep saying it: ‘I want to improve, I want to improve. I want to chant better, and I think I can do it. I can improve. I just have to take the mind from where it is and bring it back to the hearing.’

“I rarely do that. Very rarely do I think, ‘This is Krsna, this is Radha.’ Rarely do I even hear it. I don’t know what I am doing.

“Overall, it’s not bad; you are a nice person and all that, but for real results, we’ll have to consult someone else. I mean we need a real guru, not you who can’t even chant. We appreciate your honesty about it, but we need to go to a higher stage of *hari-nama*.”

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

pp.38-40

“In Song Seven, the tone changes. A pure devotee enters the scene and rescues the poor sinner. ‘A wicked mind brought me into this world, O Lord, but one of Your

pure and elevated devotees has come to bring me out.’ This is not make-believe; it actually happens whenever the Lord's confidential servants contact the *jivas*. It is preaching. The pure devotees come to rescue the *jivas* from illusion and deliver them to Krsna. I know because it happened to me. All glories to the pure devotees who carry Krsna's message.

“A wicked mind brought me into this world, and a wayward and fickle mind will keep me in it. The pure devotee comes to save me. My spiritual master is a specific person, and I serve him specifically to please him. He's a preacher and a pure devotee of Krsna, my Prabhupada. He wants me to surrender and practice *bhakti* in my own life, and he wants me to do something to help others.

“ . . . After judging my sins, You should punish me, for I deserve 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 am 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* and *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 / arpilu tuwa pade nanda-kisora!*

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.

“If it is Your will that I be born again, then may it be in the home of Your devotee. . . . I yearn for the company of that devotee who is completely devoid of all desire for worldly enjoyment and liberation Father, mother, lover, son, Lord, preceptor, and husband—You are everything to me! O Lord of Radha, You are my life and soul!’

“I think by writing it will come. By reading and hearing and serving—but how long will it take? *Manasa deho geho jo kichu mor.*

“I wish I could claim these words for myself. I wish I could say that I have surrendered my *atma*, my very self, and all that I have to Krsna – my friend, my lover, my guru. Now He may do with me as He likes. Instead, what do I say? Taking precautions, I try to preserve my health.”

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Begging for the Nectar of the Holy Name

pp.304-5

April 23

2:05 AM

“I woke a little late, said prayers, and started *japa* a little late, so I rushed the

first six rounds. The sixth one was 6:25. Rushing is all right, but of course I am supposed to be praying and savoring and worshiping the holy name. I don't have anything to say about that. I am always dissatisfied and always eager to do more. Maybe I will overcome the worst and improve, but even when I do better, I realize that it still isn't much.

“One devotee I know who doubted the potency of the holy name (and who later gave up chanting) said he could not tell for certain whether his spiritual life was due to chanting or to something else, such as reading or God's grace. But we cannot refuse the main recommendation and Srila Prabhupada's specific quota of a mere sixteen rounds.

“One gain from this *japa-vrata* of three weeks is that I realize the insignificance of sixteen rounds. Srila Prabhupada said, ‘Sixteen rounds is nothing. My spiritual master used to say that unless one chants at least sixty-four rounds of *japa*, he is considered fallen (*patita*).’ So Srila Prabhupada has leniently reduced this to an unavoidable number.”

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Writing Sessions

May Apples

Stroudsburg, PA – Queens, NY – Philadelphia, PA (May 5-13, 1996)

Writing Session #4

3:44 P.M.

“Reading a little in the *Namamrta* with some feeling. And I think about taste. Could I discuss such a thing at lunch? Say, ‘You know our philosophy has all the answers. Steve Gelberg said to me he didn’t want pat answers to everything.’ Say I believe and accept and live in Krsna conscious teachings, but what do I feel? Or say I used to feel this more keenly and was more willing to tell the world with hopes of ‘converting’ them to Krsna consciousness, or at least I had faith that even if they didn’t join us and become devotees, people would become greatly benefited just to hear Hare Krsna chanting or to take *prasadam*. Where is that fervor? Gone with the old days of the Boston temple? Did it exist even then? I was always one who preferred to stay indoors and read.

“Reading C.K. Williams telling of cruelty and violence and lust. Puts it on the pages in his poems. Confesses, attests to it, all the details of the gory and horrible. I flinch from it. Yeah.

“Timid soul, they say, took to the Krsna consciousness movement (Religion) because it provided him Answers to all of the sufferings. He couldn’t handle it in the real world of lust and crime and injustice and competition.

“So, he opted for religion, like joining a monastery. Neither could he go the way of middle-class values; he’d rebelled from that so much in coming of age, getting out of his parents’ mode, U.S. Navy, and then the Lower East Side.

“What are you trying to say? I know worldly people, poets like C.K. Williams and so many others, see Krsna consciousness as a—

“Whatever.

“Here we are. Leave at 4:30 A.M. M. is waiting for a mechanic to come, and he’s got washers and bolts, big ones, and they’ll tighten the parts under the van. Hope that will be good enough until the company sends us new parts in the mail.

Sure hope we don't break down en route to New York City or Philly. It's my van, Steven Guarino; although I don't drive, I'm the owner.

"Don't want it that way, to be accountable. M. says don't worry, it will go all right. Whatever you own can get you into trouble but you need to have things.

"I write of the past, but the present too. Well, *May Apples* was my happy choice. I opened a dictionary at random and immediately turned right to the page where 'May apple' appeared.

"Those yellowish apples are edible but no one eats them. They grow along the banks of the Tuscarora Creek at Gita-nagari. I'm not there and can't be. They don't know why. It's because I can't be myself there; too much has changed. I have to move on but can always go back and visit.

"Hare Krsna
until you die. If Gour Govinda Swami can die, I can too. That's the logic. It's like saying, 'Socrates is mortal; Socrates is a man, therefore all men are mortal.' But Socrates said he was immortal. You know what I mean. Don't say 'die' then. Say as the *ISKCON World Review* did, 'ISKCON leader passing on.' Passes to where? That's unknown. But as that Swami passed on, you will too. He went suddenly while discussing Krsna's pastimes as Lord Jagannatha in Dvaraka. Clutched at his heart. Asked them to chant Hare Krsna. They did. In fifteen minutes, he was gone, in Mayapur, on the disappearance day of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

"You have a little story of bare facts too. Your father, it says on his death certificate, died of a heart attack in Philadelphia in 1989 (I think). Mother is now eighty-five. They were both twenty-nine years old when I was born on December 5, 1939.

“I was supposed to hear a Godbrother telling me what the astrologer said he was going through. I thought he was above that. He said, ‘Don’t trust anything Srila Prabhupada didn’t specifically tell us by 1977.’ Well, he didn’t teach astrology; only at the end of his life did he consult. And those predictions didn’t come true; they said he would live longer. I say don’t bother with it. Keep your resolve not to get a horoscope done. I’ve stopped listening to jazz, and no horoscope, no women dallying and no serious interest in Christianity or any writer. If only instead I could be ‘into’ prayer or *hari-nama*, or preaching *sankirtana*. At least I’ve got this writing.

“May apples. Crab apples. May fly. Tsetse fly. No, no kidding. They are May apples, seasonally raw woods’ herbage, not so pretty, a shy plant that hides its waxy white flowers under a broad waxy green leaf, and later that flower becomes the fruit. You know when they come, it’s full spring. May at Gita-nagari. But I’ll be in the cities mostly: NYC, Philly, and the suburbs of Baltimore and then Boston. Won’t see much of spring apples, but I’ll be thinking of them. And maybe when you see white blossoming trees. I know in the Philly suburbs, around Mt. Airy, it’s spectacular – pink blossoms in the trees of many yards, maybe in the temple yard too. All these years, Ravindra Svarupa and Saudamani there. I come and go,

slippers

shopping bags.

Pens, for writing and making doodle pictures.

The serious frown of Kevin of the USN, and others

And me on the road, seeking

protection, solitude, a room alone, and then I come out to lecture on Prabhupada and his teachings. Don’t let it all show when you lecture. Put on a bold front. It’s required. Advocate what Visvanatha Cakravarti does and what Srila Prabhupada

does and say, 'I have not realized this "fully," but I do follow it, and isn't it nice? Isn't this a beautiful truth to live by? Is it possible?'

"Let us hear it more, how chanting Hare Krsna can wash all dirty (material) things from one's heart and give you the original position of loving service to Krsna. Yeah, I can do it.

"(1/2 hour – afternoon, May 6, 1996, indoors at Samika Rsi's house, 50 degrees, rainy day)"