

Free Write Journal #157

August 20, 2021

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Free Writes

Revolution

Last night I suddenly had an opening, an inspiration to write again. I haven't been writing by hand for many months, and the books we're publishing were written over twenty years ago in Ireland and India. So I am very happy to present this "revolution" and pray that it is just a beginning of a return to regular free writing and poems.

Revolution

6:00 P.M. August 14th, 2021

Do you remember how to free-write?

Does the ink show through with

this Pilot pen?

I haven't written a poem in maybe five years.

Summer is coming to an end.

I only go outdoors for doctor's visits.

I see and hear and talk to devotees every day

on Zoom. We read aloud from Prabhupada's books.

This is the first free-writing session I've done

in a long time. I thought I was too old (81)—

shaky hand and leak-through pen—

handwriting illegible and too slow.

But I've made some adjustments

(new pen, accepting that I go slower).

I even wrote a second new poem to celebrate this occasion:

Look Ma, I'm making a poem.

I live at home. I'm staying

up late tonight to keep up my promise:

I still got juices to flow.

My oxygen is low but

I still can go down

the *bhakti-marga*. Keep

Radha and Krsna

in view, Prabhupada too.

I'm not dead yet.

Krsna's books I

still read and make

my report.

Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu's Vyasa-puja

I watched Ravindra Svarupa Prabhu's Vyasa-puja on Zoom. His disciples spoke sincere and *parampara* homages. Then Ravindra Svarupa spoke. He started by saying we are living in bad times, and he pointed out the COVID pandemic and the spreading of wildfires all over the world. Then he began into his main topic: the chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra in the Age of Kali. Although an apparently easy method of sacrifice to God, when one does so offenselessly, it can act as a panacea on the vices and violence of Kali-yuga. Ravindra Svarupa spoke of those pioneers who had a vision to spread Hare Krsna outside of India and make it a worldwide movement. He mentioned Bhaktivinoda Thakura, who wrote over 100 books and preached vigorously to congregations. His son, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, opened over 64 Krsna conscious centers or maths. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's prominent disciple A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami took the mission of his spiritual master outside of India at age 70 and in frail health. Yet Bhaktivedanta Swami's "Hare Krsna movement" met with great success. He initiated approximately 4000 devotees in eleven years and translated the main Vaisnava books into English with "Bhaktivedanta purports." Ravindra closed his talk by imploring his audience to dedicate themselves to continuing the mission and expanding on it throughout the entire world.

5:00 A.M.

I am in pneumonia. Your body is weak. You call for your assistants to help you pull on your pants after using the toilet. They push you in your carriage over to your lounge chair. Then you and Baladeva work on your *FWJ*, coming up first with some "rabbits" spontaneously picked out of hats, and then selecting excerpts from my books by the "Ouija board" method.

Next Out-Loud Book

In our out-loud reading we are hearing near the end of the long chapter "Prayers by the Vedas

Personified.” Thus we are almost finished with the *Krsna* book, which is the Tenth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. So the four of us voted for the next selection to be read. Three of the secret ballots came out for *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. This indicates our hunger for the basic book by Prabhupada and Krsna. *Bhagavad-gita* is frequently quoted in the purports to the *Bhagavatam* verses and in Prabhupada’s lectures. Prabhupada definitely uses it as his foundation scripture, and we want to show respect by hearing it repeatedly.

12:15 P.M., August 15th, 2021

I’m still here with my no-leakthrough pen. Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He says worship and service of His pure devotees is better than worship of Himself. He is called bhaktavatsala: when He sees someone favoring His *bhaktas* and *bhaktins*, He is most pleased. In *The Nectar of Devotion*, there is a list of twenty-six qualities of a devotee. When we practice them and separately always chant the names of Radha and Krsna, our lives become successful.

Killer Escaped

Here is heart. Aksobhya’s murderer
stabbed him with a knife when
he was trying to defend a devotee.

Too much blood poured
out and A. had to die.

The police were not
able to capture the killer.

He lived in college in
Hawaii and Kirtan Rasa

his surviving brother
 was a lawyer in the U.S.A.
 The culprit slipped away.

The Muslim Devotee

I was sent this story of a great Muslim devotee of Lord Jagannatha who appeared in the seventeenth century. He used to write intense devotional poems to Jagannatha. His name was Salabeg. He was the son of Lal Beg, who was deputed by the emperor to invade Orissa to desecrate the sanctity of the Jagannatha temple in Puri in order to undermine the faith and devotion of the devotees. Salabeg was gravely wounded on the battlefield. In a dream, his mother, Lalita, revealed she was from a *brahmana* family who worshiped Lord Gopinatha. In that dream, Krsna appeared to Salabeg and cured his wounds. In his dream Salabeg saw Krsna, who cured his mortal wounds. Salabeg then determined to dedicate his life to glorifying the merciful Lord Jagannatha. He kept up his active devotion to Lord Jagannatha despite being repeatedly rebuked, humiliated and ill-treated by the brahmana servants of Sri Mandir, who could not accept Salabeg because he was a convert from the Muslim religion. He articulated his grief in the form of sorrowful songs saturated with deference and submission and determination to attain the lotus feet of Lord Krsna in spite of his fallen position.

Book Publishing Update

We want to start serializing *Karttika Moon* (in its three parts) in the *Free Write Journal*. John wants to make a poster and give out business cards informing devotees how they can get SDGLegacy titles. I wanted to add to his poster, “FREE!” Krishna-bhajana and his wife Satyasara are doing the proofreading of the books, and Lal Krsna is creating the covers and doing the layout and design. I want to continue publishing “The Many Colors of Satsvarupa dasa Goswami” because I think it is a

very important book.

Nebulizer

When the visiting nurse came, she detected I had low oxygen levels. She prescribed that I use a nebulizer. It vaporizes medicine so you can breathe it into your lungs to help open them up. We don't have the medicine yet to put into the nebulizer, although the nebulizer was delivered yesterday. I am eager to try it out.

August 16, 2021

11:00 A.M.

Pneumonia and Parkinson's disease. I've got them both, treated by the doctors' medicines. But I am a spirit soul, above the modes of nature. Yet one of these days one of these diseases will get me—*janma mrtyu jara vyadi* (birth, death, disease and old age). Every man is mortal; Socrates is a man; Socrates is mortal. The Vedas say *aham brahmasmi*—I am eternal spirit soul. I do not die when the body dies. But do I transmigrate to another material body, or do I go to Krsna for eternity, bliss and knowledge? Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura urged his disciples not to come back to this world of miseries but to go directly in one lifetime back to the Lord's abode. Srila Prabhupada told us we could go back to Godhead if we chant Hare Krsna without offense, avoid the four sinful activities, and take part in the preaching mission according to our capacity.

Do you have the *laulyam* (intense greed to join Radha and Krsna in the spiritual world)? Will you be able to pray to your spiritual master, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, begging to serve him at the time of your death?

From Sweden

I received a letter from ISKCON Almvik (Jarna, Sweden). It contained all the signature of the devotees at that farm, headed by Smita Krsna Maharaja. They informed me that every morning after

mangala-arati they read a short sequential section from the *Prabhupada-lilamrta*. In this way they have gone through the book twice and are starting a third time. Their letter inspired me, and I hope it might be taken up by other temples in the world, group readings of the *Lilamrta* every day.

Vintage Photographs

I received two vintage photographs from a devotee who was long out of touch. He used to be a photographer, and one picture was of me taken in the garden at the Honolulu temple just when I was beginning to initiate. He wrote me a note and said, “When I first saw this picture, my reaction was ‘too stern.’” But he said he needs that mood so that someday my instructions will sink into his brain and let him understand “how to become the servant of the servant of the servant . . .”

Another picture he sent was me sitting at a low desk and smiling. They are both studies in “changing bodies,” since I have aged so much since they were taken. As an extra treat, he wrote a note on a copy of an original piece of Prabhupada’s stationery, titled “Abhay Charan De and Sons, Allahabad Branch.” On his stationery, Abhay Charan De lists some of the pharmaceutical products he sells: Manufacturers of pharmaceutical drugs, Absolut alcohol, ether sulfate (chloroform), inject tools, medicinal specialties, fine chemicals, surgical dressings and general toilet preparations.” These were the days when Prabhupada was flourishing as a pharmacist. But later Krsna diminished his business and forced him to take to full-time preaching of Krsna consciousness.

Disciples Speak Out

One disciple wrote me that her husband had lost faith in God, and this led to conflicts in the home. I wrote her back that she should not increase the conflicts in the name of “preaching” but try to lead a peaceful family life and not be a fanatic of book distribution. She wrote back, “Maintaining peace in my family life is now my first priority. She also wrote me that she has been turning in prayer to the Virgin Mary, who, to her, exemplifies the most humility and patience. I admitted that the

Virgin Mary had all good qualities, yet I mentioned that she should also take shelter in our own Vaisnava *sampradaya*. Krsna became the lover of Radharani and called Her His dearmost. But then He left Her, and She had to live in separation. She remained chaste to Her Lord and never deviated in Her love for Him. All the *gopis* of Krsna who were left by Him in separation also maintained their chastity and undying love for Him. Certainly the *gopis* must be considered topmost in their humility and patience.

While one disciple was complaining about her conflicts, another wrote me a letter filled with joy and love. This disciple has serious physical issues and is not appreciated by the other devotees. Yet based on a letter I wrote her saying I loved her and that she should take protection in Krsna, she wrote back full of happiness and the desire to follow my instructions.

Guyana Festival

I received a letter from the director of festivals for ISKCON Guyana. They have very ambitious plans for celebrating the 125th anniversary of Srila Prabhupada's appearance. They are producing a Vyasa-puja book just for Guyana, and they have asked me to make a written composition. I wrote one praising the devotees' enthusiasm, which they are keeping up after so many years of separation. I also agreed to take part in a live Zoom talk to be given on Prabhupada's birthday. I have not been able to travel to Guyana for years because of my illness, but I am encouraging them in their commendable enthusiasm as they are serving in separation from Srila Prabhupada.

Out-Loud Reading

In our out-loud reading we are coming to the end of the longest chapter in the *Krsna* book, "Prayers of the Vedas Personified." After hearing so many personal pastimes of Krsna and His associates, some devotees can't keep up interest in the technical philosophical discussion of prayers by the Vedas personified. It is very technical philosophy, mostly directed against the Mayavadis in

favor of the Vaisnava philosophy. If one reads it carefully and slowly, he or she will find it actually relishable. Every word in the *Bhagavatam* is said to be like immortal nectar, and we just have to slow down and pay attention to the prayers of the Vedas personified.

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From *A Poor Man Reads the Bhagavatam, Volume 1*

p.85

“I try to write even when someone comes into the room. Prabhupada did this too wherever he traveled. I’ll write a poem, and before lunch, I may go to the roof for a massage.

“There’s mouse stool on the rug. I am okay, avoiding the crunch of writing here, but then suddenly feeling grateful, absorbed, quick to kneel.



“He ain’t no scholar like those men preparing the *Sat Sandarbhas* in English or the painstaking overview of *The Nectar of Devotion*. Neither is he pounding wash by the river bank or singing in a nightclub. He’s our man south of Indore dancing “The Twist.”

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pp.86-87

“If someone has received this confidential knowledge, then he should serve others who are searching for relief from *samsara*’s miseries. ‘Here it is, that which you have been looking for but couldn’t find life after life. Here is the Lord you are seeking, the scripture, the hymn, the one work required.’

“When we speak of *atma*, the materialist doubts that it even exists. He recognizes only the body and the mind. We must affirm, therefore, the existence of our own self despite the detractors. Here’s an expression of this affirmation by a contemporary spiritual author:

“But how do we search for our soul, our God,
our inner voice? How do we find this treasure
hidden in our life? How do we connect to this
transforming and healing power?
The search and the relationship is
a lifetime’s work and there is help available,
but an important, perhaps essential part of this
process seems to involve ongoing, humble
acknowledgment of the soul’s existence and
integrity. Not just an intellectual recognition but
also a ritualistic, perhaps poetic,
gesture of acknowledgment: a respectful tribute.

“This do-it-yourself ceremony where the mind is on

its knees; a small ceremony of words which calls
 on the soul to come forward. This ritual known
 simply as prayer.’

“—*Common Prayer Collection*, by Michael Leunig”

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pp. 90-94

“Here comes Madhu back from market
 with the house servant.
 I look out from the *Bhagavatam*.
 Can’t understand
 Hindi. Shadow on page.
 Rest, rest. You’ll make it, Prabhu.
 Your questions will get answered and
 some not. Keep going until it stops.
 You don’t stop blood beat pulse
 until interrupted and you look up,
 ‘What?’ You are a civil boy
 caught in the act of
 private prose
 with a gnat on your hand.
 You were about to say
 when he entered
 I . . . I . . . and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, we
 form a good team, huh?

I was about to call myself
a cow when he opened the
door.”

“No milk tonight.

“That’s OK. I’ve got my book. It’s not outside *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

“In writing this book, I seek my true self and try to express it. I summarize each verse and purple it because I need to. It’s the rock, the anchor. Then I need to go beyond that act. I don’t claim my knowledge goes beyond Sriman Bhagavatam, but I trust you will understand my name. I have to express myself more, and more personally, after I have done the summary. The review of the purport doesn’t exhaust me. It barely gets me started.

“I realize I am not in love with the Absolute or the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, although I have a strong affinity for them and feel safe in their company. Therefore, I need to explore without shame who I am—this person who is not yet in love with Krsna. Why am I this way? I won’t swat at myself superficially with words while remaining untouched at heart. I need to keep speaking it out. That’s why the automatic writing and poems, the lists, and so on are worth employing. This is my personal book of discovery, and I hope it can be shared with others. Each of us is a person, in God. If I can help others in their search, this is how I will help them—by giving my whole self to the search and the continual act of expression. That’s why I’m grateful to Krsna for giving me such a long-term project to carry out where I can be myself as much as possible, yet not in a whimsical way. Rather, I’ll be speaking *Bhagavatam*, as a *sannyasi* should. Through self-expression, I also avoid cutting myself off from others.”

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pp.98-99

“A poet, Paul Celan, wrote:

“Death is a gang-boss *aus Deutsche* and his eye is blue
 He hits you with leaden bullets his aim is true
 there’s a man in this house your golden hair Margareta
 he sets his dogs on our trail he gives us a grave in the sky . . .’

“He sings this fugue over and over. I smear the ink by mistake with my left hand. Our “death fugue” is different because we know the purpose for which BHagavan appeared as the son of His devotees.

“I don’t get so deeply bothered by mice or flies or death, I claim, because the Lord is protecting me. Maybe I have not been so tested—tortured by Yamaraja’s associates—or I can’t recall it right now. I want to be a writer, but when the day’s work is done, I don’t live a death fugue, but Krsna consciousness through and through. We have the desire to come through death even as we cope and drive off mosquitoes and flies and other forms of torment Prabhupada assures us pervade life in this world. We sing a better song because we mold our lives according to Krsna’s fugue. We believe in the ultimate destination.

“We go out to shovel snow or tend to the barn, and while out there we get cold and hungry. Or we don’t have such manual duties, but we go out to walk a poets walk and we become just as cold and hungry. We want to return the fireplace of *krsna-katha*, the meal of Krsna *upadesa*, and the friendly companionship of Krsna’s

devotees. We must have this, so we try out our best to arrange for it. We are never far away from the Lord in book form, mantra form, even while we struggle to “create.” By His grace, ours is a thanksgiving fugue, not a call to death. But yes, that too--Krsna waits for us as Death.”

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From ***Japa Walks, Japa Talks***

pp.52-53

“I was out the gate this morning before 5 A.M. The metal gate was wet from the rain overnight, and the sky was covered with remnants of last night’s rainclouds. I’m feeling uneasy because of the little moths who dove into my candlelight while I was chanting *japa*. Now I have decided not to use votive candles in the summer anymore. It should have occurred to me earlier, before all these creatures had to sacrifice their lives. Of course, I can’t protect them from dying if it is their time, but I don’t have to turn out the lights and invite them into the flames just because I think the candles help me to concentrate. Whatever I gain in concentration I lose by the unintentional or half-intentional killing of other creatures. When this finally became clear to me, I tried chanting in the mood of seeking forgiveness, remembering how Ajamila was protected from sin by the holy name.”

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From ***The Twenty-Six Qualities of a Devotee***

pp. 88

“Sama”

“ . . . Seeing with equal vision, however, does not mean that we treat each person exactly the same. But our intention should be the same: to share Krsna consciousness with one and all. Lord Caitanya was able to engage even the jungle tigers, lions, and elephants in chanting Hare Krsna. This is not possible for us, but nevertheless, we can relate in a Krsna conscious way even to the animals. At least we need not kill them simply for our sense gratification. Especially we can approach the human beings— always seeing them as eternal servants of the Lord and relating to them in Krsna consciousness.

“In *The Nectar of Devotion*, Rupa Gosvami tells us how to relate to the Supreme Lord, the devotee, the innocent persons, and the demon. Each case is a matter of reciprocating in Krsna consciousness. We should worship and serve the Supreme Lord, the object of all devotional service. With the devotee we should be friends. With the innocent nondevotee we should use all facility to give him the gift of Krsna consciousness. And with the devout atheist we should leave him to his own devices, to be dealt with by Krsna according to the law of karma. Sometimes, however, the dedicated and empowered devotees reach even the stone-like hearts of the avowed atheists through distribution of the Lord's mercy as *prasadam*, *kirtana*, and Krsna conscious literature.”

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From ***Prabhupada Appreciation***

pp.42-43

“APPRECIATING CONTROVERSIAL TEACHINGS”

“Actually, the universe is *acintya*, inconceivable; certain Krsna and the activities of the spiritual world are inconceivable. According to the *Mahabharata*, inconceivable

subject matter is not debatable. Even scientists accept that there is little sense in arguing about the qualities or functions of inconceivable nature.

Krsna consciousness is simple for those who are simple and difficult for the crooked. When we hear descriptions of the inconceivable Lord and His inconceivable pastimes, we may think, ‘I don’t understand all of this. Perhaps by Krsna’s grace, it will one day be revealed to me, if He desires. In any case, let me love this inconceivable Lord and serve His devotees.’ As we practice *bhakti-yoga* our faith will grow and our understanding will increase. The crooked heart will think that Krsna’s pastimes are impossible. And for him, they will remain so.

“Simple devotees are actually more intelligent than the scientists because they have understood the main point: ‘I am lower than the grass on the street.’ Thus, they repose their love, faith and trust in the source of knowledge, understanding that without the Lord’s mercy, they can never see beyond the curtain of the three modes of material nature to understand the mysteries of Krsna’s energy. That is real intelligence, as taught by Srila Prabhupada.”

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From ***Forgetting the Audience***

pp.191-92

“Writing as an art or craft. Writing practice is also ‘practice’ in the simple sense of the word—‘to do repeatedly in order to learn or become proficient.’ Someone may ask, ‘This is your writing practice, but shouldn’t the final performance be different, without mistakes and with more of a structure than your practice?’ Yes. But the final product is made of practice also. The two—practice and final performance—become closer in nature.

“Practice also means ‘to put knowledge into practice.’ Qualification as a doctor or lawyer is not enough. You also have to practice. A writer is always practicing. Some of the products of his practicing may be published. It is in publishing that a writer distinguishes his exercises or repetitive drills from his finished work. The difference is achieved by editing and selecting from his inspired writings—all of which come in his practice of writing—and using the best for published works.

The synonyms to practice, such as ‘exercise’ and ‘drill,’ imply a more formal discipline or training.

“Practice is action. You do it repeatedly. A person heard John Coltrane’s record, ‘My Favorite Things’ and said despairingly, ‘Sounds like he’s practicing.’ They could only hear a random, apparently undisciplined playing of notes. They wanted an ordered recognizable melody. Coltrane, or any jazz musician, is more interested in improvisation. The artist practices to attain spontaneity. He attains a proficiency where he can always be himself.

“Perfection is when you write spontaneously in the course of your constant practice and it comes out in a deft way ready to publish. My aim is to practice as much as possible and select from some of it. This is better, I find, than adapting a stricken mentality, ‘Now I am not practicing. This is the real performance. Now it has to come out just right.’ Why should the real thing be so divorced from what you constantly practice? Rather by frequent practice, you will more often attain your best expressions. The distinction will disappear. Your private performance and public performance will be the same. Leave it up to editors what they think should be published and what should remain unpublished.”

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

pp.12-13

“I was thinking about this writing this morning. I made a resolution to keep writing, but I realized that at any moment, my peace and ease could be violently torn away. I felt this in a small way today while walking and listening to tapes. I made a gesture with my hand and it caught the wire that leads to the Walkman. Suddenly the earplugs were jerked out of my ears. It didn't hurt, but it was sudden, accidental—the sound was gone. It produced a mental shock as I humbly returned the earplugs to my ears.

“That was just a small inconvenience—not even serious—but with the same suddenness, I could lose my life. I try to write with that in mind. Every moment is special, and when you pass the fifty-year mark, every moment becomes more precious. I still haven't been able to write a profound epic, but at least I am able to stop and breathe prayers and to remind myself that I am writing as one who is about to die for those who are also about to die. Don't waste time. We are all looking for earnestness. We are all looking for that feeling that will connect us to Krsna.”

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From ***From Copper to Touchstone: Favorite Selections from the Caitanya-caritamrta***

pp.230-31

“THE BEST OF ALL DEVOTEES”

“Ramananda Raya then described that among the *gopis*, the love of 8rimati Radharani for Krsna is topmost. To support this, he quoted two *slokas* from authorized

scriptures. They both explicitly declare that Srimati Radharani is the best of all the *gopis*. The first is from the *Padma Purana*:

“Just as Srimati Radharani is most dear to Sri Krsna, Her bathing place known as Radha-kunda is also dear to Him. Among all the *gopis*, Srimati Radharani is supermost and very dear to Lord Krsna.’ (*Padma Purana*, also in *Laghu-bhagavatamrta* 2.45)

“Ramananda Raya also quoted from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* the one verse in which the name of Srimati Radharani is mentioned, although in a concealed way:

“*anayaradhito nunam*
bhagavan harir isvarah
yan no vihdyā govindah
prito yam anayad rahah

“When the *gopis* began to talk among themselves, they said, “Dear friends, the *gopi* who has been taken away by Krsna to a secluded place must have worshiped the Lord more than anyone else.” (*Bhag.* 10.30.28, as quoted in *Cc., Madhya* 8.100)

“Srila Prabhupada informed his disciples of the preeminence of Srimati Radharani as early as 1966. I can remember on Radhastami of that year, Srila Prabhupada told us, ‘Srimati Radharani is the best of all the devotees. That is because She loves Krsna the most.’ In those two statements, Srila Prabhupada summed up the confidential topic of *radha-prema* in a way that we could appreciate.

“The subject of Radha and Krsna’s loving affairs is very confidential, which is indicated by the fact that it is mentioned only indirectly in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself did not write down any of these topics. He empowered Rupa Gosvami to reveal to the world the actual glories of Srimati Radharani and Her service. By the Lord’s mercy, Ramananda Raya also revealed something about Radha’s devotion in his talks with Lord Caitanya.”

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From *The Qualities of Sri Krsna*

p.129-30

“53. Ever Fresh”

“Krsna is always remembered, and His name is always chanted by millions of devotees, but the devotees never become saturated. . . . Therefore Kona is ever fresh.”
(NOD, Chap. 21, p. 185)

As stated in the *Brahma-samhita*, Lord Krsna is the Absolute Truth, He has no cause, He is the oldest, yet He is *nava-yauvanam*, always a fresh youth. Krsna’s knowledge is also always fresh, as exemplified by the eternal nature of the *Bhagavad-gita*. Neophyte devotees may become jaded in their routine practices of worship, but we should always acknowledge that this is our own fault. When genuinely performed, devotional service brings joy and new insights at every moment. We need to go deeper and to remove *anarthas*, and then we will never think devotional service is stale.

“The *gopis* of Vraja are blessed with *purva-raga*. This is the stage of loving Krsna before actually meeting with Him. It is the freshest stage, where Srimati Radharani hears Krsna's name, hears His flute, and sees His form for the first time. She becomes enchanted by Her beloved and forgets all other duties. This *purva-raga* continues even

after many meetings with Krsna. The *gopis* may be with Krsna all night, but by the next day feel as if they have never met Him. Thus they are always eager to go to Him. ‘Most of the girlfriends of Krsna were married, but because Krsna was their friend before their marriages, they could not forget His attractive features, which were always fascinating to them, even after their marriages.’ (*NOD*, Chap. 22, p. 185)

“Let us pray to attain the quality of ever fresh appreciation for Krsna. The world of *maya* presents many obstacles to Krsna consciousness, but when we can taste the sweetness of *harinama* as ever fresh, as always revealing more to us, then we will be able to overcome all obstacles.

“I do believe Krsna is ever fresh, but whether I believe it or not, my realization is small. Never mind. I must go forward by hearing from the *acaryas*. I will one day get a glimpse of Krsna in His unlimited qualities.”

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From ***Vandanam: A Krsna Conscious Handbook on Prayer***

pp.74-75

“What would be the most pleasing prayer to Lord Krsna? And what is the most pleasing prayer to Prabhupada?

“Again, we can learn this from them. They have phrased it in various ways, but the essence of the best prayer is, ‘Please let me love you. Please give me the strength to serve you.’

“O energy of the Lord, O Lord, please pick me up and engage me in Your service.’
‘Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.’

“Lord Krsna says, ‘Surrender to Me.’ As Krsna's pure devotee, Prabhupada is

most pleased when he sees us surrender to Krsna. Prabhupada was once asked, ‘What would please you the most?’ He replied, ‘If you love Krsna.’”

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From *Srila Prabhupada Samadhi Diary*

pp.19-20

September 15

Prabhupada's Room

“It’s hard to have the privacy here for prayer. Even my own secretary gets in the way. He says, ‘There’s a bead bag that you can put on Prabhupada.’ And two *matajis* stand in front of Prabhupada’s door and bow down to me.

“I can’t go back to those days and don’t want to exactly. I want to know you now, Srila Prabhupada. Do I dare? I’m afraid of you and what you might say, what you might order me to do. (I hear the click of a camera behind me. Just see, Satsvarupa is sitting alone with Srila Prabhupada.)

“I cannot expect to live in a vacuum with him, and I cannot disown disciples I have accepted on Srila Prabhupada’s order. It was in this room that he said, ‘They will be our disciples.’

“Prabhupada wants us to live and give all our energy to his movement. Srila Prabhupada was progressive. Time has moved on from November 14, 1977 to September 15, 1993, and it will continue to go on. I can’t (don’t want to) create a dream that I’m alone in his room and he’s here, and that Madhu doesn’t exist and that the ISKCON devotees are not gathered in the temple listening to Brajabihari’s morning announcements. But I do want to go deeper in my relationship with Prabhupada. Yesterday I prayed at Govardhana. I repeat that prayer privately to Prabhupada now.

“The letter on Srila Prabhupada's desk today is that long one to Yadunandana (Boston, April 13, 1968), answering his many philosophical questions. I wrote about that letter in my memoir.

“I want to come closer to you, Srila Prabhupada, in all your aspects—as you taught in 1968, as you lived in India, as you were in this room in 1975, then in 1979, in 1993, as you are in your *nitya-lila pravista*. I can know you by service, beginning with hearing from you.”

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

pp.46-47

“5:45 A.M.

“I complain, but let's remember that even shadow chanting brings freedom from sins and all miseries. Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings, ‘O Holy Name, from the very moment You first appear on the horizon of the heart, the darkness of this material world is almost totally devoured.’ (*Gitavali, ‘Sri Namastaka,’* Song 3, verse 3, *Bhaktivinoda Thakura Songbook*, p. 105).

“I don't know exactly where I am situated, whether in *namaparadha* or *namabhasa* or both or in-between them. I know I am not in *suddha-nama*. There are offenses in my chanting. But the holy name has carried me out of the worst darkness. That has already been done by uttering sincere Hare Krsna mantras under the powerful guidance of Srila Prabhupada.

“It is not wrong for me to be distressed that after twenty-five years of practice, I cannot control my mind and cannot bring the Name into my heart. My heart is steel-framed.

“The second offense in chanting is to consider the names of the demigods like Lord Brahma or Lord Siva to be equal to or independent of the holy name of Lord Visnu. In one sense, this seems like an offense that is relevant only to Hindus and not to me, but there are other ways to consider this offense. For example, Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that mayavada thought is offensive under the second offense in chanting. If we think that ultimately, the Absolute Truth is formless and that Krsna's pastimes are just illusion, then we are offensive. Any consideration that the name is different than Krsna is *namaparadha*.”

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From ***The Story of My Life, Volume 2***

pp.155-56

“Madhurya-lila quoted *The Nectar of Devotion*, in which it is stated that particular propensities are not just material but are spiritual tastes.

“I’m grateful to the devotees for speaking in this way. I have faith in the integrity of this approach, and I know that Krsna is fully capable of stepping in and changing our service if He wants. I don’t want to think that after 30 years of service I have no idea how to please Krsna. I want to go on doing what I’m doing, but at the same time ask Him to help me improve, go deeper, become pure, and so on.

Go to Vrndavana in a humble mood and pray to Krsna. He can do anything, though it may not be what you think is going to happen.

“Digression update: While dictating this autobiography, Baladeva remarked (regarding the preceding section) that I seem to be ‘obsessing’ on this particular point—wanting to serve with my best intelligence, and that this is the best way to surrender. Why do I feel guilty about it? Why the uncertainty? Why the constant

analysis? It may be that on this point I have faced so much resistance from the managers in ISKCON that I feel the need to defend myself, and even to justify myself, to myself. I always come out in favor of doing what I'm doing, but I still can't seem to stop reassessing my approach over and over again.

“Baladeva reminds me that he asked the same question while I was living in California: Why am I always defending myself? Apparently, this is what I said: ‘If I don't defend myself, who will?’ Is this just a manifestation of the material tendency? Eating, sleeping, mating, and defending? I have visited and revisited this discussion in my books so often that my readers may be disturbed by it. They may doubt me, wondering why I don't just come to a conclusion and drop the subject once and for all.

“But, on the other hand, it's not a bad idea to occasionally reassess your position in devotional service.”

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From ***Here Is Srila Prabhupada***

pp.45-46

“I have chosen to love Srila Prabhupada. It is a commitment I will always honor, and I have sealed that commitment at my initiation. We have a contract of love now. Although my love for Srila Prabhupada may not yet be free of any material tinge, he is patient. And Prabhupada himself has placed conditions on his love for his disciples. He expects them to follow him. Although he will still love a disobedient disciple, his love will not reach a disciple who rebels or disobeys his order and who blasphemes guru and Krsna. The relationship between guru and disciple is meant to be based on honor.

“I have heard people say that this "condition" Prabhupada places on his love for us is not much different than the conditions some of our parents placed on us to win

their love. Many people have been hurt by parents who sold their love for high grades in school or conformity to family rules, etc. There was no chance for people who grew up in these families to develop themselves as individuals or to feel self-worth despite their failings to meet their parents' standards. They grew up only with conditions and have no experience of real love. Is Prabhupada's love for us like that? Is it a lesser kind of love because he places on it the condition of our obedience?

“No, Prabhupada will accept a fallen disciple. He does not reject anyone who fails to follow his standards. What he expects from his disciples is to maintain our honor. We have to try, and we have to be faithful to him, even if we do not always succeed. He wants at least that much reciprocation for the great gift he is giving us. Neither is his motivation for setting these standards based on false ego, as our parents' motivations were. Following the spiritual master is best for us. We have to follow the spiritual master in order to learn to love Krsna. And this is the gift he so much wants to share with us, but he knows we have to be qualified first.

“Prabhupada's conditions are not the same as so many mundane performance requirements. They are purely spiritual. Neither does he distinguish between race or sex or religion, he doesn't ask for money, and although he loves all living entities (he is *mahatma*, great-hearted), he feels a special obligation to guide and nurture those who surrender and seek shelter from him as his disciples. It is a case of "if you love me, then I'll love you.’

“The pure devotee loves us in a much greater proportion than we can love him. We are simply beggars. All he is asking in return for his gift of Krsna consciousness is our sincerity.”

From *The Wild Garden: Collected Writings 1990-1993*

pp.92-93

“The beauty of a snowy, gray dawn is not to be put into words. No matter what I'm going through, whether my life is sorrow or I feel I am being tested, I feel uplifted by the natural beauty of a wintry scene. Of course, it's not only the beautiful scenery, but the satisfaction I feel when I am absorbed in a Krsna conscious project. The project makes me satisfied and the natural beauty soothes me. I like to walk in the cold of gray dawns and feel the beauty of winter snowscapes.

“But where is Vraja in this snow? Not here, that's true. Still, I feel in my bones, in my being, that walking in the snow alone is connected. The snowfall evokes an almost ideal solitude in which to think about Vrndavana.

“I have letters from devotees in Vrndavana—certainly I plan to return—and the work I'm doing now is connected to Vraja. I am reading Prabhupada's *Caitanya-caritamrta*, and wherever he is, that is Vrndavana. But somehow I'm here and it's connected.”

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pp. 295-96

“Prayer #15”

“O tender as a rose Lord who was as hard as Indra's thunderbolt when You killed the Kesi demon; O Lord who may laugh at us; O Lord of English and French and Hindi—why this babble of confused tongues? O Lord who is not to blame but who is sorry when the jivas torture each other. O Lord who comes to tell us, ‘Come back to God and quit this place,’ O Lord, how hard is it to get back to You?

“O Lord above all and in our hearts, I pray to transcend mechanical prayer. Why am I so afraid to be open with You? Please free me.

“O Lord with the peacock feather in Your hair, You like Your devotees who have unalloyed love for You. The tainted ones are like merchants praying for profit and liberation.

“O Lord who likes nonenvious devotees, we pray for the day when we can become free of envy. May we be confident of Your love and our place at Your lotus feet.”

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From ***My Dear Lord Krsna, A Book of Prayers, Volume 2***

pp.64-65

“Coming to You is like a little sparrow coming to the ocean and trying to empty it drop by drop to get back her eggs. Only when Garuda came to her aid did the ocean yield. You are more vast than any ocean, and I don’t know where to begin to address You. The best place is to start with Your pure devotee and the knowledge that You are especially inclined to your devotee. Prabhupada writes that we should be addicted to hearing about You, just as a person is addicted to intoxicants.

“I am reading of how you spoke to Dhruva Maharaja after he finished his prayers. You were awarded him the pole star as residence, a spiritual planet that would never be annihilated. After You left Dhruva, he felt morose because after obtaining the rare gift of serving You, he had asked for material things. A pure devotee never asks anything in return for his service, but You made an exceptional case with Dhruva Maharaja and awarded him both the highest material opulence and personal liberation.

“I hope my prayers are not materially tinged. Is it wrong to try to speak to You and assume I can do it, address You in personal words? Am I seeking something

selfish? Please let it not be so,. Let these prayers be simple attempts by a tiny, aspiring devotee to come into Your presence and be with his God. I do not want material fame or gain, I only want to express myself to You and share with my friends a genuine worship of You. I know You are present for the touching, and I eagerly desire to reach You. I should not think I will run out of words or that You will deny me.”

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Writing Sessions

From *Dublin Pieces (June 1996)*

“*Dublin Pieces (conclusion)*”

“#13)

Write true, that’s your discipline. Admit that you didn’t feel like getting up at midnight or writing here, and you know the quality of the writing won’t be deep or entertaining. And the prospects for July could be diminishing returns. All right, so what if I wind down? Everything comes from Krsna. It’s up to Him, but you have to keep trying. Yes, don’t manufacture or concoct but lay down some lines. A devotee writes with the permission of high authorities.

“The Cc. describes Lord Caitanya saying farewell to the Vaisnavas from Bengal after they’d visited Him in Jagannatha Puri for the first time. To each one He spoke to, He had something significant to say. He respectfully asked Advaita Acarya to distribute Krsna consciousness even to the *candalas*. He asked Lord Nityananda to give Krsna consciousness to the people of Bengal. He advised Srivasa Pandita to hold congregational *kirtana*. He sent some Jagannatha *prasadam* and remnants to His mother. He commended devotees for their various services.

“You’d better do the best you can. Write a sonnet, write a bonnet. Fall at the feet of your masters and say, ‘Please direct me.’

“When the residents of Kulina-grama came before the Lord, they had some questions: ‘How may we serve You?’ A devotee here asked me, ‘I am trying now to be more conscious, more Krsna conscious. Unfortunately, all my realizations are part-time. How can I make these realizations more than fads or passing phases?’

“I replied, ‘I don’t have any permanent remedy by which, once and for all, you feel a gain and never slip from it. But we need not expect that. Every day dust accumulates in the housewife’s room and every day she cleans it. Leaves and debris and even animal stool accumulate in her front yard, and she brushes them away with a broom. Every day – every moment – we clean our hearts from accumulating dirt (*ceto-darpana marjanam*). You may record sometimes in a journal at a time you feel particularly elated, and you’ll have proof of it later. And we read in the scriptures of those who are permanently on such a faultless level – and this inspires us. The fact that we do have to struggle spiritually every day may be used favorably. You can’t be mechanical. You must put your best effort into seeking shelter of *hari-nama* and service – or else you’ll drown in the modes so prevalent in Dublin.’

“Painfully face it. Try to call out. There must be love in life surely, if Krsna is to be pleased and we ourselves pleased. ‘Do it anyway,’ one *sannyasi* told a young devotee who said that daily reading was a chore. Do your chore and it will get better eventually. But is everything just a daily chore? Are the advanced, senior devotees feeling some bliss and realization? What is the hope for me?

“The Lord in the heart gives intelligence, inconceivably and imperceptibly. American Friends (the Quakers) depend on this very much. They get together in silence and speak if God moves them. God is in the heart. We don’t trust entirely in this

process; we have gurus and Krsna. But the Lord in the heart also. Srila Prabhupada commended us to go ahead; Krsna will give you intelligence. You can't figure Him out on your own.

“Lord Caitanya said that sometimes when His mother cried for Him, He would go there unseen and eat the food she had prepared. He said she realizes this internally but doubts it externally. So internally I also go on writing this way with confidence and devotion (*tusyanti ca ramanti ca*). I write a lot how I doubt it, but even then, I argue, ‘It’s okay, this is my preaching.’ I think Krsna is giving me intelligence like this. *Bhagavad-gita*, Chapter 1, Verses 10 and 11 confirm this.

“Therefore, in defense you don’t want to put down other leaders and preachers. They may have their ways and they are receiving confirmation from guru and Krsna and so are you.

“*Prana* means life force. A devotee feels Krsna is his life and soul. Radha-Krsna. The Lord guides me. Krsna’s flute I hear. The *mrdanga* I like to hear. I honor *prasadam*. Life is an adventure in Krsna consciousness. Don’t be dead to it, see Krsna’s hand at work.

“Lord, I wish to write this way and my particular service is to write and demonstrate the triumph of the *bhakti* process for me. All glories to Lord Caitanya and Krsnadasa Kaviraja, the author.

“Thank the Lord for giving us this chanting process. Chant now and hear. You don’t have to think, but if you can that is nice. Call out His names. All glories to the Lord of the universe. All glories to Sri Krsna. *Nama, Nama*, I wish to serve you. It may feel dry to me, but I chant, chant. There is no other way, chant Hare Krsna. Chant Hare Krsna. Where is the best place to live, the best thing to do? It is to serve and chant and tell others about this process and how it works.

“You do it and tell others.

“Then you surmount Dublin. You may get some ideas from these books you purchased from the bookstore and put it in your own. Do something very nice for Krsna. Sometimes something special, a little different, otherwise be content to follow the process and that means travel notes, diary, spiritual self-help, no pretension. Enter the date and time and say, ‘Here I am, mercy’s here too and my soul now feels better and cleared of most recently accumulated dross.’”

(June 27, 1996, morning, Dublin flat)

“#14

“Dream images: two Godbrothers are talking, and I’m directly behind them. They are talking of printers. The one sees me, turns and says, ‘The fallout.’ That’s me. Means what? One who fell out of the GBC? Then he looks like a cool dude, with beard and stylish turtleneck sweater. I hesitate to remark. Maybe he’s not aware.

“Then I’m walking – like in a procession with devotees. I start singing the finale of *West Side Story*, ‘There’s a place for us.’ Eventually I hear a girl disciple singing it. It will become a Satsvarupa thing, symbolic for going back to Godhead with guru:

“There’s a place for us

I know

a place somewhere

hold my hand and I’ll take you there...

“When I hear the girl singing it, I switch to something stinky, like from Looney Tunes cartoons.

“You can’t make this up. Mixture of devotees in my room. Which is my room? I thought they ought to put nice things in it for my homecoming. People love me and treat me right. I look out the window, many stories down, and see an anxious, and see a female disciple. She prepared for my arrival, but doesn’t even know if I’m in the building yet. Suddenly, another *sannyasi* Godbrother wakes up in the bed in my room. I think, ‘Are they preparing lunch for the others who are here with me?’ Won’t you prefer to be alone?”

“Hey, fallout, where ya been?”

I’ve been around, Angel.

Dig in.

“Yeah, dig me. I’ve got wind chimes in the background and I have glass tuning forks in my hands to make sweet sounds. Are you wondering what my actual service is? I’ll tell you.

“It’s a dream scheme

a chick is hatched

I write books in Krsna consciousness

as good as...

“Blip and wake up here, we are where? Dublin. Really? Scores of dreams wash over the bridge canal Liffey.

“He said the lough where I live connects to here. Good enough. I’ve got a *caitya-guru* lecture ready to go.

“‘Bacon and eggs for the guy in front and for the Hare Krsnas, nothing at all. They just come in here to chant hello.’ In this post-war communalism.”

“(June 27, 1996, Dublin flat)”