

Free Write Journal #161

September 17, 2021

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Free Writes

Radharani's Qualities

She is sweetness personified.

She is a fresh young girl.

She is transcendently cunning.

Her eyes are always moving.

She is expert in the art of singing.

She is always respectful.

She is always affectionate.

She can give shelter to all kinds of devotees.

She knows how to dress nicely.

She can speak very nicely and sweetly.

She is always brightly smiling.

She is expert in presenting feminine attractions.

She is the greatest among Krsna's girlfriends.

She is always shy.

She always keeps Krsna under Her control.

She is enjoyed by Krsna.

She can agitate Krsna by the flavor of Her person . . .

There are two arches of flowers over Their heads.

Radhastami

Our Radhastami observance was a success. It was a joy to see Bala attending although he's ill. Haridasa from Guyana came by. He stayed in another room because he had a cold, but he played the *mrdanga* and led a *kirtana* and *arati*. The "Radha-red" chutney was a little too spicy for me, but everyone else seemed to enjoy it. My favorite preparation was a scoop of moist blueberry *halava* with whipped cream. After finishing the Fourth Chapter of *Caitanya-caritamrta*, "The Confidential Reasons for the Lord's Descent," the next chapter was about Lord Caitanya and Nityananda. So I thought the best thing to do was to go back to the Fourth Chapter, which is all about Radharani, and read it again. So we did that, and it was just as fresh, or even better and clearer, than when we read it the first time. All the components for a grand festival were there—*kirtana*, reading about Radharani from the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, decorated altars, and Gaura-Nitai in new clothes and with a fountain. It was small in attendance, but it was satisfying and complete. That's how we celebrated our Radhastami.

Jayadvaita Swami

Jayadvaita Swami called today and said he's coming next Tuesday for a visit. He is a dear friend. He'll be staying across the street in the "swami room," and so we'll both have privacy and space to recover from our different ailments.

Shopping for Jayadvaita Maharaja

Baladeva has gone to the market to buy things for Jayadvaita Maharaja's visit. The main

purchase is apples. Sraddha even said the main reason he comes here is to get good applesauce. Where we live is the apple country, and you can get fresh apples off the trees. Jayadvaita likes to take applesauce mixed with saffron, cardamom, salt, pepper, lemon, cinnamon and ginger. Baladeva says he knows the ingredients Maharaja likes in his applesauces, but he doesn't remember the doses of each, so we'll have to wing it.

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For our conversation with Jayadvaita Swami, we have no agenda planned. We enjoy each other's company and feel free to talk about anything, but we try to steer it towards Krsna. Bhakti Rasa remarked to me that he heard Jayadvaita Swami was writing a book about Krsna consciousness and a book from the *Old Testament*. I told him that book was already written, published and sold out. It is *Vanity Karma* and is a researched study of the *Old Testament* book *Ecclesiastes*. I don't think JS is planning another book, and certainly not one on the *Old Testament*. Jayadvaita Maharaja knows I'm recovering from pneumonia. He also recently had a bout with the same disease, and he said pneumonia is such a thing that once you get it, you don't always come back in health full strength. We're both experiencing the same thing. So he indicated we would go easy on each other in our intense conversations.

Advance Copy

An advance copy of my book *The Best I Could Do* arrived in the mail. It's a great relief for me. Now I know that the book will be ready—with all the copies on time—for distribution at my Vyasa-puja observation on December 4th. On receiving a new book from the printer, Prabhupada said, "I feel like I have conquered an empire." I say, "Little drops of water wear away the stone."

Out-Loud Reading

In our out-loud reading, we are beginning to hear the opening verses of *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami states:

“The first fourteen verses, therefore, offer auspicious invocations and describe the supreme truth. I offer my obeisances unto all my Vaisnava readers as I begin to explain the intricacies of all these verses. I request all my Vaisnava readers to read and hear with rapt attention this narration of Sri Krsna Caitanya as inculcated in the revealed scriptures.”

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We are hearing Chapter Four of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*, “The Confidential Reasons for the Lord’s Appearance.” Krsna has two ways of reciprocating with His conjugal lovers. One, called *svakiya rasa*, is His reciprocation with His 16, 108 official wives, the queens who live with Him in Dvaraka. To fulfill their hearts’ desires, Krsna expands Himself into 16,108 forms and manifests 16,108 palaces to enjoy with each of them as their Husband in the transcendental wedded bliss of household life. The other kind of conjugal love is even higher than *svakiya* and is called *parakiya*. This refers to Krsna’s loving affairs with the *gopis* of Vrndavana, which are done outside of social and religious codes. *Parakiya rasa* is considered the most high because it is the most enthusiastic, involving risk as He sports with the women who are married to other men. *Parakiya rasa* is most abominable in the material world, but in the spiritual world it is free of any taint of sex desire. Krsna and the *parakiya gopis* in Vraja *dhama* are the highest summit of transcendental love. Krsna’s relationships with His married queens in Dvaraka is an amazing display of opulence. The Lord expands Himself into 16,108 forms and stays with each wife in her own palace. Narada Muni went to visit Krsna and His queens in each and every one of their different palaces. He was astounded to see that in one palace Krsna was engaged in joking with His queen; in another palace He was arranging

marriages for His children; and in another palace He was engaged in practicing military arts. Krsna was satisfying each and every queen just like a henpecked husband.

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We are going deeper and deeper into *Caitanya-caritamrta, Adi-lila* Chapter Four, “The Confidential Reasons for the Lord’s Descent.” We are hearing the secrets of *radha-bhava*, things Krsna Himself doesn’t know about Radha. Krsna says, “Whatever pleasure I get from tasting My love for Srimati Radharani, She tastes ten million times more by Her love.’ The second secret is that Krsna knows His sweetness is very great. But Radharani knows that sweetness many, many more times than He does. When He sees His image in a mirror or in a fountain at Dvaraka, He is overwhelmed by the beauty of His form. But Radharani tastes that form many, many times more than He does. The third secret is that They both feel great bliss for one another, but the bliss that Radharani feels when She is in the company of Krsna is millions of times greater than the bliss that Krsna feels. In order to learn these secrets, Krsna appeared as Lord Caitanya in a golden color and in the moods of Radharani. In this way He was able to taste all the secrets of His consort Radharani.

The Prodigal Son Leaves

Many, many years ago I initiated a devotee and gave him the name Purusa dasa. He was active in Krsna consciousness for seven years and then dropped out. He was very disappointed with the devotees when they sold the skyscraper temple at 55th Street in Manhattan, and he stopped his association. Somehow or other, he came back just at a time when we needed his help. I had pneumonia, and he joined with Baladeva V. in caring for me. We’re all grateful that he stayed so long. He started chanting his rounds again and working in the garden with Baladeva. But he’s got his attachments—to his family. He has mixed feelings, but he’s decided to return to the home he owns in Florida, to coincide with the 21st birthday of his daughter. He also has a son named Narayana, who’s

34 years old, and he's attached to a few family cats. I'm sure I'll see him again. One problem was we didn't have a guest room for him. So he's going "home" for a while, but I'm sure he'll be back to join me.

A Visit from the Singhs

Nitai Gaurasundara and his son, now a lawyer, visited us at Viraha Bhavan. They are always enjoyable company. They are entertaining and sharp-witted. I asked them about their work. Nitai Gaurasundara is thinking of selling his practice to another doctor, while Abhisekha is just getting started in his career. Abhisekha is responsible for legal services relating to the day-to-day operations of hospitals and clinics. He coordinates with support staff in providing legal guidance. He likes his work. We had a lasagna meal.

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We phoned Nitai Gaurasundara's wife, Matsya, and her daughter Manjari. Matsya was not able to visit us because she is just recovering from surgery in her shoulder, which is still giving her nagging pain. We were able to see them, as well as talk to them, on iPhone. Manjari said that our talking to the women would make it more entertaining. I told her that our talk with the men was sober. Matsya told us how she has trouble sleeping because of the pain. Manjari runs a business office for a hospital, and her older sister Shruti is an oncologist with twin daughters three years old.

The whole family is involved in the health care industry. Nitai Gaurasundara is a psychiatrist, and after forty years of practice he is seeking to sell his practice and retire.

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

“Divinity and Divine Service (continued)”

“Or there are petty questions, questions that are merely pious and are therefore mundane. Mundane questions tend to be demanding: ‘When will You give me love of God?’ ‘Why can’t I see You?’ ‘Where are the bananas?’ ‘When can I expect relief from my suffering?’

“‘Where is God? Can you show me God?’ Agnostic questions. Insincere time-fillers. Vapid, stupid and irrelevant. Questions that reveal our mentality as mean, our motives impure.

“. . . We don’t want to face our real questions because they are often so nasty. Neither do we want to face up to asking the questions that will bring us the most surrender, because to ask those questions would demand too much *tapasya*.

“And we have to give answers. Are our replies verbose or superficial? Why bluff that we are capable answer-men? We can repeat what the books say, but the answers should live in our hearts. Don’t give solutions if we can’t follow them ourselves.

“Ask only how you can serve. If you don’t know how to ask, keep an inquiring mood by reading Prabhupada’s books. Ask Prabhupada every day and answer the question with affirmative action. Then you’ll stop feeling the need for so many sentences ending in question marks.”

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pp. 200-1, 202-3

“I mean I believe and you try.

I get restless sometimes

in the confines of what I know

as *bhakti*. So I

peek around outside. But then
 come back into the house where
 it's safe.

“Don't want no hideous danger.
 Know that most men and women
 I meet are *maya* personified.
 Don't want to be part of it.
 Yet sometimes I feel unsatisfied or
 bored and mostly lacking,
 tired shortcoming.
 Who could be happy
 jawing his *japa* in such
 a mechanical way?

“*Sa vai pumsam's*
 theory to me, not realized fact.
 It points to the supreme devotees.
 I acknowledge them in any land
 and I believe they have lived and
 walked the earth (often barefoot).
 I sing this song of the interrupted,
 distracted. Please bless us as
 we get back onto the track.
 I must speak unrehearsed 'tho,

how I opened a bag and found
 only a *duskrtina* spark . . .
 and
 here in India I met the red
 orb on the horizon at 7 A.M.
 to the desk on time,
 silent, waiting, untouched,
 reading *bhakti's* true form
 and liking it; it's my own code
 and I'll uphold it next week
 in an advertised lecture."

"This system of writing on *Bhagavatam* verses is good. The *slokas* reverberate in me. Although I appear to wander, I always return to them."

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pp.206-7

"The desire to eat *halava* is starting to build in me. Is it wrong, sinful?
 Prabhupada ate sweets, normal food, and he didn't follow Nature Cure. I dreamt last
 night I was licking up white cream. Samika Rsi asked me how long I would follow this
 diet. I said, 'Oh, forever. It's a way of life.' But maybe I should modify it. Everything we
 eat each day fits into a little pot. I have to have keen hunger to appreciate it, because
 half of it is raw. I am not mocking anything here, just confessing that I feel discontent
 building up. It occurred to me to speak about it to someone, but to whom? Anyone I
 think of is already for or against it. No one is impartial. God may be amused.

“I wrote a book at the health clinic asserting Nature Cure is superior to other diets and the best method is to control the tongue. Sense control is a virtue. It’s a mistake, as they say, to keep loading the belly even after we belch and we’re not hungry any more. We cram it all in anyway. It becomes morbid, toxic, and the poisons circulate undigested in the blood. That’s where sickness comes from. It makes *sense*, doesn’t it? But how come I’m so skinny now and feel so weak? At least I’m not burping and belching all day long, and I have a clearer head.

“I was trying to keep up my meditation on *Bhagavatam* 1.2.7 without drifting. Those little asides just came. They are part of the life of a *Bhagavatam* reader. He reads a text, then takes off his shoes. If he’s a father, his son may read comic books. The father may pick one up at an odd moment and look at something. Of course, I’m not a father and there are no comic books here. I just mean I drifted off on a raft in order to come back to you, dear *Srimad-Bhagavatam* ; you are the riverbank and the holy river. I’m just an imitative fool drifting in literary currents who wants the ecstasy of *vairagya-vidya*, knowledge and detachment.”

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pp. 212-14

“Krsna doesn’t work in the spiritual
sky. He plays His flute. He
goes to the forest with calves
and cows as a playing sport.
His friends go with Him.

‘Did you ever see a picture of Krsna in a factory
or working a machine or smoking a

cigarette? Did you ever see?

No, He is always jolly.’

“And Radha doesn’t approach Krsna
at the end of His *karmi* work day
and say, ‘What money do You have
in Your pocket?’

They are innocent boys and girls
in Vrndavana village, far beyond this
rat race.

We can go there.

Work for it.

“The Krsna conscious writer-self wants all for our Lord.

“Who are you?

“I’m the hand and voice from one who was told to do automatic writing according
to the rules of surrealists who write whatever comes without censorship.

“Don Marquis gives up job,
gives up tavern-frequenting,
converts all he has to cause
of Krsna.

“We can’t go wrong. Our song will triumph even if people think, ‘We’re ragged
and funny, but we’ll travel along, singing a song, side by side.’

“Don’t be so corny. Make the best art for Krsna.

“That’s what I attempt.

You say you are the Krsna conscious writing self, but do you think you're alone in that? By the 'pure,' automatic writing or in memories, I too am trying to evoke that which will be Krsna conscious and avoid *srama eve hi kevalam*. I'm going to all the corners of my body and selves (*atma*), all the dark places in material creation, and lighting them with a Krsna conscious torch.

“Still, we can work together and cut through quicker. And I can tell you of what I read in *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Lord Caitanya wanted to experience *radha-bhava*. How the Supreme Lord desired to be a *gopi* is *acintya-sakti*. If you are celibate, you stand a chance to understand Him. If you are *Krsna conscious* and celibate.”

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pp. 223-25

“Read *Bhagavatam* daily.

Seek lookout on lofty plain.

It's almost 3 P.M., Sarge.

Time to wake up Srila Prabhupada *murti*.

I'm sorry for my oversights today—

came before him

wearing no Vaisnava *tilaka* because

I was in a rush, splashed his

best sleeping blanket with hot

wax because I was playing with

fire and not using my intelligence.

And other mistakes.

But I did use some care and

tenderness and respect and I'm glad
for that.

“Time for his juice and
mine. Keep working at
transplanting organs, growing
tomatoes, carrots, and beets
and controlling your tongue by being
overwhelmed in the work, as he says,
of researching the Truth.

“Research? I thought that
was a bad word. Well,
you can research
how to engage yourself even
when you feel tired at midday.
How to head off anger and
irritability at that time.
How many ways to be kind to
your closest friends, and to be companions—
can you do it?—
to those you don't even know
or to those who may hurt you?

“Research—tomorrow is Ekadasi.
How many extra rounds can
you chant? Can you find places
in your schedule to do it?
Can you improve your delivery of
A Poor Man? Research in Jiva
Gosvami and the familiar yet
new purports of your spiritual master.
There is much to be done.
Patiently. Humbly.
Without attachment or
material desire.
And don't get restless or allow
the mad mind to do what
it wants. Know what I mean?”

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“Here’s a picture of the seriously inquisitive sage. Notice that he’s walking to the left. That’s west. Is he going downtown to preach? Is he bold? Or is he just going to the bathroom again? Is he going from the *brahmacari-asrama* to the temple room, half out of boredom, half out of routine?

Why do I call him ‘seriously inquisitive’? Because he left his parents, school, and career and moved into a Hare Krsna temple where they stress reading, chanting, and serving all day. That’s a serious commitment.

This particular student needs a break, though—a few amenities. He looks forward to some *Vedanta-sruti*, but not more than thirty or thirty-five minutes at a time. He needs to joke. He wants to go to the roof and feel a little warmth from the winter sunshine because his bones and flesh are cold. He’s got a cold. He looks forward to eating and daydreaming, ‘while visions of sugarplums dance in his head.’

“He’s not really a *chraddadhana munayo*, not yet, but we won’t reject him. He has come a long way already and we want to protect him. Some senior can counsel him: ‘Get serious. Don’t space out.’ The boy walks to the left. He is on a man’s errand and he lacks confidence. Will he walk into profound, self-sacrificing engagement, or

just to the bathroom again?

“A third-class devotee is material

A second-class devotee is a preacher who hears from the *Bhagavatam* person.

There he goes again,

flying off a cliff,

hang glider. He can do that because

he doesn't have to work for a living.

He's spending his karma that way.

I say better chant more today and redeem

yourself. ISKCON on the march for

1996. Better account for yourself.

Willy bejabbbers I ebb and

flow while the female singer

broadcasts. I had a good reference

to read you about strictness in

celibacy and how it relates

to Lord Caitanya not being *gauranga-nagari* but

always in the mood of a *gopi*.

Give up material lust and all lust.

Don't feel guilty for not being in a temple right now.

I'm out here writing. I'm seeking themes and scars

and ebb and flow to prepare this

seriously inquisitive sage

rabbit's foot, stew of newt,

witches brew. It's actual.

I came out of stupor, a boy who remembers

He was in the Navy and ate garbagey

meat stew with lousy taste and cooks

and servers dirty, pimples and ripped

T-shirts, foul mouths and him with a

delicate or agonized poet's book in back

pocket. That's all past now. Present is

Indian pop music, house servant Lakshman

cleaning the bathroom, water sounds and I'm

actually serious and well-equipped

with knowledge and hearing

Vedanta-sruti sometimes.

“And you, are you always perfect? You don't want to hear this? Then turn it off. I'm gonna chant. This is also chanting. Grr, humble, bark, snuffle, belch, look at, gripe and drive the worst.”



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From *Songs from Stuyvesant Falls*

pp. 54-55

“Prabhupada’s Vyasa-puja”

“My rounds were attentive and swift.

Our Vyasa-puja celebration was very nice. I spoke at length commenting on the homages made by the devotees for the Vyasa-puja book. I also spoke my

reminiscences of the early days with Srila Prabhupada.
 Jayadvaita Swami spoke strongly how Prabhupada
 never compromised and told incidents of how he
 smashed the impersonalists and
 scientists. Arundhati stole the show
 with her long memoirs of intimate exchanges with
 Srila Prabhupada. For a year and a half she traveled
 with him and typed his manuscripts and cooked for
 him. Dhanurdhara Swami spoke Prabhupada's
 legacy is being carried out by his potent followers.
 Then we observed
puspanjali and an *arati*. We honored
 a feast, and everyone liked the *samosas*
 and sweet rice made by Baladeva.

“In separation from Krsna, Radha thought of giving
 up Her life. But She thought if Krsna returned from
 Mathura and did not find Her there He would be unable
 to remain alive. Her yearning to meet Krsna is
 a transformation of Her *prema*. It exudes a wonderful
 sweetness. Hearing
 Her contradictory nature I am puzzled.
 I want to taste it, but I am not qualified.
 I stand on the shore of the ocean
 and taste a drop.

I worship Radha-Govinda and
 play music to enliven my senses.
 It is playful, and I dovetail it in
 my *sadhana*. My body is
 tired from the two days of
 exhausting participation in the
 Vaisnava holidays. I felt
 pain in standing for the *puspanjali*
 as my left ankle ached. I talked
 with Lilavatara who was unhappy
 that she could not cook for me.
 Jayadvaita Swami will stay on for several days, and I
 will host him. The four of us sat at a table
 and honored the Vyasa-puja feast.”

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

pp.134-35

“Other Places”

“There are so many devotees in Srila Prabhupada’s movement. Some of them appear irregular in their character and we are prone to criticize. Just by thinking ill of another devotee or by allowing our minds to criticize someone, we can jeopardize our whole spiritual life. Although we may be inoffensive in our actual dealings, we also have to check our internal offenses. It means we have to become humble in our hearts.

“If we can realize, at least somewhat, our own fallen natures, then we may deliberately avoid the cutting, sarcastic words or thoughts we aim at other devotees. According to the narrations we hear in *sastra*, if we do offend someone, we should approach them directly and beg their forgiveness.

“We cannot become offenseless by simply avoiding contact with others, although it's true that thick mixing with many devotees can give rise to offensiveness. But as Lord Caitanya prescribed, we should praise the devotees, both in their presence and in private. We don't want to be superficial, but we should look for the good that exists in each person, and concentrate on that.

“I hear children's voices mixing in with the cattle lowing and the sheep baaaa-ing. Are the cattle complaining because I am leaving here in a few days? Of course not. But it somehow speaks to my mood in a way that reminds me I have to go. It also reminds us that these creatures are not happy. They are a lower species of life. (Lord Caitanya told the leper that Yamaraja has 84 *lakhs* of hells for offenders.) To err may be human, but too many mistakes and you have to suffer.”

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From ***From Imperfection, Purity Will Come About***

pp.70-71

“Okay, ink-spiller, one pen has leaked all over your finger and your right palm. Another has run out, and since you have no refills on the desk, it lies discarded like a dead soldier. More ink is easy to find, but stop and think. Writing can also be an excuse not to act: ‘Isn't it marvelous the way Bhaktivinoda Thakura puts all of us on the spot?’ Yeah, and he writes, ‘Me too, me too,’ and leans back satisfied that he has done a

morning's work. O when, under the shelter of my spiritual master, will I call out to You with humility?"

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From *Morning Songs*

pp. 114-115

“The poem is a formula
 but I want to change it
 so it's not the same
 thing every day. I face Krsna in my
 heart and pray to Him.
 There is always something
 new to sing. The
 music carries me in
 waves of expression
 as a part of
 God-praise. Krsna has
 given me the ability to
 write many books which
 I am reviewing in the
 autobiog, quoting them
 for their Krsna conscious content
 and seeking sentences from
 my imperfect self.

I am happy to
 continue it for many
 pages. The books are after
 all my best effort,
 my prime service to
 the Lord and guru.”

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From *Vaisnava Behavior*

pp.6-7

“BEHAVIOR IN PREACHING”

“A Devotee is a Gentleman”

“When a television interviewer asked Srila Prabhupada by what behavior one could recognize a true follower of Krsna consciousness, Srila Prabhupada replied, ‘He’d be the perfect gentleman, that’s all.’ And in translating the *Bhagavad-gita* verses listing eighteen items of knowledge (Bg. 13.8-12), Srila Prabhupada translates the word *amanitvam* as, ‘One should himself become a perfect gentleman and learn to give proper respect to others.’ Although in ordinary usage the word ‘gentleman’ may refer to a man of wealth and aristocracy, we use it here to describe a devotee’s high standard of honorable and considerate behavior. The polite and humble behavior of a devotee can be appreciated even by the nondevotee. A devotee is not arrogant, boorish, or inconsiderate of others.

“In the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 1.5.29, Narada Muni explains that he was favored by the Vaisnavas because, ‘I was gentle in behavior, and all my sins were eradicated in their service.’ Commenting on this verse, Srila Prabhupada remarks, ‘One should not

be misled by a pseudodevotee. He himself must be plain and gentle to receive the instructions of such a pure devotee.’

“In His own preaching, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu displayed cool-headed, polite behavior even when engaged in debate. On one occasion he demonstrated extraordinary humility and tolerance by sitting silently for seven days while Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya lectured to Him on *Vedanta Sutra*. Only when the Bhattacharya inquired of His silence did the Lord begin his opposition to the *Mayavada* interpretation of Vedanta. When Lord Caitanya came into the company of *Mayavadi sannyasis* at Benares, He sat down humbly at the doorway until the chief *sannyasi*, Prakasananda Sarasvati, personally came to invite Him inside. And on subsequent visits to Benares, Lord Caitanya displayed similar gentleness and humility.”

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From ***Journal and Poems, Book 1***

pp.152-53

“THE ATTRACTION OF PRABHUPADA'S PREACHING

“I was listening to a tape of Prabhupada explaining to an M.A. philosophy student the nature of *atma*. Prabhupada explained it so nicely that I became very happy just hearing it. He explained that the *atma* is *sac-cid-ananda*. The nature of the self is to feel blissful. ‘Why do I like this flower?’ Prabhupada said. ‘Because I enjoy it. And why have you become a philosophy student? For knowledge. And why don't we want to die? Because we're eternal.’ Prabhupada's masterfully attractive handling of the questions and his gravity as guru made me very proud and happy to be his disciple. When the philosophy student interjected and tried to ask more questions, Prabhupada said, ‘Just hear, just hear.’

“Certainly I cannot explain anything as expertly as Prabhupada. But on the other hand, hearing from him makes me confident that my duty is to go on explaining things as he has taught me, just as long as I don't act as if I am actually surpassing him. Prabhupada surely didn't want us to be silent but to expand the message as he taught it. So I have to continue writing in that mood, explaining the nature of *atma*, *sac-cid-ananda*, in Prabhupada's footsteps, and whenever possible reminding others of the particular attractiveness of His Divine Grace, Srila Prabhupada.”

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From ***Reading Reform: Srila Prabhupada's Plan for the Daily Reading of His Books***

pp.29-30

“GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING READING AND STUDY”

“#1. ‘I am very much stressing at this point that all of my students shall be very much conversant with the philosophy of Krsna consciousness and they should read our books very diligently at least one or two hours daily and try to understand the subject matter from varieties of angles.’ (Letter to Madhudvisa, 6/16/72)

“COMMENTARY:

“This is one of several letters that Prabhupada sent to members of the GBC introducing the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class. In these letters Prabhupada describes how the devotees should each day read aloud one Sanskrit *sloka* from the *Srimad-*

Bhagavatam, repeat the Roman transliterations, chant the *sloka* several times, and then discuss the subject matter ‘very minutely and inspect it from all angles of approach and savor the new understandings.’ Prabhupada stresses in these letters that a devotee’s best training is to hear repeatedly from the *Bhagavatam*, and that by such hearing the devotees will become qualified to spread Krsna consciousness. ‘But if they do not have knowledge,’ Prabhupada asks, ‘how can they go out and preach?’

“Hearing regularly from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* enables a devotee to practice the austerities of spiritual life, and such hearing especially protects the neophyte from being allured by the material energy, But hearing in this way, a devotee becomes successful. No devotee should think that he has nothing to gain by attending *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class. Rather, since Prabhupada introduced it, we should have faith in its importance and not neglect it. Hearing together the realizations of the senior members of the devotee community creates among the devotees the cohesion and cooperation needed to spread this movement. And by carefully chanting sixteen rounds and following the four regulative principles, one can derive the greatest benefit from hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class.”

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From ***Visitors***

pp. 25-26

“Yesterday afternoon Nanda surprised me by asking me to come over to the big house and hold a reading with all the many people who are here. I said, ‘Sure,’ and picked out the book *Under the Banyan Tree*. To get ready for it, I read many of the classical Japanese *haiku* and took the book *Spring Haiku*, by R. H. Blyth. I was reading the *haiku* with his commentaries on them. I wanted to just keep reading those, but I

stopped and read my own. They were *haikus* about coming to surrender to Prabhupada. My poems are rather weak, but they are in a book that is a very straight story about how I came to surrender to Srila Prabhupada at 26 Second Avenue. The book was even reviewed in a few American *haiku* journals, and received some faint praise. Last night I read from R. H. Blyth's book, and I can't help but say that I really love *haiku* as a literary form. When I was studying and writing *haiku*, however, it was not particularly good for my Krsna consciousness. They are indirect codes, and they're not personal worship of God. But oh my, what lallapaloozas of literary delight.

“In the center,
Mt. Fuji towers up:
Spring in our country.’

“I fell in love
With the wings of the birds,—
With the light of spring on them!’ (Chora)

“Suddenly thinking of it,
I went out and was sweeping in the garden:
A spring evening.’ (Tairo)

“There's a comment to this one by Blyth:

“What a peculiar thing poetry is, coming and going like the wind . . .
. Valueless, fortuitous things, mere trivia of a life, suddenly sink down to
the very essence, the soul of existence. It is such moments of vision the

poet describes in the above verse. All you can say is that in the very useless, the unpremeditativeness, the casual inevitability, lies the secret of the mystery, the connection between the sweeping of the garden and the evening of spring:

““Lighting one candle
with another candle:
an evening of spring.” (Buson)”

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From ***Remembering Srila Prabhupada: A Free-Verse Rendition of the Life and Teachings of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, Founder-Acarya of the International Society for Krsna Consciousness***

pp.365-66

“To the Mississippi farm,
I went along too,
and now I remember him
so others can rejoin us.
This is the service of the poem,
an attempt to spread the Krsna Consciousness Movement
by bringing its members and friends
closer to Prabhupada.
Only through him
can we make the revolution.
To us he is like Christ and more

and time will bear that out.

His passage through the Earth
is not like yours and mine.

“He arrived at the flat land,
and went into the house
where he encouraged the residents,
‘Stick to this spot,

be satisfied. no artificial life.’

From the moment he spoke
the Mississippi farm took birth.

Then in a smaller room
he talked of cows and milk.

how every drop
can be drunk or transformed
until everything is used.

And there is no killing her,
but sweets and curd and cheese and ghee
from her natural bounty, this mother of Earth.
Do not kill her.

“With no shirt on he
stood in the kitchen.

It was warm and flies came,
but everyone watched him excitedly.

Why? Because of love.
Because of that devotional love
that hour of cooking
is still memorable today.
And the Mississippi kitchen
is the place
where Prabhupada cooked
nine preparations in an hour
in his shiny brass boiler,
his thin arms moving, his expert, swift
chemist's pinching of spices
tossing them in the pot, and deft
home-grown secrets known only to him.
Dal, rice, *chapatis*
kerela, potatoes, eggplants, peas—
when made or tasted
by the pure devotee
it is known as *maha-maha-prasadam*.
He walked in the fields
through tall sugar cane and grains,
and criticized Nityananda dasa
for rusting machinery in the rain,
and then went back to New Orleans,
all in a day.”

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Writing Sessions

Introduction to The Karttika Papers

This past week we began the serialization of Satsvarupa Maharaja's 1994 manuscript, The Karttika Papers, which recounts his travel to and experiences in Mayapur during that holy month. Part travelogue, part chronicle of his daily life infused with spiritual reflections, he creates a palpable account of this Mayapur experience. To help orient the reader to this significant work, one may consider these three distinct features of the manuscript:

- 1. Shape. This manuscript was composed in a very interesting manner, which provides a context for the book itself, as Satsvarupa Maharaja filled six individual notepads with this work. Perhaps we imagine composition occurring within the neat framework of notebooks. The use of notepads creates a sense of open-endedness even as Maharaja seamlessly produces a single narrative.*
- 2. Genres. The use of notepads and the spontaneity that emerges from this type of literary production organically leads to the free-write style of expression. Satsvarupa Maharaja began to fully turn to this style the previous year with his publication, Shack Notes. Upon and between the six interrelated notepads, the reader will be carried along by the dynamic and improvisational qualities of both his prose and poetry.*
- 3. Context. In significant ways, this trip to Mayapur would be a profound challenge for Satsvarupa Maharaja as he found himself to be drawn to increasing amounts of solitude. Here he would find himself participating in large temple gatherings, inviting a series of disciple meetings as well as meeting with a number of*

Godbrothers. I have been continually amazed that he would actually find both time and space to write such a significant work.

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading The Karttika Papers, which represents the first of three sections of an unpublished book entitled Karttika Moon, which will be fully serialized in Maharaja's weekly online journal. I am certain that you will be inspired by the sincerity and authenticity of his writing presented here for which he is widely known and respected.

—Rev. John Endler

From ***Karttika Moon***

PART ONE

Karttika Papers, 1994

Note Pad #1: Rome to Bombay (continued)

“Here’s a note from earlier this morning on a theme I would like to follow, almost as a Karttika vow: ‘What do I want to confess? State topics and areas.’

“I heard someone call out, ‘*Karttika-vrata ki jaya!*’ I thought, ‘So what is my vow or penance?’ I have none underway. I won’t give up sweets, etc. Then why not try to confess as much as possible, write as best you can...? Thought you ought to praise Krsna and Prabhupada...? But, what do you mean by confess?

“You know, come to admit to yourself, true things you may have been hiding from yourself. Say it clearly and look for progress.

“Dictionary: **CONFESS:**

:to admit (a fault or crime)

:to declare one's faith (that's nice),

“I confess I'm a devotee in the Krsna consciousness movement and my cherished desire is to cut off material desires and be happy in pleasing Krsna. I also confess I'm not able to do this.

:to tell one's sins to God, especially in a public worship service or in private.

“The meaning of confess is as easy and clear as that.

“What about confession? It's more or less the same, but the literary meaning you have been seeking is (sometimes in plural, confessions):

a story of one's life experiences, revealing faults and confidential personal details.

“The confessional is ‘a small, enclosed place in a church, where a priest hears confessions.’

“Examples:

Confessions of an Opium Eater (Thomas de Quincey)

Confessions of an American Guru by Ramadasa (Jay Alpert)

“And a long list of similar titles. It is used so often, I think it's mostly used now to get a comic effect or ironic effect: *Confessions of a Shy Pornographer*.

“And who can write what actually is so embarrassing? And why?

“It's good for you. Get into the habit of telling all the truth about yourself.

“And confess also in that sense of professing your faith.

“Thus, the *Karttika Papers* are the Karttika confessions. Oh, that sounds too...all right, you don’t have to make it a Book Title or even a working title, but between you and me, let’s acknowledge (confess) it’s hot stuff, important, and pursue it.

“Tolerate—the pain behind your eye.

“Tolerate—the long detour in stopping in Kuwait City and waiting on the ground and re-boarding, none of which is ‘necessary.’

—the late arrival into Bombay.

—whatever may happen to make it worse.

“But if I get relief especially in eye pain, I’ll make the most of it for *sravanam-kirtanam*. And with pain I’ll remain cheerful and say some Hare Krsnas.

“Oh yes, also tolerate the role-playing in the coming weeks, as ISKCON guru, performing *sannyasi*...Tolerate socializing. Also, your own small attention span and attraction to the Name and Form of Krsna. Tolerate means you put up with all sorts of inconveniences and dovetail your actions in service of the Supreme.

“You can’t live forever in this body or with smooth sailing. Don’t expect it. Turn to Krsna. *Dhira*—one who is not disturbed, because he knows he’s not this body; he’s spirit soul, Krsna dasa.

“Dialogue while landing in Kuwait City:

“Me: ‘I wouldn’t want to have come here a few years ago.’

“Madhu: ‘Why not? It’d have been exciting!’

“Kuwait transit lounge:

“We are kept in one place, no vending machines or anything. We can see through a transparent wall into the main terminal. Big Marlboro sign. Color TV is on, showing violent episodes of a U.S. rodeo!

“Cleaning the plane.

“I see men dressed in clean white ‘desert’ clothes, as you’d expect. They’ve got drinks with white plastic cups and straws. Kid in here yelling, ‘Da-da!’, piercing off the hard walls.

“Okay Sats, you’re doing Okay. You’ll be in Bombay before you know it, through the formalities there, then packed in a car and driving to Juhu, hearing who is there and remembering some things. And your pain rides with you, your clustering companion.

“‘Why are you here, pain?’

“‘I’ve got to be. It’s the body, the stress.’

“‘Yeah, but I’ve heard you could be controlled.’

“‘Not once I come.’

“‘Well, then I’ve got to live with you. Take the right attitude.’

“‘That’s up to you. You’ve got your business and I’ve got mine.’

“‘Maybe I don’t have to pay constant attention to what you’re doing. But if I try to read and write and think as usual, then you become worse, more intense. So, do you want me to take note of you and be very quiet in my other activities?’

“‘Yes. Anyway, I can’t just go away so easily.’

“I’ve been telling myself to tolerate it. I don’t think you, Pain, have all the answers for me. Any sense in talking?’

“I’m busy paining the spot. You *are* free to speak and think differently. Maybe you can learn some techniques in hypnotherapy. But for now—and until the unforeseen future—I have to do my work.’

“Okay. That’s been a little helpful, to realize I do have some freedom how to respond to this. I can’t defy or ignore your signal. (Neither can I take full bed-sleep as I’d like to). I can’t read and write. It’s too distracting and can lead to worsening pain. But I *can* tolerate, be of good cheer, seek transcendental mind in Krsna consciousness.’

“This is Bombay. Hello, I am feeling such-and-such, no deep confession in new, new, cotton saffron on just-washed body censoring out (editing out) words like ‘skinny’ and ‘soul’; fear of repetition and all that.

“Indian made plans for the day; Madhu’s big-ticket purchase; I will get this in the mail; will this book of mine be published?; the little life, the life, and he takes it importantly.

“Krsna is not in the center.

“Onscreen during the flight they show an image of a toy plane and its progress over the map. Now it’s over Rome, now it’s over Corfu, now it’s approaching Kuwait City. The image of the plane is much bigger than its actual size in relation to map objects. The plane is as big as the entire city of Bombay. That’s absurd. In the same way, our ego is inflated in proportion to other identities. We are insignificant, hardly noticed in a city, and yet like the plane image we think we are the epicenter. Solipsism.

“Oh where, oh where,
can I get a candy bar

sang a foolish man I never
 knew. He sang and twanged
 on a plastic ukulele and when
 I asked him to stop or
 change to a Krsna conscious tune he
 wailed, ‘Where, oh where
 can I gain my *ruci*, O
 when will that day come
 when offenses ceasing
 taste for the name increasing...’

“‘That’s better,’ I said. ‘That’s the sort of tune you should always sing.’

“‘*Bul-lock-cart, bul-lock-cart*’ is the sound the revolving fan makes. I picked that out from the sound I heard. Why? I don’t know. Maybe I am thinking of the Swami, Prabhupada, who used the term ‘bullock cart.’ The fan blades turn slowly.

“Major Domo, Head of Internal Affairs and Disorders, Corporal of Disbelief, heads one troop downstairs (like I knew it would be) to attend the *mangala-arati*. Stomach isn’t up to digesting potatoes for breakfast, so don’t ask for them. He says, ‘Eyes, right’ and they pass the review stand. Anyway, I’m confident I have a good outline for a lecture of ‘Friends and Enemies’ for today’s *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class, which I am honored to give in Prabhupada’s quarters. This ends the first notepad, and each section will last one notepad. Maybe I’ll do a dozen—if I’m lucky—before leaving India. Farewell Tums (hello, I mean). I confess the trivia and worse yet to come.”