

***Free Write Journal #162***

**September 24, 2021**

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**Free Writes**

**Letter from Bala from Trinidad**

Here is a letter I wrote to Panca Tattva dasi, Temple President of ISKCON Trinidad:

Dear Pancatattva devi dasi, temple president of ISKCON Trinidad,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada.

I know you are aware of Baladeva's (Trinidad) cancer condition. He has written a letter that he wants to send to all his devotees and friends in Trinidad, Guyana and elsewhere. I'm sending his letter to you and asking you to spread the word to the other devotees. Here is the letter by Baladeva of Trinidad:

*Dear Friends and Prabhus,*

*I'm writing to request your prayers and support.*

*I've been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. I'm currently hospitalized under the supervision of a comprehensive medical team.*

*Having briefly undergone preliminary chemotherapy, my overall health condition has quickly become too weak to continue that course of*

*treatment now.*

*Following considerable professional consultation, I have decided not to pursue any further curative measures and rather to let nature run its course. I prefer instead to focus my remaining time and energies on preparing to successfully leave my present material body in optimum Krishna consciousness.*

*I humbly request you all, my dear and valued friends, to respect my decided course of action, especially since I feel so dependent on your well-wishes and prayers to help me successfully see this through.*

*The Hospital is in the process of making all necessary arrangements: electronic hospital bed, pain relief administration, nursing support, etc., to release me to return to my home in Stuyvesant Falls.*

*Once there, by Krishna's grace and with the help of friends, I will open up a Zoom forum to my bedside so that you may kindly join me online for chanting japa, kirtana and reading Krishna-katha at your convenience.*

*Please try to find a little time to spend with me in this most valuable way. Here is the Zoom link to this sanga:*

<https://zoom.us/j/5187559018?pwd=VTFoam5GWXZhOFh5ejQ4dDlve mY5QZo9>

*Hare Krishna for now . . . .*

*Your servant,*

*Baladeva dasa*

## Bala Has Come Home

Baladeva Vidyabhusana drove Krsna dasi to the hospital in Albany to give Bala (Trinidad) warmer socks and *prasadam*. He had gone into the hospital for various tests and ended up having to stay overnight. Krsna dasi stayed overnight at Albany at Saci's apartment so she could visit with her husband at the hospital.

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Bala has decided to terminate his treatment for lung cancer. He is too weak to continue the chemotherapy. I am sad that he is feeling so weak, but relieved that they discharged him from the hospital. We have been communicating, and I feel that he's ready to gracefully pass on. I cannot say what his ultimate destination will be, but I know that he is a wonderful devotee and has done much service. We will miss him in his management of my disciples' meetings. He inspired many of the family members to come closer. He has been doing this for years. Even though he is now living in Stuyvesant Falls, he is the main devotee who organizes my disciples in Trinidad, and in Guyana too. He has kept the Ratha-yatra going and growing in Trinidad. In the coming days we'll know more how the cancer is progressing and how the hospice at his house is set up.

## Out-loud Reading

In our group out-loud reading of *Caitanya-caritamrta*, we just finished *Adi-lila* Chapter Seven, "Lord Caitanya in Five Features." Caitanya Mahaprabhu went to a meeting of the Mayavadi *sannyasis*, and at their request, He spoke on the philosophy of *Vedanta Sutra*. They are very impressed with His personal beauty, and they accept Him as the Supreme Lord, Narayana. He gives the direct meanings of the *sutras* and defeated the Mayavadi interpretation of Sankaracarya. The *sannyasis* of Varanasi have their minds changed. They are also convinced by His logical explanations that the scripture should be taken directly, not by interpretation. They all become submissive to Sri

Caitanya and accept His conclusions. The whole city of Varanasi celebrates His triumph. Lord Caitanya induces the *sannyasis* of Varanasi to chant Hare Krsna, and His intimate friends Tapana Misra and Candrasekhara are very pleased.

## **Jayadvaita Swami's Visit**

I had one meeting with Jayadvaita Swami. Without too much delay he told me he was writing a new book. I was completely surprised to hear that he was doing it again. The book isn't finished or published yet so I don't want to reveal so much about it. But he read to me out loud for an hour. I liked it very much. I look forward to its getting published and read by the devotees, especially the members of ISKCON. We had lunch together, and I shared his menu of *kichari*. But he added many spices and condiments which I didn't take.

## **License Plates**

The license plates on my car had become defective; they were peeling apart. Baladeva went to the motor vehicle bureau, where he had to stand on a long line waiting to do the paperwork to get the new plates. The man at the motor vehicle bureau said he wanted to see the plates before he could issue us new ones. Baladeva went out to get the plates off the car, but he had no tools. He had to drive out to find someone to take them off. That cost ten dollars. Then he drove without license plates to the DMV. Then he had to get on the long line again. He went back to get the replacement plates, but the man told him I (SDG) had to be there to personally sign the paperwork. The only way I could do it without being there personally was to have someone with Power of Attorney do the work and sign it on my behalf. Fortunately Kirtan Rasa, who holds my Power of Attorney, was present at Viraha Bhavan for lunch, and Baladeva got back just before he was ready to leave. Kirtan Rasa now has the DMV paperwork and could proceed. Then right after lunch Baladeva had to drive Krsna dasi back to the hospital in Albany, and on his way back from Albany, he got pulled over by the police for not

having license plates on the car. The policeman was a gentleman. He told Baladeva he could give him a ticket for this, but he personally took the defective plate and with strong hands and arms (but no tools) loosely put one plate back onto the car. The other plate went on the dashboard. So Baladeva had to try to affix the license plates somehow or other until Kirtan Rasa cleared the paperwork as Power of Attorney. Baladeva complained and hoped that if he ever got to the spiritual world, there wouldn't be a motor vehicle department there.

## **A Disciple's Duty**

I received a letter from a disciple whose daughter told her that I said she should write to me once a year. This disciple just wrote me and said she's ashamed at the fact she has not written. But she feels so overwhelmed by her physical and emotional problems that she's been unable to write. Anyway, she finally wrote me and asked me if there was anything I could advise her in her devotional service, although she admitted there's not much she can do. She writes, "If you like, can you please continue to instruct me about devotional service? I am a little afraid to ask this because there isn't much I can physically do, even to take care of my own self. Maybe you should share about what services I might do while continuing resting my exhausted body. You can even instruct me about how to prepare for my final departure from this world. I'll inquire from her whether she can chant japa on her beads and advise her to try to chant sixteen rounds. If she can do this it will be sufficient even though she's ill. As for instructions to prepare for her final departure from this world, my advice is the same thing: practice chanting the quota of Hare Krsna *japa* and follow the four rules. This will keep you free from sin, and you can serve Krsna the best in this way. Krsna likes His devotees to call out to Him in a helpless way.

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## **Email Poem**

I received a nice poem by email. The poem was sent out to many readers online. It's signed, "Humbly yours, Navin Goyal." Here's the poem:

Sip your Tea,  
Nice and Slow ,  
No one ever Knows ,  
When it's Time to Go,  
There'll be no Time,  
To enjoy the Glow,  
So sip your Tea,  
Nice and Slow.

Life is too Short but  
feels pretty Long,  
There's too Much to do,  
so much going Wrong,  
And Most of the Time,  
You Struggle seems to be Strong,  
Before it's too Late,  
and it's time to Go,  
Sip your Tea,  
Nice and Slow.

Some Friends stay,  
others Go away,

Loved ones are Cherished,  
but not all will Stay.  
Kids will Grow up,  
and Fly away.  
There's really no Saying,  
how Things will Go,  
So sip your Tea,  
Nice and Slow.

In the End it's really it is,  
all about understanding Love  
For this World,  
and in the Stars above,  
Appreciate and Value  
who truly Cares,  
Smile and Breathe ,  
and let your Worries go,  
So Just Sip your Tea ,  
Nice and Slow."

When I'm dead,  
Your tears will flow, but I won't know,  
Cry with me now instead  
You will send flowers,  
But I won't see

Send them now instead.

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

pp.232-33

**“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”** (continued)

“In my own list of admissions, I’ve dug up all sorts of less than pure thoughts and inclinations, yet I go on hearing and trying to assimilate the *Bhagavatam*. Is that a contradiction? Hypocrisy? How can one suddenly banish all desires and meditate exclusively on the spiritual master’s desires? What about a *Bhagavatam* verse such as *akama sarva-kamo va moksa-kama udara-dhih*: ‘A person who has broader intelligence, whether he be full of all material desire, without any material desire, or desiring liberation, must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead’? Isn’t hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* the best method to cleanse dirt from the heart? Yes, it is.

“We won’t be outright hypocrites if we follow our initiation vows (no meat-eating, no illicit sex, no intoxication, and no gambling, and to chant at least sixteen rounds of Hare Krsna mantra a day), but we can’t claim to be advanced devotees as long as we are more concerned with material benefits than transcendental profit as a result of the practice of *sadhana-bhakti*. Take the spiritual masters order on our heads, humbly. Remove the weeds and apparatus that we perceive either by self examination or by Krsna’s pointing them out. In that way, we won’t remain perpetually nonsensical and be an embarrassment to ourselves and to our group. We have to become *chraddadhana munayo*, seriously inquisitive students.”



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

pp.243, 247

***“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”*** (continued)

“ . . . One either hears about, praises, and worships Krsna, or he hears about, praises, and worships a fallible, unqualified object of worship.

“It reminds me of my own tendency to worship heroes, which I directed towards various persons during my childhood and adolescence. When I was very small, I looked up to my father. Later, I worshiped various members of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Even later, I worshiped famous rock ‘n’ roll singers. In college, I transferred my praise to intellectuals and artists. The heroes changed because I outgrew them. I took their pictures down from my walls and replaced them with others. Those who seemed great later seemed foolish. Then I would make fun of them. They proved to be impermanent heroes or protectors. Neither could they give me happiness, even when I was at the height of their praises.

“Srla Prabhupada points out how political or advertising propaganda creates the false impression that an ordinary person is wonderful. Such a person’s popularity surge lasts only a little while. Then people become tired of the hero and begin to see the glaring defects in his character. They then reject him at the voting booth. When the hero is at his zenith, he appears to be the country’s savior, but history judges us in the long run: who has done anything to alleviate the basic miseries of human existence?

“Therefore, hearing, praising, remembering, and worshiping should be offered exclusively to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unfortunately, people have so little information about God that He’s just not tangible to them. The local politicians and superstars are more tangible than God. Or, God is poorly presented by religious leaders

and people simply reject Him as sentiment. This is a faithless age.

“ . . . I hereby sign off after having scratched the tender surface of my own inadequacy and self-centeredness. But I can’t kick myself out. I have to work with this fruitive being and, even in my conditioned state, perform devotional service. All I can do is ask forgiveness and keep going. Lead on, Suta. I can’t help myself, so I fall at your feet.”

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pp.264-65

**“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”** (continued)

“ . . . I’m even a little embarrassed that these *Poor Man* books can come out nicely bound. I don’t want to deny the book that facility, however. ‘Poor man’ really means ‘poor in spirit.’ It means ‘humble.’ It means admitting that one is not spiritually advanced has not received the spiritual riches from Krsna.

“On the other hand, if a poor man sincerely makes his contribution, it’ll be appreciated even by a rich man. Krsna was pleased by Sudama’s gift of flat rice, but Sudama had no mood of trying to impress Krsna with such a materially paltry gift. Rather, Sudama was ashamed to give his gift to Krsna. Krsna said it tasted like nectar. He was so pleased that the goddess of fortune became afraid that Krsna would become too indebted to Sudama. Let the poor man be happy in serving Krsna, yet aware of his unworthiness. Let him be serious and sincere. He may dance before Krsna as Srutadeva and his wife did. Commenting on Krsna’s invitation to offer Him a leaf or a fruit, Prabhupada writes, “This means that Krsna may be worshiped by the poorest man in the world.”

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pp. 267-68

**“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”** (continued)

“By regular attendance in the *Bhagavatam* class. Often devotees ask why this verse states that *almost* all the dirty things removed. Why not *all*? Whenever I’m asked that question, I reply that it’s good if most of the dirty things are removed. Why complain? We tend to want everything to come in the first installment of mercy. We have to have faith that the bhagavatas know what we need and will in time give us everything. They will irrevocably give us faith even before we are perfect. Even up to *bhava*, we suffer from the odor of past sins.

“ . . . I’m glad to return to the living. That’s how I feel when I recover from a headache, because headaches knock me out of action completely. They bring my low point of the day when I see that I can’t take my regular turn with the *Bhagavatam*. I also feel appreciation, however, for the times when I do have health and facility to perform this *yajna*. I pray for life duration—so that I can do what? Finish the whole thing? It’s not possible. Anyway, I do appreciate it more when it is taken from me. The feeling comes even while I am sidelined. When the pain finally subsides after hours of rest, then I feel relief and gratitude. (I am aware that some people don’t ever get relief. They have to live in a different way, and their struggle becomes a constant way of life. We have to adjust to whatever becomes our fate and use whatever resources we have in service to guru and Krsna.”

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pp.274

**“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”** (continued)

“In this context, Prabhupada describes the *gopis*’ simple love for Krsna. It is appealing to hear it from him. He says they were not attracted to the opulence of Krsna in Dvaraka. They wanted Him in the calm atmosphere of Vrndavana. The *gopis* are already enlightened, and

“They simply engage their purified senses in the service of the Lord in the remote village of Vrndavana. The *gopis* are not interested in dry speculation, or in the arts, in music, or in other conditions of material life.’ (*Cc. Madhya*, 1.82 purport)

“The mention of art made me wonder what I’m trying to do. I was just about to tell you about some poetry and then try my hand at writing some myself. The *gopis* were not interested in any arts except the art of loving Krsna. Prabhupada goes on to say that Krsna loves the *gopis* not for their opulence of personal beauty, but for their pure devotional service.

*“Tada-rajastamo-bhavah,*

nice rhyme to tap to, to

intone, to keep yourself pure.

*Kama-lobhadayas ca ye—*

if you can memorize, you’re lucky,

or take it here for reading

and sing—

“I was born low and lusty,  
 but by guru’s grace, I’ve got  
 a place in goodness.

A happy boy can sing a simple  
 line if his heart is halfway  
 pure, or more we hope—  
 a song of goodness  
 and going above.

“Did you read something interesting  
 you’d like to share?

Here, I’m in the chair  
 want to be with you in this.

But let’s admit the *Bhagavatam*  
 service must be our main  
 thoroughfare. When you write you may  
 let the words choose you and be free,  
 let it be American-derived speech music  
 whatever you find—  
 but convert it,  
 to the real currency that lasts.

Tell us of *suddha-sattva*  
 and the Swami. Then  
 your Etruscan wish-wash jabber jabber

won't be of much account.  
 What matters is the end  
 when Jagannatha reigns over  
 His pure beloveds.  
 I want to be there.”

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pp.284-86

***“Chapter Two: Divinity and Divine Service”*** (continued)

“Nobody but me knows  
 what's behind my eye,  
 that threat to what I know  
 as peace and well-being.

“How much longer  
 will I be able to press down on  
 the accelerator to write a sentence?  
 Writ is sacred, the letters  
 form a line-up, sense  
 and grace come out and I'm driving  
 it home for Krsna's sake.  
 Yes, let us have elegant and sensible  
 sentences turned in His cause  
 rather than Ravana's or

some demon's agent.

“The knot is

cut to pieces, karma is ended,

and he sees the self as master.

Prabhupada said,

‘Krsna's not meant for pleasing anyone's

senses. He wants us to please

His senses.’

You are a master, I'm servant,

drill it into my head

so my knot is cut and

my karma ended. That's

what it means to

take care of Number One.

“A random list:

(1) Flowerpots

(2) It was nice using the typewriter for two days, but now the ribbon has run out and in India, that could be the end of the typewriter's working.

(3) Before anything gets repaired, we will be gone. Mice will nibble the bananas in peace. We will be gone to meet new troubles on new continents.

(4) I'm attached to using earplugs.

(5) With Madhu sick, I have had a chance to change my diet, so I did just a little. I saw myself rushing into piles of *halava* and apple pies and cursing Nature Cure's imbalance of too little grains. The doctor says we're not getting enough protein or carbohydrates. We're too weak.

(6) Srila Prabhupada wrote the following numbers of purports of at least eight or more lines long: First Canto—612; Second Canto—324; Third Canto—875; Fourth Canto—9:50; Fifth Canto—389; Sixth Canto—324; Seventh Canto—443; Eighth Canto—261; Ninth Canto—202; Tenth Canto—294. Total 4,678. Figure out how many books I could write in his footsteps. Fifty volumes at 400 pages each are nowhere near enough. Who would live so long or want to write or read them?

(7) The list grows longer, life shorter.

(8) I wanted to be peaceful. Write about that. I liked it when Prabhupada said Radharani wanted Krsna in the calm atmosphere of Vrndavana. It's true that although the *gopis* were often involved in intrigues and anxieties, Vraja was peaceful with its Yamuna and forests, and Krsna was always in the vicinity to tease and to love.

“This book may be wrong and crazy, but if I keep at it, I could turn it right by serious sincerity. Any examples of that? The sparrow trying to empty the ocean. The man who wanted to serve the greatest. The fool who became a



devotee. The rat who tried to eat the dying candle on the altar and who made the candle flame flare up. Putana coming as Krsna's nurse. Kamsa always thinking of the Lord in Krsna consciousness and becoming liberated (although we prefer to be favorable, not against Him)."

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From ***Journal and Poems, Book 2 (June-December 1985)***

pp.204-5

***"PLEASURES OF THE DAY"***

"Early morning despite chill, rising for devotional service. The warm shower water is nice, but then even more the chill of the cold shower and knowing it is good for renunciation and health. Dressing warmly and then going into the next room; knowing I am up before the others.

"Approaching the Deity of Jagannatha and setting up the little table where I will bathe Them; the brief ceremony of His bathing and dressing. Beginning *brahma-muhurta japa* in the dim-lit room—the comfort and peace, spiritual pleasure in reciting Krsna's name; shelter under the order of Srila Prabhupada, and communion with Prabhupada through his order; the satisfaction of the rounds accumulating.

"Feeling well enough to go to *mangala-arati*. Taking my place as preceptor of devotees here.

"Bowling down before the temple Deities. Sitting to view Them while the *kirtana* starts, and joining in the *kirtana*.

Almost every act is pleasurable. There is also sadness that I do not feel it more deeply and purely, yet it is undeniable that this life is happy and this is what I want. I

want to live with devotees and rise early and see Krsna Deities all my life, and I am doing that now, so it is a source of happiness.

“Similarly, the *tulasi* songs, the beginning of group *japa* . . . as Prabhupada said, ‘It is all recreation; you cannot think of a part of our *bhakti-yoga* program and say this is not likeable.’”

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From ***Prabhupada Meditations, Volume 4***

pp.304-5

**“A Letter to Srila Prabhupada”**

“Dear Srila Prabhupada,

“Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

“I am trying to start the practice of writing you letters again. I know that you won’t be able to answer this through your secretaries as you used to do up until 1977, but I want to do it as a kind of meditation. I think that by expressing myself to you, that will also help me to hear your answers to my inquiries in your books. In fact, you speak to us in many different ways, if we could only hear.

“ . . . I still have specific questions, although the letter-writing circumstances have changed so drastically. But I have to break into this letter-writing gradually. Perhaps in this one I will only be able to state my intention to open correspondence with you again and leave it at that. I really hope I can keep them up on a regular basis.

“ . . . Please forgive me for being unsundered. Actually, I am hoping this letter-writing will help me to become a better follower of Your Divine Grace. There is no better way than becoming a real disciple to glorify such a wonderful spiritual master.

“I am writing this ‘first’ letter from Ireland, where I am writing a book called *Here is Srila Prabhupada*. I am also visiting with devotees here. Ratha-yatra in Dublin will take place in a couple of weeks.

“. . . When I used to write you letters, I would sometimes ask about your health, or the progress of your writing of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Or, I would know where you were in the world and ask you how the preaching was there. But I don’t know where you are anymore. I know that you are in Krsna’s internal energy, and that you are always with Krsna wherever you are. I don’t know what to ask you about your activities anymore. Can you tell me what you are doing? I would be so happy to hear about your activities. Ultimately, I will come to you as I absorb myself in Lord Caitanya's pastimes and as I hear about Krsna in Vrndavana, because you are always in Vrndavana with Krsna—and you always serve your ISKCON *sankirtana* mission.

“Your eternal servant,

SDG”

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From ***Passing Places, Eternal Truths (Travel Writings 1988-1996)***

pp.92-93

***“The Summer Marathon”***

“I am sitting in Harikesa Swami's chair, and a very handsome and good, back-fitting chair it is. That does not make me a hardworking, multifaceted leader. I am still the toad, the handsome prince, the worry wart. I want to say something that will come out on the typewriter. I think they may hear me or see me through a crack in the door and think, ‘He is a writer. He is writing something in Krsna consciousness.’

“Listen, the cars are going by in Zurich. It's another day in our life. I complain that I will have to stay up late two nights in a row to give the *Gita* class. It means I won't be able to follow my schedule of rising at midnight, unless I am willing to get up after only three hours of rest. I could try that. Anything to follow my schedule. I will get up and read the *Bhagavad-gita* on my own, or I may have to use the time to prepare for the next *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class. Adjust to it, man. We're only here for three days. It's my *dharma* to do this, my *tapasya* during this summer marathon. The book distributors here in Switzerland, led by the legendary Harinamananda Prabhu, have been out all week as usual and will come back for the weekend. Why don't I think of their austerities and do a little of my own? Yeah, but my schedule is also my austerity. What if I told those book distributors that instead of their regular schedule for distributing books, they would have to follow another schedule? You see my point?”

“Yeah, but I will still do it.”

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From ***Calling Out to Srila Prabhupada***

pp.36-37

***“Introductions to Prayers”***

“Srila Prabhupada has advised us to hear and recite the standard prayers in Vaisnava *parampara*, such as the prayers of the *Brahma-samhita*, and the many prayers contained in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. He has also encouraged us to pray in our own words: ‘With devotion one should feel, “God is great, and I am very small. Therefore my duty is to offer prayers to the Lord.”’ (*Bhag.* 7.9.12, purport).

“Because one goes to God through the guru, it seems more natural to offer prayers to the spiritual master. How can I dare to directly address Sri Krsna? Prabhupada says it is our duty. And Prahlada Maharaja states,

“Anyone who has been forced by ignorance to enter the material world may be purified of material life if he offers prayers to the Lord and hears the Lord's glories.’ (*Bhag.* 7.9.12)

“With this in mind, one may begin. But we should also always be aware that whatever prayers we make will be inferior to the best prayers already composed. My prayers may be taken as additional proof to the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* statement that devotional service may be practiced in all circumstances, by all living beings, including the demons, the beastly species, and the fallen souls.

“Although I am enveloped by the modes of passion and ignorance, and although I actually have little desire to glorify You, I have nevertheless composed these pretended prayers, posing myself as a great devotee eager to praise You. O Supreme Lord, O maintainer of the earth, even though these prayers are a sham, please accept them anyway, and please also teach my mind how to properly glorify You.’  
(Sri Yamunacarya, *Stotra-ratna* Text 56,)

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From ***He Lives Forever: On Separation from Srila Prabhupada***

p.45-46

“If a great personality departs, it is, in one sense, a matter of rejoicing. When Bhishma left his body, the demigods showered flowers from the sky and beat drums. Then everyone became respectfully silent, He passed away at an auspicious hour, and everyone knew that he had gone back to Krsna. Actually, he was seeing Krsna face to face as he left his body. Similarly, Srila Prabhupada was hearing the chanting of Hare Krsna and looking at the lotus feet of Krsna-Balarama and was surrounded by all his devotees—not just at the end of his life, but he had dedicated his whole life to serving Krsna. "If you think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer obeisances to Me,' Krsna says, 'then surely you will come to Me.' Even the newspapers in India — where they're a little more intelligent than in this part of the world—used the caption 'At Krsna's Lotus Feet' for Srila Prabhupada's picture. Another headline read, 'Srila Prabhupada Goes Back to Heaven.' So this is the position of the pure devotee. While he's with us he's with Krsna, and when he leaves he goes to Krsna in the spiritual world to serve Him eternally. It's not ordinary; there's nothing to lament for him. He has certainly gone back to Godhead.

“So Srila Prabhupada's disappearance doesn't have the tragedy of an ordinary death. But it is tragic in another way, in that his contribution is no longer here. He was doing so much to help the world. Now he's gone. When Maharaja Pariksit decided to give up his kingdom and sit down and await his death for seven days, the question was asked, 'Why is he doing this? The whole world is depending on him. How can he leave? He is the shelter for all the citizens of the world. Even if he is detached and wants to go back to Godhead, how can he leave everyone else?' So just as they were lamenting, we are also thinking in the same way: 'Srila Prabhupada has left us. Now what will we do? What will our movement do? Why did he leave? This *Srimad-Bhagavatam* will not be the same without him being here to finish it. What will the world do without his

guidance?’ (Of course, the world didn't always want his guidance, but he has given it, and the world is benefiting from the *sankirtana* movement.)”

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From ***Entering the Life of Prayer***

pp. 45-46

“I wanted to set down here some things that happened on the plane trip. Whenever I can catch communion with Krsna, I want to remember it because the tendency is that one can have some good experience and then forget it. These experiences are the whole direction I want my life to go in; I want to shape my life accordingly.

“So, on the airplane, Madhu and I had a conversation which was not ordinary talking about praying. Usually these things are better kept private, so I was hesitant to talk, but I confided in him some things such as my occasional confusion between praying to Krsna and praying to Prabhupada. He told me his own experience, and it was helpful to hear. Sometimes we just want to pray to Krsna, but even at that time we don't leave our spiritual masters. I also gave the evidence that Prabhupada taught us to chant the Hare Krsna mantra and that at the same time, he said we have to pray through the spiritual master. We don't chant, ‘Prabhupada, Prabhupada,’ as much as ‘Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna.’ We have to remember them simultaneously.”

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From ***Obstacles on the Path of Devotional Service***

pp.38

***“What's the Best Way to Read?”***

“Even if our lives are relatively peaceful, we have to give ourselves a little preparation before practicing *japa* or reading. It may take only a moment to remind ourselves, ‘Now I’m going to chant the Lord’s holy names,’ or, ‘Now I’m going to read a very special book, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Let me do it with reverence and submission. This is not ordinary reading.’

“We should be aware that there is a transition from ordinary consciousness to speaking and hearing transcendental sound vibration. You cannot open the *Bhagavad-gita* as you would a newspaper and start scanning it or cramming. It will not work. First, you have to calm yourself and enter a state of worship. Only then can you actually read or chant. ‘Before reciting this *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, which is the very means of conquest, one should offer respectful obeisances unto the Personality of Godhead, Narayana, unto Nara-narayana Rsi, the supermost human being, unto mother Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, and unto Srila Vyasadeva, the author.’  
(*Bhag.1.2.4*)

“Devotees have to develop their own methods of preparing their consciousness for *sadhana*. The best method is in Krsna’s advice, ‘Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt.’ (Bg. 12.8) But Lord Krsna is aware that many persons are ‘too busy’ or harassed to stay in a continuous flow of devotional meditation. So Krsna recommends, “If you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*. In this way develop a desire to attain Me.’ (Bg. 12.9) This implies a deliberate turning away from other thoughts to the practice of Krsna consciousness, which we do when we take up chanting and hearing.”



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From ***Churning the Milk Ocean: Collected Writings 1993-1994***

pp.379

**“Onboard”**

“It was a trip getting on the boat. They made us go back to the scales where the guy told us to pull the van a little forward off the scale, so we weighed in at 2 tons, 290 kgs. In other words, he cheated. But why? Anyway, it was ridiculous and last minute, and we lost our place in line. Then an immigration official came forward and asked why we had such an odd combination—an Italian van, an Irish driver (born in London), and an American passenger. ‘What is your occupation?’

“‘We are monks.’ He wanted an itinerary of our past travels.

“Now that we're finally onboard, we have to sit with the passengers near the video games room. The kids are bawling, and the ferry plays loud rock music for our entertainment. The slower ferries don't provide such ‘entertainment.’ Anyway, we're lucky to have gotten on board at all.

“M. told the immigration man that we were going for a ‘spiritual tour.’ I just tried to stay calm. I noticed the pink clouds and uttered the Hare Krsna mantra to myself. I thought of Lord Krsna as Madana-mohana dasa drew Him on the cover of The Daily News. He stands in His *tribhanga* form in silhouette. Krsna will take care of the demons and everything else. He will take care of His devotees.

“‘Good morning, the captain . . . fast craft . . . forty minutes . . . good weather . . . no smoking . . . keep children under control. In the unlikely event of emergency, pay careful attention to the safety broadcast . . . In the unlikely event of having to abandon the craft, on the order of the captain, stay calm’ (all this enunciated by a British actor)

‘and get into the survival craft.’ Announcement complete. Back to the music. Is it going to continue for the whole trip? Little botherations —and I shouldn't complain. Find peace within.”

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

pp.47-48

“Since temperaments differ, some devotees may be more inclined to the inner dialogue than others. Some may even pray regularly without really noticing it or labeling it as ‘prayer.’ We needn’t advocate that everyone must pray in the way we do. But, although prayer makes no noise, some may become disturbed that anyone their house is taking prayer so seriously.

“The voice of doubt continues, ‘What has this to do with the preaching mission?’ One answer to this is that purity is the force. Any spiritual activity which purifies us and makes us a genuine devotee will make us more fit to preach. Prayer will help us to become more convinced of Krsna’s presence.

“As we become more Krsna conscious, the people we meet will be impressed that we are not speaking hype or trying to cheat them. Prayer will also give us in inner strength to face the opposition to preaching which comes from nondevotees.

“By praying for others, one's selfish heart broadens and an automatic result is that one wants to give them Krsna consciousness. This attitude of caring for others and then wanting to actually do something for them is expressed in the prayer of Prahlada Maharaja:

“My dear Lord Nrsimhadeva, I see that there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forest to meditate with vows of silence [*mauna-vrata*]. They are not interested in delivering others. As for me, however, I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals. I know that without Krsna consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore I wish to bring them back to shelter at Your lotus feet.”

(*Bhag.* 7.9.44)

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From ***Here Is Srila Prabhupada***

pp.67-68

***“August 11, 1:00 P.M.***

“. . . I found this paragraph in one of Prabhupada’s early writings called *Message of Godhead*. It is from the Introduction:

“At present, we are concerned primarily with two things: one, ourselves; and the other, the place where we live. In other words, we are concerned with two objects: namely, everything that is related to our gross and subtle bodies; and the world at large, with all its paraphernalia. But there are others above us, the transcendentalists, who are concerned not only with their bodies and minds and the world at large, but also with the transcendental subject, which is above the body and mind and the

world at large. The transcendentalists are very much concerned with the Absolute Truth, and much less with relative truths.’

“Prabhupada immediately transcended the limitations of the so-called leaders of the world. He sums up their concerns in one or two sentences and informs us that there are real transcendentalists who have spiritual concerns at heart. It impresses his readers to hear that the transcendentalists are not foolish or introverted or backward, but are ‘concerned’ with a greater truth. He assures us they are willing to share it.

“At the present moment the word religion is being sacrificed on the altar of materialistic tendencies. The human race is more concerned now with subject matters related to eating, sleeping, defending and gratifying the senses, much like the lower animals. The general tendency is to avoid transcendental subjects as far as possible, or in any case, not to go into the details. Even the biggest political leaders have been heard to say that a hungry man or woman finds no meaning in God and religion. People in general, under the leadership of such materialistic men, are gradually descending to the status of lower animals, devoid of all transcendental realization, knowing nothing beyond their material bodies and the material world.

“Thus the human race has descended to the status of the dogs, who are habituated to barking as soon as they come upon another set of dogs who happen to hail from another quarter. We cannot conceive of the greater degradation of the human being than when he raises a hue and cry as soon as he sees another human being who does not happen to

belong to his quarter or his religious denomination. He raises this hue and cry as if he had been faced with a tiger or wolf. Without transcendental knowledge, the human race has actually become no more than the tigers and the wolves.”

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## Writing Sessions

From *Karttika Moon*

### PART ONE

#### *The Karttika Papers, 1994*

#### *Note Pad #2*

#### **Bombay and Calcutta**

“Leave me alone and bless me to go alone so I can gradually produce better writings, interesting and entertaining books. I need to be sure of myself, need to time to walk alone with *Gita* verses and speak to myself.

“Okay, now I’m in Bombay. No more than twenty minutes for this pre-*mangala-arati* WS (Writing Session). I did twelve rounds and prepared the lecture. Now I have to get ready to do down into the marble *kirtana* hall.

Be Be witters

titters and alarms go up

where we least expected ‘em

Don’t be afraid folks,

Mr. Magoo is near-sighted  
 for all of us, have a laugh  
 at an old man's mistakes and  
 watch out, the voice is Jim

Backus rough and I don't even know...But a man died and they held his hand as  
 he went out. Mr. Kotovsky says that's all, no next life, Swamiji. He's a professor and  
 such a fool.

"Prabhupada, this fool of yours is writing and running naked, and there's  
 method in the madness. I don't claim freedom to rebel from you but need to let off  
 steam. Bell rings four times. Smile for the camera, titled teeth.

The rare garland,  
 The juicy and stale *rasagulla*,  
 The tale of tests  
 The rest of time he hypes me and I embarrass him  
 and die-liner delights.

I will go to Indian City,

"Tired and scared I make propaganda that you be gentle with me and give me  
 passage and if you don't well hell with you anyway. No one knows me, no one but Jesus  
 and Supersoul. God, Krsna knows each person's suffering.

Don't be selfish,  
 tell others your own private life,  
 be generous in that way, in writing and giving them joy and assurance,  
 especially sensitive ones (we all) like yourself.

Okay, let M. in and say good mornin'. We got a good plan.

Please write more today even ten minutes free.

“Who can ascertain the tension of a person’s heart if he himself can’t look within? Jibe and jibber. Two kites – Hertz Rent-A-Car and Alitalia. Flying together in one odd space.

“Please, I love God, please, I keep my red beads. I’m surface, don’t cut my cuticle or cause me some pain. Say, “Ouch, I love you.’

“Say, ‘Please take care of me in my old age.’ Say, ‘I don’t pray for medical insurance, but Lord Krsna sure is taking nice care of me.’ Depend on Him. ‘I carry what they lack and maintain what they have.’

“Please put Krsna in the center. You just carry the brass *murti* around three times. Just carry the *danda*, give a lecture, say what is expected, from who you are – I don’t mean your secretmost inner voice, but at least, ‘Hi!’ and yeah, I serve him too, and here’s a little of what I know best. How can I help you if it doesn’t cost me too much? You should, in a meeting with the temple president, be thinking how you can serve him. I do, I try. I come and say what may be helpful.

“Now Narada and a man arrived and are getting the *prasadam* plate ready. Don’t let your tongue and mind go wild in salivating expectation. Just accept whatever it is and eat it nicely and be done with it. Pleasantries, routine talks, feel some pleasure in life, man, I mean in serving and being an aspiring devotee...So what if things don’t go right externally? – Flights, meals, talks with others – main life is your own time to read and

here I take potshots

stabs at truthfulness and self

help and praise of God.

Even a dream may be that.

But what more can you expect?

“Shrug shoulders, smile like, ‘What can I do?’ Blarney, goodbye, leave me alone so I do appreciate that you all are big workers for Prabhupada, brother – (Narada, Bhima, all) but I *should* appreciate, be friendly in service. Don’t put others down.

“It’s best that way. It’s what I want for myself so I give a little to you.

“Tired of confiding to M. who knows it so well already. Enough advertising of my intentions to another, enough ‘affirmations,’ coaching, etc. – now do it, here this afternoon and right now.

“Hare Krsna Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

“It takes energy units  
I jump-startled when  
someone entered the room while  
I was trying to finish writing  
a sentence or word.  
I’m startled and check how  
my energy units are jamming  
thigh and stiffened neck.  
Relax. Close eyes and  
pray.

“Okay chump, I mean champ, here’s your lunch. Eat and run. Don’t take lumps of sin but offer to guru. Each moment is like that. Fan noise, energy units expending



everywhere from the sun planet, from Niagara Falls, from the Indian government, my heart, measured breaths of life, duration of the taxi meter, the running down.

“Will Krsna take up central residence in my heart and not be consigned to an abstract wing in my house? Will I realize my house (body) is actually His dwelling place and I am His eternal servant? When will I surrender and cry tears as I chant His holy names? “When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name?”

“You know, know, whirl whirl whirl . . . The quick fan next door and the heavier, slower rotations in this one.

“Small planes commuting to New England locations in winter. No exaggeration. But what about joy uplifts in moments . . . Capture them too as genuine. No exaggeration but no cynical cut down either. You say call a spade a spade. Yet sometimes feel roses and joy uplifts in Krsna conscious moments.

“The man who, toward a hat  
 had no feeling, wore it  
 Ka-divers,  
 said, ‘A nonsense verse is  
 a little tense these days  
 of simple Hindu *dharmā*.’  
 Then let us converse  
 of esoteric pauses that open  
 with yen and marks and bucks.  
 Let us drink *lassis* and  
 earn our dues for Boy

Scout newspaper routes.  
 Ah, cut it man. Be a  
 serious barefoot and  
 go down to temple hall a  
 simple head. You can't avoid  
 the bow down exchanges but at  
 least glance at your effulgent  
 master and remember your night-  
 mare's effect –  
 how grateful to be here and  
 not held in ransom  
 by *raksasas*.

“Yes, I do pray thanks and don't need jive to distract me and kick out the  
 scorpion in my mind.  
 who find fault  
 The cop-hater, the con...  
 goodbye words of  
 revolving fan  
 Don't hurt me 'cause I'm  
 sane not mad  
 and not Catholic  
 I go to mass – at a temple in India.

**“(To be continued)”**