

Free Write Journal #10

October 12, 2018

This is the tenth week of the *Journal*. Readers can see the previous weeks by looking them up in our archives on the websites. John Endler is coming today. I will tell him I want to end the book with *EJW 17: Radha-Govinda, We Hardly Knew Ya*. This is the last volume in the series written while living peacefully at Geaglum in Inis Rath, North Ireland. John has already typed beyond this, poems written when I traveled to Trinidad and Guyana. But I want him to save them, perhaps for a second volume of *POEMS/ From Every Day, Just Write*. I also want to tell John to omit the ampersand at the beginning of the poem and the double-staff at the end. I originally used them to indicate the poem was like sheet music, a composition to be played. But I think it may expose the fact that I was listening to jazz while I wrote the poem--which I don't want to do. I want to de-emphasize the jazz influence, although I don't need to omit it entirely. If we print mostly the poems written in Ireland, it will be a substantial book. So far, John has not written all the prefaces to the poems. He is a little slow at it, but the ones he has completed are good.

John was pleased to hear that we are finishing the book. But he wants to go on typing poems and writing prefaces for a second volume. For me, I'll keep proofreading. There are some things that only I can proofread before turning it over to our official proofreaders.

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October 14, 2018

In *Brhad-Bhagavatamrta*, Gopa-kumara goes to the heavenly planet of Indra. He takes part in the worship of Lord Visnu, who is present there in the form of Vamanadeva. While Gopa-kumara is residing in heaven, Indra commits a grave offense, and he is forced to leave the planet and live incognito, with no one's knowledge. The elders in heaven consult and decide to select a new ruler to prevent lawlessness. Although Gopa-kumara has been living there for only a year in the calculation of heavenly time, the elders select him to take Indra's post, being favorably impressed with how Gopa-kumara engages in *bhajana* and his exemplary chanting of the Gopala mantra. After a year of ruling the heavenly planet, Gopa-kumara is dissatisfied. He finds the duties of being a manager to be a distraction to his duties of *sadhana* and chanting his Gopala mantra. At this time, some sages on pilgrimage from Maharloka pass through on their way to visit the earth to sanctify the places of pilgrimage. Among the pilgrims is a five-year-

old boy, Sanat-kumara, who travels naked but with a saintly demeanor. Gopa-kumara is at once attracted to him and pays obeisances to his feet. The sages glorify the atmosphere of Maharloka. Lord Visnu is present there, and He accepts the offering of His devotees and has intimate exchanges with them. Gopa-kumara developed a desire to go there, and he chanted intently on his mantra, focusing on asking for the benediction to transfer to Maharloka. Soon he finds he is in Maharloka. Gopa-kumara at first experiences Maharloka as the best place he has ever been. He is able to freely offer the Lord sacrifice and have intimate exchanges. But there is one drawback: the Lord of Maharloka sometimes leaves for undefined periods of time, and this makes the devotees sad. This makes Gopa-kumara think of leaving, either for Orissa, where he can always get the Lord's *darsana* as *Daru Brahman*--or return to Vrajabhumi, where he began his spiritual life, where his spiritual master gave him the Gopala mantra, and where the goddess appeared to him and urged him to always chant the mantra and he would attain the highest perfection of his desires.

What will you have for lunch? The *prasadam* that they'll offer to me ... The conservative Supreme Court is waiting to get another abortion case. They want to overrule the *Roe vs. Wade* decision which has legalized abortion in the U.S.A. for decades. The conservative argument is religious.

They believe that at the time of conception, when the living entity begins to form, it is "life" and should not be killed. Srila Prabhupada is of the same conviction. It is a strange coincidence of identical opinions. "Pro-Life" vs. "Pro-Choice."

The ghastly scene: when Nrsimhadeva tore apart Hiranyakasipu and his soldiers. Nrsimhadeva remained enraged. The demigods then went before Him and offered prayers, stating their relief and gratitude that the demon had been killed. But still, Nrsimha remained unpacified. Then Brahma pushed the five-year-old Prahlada forward to calm the Lord. Seeing the boy stretched out in full *dandavats* at His lotus feet, Nrsimhadeva reached out and patted Prahlada on the head, granting him *jnana-sakti* so that he could speak excellent prayers. Prahlada began, "I am the son of Hiranyakasipu, and demoniac blood flows in my veins. What can I say that your faithful demigods couldn't utter? Still, I have heard that devotional service pleases You very much." He went on to pacify Nrsimhadeva with many thoughtful prayers. He said for himself he had no fear or unhappiness because he could always chant the holy names and meditate on Nrsimhadeva. He was sorry for all those rascals who turned their backs on Krsna. He wanted to work to save them from their sin and suffering. He wanted no boon for himself but to serve the pure devotees and remain pure

in his own heart. Lord Nrsimhadeva told Prahlada that his father had been liberated and fourteen generations of his relatives also, just by being born in the line of Prahlada.

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I have written to Garuda that I don't want to take sides in the controversy over the first and second editions of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is. It is too personal!* If I reject the second edition as unfaithful to Srila Prabhupada, it will affect my relationship with Jayadvaita Swami. He is perhaps my best friend among my Godbrothers. I don't want to disturb my relationship with him. But if I don't accept the compelling arguments by Garuda in favor of reading the first edition, I may limit my relationship with him. We used to have a close relationship, and recently we have revived it. I admire his writing and preaching Krsna consciousness in the academic world. I propose to myself to sometimes read from the first edition and sometimes from the second. If I am approached for my opinion as to which is best, I'll say, "No comment."

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October 16, 2018

N.G. says, "Go home." Wolfe wrote *You Can't Go Home Again*. I go back as far as 1966, when I first met the Swami and became a new person. I have given up my sinful habits of pre-1966 years. Years later, after I accepted *sannyasa* (I am telling this again out of repentance, honesty, and to purify myself), I became infatuated with a woman. I kept this a complete secret from anyone, including the woman. After several years, she got married, and my attraction for her vanished. In a spirit of confession, I foolishly wrote her a letter telling her of my former feelings for her. (A therapist told me this letter was "offensive" to her.) The letter had an opposite effect. It aroused her romantic feelings for me, and I reciprocated. Shortly after this, we had a falldown on two separate occasions. An anonymous person exposed the scandal, and I was given some restrictions by the GBC. Those disciples of mine who had lost faith in me were advised to take shelter in another ISKCON guru, and I was forbidden to initiate any more disciples in my life. There is more that can be written on this blemish on my career, but it is too painful to write (for myself and other parties, including my still-faithful disciples). My Godbrother Rupa-vilasa read my autobiography, *The Story of My Life*. He noted a couple of references to

this affair and commented that I should not remain so down on myself.

"After all, you are not Junior Haridasa."

N.G. writes about writing marathons. She gathers about ten friends, and they sit in a circle with a candle in the middle. First they write for ten minutes, then twenty minutes, then thirty minutes. They read aloud what they have written, but no comments are made. I cannot find so much time to write in. So I go in little spurts.

Bala's (from Trinidad) operation was delayed because the patient before him took extra time. I prayed to Krsna to guide the hands of the surgeon. He is having his cancerous bladder removed and a bag put in so he can urinate without losing blood, as he has been doing. They say it is a routine operation, so let it be routine with no complications. He underwent surgery yesterday, but we have not yet heard the results. It will take seven weeks before he can resume light duties. Bala lamented to Saci that he could not do his service. Saci said more important than his doing his service was the fact that we all love him and want to see him recovered. These words were reassuring to Bala.

Bala phoned me from the hospital. His surgery took five hours and was successful, but he is in much pain. I told him about my prayer, and he submissively said, "Krsna has answered your prayer." He cannot eat for a

week but will be fed by IVs. After that he may be released from the hospital and be allowed to honor some light *prasadam* and told to completely rest for six weeks.

Baladeva walked into the bedroom, where I was trying to take a nap, and said, "The good news is that you don't have to go to the urologist tomorrow. He phoned and said the CAT scan showed that your kidney stones are so small they will be dissolved by the medicine you are taking for that purpose. The bad news is that we have to go see the dermatologist right away. They close at 4:00 P.M." The place in my back where they cut out the cancer cells hasn't healed. It stings me and prevents me from sleep. So we went right away. She instantly diagnosed it and wrote me a prescription for antibiotics, two times a day for five days. It is a beautiful, sunshiny mid-October day. We have big pots of yellow mums on our front porch, and a large orange pumpkin. Baladeva gave out half a dozen Simply Wonderfuls *prasadam* to the staff at the dermatologist's, and they thanked us for the "treats."

In the *Brhad-Bhagavatamrta*, the *Bhakti-sastras* speak to Gopakumara about the unlimited happiness of devotional service to Krsna compared to the tiny joy of impersonal oneness. They have far more Vedic proofs and evidence than the impersonalists, but they don't like to engage

in philosophical arguments. Still, they do it to convince impersonalists and to encourage neophyte devotees. Usually they prefer to chant, hear and remember the Supreme Lord and engage in various kinds of devotional service.

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October 17, 2018

Stand behind your work. Believe in it. I think I do. I create my small pieces and place them in a mosaic, and they are alive and good. It is a mixed bag, and I approach it each day with a feeling of poverty. But as Bhaktivinode Thakura writes, "From imperfection, purity will come about." The pieces are very important and sometimes ordinary, but as I read them I notice I regularly touch upon important and interesting pieces. Like this one: "We have big pots of yellow mums on our front porch and a large orange pumpkin." It is not exactly Krsna conscious, but it gives a perfect picture of Viraha Bhavan in terms of time and space. And I like it inserted there before Baladeva's distribution of *prasadam*. They are all interlocking pieces of a jigsaw, or varieties of marble in a mosaic. Anything is allowed to suddenly appear because it is free writing. Mandalesvara was my editor for the *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*, and he did a thorough job. When Kaisori joined me, she also did thorough editing. Nowadays I don't subject my

writing to intense editing before I publish. I have several devotees do active proofreading correcting misspellings, faulty grammar, and mistakes in fact. (I mistakenly wrote that Radhanatha Swami's temple in Mumbai was "Chippiwada," which is in New Delhi. Radhanatha Swami's temple is "Chowpatty" in Mumbai. A terrible mistake, which was missed by two proofreaders. They say Nagaraja Prabhu has four or five devotees proofread each issue of *BTG* magazine.) But I don't want editors making drastic changes in my work. I know what I want to say; I just want it cleaned up and free of mistakes.

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October 18, 2018

Gopa-kumara is at Shiva-loka. Shiva is advising him to go to Vaikuntha. There's a painting of St. Jerome writing. On his desk is a human skull. Every time he looks up, Jerome sees Death, his inevitable end. Srila Prabhupada said, "We should always keep death in our front." Senior citizens are living older. I am almost 79. I may have ten years left. Or I may have only ten minutes left. I will have to leave everything behind. My writings are my legacy. I will live on in my books. I have written many books about Srila Prabhupada; the most recent is a handsome reprinting in India of two volumes, Books 1-4 of *Prabhupada Meditations*. These are

wonderful books, a continuation of the inspiration I had while writing *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*. *My Dear Lord Krsna*, a two-volume collection of prayers, is also good, as is the three-volume series, *My Letters from Srila Prabhupada*. Isvara-Govinda has posted all of my books in e-book format available at SDGLegacy.com.

Lal-Krsna and Shyama dasi from the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies are here for two weeks. Lal-Krsna is a computer expert, and he has already given me access to two things Jayadvaita Swami and Bhurijana sent which we couldn't receive without his help. Shyama is having difficulty in her relationship with the head of the Oxford Centre, and I'm trying to help her by interceding, talking with her authority on the phone. Lal and Shyama are very nice devotees. They get along well together, but Lal loves his service at the Oxford Centre while Shyama is struggling to find her place. They are cooking every day while they are here, and Lal is helping me with computer things.

I'm asking Lal to show me Bhurijana's video today, and on Saturday show me the extensive website that Jayadvaita Swami recommended to me, which defends the second edition of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*.

I am reading "Responsible Preaching." It's a BBT position paper written many years ago by Jayadvaita Swami and Dravida Prabhu. I take it

in submissively, but after half an hour a pain develops in my right eye (migraine). That's because the subject is controversial and is polarizing devotees (whether the first or second edition of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* is more faithful to Srila Prabhupada). Garuda has started a campaign against the second edition on Facebook, and that causes tension in me. I'm going to watch the more recent website, which extensively supports the second edition. I don't want to be on the fence about this.

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October 19, 2018

John is coming today. He insists on pushing ahead and typing poems and writing prefaces for what would be Volume 2 of *POEMS/From Every Day, Just Write*. But I want to concentrate on cleaning up and finishing everything in Volume 1. Then I will ask him if he can send the typed manuscript of Volume 1 in electronic form to our proofreader, Krsna-kripa. Krsna-kripa has limited time (he's a *harinama* man), and we will have to accept that (two hours a day). But John and I are eager to get this book out and distributed. We have to be patient. It will take some time for the proofreaders (Guru dasa is also one), and I should do it as well (to catch the mistakes and correct them). The explicit jazz influence should be restrained, but some semblance of it may remain, to keep the authenticity

of the poems as they were written.

Today I have a morning meeting and an afternoon doctor's appointment. With so many interruptions, I think this week's *Journal* will be shorter. But I think I wrote on some worthwhile subjects. I hope that my readers will be satisfied, even if there are less pages. John showed me in one of my books written in the early 1990s: *L.I.S.*, "Let It Simmer." This may mean don't rush something into print. But for the past couple of days, I have been feeling a pressure--that I am forcing myself to write words which I will immediately post as *Free Write Journal*. I don't like the pressure.

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October 20, 2018

I am at a crossroads in the *Journal*. I don't like the "hand-to-mouth" struggle to find words and make short pieces to fit into the mosaic. N.G. advocates profuse "practice" writing, filling a notebook in a month and not publishing it all. I have been posting everything I write and scraping the bottom of the barrel by telling of my medical visits and my aches and pains. But that was the whole purpose of the *Journal*, as advised by N.K., just share myself and news of my activities. That was thought to be sufficient. Now do I doubt it? And I would do *directed* free writing, steering to Krsna, mainly by reporting on the scripture we have chosen in our out-loud

reading. And maybe write less. So I shouldn't give something inferior. What about, in a separate notebook, do pure free writing not for posting? It might free my hand, and I could take excerpts from it for posting. I think I'll do that and end my *FWJ* #10 here.