

Free Write Session #3

August 23, 2018 (continued)

This is the third chapter of my weekly journal. I hope I am gaining readers. If not, I am writing for myself. Summer is over. It was down to 65° last night. I have three disciples who were married but divorced or in the process of divorce. They share the time they spend with their children. It is sad how they raise children but then break up, sometimes with no apparent good reason. I grew up in the 1940s and 1950s in a secure family unit. But then my parents and sister disowned me when I joined the Hare Krsna Movement. That was bizarre and I can't really understand it, even today. When I told Prabhupada, he didn't seem to think it was so terrible. He told me my material father was a temporary arrangement and that he was my eternal father. I would phone my mother every fifteen years or so, and she always told me, "As long as you are with them, we don't want anything to do with you." I have seen devotees too attached to their material families, and I prefer to be free of that. Just Prabhupada and the association of devotees.

Krsna-dasi is back, and she cleaned and changed the dress of Radha-Govinda and Gaura-Nitai. The standard jumped way up. I can now take long *darsanas* of Radha-Govinda because They are so well-dressed and

attractive. Govinda is wearing a stunning turban with dark and light blue pants of cloth and several long and well-fitting necklaces. His right shin and left toes are exposed in *tri-bhanga* pose. Radharani looks simply wonderful in a red blouse and expansive flower-patterned skirt. It is easier to see Them as spiritual *arca-murtis* and not brass statues. I am content and enlivened just to sit in my chair and gaze upon Their beautiful forms. Prabhupada said that the *pujari* is the most fortunate person in the world. He or she gets to do the same thing they will be doing when they go to the spiritual world.

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August 24, 2018

Vande guroh sri-charanaravindam . . . There are many wonderful *krsna-bhajan*s, especially by Narottama dasa Thakura and Bhaktivinoda Thakura. They are as authorized as the Vedas. But Aindra Prabhu's 24-hour *kirtana* party sings only the *maha-mantra*, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare to different melodies and rhythms. The Hare Krsna mantra, earnestly chanted in *japa* or *kirtana*, has all the potency to please Radha and Krsna as the recitation of all the *bhajan*s and Vedic *sloka*s. But it has to be chanted without offenses and attentively, "from the heart." The holy names are

Krsna Himself; in fact, the sound form of the Lord is more merciful than the personal form. If you chant offensively and do not feel attraction for the Names, you are advised to go on chanting constantly and your offenses will disappear.

Three members of the Singh family from Tennessee are visiting and staying four days. The father, Nitai-Gaurasundara, is my doctor and prescribes medicine for me. His wife, Matsya devi dasi, has aches and pains associated with the coming of old age, but she is cheerful and affectionate. Their youngest son, Abhisekha, who graduated from college and is trying to be a lawyer, is sober, but he likes to joke the two grown-up daughters will not be here. With the whole family together, they are like a sit-com show, with much laughter at each other's expense. It will be toned down without the daughters, but we will have some fun.

Jahnavi Held comes up with
good titles for her poems:

"My poverty,"

"I Am Still Here," etc.

They are provoking and personal.

Her poetry is a little

difficult to understand
but you know you are
in the presence of a talented
artist. She is a Hare Krsna devotee
but never uses the word "Krsna."
We devotees know who she is
talking about when she writes "You"
or "my oldest friend." But she is
so subtle. Her poems are open to everyone of any
religion. I like them;
poems on very elemental
subjects spun on a
tapestry of words. I am
going to read them again
and again (so I can
know them better).

The summer is over, but we are still receiving lots of visitors.
Janmastami and Radhastami are still ahead. I wrote a book, *Visitors*, in
which I expressed my ambiguity about receiving guests. I enjoy their

company and conversation, but they cut into my precious solitude and creative work. Socialization: I can't live without it, but too much of it disorients me. I need long uninterrupted periods of being alone. Then I can read and write and hear Prabhupada's lectures. I can chill out and rest my fragile old bones. I can't bear much stress without getting a headache. I like to sit comfortably and gaze at Radha-Govinda.

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August 24, 2018

This writing is imperfect. "From imperfection, purity will come about," wrote Bhaktivinoda Thakura. He meant by constant, determined practice, Krsna's mercy would be revealed. (Baladeva just interrupted me and asked me to take part in a meeting tomorrow with Krsna-rasa, my lawyer, Saci-suta, my daughter and patron, Nitai-Gaurasundara, my physician. He wanted me to "settle up" the issue of what I want to do if my heart stops beating. I thought I had already settled that after talking with a doctor and a nurse when I was in the hospital. I chose DNI, "Do Not Intrude," in case my heart stopped beating. I was told the alternative was a painful process where they put something down my throat, whereby I would lose the ability to talk but could hear others talking. There was a risk

the patient couldn't come out of this and return to normal consciousness. Then they described further, more extreme processes of prolonging life. At this point of the conversation I fixed on Prabhupada's example of dying and I became emotional, felt devoted to him and wanted to follow his path. He refused to even enter the hospital, stopped eating, stayed surrounded with his intimate disciples and an attending *kaviraja*. He did not consider any artificial life supports. I decided I wanted DNI and gave my signature to that on the form. Later I asked the nurse if she could show it to me so I could study it. She lent it to me. I saw it was already stamped in several places, had doctors' signatures on it, and was entered into the hospital's system. I was satisfied with it but my disciple and medical proxy, Baladeva, said he was "confused." He had previously received an opposing opinion from my urologist, who said DNI wasn't enough. Therefore, they have called a meeting of me and four of my intimate and responsible disciples.)

My friendly follower, Matthew Wheelock, just sent me an email that he was excited to see my first week's installment of the *Free Writing Journal* on the websites. I want to write confidentially. Baladeva came to me an hour ago and said, "I have something you can write about in your journal." He mentioned the DNI issue. I said no, I wasn't going to write about it. I had just written two sentences about the nature of free write and

wanted to develop it more. But instead, I opened a parentheses and wrote all about DNI. My fellow writing buddy, Narayana Kavaca, advised me to include my readers in my writing: "I offer this to you that you may bear witness to these final years of my life in this world." I wrote about how I want to die to clear up the subject for myself. (I intend to read it at my confidential meeting tomorrow.) But I also intend to share it with my readers. I don't think I am being hypocritical; I am writing simultaneously privately and for my "glorious readers."

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August 25, 2018

Bhagavatacarya, my Ukrainian disciple, criticizes me for writing favorably of the Christian saints in *Entering the Life of Prayer*. He states it is not proper for an ISKCON guru. (I remember when the book first came out, Jayadvaita Swami also criticized me. He wrote to me that I might be the next guru to fall down because of my "Christian deviation.") But as the years have gone by, the controversy over *Entering* has died down, and many devotees have expressed their appreciation for the book. It was written when I was going through a keen discovery of the Christian mystics. But I have passed through that phase and haven't written any more of it. I am sticking to Prabhupada's books. We are now reading "The Churning of

the Milk Ocean." It is a favorite section. The demigods and demons are engaged in a tug-of-war, trying to churn nectar. Many wonderful things are being produced, including beautiful women. The demigods were coached by Lord Visnu not to become attached to any of the attractive phenomena created by the churning, and not to be disturbed by trouble made by the demons. They should be patient and wait for the opportunity, knowing that the Supreme Personality of Godhead was on their side.

When Hiranyakasipu fought with Lord Nrsimha, the demon used his sword and shield, leaving no gaps open. Nrsimhadeva captured him like Garuda catches a snake, then just for fun He dropped Hiranyakasipu from His grip. The demigods watching from the sky didn't think this was a good move. They feared if Hiranyakasipu became triumphant, he would take revenge on them for rooting for Nrsimhadeva.

A devotee wrote me and asked if a "revised" edition of *ISKCON in the 1970s* could be done. I wrote him back, "No." I said all my books were copyrighted and it was illegal to change them without my permission. I told him to "take it or leave it." After I disappear, they will stay as they are without any further editing.

I can't seem to stretch out longer on one topic in free writing. I give out small pieces, switching from one to another. Some practice writing I

don't save for the Journal. For example, I wrote off the top of my head, "The microscope was invented by Horace Morsh." That's irrelevant gibberish. I want to steer to Krsna consciousness. I can't allow myself to write anything and pass it off as "writing practice." I am a responsible member of the *parampara* and have to "bear the burden of theism."

But sometimes I want to go free, run through the leaves of grass . . . (but I can't even walk without holding on to someone's hands. I have been neglecting my physical exercise in favor of writing. Writing is more fun and creative. I may be risking my longevity, but I love to make the line.)

We had our meeting, and I consented that if Baladeva found me unconscious but breathing, he could call 9-1-1. This means I agreed to enter the hospital rather than to die at home. But I much rather dying at home, surrounded by devotees and *kirtana*. The hospital is an alien place with nurses interrupting your sleep during the night, etc. Let me die in my bed at home, with devotees attending me. But how do I know I have a terminal disease (so that I can go home and die in peace) unless I enter the hospital and let the doctors examine me and diagnose me? "You have cancer; you have _____ months to live."

I just had a talk with Baladeva. I told him that after our larger meeting, it seemed that our promise (we shook hands on it, just he and I)--

not to enter the hospital again--was cancelled. He replied that he wouldn't take me on his own power but would call in Saci-suta or Kirtana-rasa to convince me. He pointed out that I have had numerous occurrences of UTI, urinary tract infection. It is treated with antibiotics; repeated use is not good for you. I have had several bouts of pneumonia. Each time I recover, I do not come back up to the normal condition. I have weak lungs.

Pneumonia is said to be "the number one killer of old folks." I have resigned myself to entering the emergency room if I have a serious illness--as much as I am *very averse* to staying in the prison-like hospital.

