

Collected Drawings

1996–1997

Satsvarupa dasa Goswami



Dear Guru Maharaja,

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

Here are some questions and thoughts on the enclosed pictures of your work.

As you have said, you want to impel our Krsna consciousness. You said, "The pictures are meant to have a life of their own and to show that we see Krsna in all things and we think of Krsna at all times."

You are in action and to hear the person behind the action come forth in words and feeling and ultimately how this is just another way to say what we want to say, that we love our lives in Krsna consciousness, is valuable to anyone who hears.

There is nothing more refreshing than hearing the artist himself speak. The audience will feel the gift of Krsna consciousness in their own lives by hearing someone else's gifts.

The compilation in its completion—a book that you can sit down with and enter into, not something that needs to be explained—in fact that could work against it. But it is very much a journey in the present, and it is something that is like being with the person in his action. In that sense, it has an unassumingness of a child at play (one artist commented that as he grew older, he felt more youthful, fresh . . .)

The drawings selected here all come from EJW volumes, from volumes 1 to 12.

Sa vai Pumsam . . .



Splashes and sacred text. Somehow the meaning of this verse seems to be unconsciously expressed through the spontaneous color, unmotivated action of the hand. Matisse has said, "He who really has something to say is driven to it by the emotion which makes him carry out his work . . ."

Madhumangala sings direct, literal Kṛṣṇa conscious lyrics, yet he also plays an instrument alongside with freedom and improvisation. Do you feel that way about the colors and words together? Is the coloring like the instrument that you can play along with direct Kṛṣṇa conscious expression?

Krsna—own words



There is a statement by Jean Du Buffet that “true art crops up wherever you don’t expect it . . . whenever no one has been thinking about it or uttering its name.” Somehow I think of this when I look at this picture. It creates a connection with the artist. And a connection with the person of the picture who is walking in this world, yet at the same time in the world of Krsna. You have said that art can sometimes remind us that we are connected to Krsna at every moment. Sometimes we just need reminding. A true painting, true art brings this about in our lives and we too want to see beyond the half tones, see the color that surrounds our lives. It sings out the warmth of Krsna having entered our lives.

Please speak about how the spontaneity of color and marks in this picture can be like imprints of the very luck we have found ourselves in, the warmth that exists by our connection to Krsna in our "own words."

Kirtan and Krsna kirtana



anyone can take part in the chanting, even a child, even a dog...

Fear not, Read Bhagavad gita sincerely



Please tell us how this painting came about.

Landscape



Peaceful green. It appears that this expressive landscape took birth within the moment, within a few strokes of the hand. Could you speak about this quality of moving the hand quickly and gaining entrance to a vista of simple form.

Untitled (man with up raised arms)



Layers that keep their fresh beauty. This reminds of the quote of Mellick where she says " . . . These have no place in this work than telling a mother that her child will look better with different colored eyes." The layers of color seem to have given birth to a beautifully raw form. It is a basic form of a devotee. Could you speak how under the apparent simpleness of this picture, there is a valuable voice, something that can't be captured by a child working in his childish simplicity?

Krsna consc. is free



And we have the freedom to shout it out.

You said about your ink stain pictures, "If I had time and energy I'd liked to have done twice as many. There is no limit. Keep doing them . . ."

The colors are like dancing rainbows. The black minimal form and lettering directs us to the bareness of the truth. Please say something about this painting as you follow the line movement and free flow?

Lord Varaha and the demon



This is an example of how mark-making in a drawing can lead you to glimpsing into the mind of the maker. This can't be portrayed in careful, painstaking attempts to capture nature. Look at the demon, how his form is 'scratched' in. How did you feel after you got this out of your hand and mind. In what sense bring you closer to Lord Varaha and His pastimes?

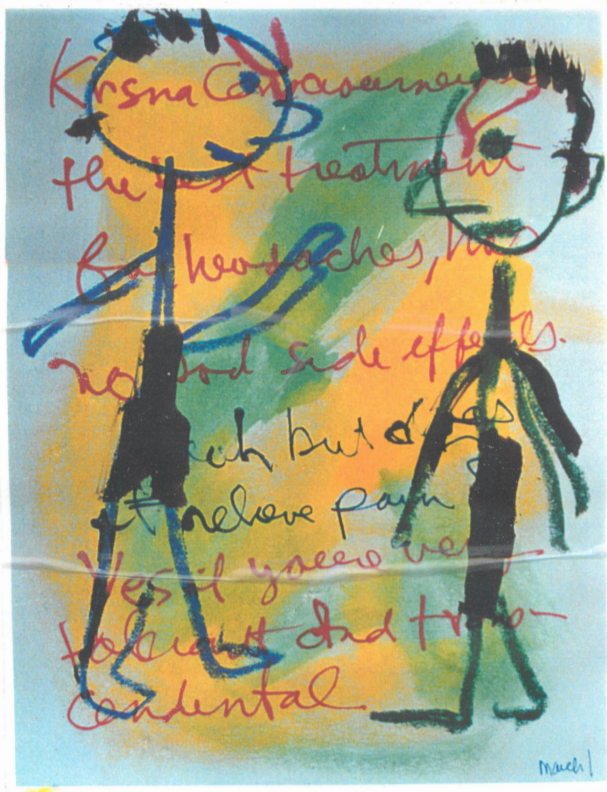
"Krsna consciousness is the best treatment for headaches . . . "

and

" . . . is the supreme lovable object"



The color and form in this picture comes from their own depth. The artist's impulses has allowed the picture its own inventiveness. You said once, that you want to 'backwards' in your picture-making, not 'forward.' Do you still feel like that? What is the value of immediately going to the essence of what comes from you?



Self-portrait



This one is abundant with warmth of the artist. Immediate life, the writing hand, a light to do it by at midnight, a self-portrait . . . These all seem like pieces of a world that faithfully exist day after day. And this life has a good life duration. Who is the figure on the left of the self-portrait? Is he a sub-person? What is his place in this picture?

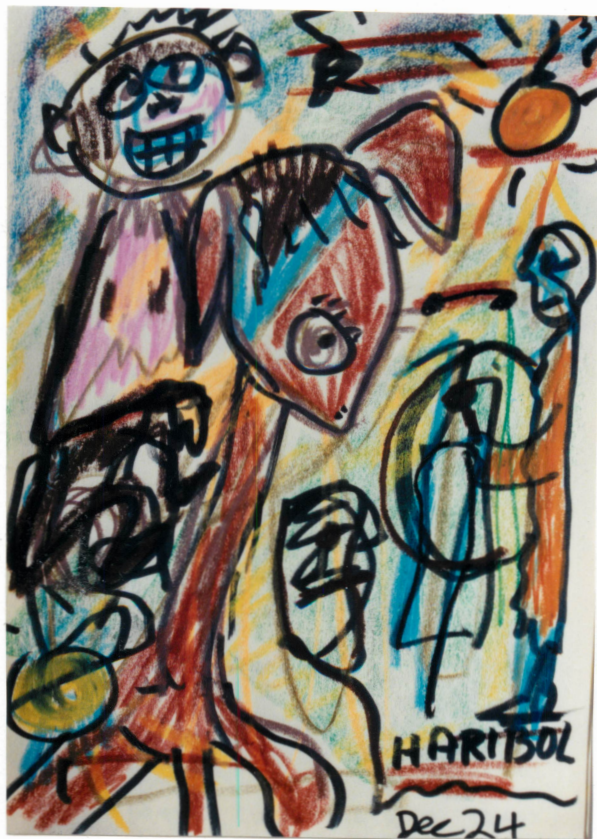
Radha and Krsna, Dec 3



You have once said that even an artist who tries to portray Krsna very realistically, can't come near the complete beauty of Radha Krsna.

What satisfies you in a portrait of Radha and Krsna, especially the pictures you have draw of Them? You said once how you liked a Radha Krsna picture you did, especially the 'chunkiness' of Krsna.

Haribol



What is this painting's story? If it didn't exactly have a story, could you give it one now?

World Enlightenment Day



Since this one never had words written in bold on the picture, I selected the first words of the underlying type. There seems a connection between those words and the brilliance and encompassing, dancing flower. True enlightenment expressed to others is a wonderful thing. Please talk about this generous mood of the devotee, how we are not pessimistic, don't sit down and 'cry' at the world situation but take up the process with vigor and optimism. Or please talk about painting flowers in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

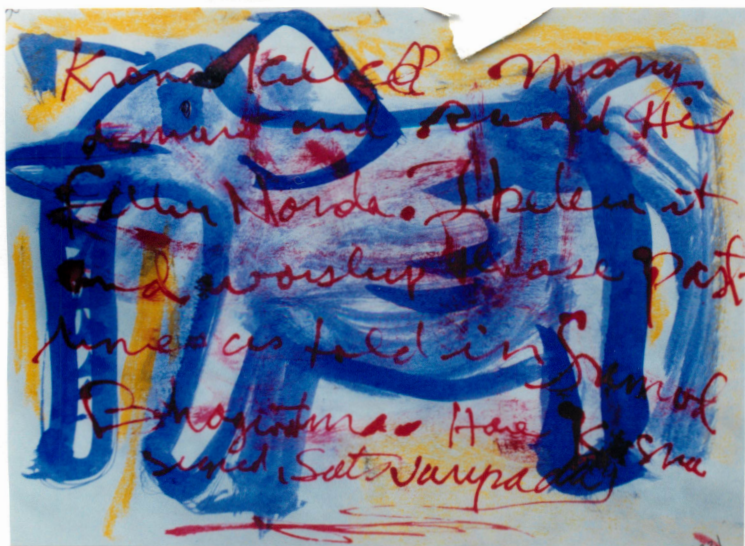
Nrsimhadeva



You have painted Nrsimdeva before. The previous one you did was a rendition of Jadurani's painting. You did it in a few strokes of spray paint. This Nrsimhadeva seems to have come out of the colors themselves, somehow out of everything Lord Nrsimhadeva manifest. And He did so in all His fierceness. The energy of the Lord's anger, and the intelligence of the Lord's mission.

You have said, on painting the Lord's form, "Don't be afraid to do so. He likes fun and devotion. You can do Him in this way even with those non-Krsna figures on the same page. After all, we are His parts and parcels." Could you comment further on this.

Krsna killed many demons . . .



You write over the painting, "Krsna killed many demons and [?] His father Nanda. I believe it and worship those pastimes as told in Srimad Bhagavatam. Hare Krsna. Signed, Satsvarupa das."

The writing has the same faithful simplicity that the painting has. The mood comes over in a matter-of-fact way, that really ushers us into His pastimes. Did you feel as free doing these as it looks? Free like a child skipping down a road?

Haribol
(two paintings)



Two paintings of persons, creatures, chanting "Haribol." You have said that by feeling joyful in our expressions, Krsna consciousness becomes manifest. These both speak their joy.



Car ride



Please tell us about this picture.

Headache



This can express more about physical pain in this world than any spoken dialogue. What is the story along with this picture? The vise seems to just be knocking at the outer wall.

Navadwipa Bhava Taranga



Is the flowering plant the tree of bhakti?

Jagannathasvami
(two paintings)



Lord Jagannatha and His strong servants. These paintings were done in Jagannatha Puri early this year. How does the dhama have a special influence on your

collages. You have said how naturally the quality of the collages are superior in the holy dhamas.



Ha ha Prabhu . . .
and
Bhaja Bhakata

You mentioned how sometimes you do drawings and simultaneously listen to Prabhupāda chanting bhajanas. You have also said how your drawings are sometimes experimental. That it is colorful and nice and that it is where you want to go.



Krsna, Rabbit and devotee



You said, "I draw free-expression drawings but I don't know if I should let go like that. Would it be better to repress that?"

This picture has Krsna's holy name and some kind of a preaching story. It really looks like a lot of fun and that it *did* come out of the free-expression forum. Krsna is always in our lives and as devotees we can't "escape" that. Your drawings share this message.

Here is a poem you wrote in EJW 10:

Just to avoid the always
serious and official we
may do this.

And just to make an
act (drawing), etc. which
has no audience like
the flower that

blossoms unseen but
is therefore seen only by
God. The flutist in the pit.

You delight in it and offer it to Him
and no one else has to know it.

