

Free Write Journal #54

Update on Our Out-Loud Reading of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*

King Nabhi performed the sacrifice to get a son like Lord Visnu. The Lord appeared and assured Nabhi his wish would be fulfilled. Nabhi's priests were ashamed that they had called upon Lord Visnu to ask for such a paltry boon. But the Supreme Lord was so inclined to His devotee Nabhi that He fulfilled his desire. Nabhi and his wife Merudevi begot a son named Rsabha ("the best person"). Nabhi raised the boy with great care. He sent him for education and training to the *gurukula* of the learned brahmanas to be taught the wisdom of the Vedic literature. As Nabhi saw that his son was very much loved and was popular with the citizens, he turned the boy over to *brahmanas* and retired to the holy place of Badarikasrama to practice austerities. Rsabha ruled the kingdom, the field of his activities. He saw to it that everyone was following their quality of work according to *varnasrama dharma*. Rsabhadeva married and begot 100 sons in his wife Jayanti. His instructions to his sons are very famous and praiseworthy. He taught them not to waste their lives in sense gratification, which is available in the lives of the hogs and dogs, but to practice "divine austerity" (*tapo divyam*). He said no one should become a husband or a mother or a spiritual master unless he can save his subordinates from death. He told them to follow the lead of his senior son Bharata

and gave many more valuable instructions.

How Do I Feel That Most of My Books Are Not Available in Hard Copies, and Am I Satisfied That My Main Readership Will Be in the Future?

I accept that because of financial reasons and lack of organization, most of my books are available only in e-book format. But I am disappointed about this situation. I wish all the books were in print and hope maybe in the future this will take place. As for my main readership being in the future, that would be fine with me. But I don't know if it will be a fact. It's possible that after I pass away my readership may dwindle. I would be very happy if in the future new people came forward to read my books and keep them in print. My books are not just for my disciples (who are limited in number, and growing old). I need some devotees who are enthusiastic to keep the books in print and make them available for future generations.

Flowers in Krsna Consciousness

As I write this, it is the beginning of August, and our garden is producing many marigolds, lilies and roses. We are using them exclusively in our worship of the many Deities we maintain in the *ashram*. Flowers have always been important in ISKCON. Garlands were made for Prabhupada and his senior devotees, *sannyasis*, etc. In the temple worship of the *arca-vigraha*, each Deity had a flower garland. This standard is easier to keep up in the warm weather than it is in the winter. But

temples that keep a high standard purchase flowers from the florist even in the winter. We see it as a necessary part of devotional service.

From *The Radha-Govinda Worship Book*

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“Now here I am seated facing Radha and Govinda. A handsome combination, black *chadars*, brown outfits with much golden trim, suitable for the cool gray day.”

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“I have laid out three sets of clothes for Radha-Govinda for Syamananda dasa to photograph. He’s supposed to come here this morning. I have dressed Them in a very photogenic outfit. I gave Govinda His silver buffalo horn but then wondered if it is the right mood for Him when He is alone with Radha. Anyway, it is a part of His eternal paraphernalia. Certainly, the flute goes with Him everywhere. Radha does not carry so much paraphernalia, although She wears a nice blue *candrika* and blue clothes. They are ready for the picture-taking.”

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“Dawn. Radha and Krsna in red *chadars*, pink dresses with

peacock-feather trim and golden *jari*, golden leaning stick and flute. All glories to Radha and Krsna in the groves of Vrndavana! Thanks to Srila Prabhupada for allowing me to worship Them on this altar in my room. Wonderful loyalty to him. Surely he will take us all the way to the service of Radha and Krsna.”

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“The Deities’ bed is placed under the altar, the tissues I used to bathe and dry Them are thrown away. The tape recorder is waiting for you to play a lecture of Prabhupada. He watched me as I dressed him, and he indicated that I was his disciple and that he would grant me and his other disciples all our desires. But we have to learn.”

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“Radha and Krsna wearing Their royal purple dresses with white and silver trim. Even though it doesn’t show Krsna’s lotus feet, I like these regal outfits. I gave Them black *chadars*, and Krsna carries His silver flute and stick. I found a purple *candrika* for Radharani. All this is very nice, and I should not complain that I am feeling tasteless. But I know somewhat that I am mortal, and I know that I don’t possess the treasure of love for Radha and Krsna.”

Letters from Srila Prabhupada

“Bhaktivedanta Manor

28 August 1973

“My Dear Satsvarupa,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated August 22, 1973.

“You are the only one sending in reports, so I thank you very much for your diligence.

“If you can arrange for meetings with Professor Dimock and other professors, then do it for the month of October and I shall come.

“Krishna is very kind upon you because he has given you so many responsible tasks. So always think of the Lotus Feet of Sri Krishna and you will find no difficulties in executing the tasks allotted to you by Krishna. Bhaktivinode Thakura used to say all difficult tasks he had to execute for Krishna were considered as great pleasure for him.

“Regarding the criticism from others, that may be there but we have to follow our own principles. Syamasundara was too attached to his daughter and therefore he took her back, but it is not good.

“Kindly see that the principles are being followed, Deity worship, *sankirtana*, chanting, etc. If we maintain these principles rigidly, there is

no question of falldown and without any difficulty our progressive march will advance.

“I hope this letter meets you in good health.

“Your ever well wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

Comment: Prabhupada thanks me for being the only one to send him monthly GBC reports. I don't know why the others didn't do so, but they were doing many things in his service, and I thought it was the least I could do to send him the monthly reports he required. Without these reports, how could he be in close contact with all the GBCs?

There is talk of possible meetings with Professor Dimock (of the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Chicago—and other professors). The professor's interest was not that strong, and the meetings never came about. Among the professors of religion, Professor Thomas Hopkins was the most interested and had several private meetings with Prabhupada in which he asked him so many interesting and submissive questions.

Prabhupada says I have been given so many responsible tasks, and this is Krsna's kindness. I believe at this time I had a Midwest USA GBC zone, and there were many temples to visit and see that the standards were being kept up. Prabhupada says if I always think of the lotus feet of Krsna, I will find no difficulty in executing the many tasks.

I don't remember what Prabhupada means about criticism from others. He seems to refer to Syamasundara taking his daughter out of the gurukula, which he doesn't approve. Perhaps Syamasundara had some disagreement about how the gurukula was run, for Prabhupada says, "There may be criticisms but we have to follow our own principles." Finally, he orders me to see that the principles are being followed in all departments. If we follow them rigidly, there will be no falldown, and our progressive march will advance."

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"Bombay

16 September 1973

"My Dear Satsvarupa Maharaja:

"Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your GBC report dated Sept. 3, and have noted the contents. So far naming of the Detroit Deities, They shall be known as Radha Kunja Behari. Yes, it is proper etiquette that the *sannyasis* consult with the local president for anything they need such as men.

"Regarding the Gurukula I am glad to hear that the one 5-year-old boy wanted to stay with us. That is very good. Boys like friends of the same age. Regarding sending the older boys to New Vrindaban, let New

Vrindaban have sufficient place for them, then you can consider.
 Anyway, this will have to be decided amongst yourselves.

“Yes for Deity worship at least 10 *brahmanas* are required.

Regarding New Orleans, the book distribution must be established, not just the Deity worship. This is very important to our Movement, so please arrange this to go on.

“I hope this meets you in good health.

“Your ever well wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

Comment: Prabhupada is writing in response to my GBC report of September 3rd. He tactfully advises that the *sannyasis* should not independently preach to men that they should leave the temples and join the *sannyasis*. They should discuss their needs with the temple president and act accordingly.

Prabhupada is pleased to hear that a five-year-old boy wanted to stay with us at *gurukula*. Some of the parents thought five years old was too young to send their children to *gurukula*, but here Prabhupada approves it. Regarding a proposal that older boys go to New Vrindavana, he steps back from too much hands-on management and says it has to be decided “amongst yourselves.”

At least ten *brahmanas* are required for Deity worship. That seemed to us to be a lot. How could we maintain it? And then he warned us that book distribution must be established, not just Deity worship. So somehow everything has to be

accommodated, and book distribution should not be neglected.

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“Bombay

4 October 1973

“My Dear Satsvarupa,

“Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your report for Central USA dated September 25th, and I have noted the contents with great satisfaction. Your reports are coming more regularly than any other GBC, and from them I can understand that things are developing very steadily under your supervision.

“Karandhara's plan to eventually purchase the entire block of land for Gurukula at the low price it is available is good. Yes, Dayananda is correct. When the boys and girls become ten or twelve years and above, then they should be separated. At that time special care should be taken, because once they become a victim of sex their whole life is spoiled.

“I am very glad to learn that Govardhana dasa has become a leader in the deity worship, due to his inspired service. That is the real thing— one who has inspiration of life, he can do anything. Rupa Goswami explains this as ‘*utsaha*,’ enthusiasm.

“I am very pleased that you and Hridayananda Swami are traveling and preaching and that everyone was singing and dancing at the *kirtana* at the University of Iowa. It is a sign of great success. Your plan to spend up to one month in each big university city, sometimes taking an apartment for conducting regular evening meetings is approved by me. But do not open any permanent centers, just take the apartment for a month and then move onto another city. For the time being new centers may not be opened. Whatever centers we have got already, let us organize them very soundly. If more men are available, let them come to India. I have already written to Karandhara that fifty more men are required in India, so if possible, you may arrange for some men to come from your zone.

“So I am very pleased with your preaching. Please continue with all enthusiasm and determination and win the hearts of all your fellow countrymen by offering this authorized process of Krishna Consciousness.

“I hope this meets you in the best of health.

“Your ever well-wisher,

“A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami”

Comment: In this letter Prabhupada identifies my GBC zone as “Central USA.” Once again, he says that I am sending regular reports more than any other GBC

representative, and by this he can understand that things are developing steadily under my supervision.

He mentions Karandhara's plan to eventually purchase the entire block of land for Gurukula at the low price that is available. He approves of this. It was a great opportunity to get all that land with houses on it, and the *grhasthas* moved in. The whole neighborhood became Krsna conscious!

A warning: co-ed education should not be maintained when the boys and girls become twelve years or older.

I was glad to see that Prabhupada acknowledged my praise of Govardhana dasa as an inspired leader in Deity worship. This must have pleased Govardhana very much and given him more enthusiasm.

Prabhupada approves of the traveling and preaching of Hridayananda Swami and I in the midwest. He says we can rent an apartment in a college city for a month and try to recruit members, but we should not open new permanent centers. Just stay one month and then move on.

Prabhupada asks for men to be sent to India. He says fifty more men are required and he has written to Karandhara about it—"So if possible you may arrange for some men who come from your zone." This request was a strain on our manpower, but we tried our best to respond to Prabhupada's request.

Monarchy

In former ages when *varnasrama dharma* was intact, a trained and qualified

ksatriya would be posted as emperor of the world. He would see that everyone, according to their caste and social order, was properly engaged in work. He was the supreme authority, but he followed the guidance of the *brahmanas*. (When King Vena defied the *brahmanas*, they killed him with a curse.) When ideal kings like King Yudhisthira, Pariksit Maharaja, King Prithu, etc. were ruling, all the people were satisfied, and even the weather was regulated and the earth produced ample crops. As Kali-yuga progressed, the kings collected taxes for their own selfish needs—collecting tax and using it for their sense gratification and exploiting the citizens. Monarchy was eventually abolished. The world governments adopted democracy, “a government for the people and by the people.” But this was worse than monarchy. Unqualified *sudras* and less-than-*sudras* elected the highest government officials, who themselves were not at all qualified except in begging for votes, and the situation became chaotic. At the present, the personal behavior of the voters and the presidents is so low that it is a mockery of government. The degraded masses enthusiastically rally around the worst candidates, encouraging them on in base behavior and character. Prabhupada writes that the only solution is for a Krsna conscious person to gain the position of government leadership. The vigorous prosecution of congregational chanting of the holy names can change the atmosphere and bring about sane conditions for human living.

Spending Money

In the early days of ISKCON under Prabhupada’s direction, devotees were very

frugal. They ate lean diets just to save a few dollars for book distribution.

Prabhupada was personally frugal, and he used to reuse an envelope mailed to him by writing on it. He became angry when devotees misspent. One of his managers in India stayed in an expensive hotel and rationalized it by saying that his father was paying for it. Prabhupada thought this kind of reasoning was nonsense. In 1966, when the devotees allowed themselves to be tricked by a realtor and lost \$5000, Swamiji became disgusted and withdrew, saying it was their money, so what could he do? But then he returned to New York City and threatened the realtor with legal action and got most of the money back. He saw his devotees as being unintelligent and innocent in worldly dealings, and he kept warning them to be alert and not to be cheated by the outside world.

Swamiji's early disciple Stryadhisa was eccentric. He went one day to his spiritual master and asked for money to buy five gallons of gasoline. He said he wanted to burn himself up the way the Buddhists were doing in Vietnam. Prabhupada called for Brahmananda. He told Brahmananda what Stryadhisa wanted. Brahmananda said, "Five gallons? You don't need that much to burn yourself up." That was how they determined that Stryadhisa was crazy, because he asked for so much gasoline for his suicide attempt. Swamiji denied the request on the plea that it was too expensive.

One year, a few of Prabhupada's disciples convinced him that he should visit St. Moritz, Switzerland for a vacation. When Prabhupada arrived there, he found that it was covered with snow. He said that this not St. Moritz but "St. Hellish." He

wanted to leave. In the short time they were there, the devotees were going to the stockbroker and reading the changing prices for gold. They were trying to calculate the buying of gold at a low price and then watching it change to a high price and then selling it. When Prabhupada heard what they were doing, he said their speculation was gambling, and he forbade them to do it.

Diaries—ISKCON in the 1970s

“Someone wrote and asked, “The *Bhagavad-gita* speaks of reincarnation. Why can't we remember our past lives?”

“Why can't we remember our past lives? Because we forget them. Why do we forget? Because we are tiny, conditioned beings. We are every day experiencing forgetfulness; it is itself one of the symptoms that we are limited. We forget from one day to the next, and we forget from one life to another, one body after another. Lord Krsna pointed this out to His disciple, Arjuna, in the *Bhagavad-gita*: ‘Many, many births both you and I have passed. I can remember all of them but you cannot.’ (*Bg.* 4.5) That is the difference between God and man: He never forgets, we do. Krsna had just stated that He first spoke the *Gita* to the sun-god millions of years ago, and Arjuna then inquired, ‘But how could You have spoken millions of years ago since You are my contemporary?’ Krsna instructed Arjuna that we are all eternal beings—Arjuna was also

present in another identity millions of years ago, but he cannot be expected to remember it since he is not as good as God.

“That tiny, forgetful living being is, however, is as complete in his eternality as God. Krsna states in the second chapter of the *Gita*, ‘Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be.’ (*Bg.* 2.12) Because we are only fragmented parts of the Supreme Being, however, we do not possess the same quantity of omnipotence as He does.”

“College Preaching September 1, 1975—February 4, 1976”

“As this chapter is almost entirely about preaching at the colleges, it reads as a bit of a surprise to suddenly note on January 8 in San Antonio, “We now have a new party of mostly shaky devotees, seven or eight, who form the chanting and book distribution party.” I am reminded of Srila Prabhupada's instructions to me in 1972 that I should preach mostly to the devotees. It almost seems as if the devotees in the party had been neglected, or at any rate, they certainly needed attention, as I note: ‘They are often having overt difficulties and doubts.’ Soon after Prabhupada awarded me *sannyasa*, he wrote that it was most important to preach to the devotees who had already joined. He referred to this as “boiling the milk,” which he said was a better process than diluting milk (making too many cheap members). On the other hand, a few months

after he wrote me that instruction, I met Srila Prabhupada and he told me that I should also travel with a bus, as another *sannyasi* was doing, and reach people in the interior of the country. Thus we have to balance maintenance and expansion.

“Sometimes, especially in the past, I would daydream that I was a special person meant for a glorious, special engagement. Actually, I have been given such glorious engagements—to lead the Boston *yatra*—although I did it imperfectly—to begin the *gurukula* school, to be awarded *sannyasa*, to be awarded GBC. Prabhupada once wrote me never to forget that I am one of the few he has chosen to spread Krsna consciousness. Yet to diplomatically work with the *grhastha* managers is not to my liking. What does it mean to be a leader? At least now I am thinking I want to go on lecturing on my own, not even with a big party.

“The ISKCON leadership in terms of control of the centers or many followers doesn't attract me. The question, “Is my renunciation good, a form of purity, or is it laziness and avoidance of ordeal on behalf of the spiritual master?” If I simply spend the rest of my life traveling and speaking, will that be sufficient? I'm not attached to ISKCON power—anyone who wants to take over my zone can do so. Let me go out and expand preaching and reading.”

“November 19, Los Angeles”

“This week a total of nine engagements— bringing me to a total of 86 engagements.”

Reading with Kindle

I am reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Canto 3 on the Kindle. It is convenient, using enlarged letters. I am on the section where Kardama Muni meets Svayambhuva Manu. Kardama performed austerities unto Visnu for thousands of years with the desire to receive the benediction of a like-minded wife. It is a bit of a puzzle why such an advanced yogi as Kardama would pray for a wife. Svayambhuva and his wife Satarupa come to the sage’s hut to present their daughter Devahuti as a suitable bride. Kardama and Manu exchange words of praise for each other for their roles as *ksatriya* and *brahmana*. Then Svayambhuva presents his daughter to Kardama as his wife. Devahuti assumes the duties of a yogi’s wife, but it is a great change and strain on her from her life as a princess in the palace. Kardama becomes compassionate on her, and from his yogic powers he produces an aerial mansion with all facilities and amenities for restoring Devahuti’s health and beauty. The couple board the mansion and travel all over the universe, enjoying sensual pleasure. Finally they return to live in Kardama’s simple cottage. There Kardama begets nine daughters in his wife. Originally, Kardama proposed that when he got married he would live with his wife until children were born, and then he would leave for the forest to live as a mendicant. Devahuti begs him to stay and award her fearlessness. He begets in her an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead,

Lord Kapila, who is competent to give her all protection and instruction in spiritual knowledge. The chapters that follow give Kapila's teachings to Devahuti about Sankhya philosophy and devotional service.

**Am I Unsettled at All Because There Was No Closure with Any of My Family Members, Not Even My Sister Madeline, or My Uncle Sal, Etc.?
Does That Push Me to Purity—to Save Them from Hellish Life
Somewhere**

Yes, I am unsettled about the abrupt disowning of me by all my family and relatives. But when I told Prabhupada about their rejection of me, he did not take it as a terrible thing. He assured me that he was my eternal father, and that gave me solace. I applied myself to his service and his mission, and adopted the association of devotees as my family. Am I pushed to trying for purity to save my family members? Yes, I am. Lord Nrsimhadeva told Prahlada Maharaja that fourteen generations of his family members were liberated because of Prahlada's surrender to the Lord. I don't think I am as surrendered as Prahlada, but I bear no grudge toward my family members and hope that my serious commitment to Krsna consciousness will benefit them spiritually. They have a Krsna conscious son in their family, and that is a benefit to them in their next lives.

What is My Comfort Zone? What Drags Me Out of It?

Now at age 79 and in an invalid condition, I have withdrawn from much

mainstream ISKCON activities. I am enlivened to write my weekly *Journal* and to publish two books a year. I also meet with visitors, disciples and Godbrothers throughout the year. But I do not like to be dragged into ISKCON management. Anyway, I am physically unable to travel, so if I were forced to do so, that would push me way out of my comfort zone. I don't even like to ride in the car for local medical appointments. They put me out of my comfort zone. Just now, roofers are coming to replace the shingles on our roof. This will be a great disruption to me, and it is occurring during the weekend when my Godbrother Suresvara is visiting me. I'll be driven out of my personal room and have to live downstairs in the guest room. The roofers' presence will put me out of my comfort zone.

Free Writing . . .

The trouble with free writing is that it doesn't come out as purely Krsna conscious because I am not "wired" to speak or write one hundred percent Krsna consciousness. By there is a type of free writing called "directed free writing." By this process one chooses a subject and then writes anything and everything that comes to mind on that subject. That way it seems I can steer it to Krsna.

I just read in the *Bhagavatam* that a notable devotee was chanting silently in his mind. That gave me some encouragement because I chant *manasa*, silently in the mind. If I chant out loud, the tendency is I produce strain in my head, and it builds toward a headache. I know out-loud chanting is best. But I have heard that Haridasa Thakura chanted one-third of his enormous quota silently in his mind. A

Godbrother who is a friend of mine also chants silently in his mind, or at most he whispers. I admire him a lot because he practices intense *bhajana* for many hours a day. So he is a kind of model for me to follow in my own mental chanting. I try to pronounce the words clearly, and occasionally pray, “O Radha, O Krsna, Please engage me in Your service.” I like to chant while receiving *darsana* of my Radha-Govinda Deity or of the big, blown-up photo I have of Radha-Kalachandji from Dallas. This enhances the quality of my *japa*. Prabhupada wrote that Radharani’s hand, extended in benediction, should be observed by us, then proceed down to the lotus feet of Krsna. So I do this exercise. Whenever I take my eyes off Krsna’s feet, then I go up to Radharani’s hand before I return to His feet. I do not chant at the highest level (*suddha-sattva*), but I get much satisfaction doing my sixteen rounds.

A registered nurse visited our *ashram* and asked me many questions. She knew I was a guru of some sort and asked me whether I did counseling. I wasn’t prepared to give her much of an answer, but the fact is I do counseling through emails, through face-to-face meetings, and through my writings. When I meet with devotees, I mostly let them talk. I like them to open their hearts and tell me their troubles; then I make comments. They are often comfortable with this kind of exchange and talk to me freely at length about their life and their conflicts. They seem to like to get their troubles off their chest. I don’t think I am a good conversationalist, so I lean on this strategy of letting the other person do most of the talking, and I interject comments and advice. But mostly I like to play the role of the compassionate listener. When they trust in me, it is a good exchange. Sometimes in

conversations, people try to drag me in to their point of view and want me to agree. But I don't usually go for that. I withdraw and don't become caught up in their position. I refrain from agreeing with their opinion. I try to give advice from the scriptures to suit their situation and ask them if they can follow the Vedic instructions. I sometimes feel trapped in a "headlock" by a person who goes on and on in presenting their point of view, which I don't necessarily agree with. I am constrained in my conversations by time because of my proclivity to get headaches, I cannot always speak as long as the person wants me to, and I tell them I will write to them and try to add my conclusion more clearly. Sometimes they are not satisfied with this, but that's the best I can do, and they will have to accept it.

Free Writes

anchor 1: a device usually of metal attached to a ship or boat by a cable and cast overboard to hold it in a particular place by means of a fluke that digs into the bottom.

On a news program with several reporters, the one who is most dominant and handles most of the questions is called an anchorperson. Srila Prabhupada is the anchor to the ISKCON ship when it is in shallow waters. He holds it down by his *vani* so that the ship doesn't float off in some whimsical direction. He assures that it doesn't crash in the shallow waters. We are all dependent on Prabhupada's anchor.

jolly : full of high spirits : JOYOUS

Prabhupada used to say that a symptom of a devotee is that he is always jolly. He or she is not morose. When Krsna is separate from the Vrajavasis, and especially the *gopis*, they all become very unhappy, and no one appears jolly. But their actual state is that they are feeling the ecstasy of *viraha*, separation from Krsna. By remembering Him in His absence, they feel the highest bliss of all. This is not comprehensible to the nondevotee.

catur-sloki The *catur-sloki* are four nutshell verses spoken by Krsna in the Second Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (2.9.33–36). The first *sloka* begins *aham evasam evagre*: In the beginning nothing existed except Myself, now only I exist, and in the future only I will remain. Sri Krsna then says if you see something of value, but it isn't connected to Me, it's only a reflection, illusory. Next, Krsna declares that I am in everything, yet at the same time I (in My original form of Krsna) am outside of everything. Finally Krsna states that a seeker of supreme truth needs to understand these basic principles of the absolute Personality of Godhead, at all times, both directly and indirectly.

Mayavadis misinterpret the *catur-sloki* to come up with an impersonal conclusion. But this is not the actual direct meaning of the nutshell verses. They clearly establish that Krsna is the Supreme Person, etc.

shut door When a door is shut, no one can get into a room, especially if the door is locked. No one has the keys to open the inner sanctum of *bhakti* unless he has the special keys. The keys are not available to one who is a nondevotee, to one who doesn't avoid the four sinful activities, to one who doesn't render loving devotional service to Krsna under the guidance of a bona-fide spiritual master. To one who surrenders and gives up sinful activities and who serves Krsna with his body, mind and *atma*, the shut door is immediately opened.

Telephone

In the beginning at 26 Second Avenue, Swamiji had a telephone installed in his apartment. But he began to receive numerous phone calls from casual and crazy people. They would call him at midnight and say, "Hello Swamiji, how are you doing?" He would reply, "Is this the time to call?" After a series of these intrusive phone calls, he demanded that the phone be taken out. He didn't like his disciples making long distance calls as a matter of frugality, because in those days the telephone rates were very expensive.

In several emergency cases, he had his leaders use the phone. When the *sannyasis* at New Vrndavana were preaching Mayavadi philosophy and disturbing the whole festival at New Vrndavana, Prabhupada was in Japan, but he had his leading disciple call New Vrndavana and tell the leaders that the *sannyasis* had to leave the Society. That was an emergency case which required the use of a telephone. In his frequent communications with Giriraja and others in the fight to secure the

land in Bombay, Prabhupada didn't use a telephone, but he resorted to telegrams, or usually air mail. So Prabhupada basically stopped using the telephone and confined himself to aerograms. Even to India, for urgent matters, his disciples complied with his example and communicated to him by air mail. Now in the twenty-first century, it is completely different. Devotees communicate rapidly by email, and they use the telephone without restriction. It is a botheration how often the telephone rings and someone demands your attention for their personal interest. In our *ashram*, we have just instituted a policy where we turn off our house phone and all personal phones during the time of our out-loud readings while honoring breakfast and lunch. It is very disruptive to try to sustain a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* reading while getting interrupted by people's phone calls.

Ballistic Gauranga

When Lord Caitanya was a child living in Navadvipa with His mother and father, He was extremely mischievous. He used to break all the pots and spill the buttermilk and yogurt all around. He broke the window frames and the doors, and practically dismantled the house. Mother Saci would plea to Him, "How am I going to feed You tonight?" Gauranga left her and shortly returned, and gave her a quantity of gold. Mother Saci was unsure whether the gold was genuine, so she first showed it to responsible persons. When they told her it was actually gold, she traded it for utensils and repairs on the house, and things returned to normal. Such are

some of the extraordinary childhood pastimes of Gauranga.

Poems and Prose

My poems are a natural flow of short divided lines. Much of it has to do with the visual effect of the words in that way. It also has something to do with breath units (stopping to pause), and the thought units. Can prose be like poetry? Yes. When John Endler was picking poems from *Every Day, Just Write*, he found some chapters had very few poems. He then picked out some short prose paragraphs that had a particularly poetic character to them, and we are titling the collection *Meditations and Poems from "Every Day, Just Write."* These prose excerpts are like prose-poems.

Here is an example of a meditation and a poem:

1.

“The sea—blue, brilliant under a clear sky, at least for a while. Don’t mind that my words are repetitious. The sea is itself not restless with boredom, although it has repeated the same movements since the beginning of creation. It is beyond boredom. My truth while here is to see and hear the sea. Tell us again, in slightly different ways, how the waves splash, about the light, about the color of the sea, the foam, the cool air blowing, your windproof hooded coat. What do you feel when

you sit here and face outward?

“Bring yourself toward prayer. Surely writing can help toward that, a literary version. O God, O Krsna, O spiritual master, allow me to be sincere. I wish to chant with devotion. I don’t know what to do. All I know is to count and pronounce the Names and surmount drowsiness, and to sometimes notice what I’m thinking and then correct myself.”

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2.

“Ha to you

I am described in the *Bhagavata*

as a describer of the Lord

with only partial ability.

That’s me, all right. Don’t

say I’m not. I’m connected

by Prabhupada. I don’t like

this world. I’m not violent.

I like the swans.

I fly.

I fly.

Krsna is the force of my words.”

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3.

“You can hear his voice in your backyard, or you prefer no voice
but a scratching pen and a tinkling rain on skylight.

“But then a break, a warm
human talk. A meal under
the door and then back to silence.
But who is paying for this? Maintaining this person?

“You can hear your Hare Krsna mantras?
Are you praying for the people in
your Naimisaranya? Do you have a
welfare program like food stamps
for immigrants? Something practical?
Oh, Hare Krsna, we know that.

“Hear the Hare Krsna mantra
the club, the image of the cult,
the hopeless situation
better to build your garden wild or
tamed in a little patch expatriate
they’ll never catch up at the rate I’m moving

“They do not care
 I care. Krsna cares.
 I’m thinking what to lecture on
 next Sunday at Govinda’s.
 God is great, is sweet. Something
 like that.

Prabhupada!

“Everything in ISKCON seems to be leaning toward the *ritvik* position, although we officially condemn that group. But in the attempt to not neglect Prabhupada, and to keep him in the center, we may minimize the importance of the ISKCON gurus. This is a subtle thing. No one wants to be seen as not glorifying and recognizing Prabhupada as the “founding father” of ISKCON. We need to read the *Prabhupada-lilamrta* and hear talks about the importance of Prabhupada in our lives and in our spiritual institution. But the sacred bond of the ISKCON guru and his disciples should not be minimized or trampled upon.

“It is not even Prabhupada who is being overemphasized, but the institution of ISKCON. Loyalty to the institution is equalized with loyalty to Prabhupada, and that overrides loyalty to any individual. What we are experiencing is a transformation that is predicted academically for all spiritual movements. Once the charismatic leader disappears, he is replaced by a bureaucratic institution which carries the weight of the religion more than any individual.

Kindle (continued)

I have eventually learned how to turn the pages on the Kindle. They have put the entire *Bhagavatam* on my Kindle, but it's at the section of Lord Kapila teaching Sankhya yoga to Devahuti. I am not particularly interested in these talks because they are so technical, involving the material nature. I want to ask Krsna dasi if she can put *Caitanya-caritamrta* on Kindle for me in a section of Lord Caitanya's pastimes with His devotees. I have already read the Buddhist book given to me by Baladeva's sister Kathi about the incarnated Karmapa. It contained an exciting section of how the young Karmapa escaped from Tibet into India. But I am not interested in reading more Buddhist books. I like the handiness of using the Kindle, but I want to get out of this section of Sankhya philosophy, and I need help. If I can get into *Caitanya-caritamrta* I may give reports on my reading here in the *Journal*. Prabhupada has said we should read *all* of his books, and we are doing that in our out-loud readings at mealtimes. But once we have read everything, it is all right to pick our favorite sections and read them. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati in his later years used to have the *Caitanya-caritamrta* read to him. Prabhupada has written that if we simply read and memorize the Krsna Book we can directly go back home, back to Godhead, which is ordinarily very difficult to do. So *Krsna Book* is another favorite, and we must go back to it again and again.