

## *Free Write Journal #53*

### **Free Writes**

#### **Giriraja dasa Brahmachari**

Glen Teton was first introduced to Krsna consciousness when Prabhupada and his devotees held a program at Glen's college, Brandeis University, in 1969. Glen arrived at the program late, after our first *kirtana* and Prabhupada's speech. I was leading the second *kirtana* when he arrived. Our devotees asked him if he could lend us his car to take the devotees back to our temple. He willingly did so, and during the ride, Nanda-kisora's wife, Jahnava devi dasi, preached strongly to Glen. He was impressed by her knowledge, and he was interested in what she was saying. He attended other lectures by Prabhupada in Boston during Prabhupada's two-week stay. He met Prabhupada and attended a lecture in our small storefront *ashram*. Glen had concocted ideas of spiritual life and had a sign up in his dorm room, "You are God." When he heard Prabhupada's lecture and presented his ideas, Prabhupada exposed them as nonsense, and Glen bowed down and made obeisances before Prabhupada. He started coming to our storefront temple for lunch. One day, a devotee, Saradiya devi dasi, asked me, "Since when do we allow hippies to join us?" I firmly replied, "Glen is not a hippie," and she was satisfied. I was the temple president, and in the beginning I guided Glen in the practices of Krsna

consciousness. Glen soon graduated from college, and he moved into our temple as a *brahmacari*. He was so ideal and submissive that he lifted the atmosphere of the devotee association. In our temple were about 40 devotees who worked for ISKCON Press, headed by Advaita dasa. They worked devotedly on the Press machinery for long hours, but they were not dutiful to attending the morning devotional programs. This caused a conflict for me, as I tried to get them to act like regular devotees. The Press devotees even teased Glen for his ideal behavior, taking rest early, getting up early and attending the temple program wearing devotional dress. (The ISKCON Press workers wore worker uniforms, dull green pants.) Glen went out regularly with me and the other devotees on *sankirtana*, chanting in the streets, distributing *Back to Godheads* and asking for donations. He excelled in distributing the magazines and collecting the money, first in a conchshell and then in a little money bag with straps.

His father, who was a lawyer, was concerned about Glen joining Krsna consciousness. He offered Glen a big sum of money if he would quit, and talked to me about his worries that Glen might be drafted into the Army. We politely tried to pacify his father, but Glen remained firm in his commitment to ISKCON. After a while, he was initiated by mail. Prabhupada wrote him a letter and said that he had observed his good qualities when he was in Boston.

One particular incident bonded Glen and I together. One night a local gang attacked our building, broke all the front windows and entered our house. They carried car antennas and beat us with them. We fought back with fists, pieces of

wood, and Uddhava used a small penknife to stab a gang member, who then tried to scratch Uddhava's eyes out. We called the police, and they came and arrested the gang members. But we heard that while they were in prison overnight, they swore they would come back and attack the temple again as soon as possible, and devotees were traumatized in anticipation. We feared their return. We were in shock. We sent the women down to the Brooklyn temple to take shelter, and some men also abandoned the temple and went down to Brooklyn. Myself and Glen also decided to go to Brooklyn. Immediately Brahmananda and Rsi-Kumara and another devotee had come up from Brooklyn to help guard the temple. Glen and I started to drive to Brooklyn. But when we reached the toll entry to the main highway, we started talking among ourselves how running away from the fight was not a good thing. It was an act of cowardice. So we mutually agreed to turn the car around and go back to Boston. When we arrived at the temple we were warmly greeted by Brahmananda and the other New York devotees. We had put up wooden bars across the broken windows. I armed myself with a two-by-four piece of wood and got ready to stay up all night, anticipating trouble. About 3:00 in the morning a police car cruised by. I went out to see him carrying my two-by-four. He was alarmed to see it and told me to put it down and go back inside the house. There was a court hearing, and the judge ruled that if any trouble happened in the temple in the next six months, the case would be opened again. We wrote to Prabhupada about this, and he said the judge made an intelligent decision. So things quieted down and there wasn't another attack.

Giriraja stayed with us for several years. He was our star *brahmacari*. When the lease ran out on our storefront and we needed to find new quarters, Giriraja and some other devotees found a Victorian mansion in the neighborhood that was for sale. We approached the realtor and drew up a mortgage contract. We showed it to Giriraja's father, and he said it was a good contract. We thought we could make the monthly payments if we just increased our *Back to Godhead* sales on the street. So Giriraja was very instrumental in helping us get the new building. Then after a couple of years, Prabhupada's secretary Syamasundara sent out a newsletter approved by Prabhupada asking that all the temples send men to India, because he needed manpower for his ambitious plans for starting temples in Vrndavana, Bombay and Mayapur. We didn't have that many devotees, but we surrendered to Prabhupada's request. We decided to send our very best devotee, Giriraja, as a sacrifice to the order of the spiritual master. Giriraja was enlivened at the prospect of joining Prabhupada in India, and the rest is history.

Giriraja is just finishing his 600-page book about the adventures of securing the land and getting permission to build a temple in Bombay. And I heard from devotees that he is now writing a book on the early days in Boston. He remains affectionate and grateful to me for my helping him in the early days, and I have love for him as a great preacher and soul surrendered to Prabhupada.

### **My Disciple's Son**

A disciple from Trinidad has a 31-year-old son who for a long time has been

addicted to drugs and getting into trouble. His father has repeatedly tried to help him but with no success. Recently the son made a total wreck of his father's car. My disciple had the son put into a rehabilitation program, where he was not allowed to go out. He escaped from that place, stole another car, and then disappeared from contact.

Now we have received shocking news. The son was high on drugs and was brandishing and threatening people with a machete. The police were called, and they shot the son to death. When my disciple was here and asked for advice about his son, I told him not to try to help him any more. He had done his best, but his son was a lost cause, and he should not try to help him anymore. Now the burden is lifted.

I will write to my disciple and commiserate with him over the loss of his son. But I will stick to my advice that he should not be attached to him and should just let him go. Apparently the son, for his many offenses and misbehaviors, will take a lower birth. The son has taken *prasadam*, and he has a good devotee as a father. So perhaps his fallen condition now may be eventually be reversed. When my disciple was here I told him that if he himself became a pure devotee, he would liberate 14 generations of his kin. This is the best he can do for them.

### **Lord Balarama's Appearance Day**

Haryasva arrived yesterday from Philadelphia to attend Ravindra Svarupa's function in honor of Lord Balarama's Appearance Day. The devotees in our *ashram*

went over yesterday at 12:00 P.M. for an informal celebration for Lord Balarama. We performed *puspanjali*. Ravindra Svarupa told us the story of how Lord Balarama's *murti* came to him, and how he started worshiping Him. Lord Balarama came to Ravindra Svarupa even before he was a devotee. At our little private function with Ravindra Svarupa at noon, he performed *arati* and Rama-rama led the *kirtana*, playing the harmonium. In the evening, a larger number of devotees were gathered for *abhisekha* and hearing Ravindra Svarupa give a lecture about Lord Balarama. Haryasva has come for that.

### ***Gaudiya Acaryas***

**Jiva Gosvami** is a *jivan-mukta*, an eternally liberated soul. Srila Prabhupada says he is the greatest philosopher of the Six Gosvamis; there will never be a greater one than he. His *Sat-sandarbhas* (six treatises) elucidate the teachings of Lord Caitanya in superb manner. He also wrote *Gopala-campu* about Krsna and the *gopis* in a confidential manner, and many other books.

One time a nondevotee scholar collected superficial letters of defeat from Rupa and Sanatana, and when Jiva defeated that nondevotee scholar in debate, Rupa Gosvami became angry with Jiva for being proud, and he banished him. Jiva took to living in a log and fasting. When this news reached Rupa Gosvami, he went to Jiva Gosvami, forgave him and accepted him back. (There is no counting the excellent books that Jiva Gosvami wrote and the discourses he gave on *krsna-prema*.)

**Rupa Gosvami** is the chief of the Six Gosvamis, and he knew the mind of Lord Caitanya. The Lord taught him personally at Prayaga and revealed confidential relations of Radha and Krsna. Because of this, Rupa Gosvami is known as the *rasacarya*. He is most famous for his book *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*, but he also wrote two brilliant dramas about the relationship of Radha and Krsna.

**Sanatana Gosvami** is the oldest of the Six Gosvamis. Rupa Gosvami looked up to him as his spiritual master. He wrote a long, intriguing book, *Brhad-bhagavatamrta*, which tells of Gopa-kumara's gradual ascent to Goloka Vrndavana. He wrote many other books and a collection of poems.

**Lokanatha Gosvami** was a servant of Lord Caitanya and received instructions from Him to go to Vrndavana and prosecute Krsna consciousness there. Lokanatha was determined not to accept any disciples, but Narottama dasa Thakura (who appeared after Lord Caitanya's disappearance) served Lokanatha in secret, daily cleaning up the place where Lokanatha passed stool. When Lokanatha Gosvami finally discovered this service, he became soft towards Narottama dasa and agreed to initiate him.

**Narottama dasa Thakura** became famous for his collections of songs, *Prarthana* and *Prema-bhakti-candrika*. (Later, Gaura-kisora dasa Babaji said that

if anyone wanted to attain *krsna-prema*, all he had to do was go to a bookstore with two paisa and purchase those two books of Narottama dasa Thakura.)

## **From *Prabhupada Meditations***

### ***Kaleidoscope***

“The floor of the storefront . . . Prabhupada playing the drum . . . I am being lifted out of the tragedy I was in.

“With him we could sit on the floor with our shirts of the past, our minds becoming cleansed by the cosmic sounds he described as “transcendental sound vibration,” delivering the mind from all that Lower East Side stuff and the hurt of our previous lives.

“We had grown up and broken away from our parents, gotten away from our country’s conformity and the U.S. Navy and all that, but the new freedom couldn’t deliver us either, and the new jazz couldn’t deliver us. We were still homeless, unhappy. But now Swamiji was delivering us with the cleansing cosmic vibration we barely understood. All we knew was that it was Krsna, and Krsna was far-out! And you could sing with Swami leading on the drum, Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Hare Hare. Leave everything else behind.

“Is it fiction or magic to think we can go back? No, it is the truth.

And yet it is not mere newspaper reporting. The past cannot be spoken of, except by metaphors, just as Krsna's *lila* can only be described by the metaphors of Rupa Gosvami . . . .

“And so we are sitting on the floor and Swamiji is above us. We are leaning toward him, taking from him and giving him back our voices in chant and being delivered, getting high and becoming devotees under his care. His permissible, liberal, fatherly, motherly care.

“Don't be afraid to say it again—how he walked across the floor with his bare feet. Wherever you go, to East Europe, West Europe, South Europe, keep finding new audiences and tell them about Prabhupada's bare feet across the floor. Tell them that Prabhupada said, “Eat more! Eat more!” and how you ate more than you ever did. Rejoice in your association with Prabhupada; tell everyone about his glories and do not be contaminated by anyone who doesn't appreciate what he did. Rejoice in the memories from the floor where you sit as you chant Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

“The evening is coming to an end. The Puerto Ricans are shouting outside, the night is wild.”

## Free Writes

### *Parikrama*

Circumambulation of Govardhana Hill, circling the town of Vrndavana, or Radha-kunda, are favorite *parikramas*. When you go early in the day, you can hear the dawn birds chirping and the bells being played in temple *mangala-aratis*. On special days like Ekadasis and Karttika, you will be joined by thousands of devotees from the villages and pilgrims from New Delhi. It is a peaceful congregation of people with religious motives. Sometimes a guide will lead a group and point out all the places where Krsna enacted His pastimes. Devotees collect sand in a tube from sacred places where Krsna played, or they take a little water from a sacred pond. *Parikrama* is very purifying for those with the ability to walk. With a guidebook about all the places, those who cannot walk, can make a mental *parikrama* in concentrated recall of the activities at the different places.

### *Amrta Vani*

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura writes in *Amrta Vani* that continual congregational *kirtana* and reciting of 64 rounds of the Holy Name daily banishes fear and illusion and will bring one to tasting *krsna-nama* (which is nondifferent than Krsna Himself). Chanting the holy names is both the *sadhana* (the practice to reach perfection) and the *sadya* (reaching the point of the goal, pure love of Krsna). The *sastras* state, *harer nama harer nama harer namaiva kevalam/ kalau nasty*

*eva nasty eva nasty eva gatih anyatha*: “Chant the holy name, the holy name, the holy name—in the age of Kali there is no other way, no other way, no other way to attain God consciousness.” (*Brhan-naradiya Purana*)

## Local News

I was able to sit up in bed comfortably this morning. From 2:00 A.M. to 3:45 A.M. I had good back supports, and I leaned to the left, with my arm on the bolster pillow. I avoided putting pressure on my right buttock, which is painful. The result was an attentive *darsana* of the blown-up photo of Radha-Kalachandji from 1972. We heard from Prabhupada’s purport that Radharani’s benedicting right hand enables us to gaze upon Krsna’s lotus feet, so I did this: I looked upon Radha’s hand and then went down to gazing at Kalachandji’s lotus feet. After a while of gazing at His lotus feet, I recharged myself by looking back at Radha’s benedicting hand.

Then I went into the other room and received *darsana* of Radha-Govinda. About a week ago, I complained to myself and Baladeva that I couldn’t clearly see the fine facial features of the Deities. I even said that Radharani was unattractive. We thought maybe it was an eye problem and I would address it to the optometrist in our appointment on July 31<sup>st</sup>. But a few days later, I changed my mind. I *could* see Radha-Govinda, and They were pleasing. It was not an eye problem but a mental attitude. When I used to go to Vrndavana, I constantly reminded myself to see the surface of the *dhama*, the poverty, the monkeys, etc., with “kind eyes.” Granted, that Radha-Govinda are small Deities, and I cannot see Them as close as I can see the

painting of Lord Caitanya in the Gambhira. But I can actually see Radha-Govinda, and They are very attractive and dear to me.

## **Eyes of Devotion**

Speaking of seeing, *Brahma-samhita* says we have to anoint the eyes with “the salve of devotion” if we want to see Krsna:

*premanjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena  
santah sadaiva hrdayesu vilokayanti  
yam syamasundaram acintya-guna-svarupam  
govindam adi-purusam tam aham bhajami*

"I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, who is always seen by the devotee whose eyes are anointed with the pulp of love. He is seen in His eternal form of Syamasundara, situated within the heart of the devotee." (*Brahma-samhita* 5.38)

How do we do this? By taking the order of the spiritual master as our life and soul. By constantly chanting the Hare Krsna mantra. By dedicating all our activities to Krsna and fully surrendering. By applying our life's energies in this way, we will apply the salve of love of God to our eyes and one day see Syamasundara.

## **How Long Do You Wait?**

Do I ever “close the door” on a relationship with a disciple? What do they have to do to come back? What if they are repeated offenders and have no remorse? What if they outright reject me? But what if they come back? Will I reopen the door? How long do I wait?

My response to these questions is I have tried to reach out to disciples who have rejected me, and they have just rebuffed me again. In that case, I can do nothing for the time being but pray for them. But there is no point where I will close the door on a relationship and give up hope. I can think of a few disciples who are active and close to me who have broken my heart by rejecting me. If they were to come back, it would be a joyous occasion and would bring a balm to my heart. I believe Prabhupada has written a letter that if the disciple permanently rejects the spiritual master, then the spiritual master is no longer responsible for saving the soul. But if he or she comes back, I am happy to welcome them.

After my falldown, disciples were advised if they didn't have faith in me they could take shelter in a new ISKCON *siksa* guru. They were not told to wait and see if I rectified but told to go at once to a new relationship. But I don't think it is fair (either of the new *siksa* gurus or my disciples) to obliterate the relationship with me. After all, I accepted their karma at the time I initiated them, and for years we worked together sincerely in Krsna consciousness. I *have* rectified, repented to Prabhupada and Krsna, and I have many disciples who are still faithful to me and look up to me as their spiritual master. I consider it right and proper that those disciples who have left me should at least keep in touch with me and let me know

how they are doing in their new situation. They should not pretend that we never had a relationship or that I did something that can't be forgiven. This applies even to people who have left the Krsna Consciousness Movement.

### **Update on Our Out-loud Reading of the *Bhagavatam***

Even after Narada completes his long allegory of King Puranjana (who is none other than King Pracinabarhi), the King admits that he was too dull to understand the purport. Narada then tells him another allegory. He says just imagine a deer who is peacefully eating a flower in a garden. But the deer doesn't know that a tiger is standing in front of him. Right behind the deer is a hunter with sharpened arrows. Narada gets through to King Pracinabarhi and convinces him that he is like the deer, oblivious to imminent death. King Pracinabarhi makes obeisances to Narada and says he has been misled by the *acaryas* who told him to perform animal sacrifices. He says he is now done with that and will not engage in sense gratification. So Narada took a long time, but he finally saved King Pracinabarhi by his compassionate teachings.

### **A Random Glance at *Prabhupada-lilamrta***

“The *kirtana* had been going on for about ten minutes when Swamiji arrived. Stepping out of his rubber slippers, just as if he were home in the temple, he sat down on the rug with his followers, who had

now stopped their singing and were watching him. He wore a pink sweater, and around his shoulders a *khadi* wrapper. He smiled. Looking at his group, he indicated the rhythm by counting, one, two, *three*. Then he began clapping his hands heavily as he continued counting, “One, two, *three*.” The *karatalas* followed, at first with wrong beats, but he kept the rhythm by clapping his hands, and then they got it, clapping hands, clashing cymbals artlessly in a slow, steady beat.

“He began singing prayers that no one else knew. ‘*Vande 'ham sri-guroh sri-yuta-pada-kamalam sri-gurun vaisnavams' ca.*’ His voice was sweet like the harmonium, rich in the nuances of Bengali melody. Sitting on the rug under a large elm tree, he sang the mysterious Sanskrit prayers. None of his followers knew any mantra but Hare Krsna, but they knew Swamiji. And they kept the rhythm, listening closely to him while the trucks rumbled on the street and the conga drums pulsed in the distance.”

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“Then he began the mantra—Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. They responded, too low and muddled at first, but he returned it to them again, singing it right and triumphant. Again they responded, gaining heart, ringing *karatalas* and clapping hands. Again he sang it alone, and

they stayed, hanging closely on each word, clapping, beating cymbals, and watching him looking back at them from his inner concentration—his old-age wisdom, his *bhakti*—and out of love for Swamiji, they broke loose from their surroundings and joined him as a chanting congregation. Swamiji played his small drum, holding its strap in his left hand, bracing the drum against his body, and with his right hand playing intricate *mrdanga* rhythms.

“Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. He was going strong after half an hour, repeating the mantra, carrying them with him as interested onlookers gathered in greater numbers. A few hippies sat down on the edge of the rug, copying the cross-legged sitting posture, listening, clapping, trying the chanting, and the small inner circle of Prabhupada and his followers grew, as gradually more people joined.”

**Prayers** (from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 4.30.41, purport,):

**“Nonetheless, everyone in devotional service can offer essential prayers to the Lord. Everyone is situated in a relative position, and no one is perfect in glorifying the Lord.**

**Beginning with Lord Brahma and Lord Siva down to ourselves, everyone is the servant of the Supreme Lord. We are all situated in relative positions according to our own *karma*. Yet every one of us can offer prayers with heart and soul as far as we can appreciate the Lord’s glories. That is our perfection. Even when one is in the darkest region of existence, he is allowed to offer prayers to the Lord according to his own capacity.”**

***From My Dear Lord Krsna: A Book of Prayers***

**“My dear Lord Krsna . . . I am writing to You with a prayer. Please forgive me for my wrongs. To me, this means I must be forgiving to others who may have wronged me, or just be forgiving in general to anyone I contact. If I am forgiving, You will be more inclined to forgive me. I have no reason to hold back forgiveness to others. Forgiveness is the jewel of the brahmanas and Vaisnavas.**

**“We may certainly be wronged and ill-treated by others. Our tendency is to get back at them or at least maintain resentment for them. But I should forgo this and find it within myself to forgive them. That softens my heart, makes me a**

**better devotee. I don't lose when I forgive; I gain. Just bury the hatchet. Let it pass. Don't strike back. These maxims are easier said than done. It is hard to at least not maintain a quiet (poisonous) enmity within myself toward someone I consider an adversary.**

**“Not forgiving comes close to the offense of offending Vaisnavas. They may not have wronged me, but we envy them. Envy equals not forgiving. I may see a fault in a devotee and dwell on it, hold it against him. This is not forgiving him or her. We all have some faults; no one is perfect. So I should overlook the fault in others. One way to check faultfinding is to consider my own faults. Why should I find faults in others when I have so many in myself? As I forgive myself, I should forgive others. Much of this is done in the privacy of one's own mind, although it can become so bad that we speak against others or even try to harm them or their reputation. I should be offenseless, inoffensive. The more I am so, the kinder You will look upon me and forgive my faults.**

**“And I do ask You to forgive me. I do not mean to act against You and Your devotees. I do so blindly, foolishly. Please see my good intentions and forgive me for my wrongs. It may be presumptuous or cheap to ask forgiveness, but I**

cannot help but do it. I so much want to be seen kindly in Your eyes and allowed entrance into Your pastimes. But I have done wrongs. Unless You forgive me, I have no hope. I will try my best to be forgiving of others and remain petitioning You for forgiveness upon myself.

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“My dear Lord Krsna . . .

“I thank You for letting me write to You. You make me feel that You are actually listening to me. I feel that You and Srimati Radharani are reading my words and reciprocating with me. And as the Supersoul in the heart, You direct me what to write. Today I want to write about this fact of reciprocation with You. According to the Vedic authorities—guru, *sastra* and *sadhu*—You invite me to speak to You. In *Bhagavad-gita*, You ask us to worship You, bow down to You, and offer homages to You. I am here offering an homage, written words of respect and prayer. I am praising You in *parampara* in the way You advise, in the words You suggest. I am repeating Arjuna's words, “You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate abode, the purest, the

**absolute truth. You are the eternal, transcendental, original person, the unborn, the greatest.” (Bg. 10.12)**

**“I am praising You in my own words too. You are my dearest friend and guide. You reside in my heart as my individual guru, and You tell me what is best for me. I pray to follow Your instructions and not go against them or be independent of them. (As I write this, there is thunder in the sky, and heavy rain—a mighty manifestation of Your material nature. And as I write this, You are playing in Your pastimes in the undisturbed spiritual sky.)**

**“You and Srimati Radharani are in every way persons, individuals with particular tastes and likings. I want to know them and serve them. I want to serve You. I *am* serving You, and all living beings are serving You, but we are not doing it exactly according to Your liking. Some are serving Your material nature by force and denying Your spiritual personhood. I am not like that. I believe in You as the Supreme Person, and I want to serve You with love. I want to please You.**

**“I’ve learned Your teachings as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu from my spiritual master, and I know You can be easily pleased by the chanting of Your holy names in the *maha* -**

***mantra*. I want to attain offenseless chanting and enter *krsna-prema*. I know that is not easy, but I aspire for it and chant daily with devotion. I pray for Your mercy that I may come to the stage of *suddha-nama* (perfected chanting) and experience the ecstasies of a pure chanter. You will grant this if I act sincerely to serve Your mission in this world. I am like a dwarf trying to touch the moon in saying I am trying for this, but I cannot help thinking of it. *Suddha-nama* is the boon I seek, even though I am millions of miles away from attaining it. I cannot help but admit it is my hidden, helpless desire.**

**“You know my disqualifications and lack of *adhikara*, my lack of intense greed. I write like a fool. But I ask You for help in improving my condition. I *should* pray to You, praise You, and chant Your names in the perfect stage, because You deserve it. And I should strive for it. I should not chant Your names offensively or fail to serve Your mission. I am ashamed of my failures. But I maintain hope against hope that I can still please You. I wait for the day when I can chant Your name purely and help others to do so. Please give me the desire to strive for this.”**

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## **Update of Our Out-Loud Reading in *Srimad-Bhagavatam***

We have just read in the Fourth Canto of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, “The Activities of Agnidhra.” He desires to marry an ideal wife. He worships Lord Brahma and goes to the valley where Brahma sends his heavenly *apsaras* to stroll. Agnidhra is so deep into meditation that he cannot tell whether the *apsara* Purvacitti, who comes before him, is a woman or a boy. His meditation is broken by her ankle bells. Agnidhra addresses Purvacitti as a boy. He says her eyebrows are like two bows, and he wishes they be auspicious toward him. He says her eyes are very beautiful but piercing, and he hopes they are not going to be inauspicious toward him. Prabhupada writes that this means he wishes she will marry him. Agnidhra admires Purvacitti’s full breasts but thinks she is a boy and that her breasts are horns covered by red powder. He says he would like to uncover them. Finally he recognizes Purvacitti as a woman and proposes marriage. She accepts, and they spend many years in conjugal union. They beget nine strong sons. Finally Purvacitti returns to her worship of Brahma, and Agnidhra is bereft in her absence. He is a typical example of a yogi, like Visvamitra, whose concentrated meditation was broken just by the tinkling of the ankle bells of a beautiful woman.

### **Prabhupada’s Vyasa-Puja**

I have been getting daily headaches. My doctor, Nitai-Gaurasundara, has diagnosed it and says it is anxiety over what to speak at Srila Prabhupada’s Vyasa-Puja observation. At first it was decided that I should simply read my homage in this

year's *Tributes* book and leave room and time for all the other devotees to speak their homages. But then I felt obligated to speak more as the senior-most disciple, and bring out all of my "old chestnuts" of Prabhupada reminiscences. But Nitai-Gaurasundara and Baladeva said that wasn't required of me. They said the program was organized so that an hour was saved for everyone to speak their homages. There was no need for me to speak at length. So this has made me more relaxed and looking forward to the event, and hearing all the devotees' homages and speaking my own.

### **How Did I Feel When Prabhupada Asked the GBC Members, "Are You Convinced?"**

This took place in Prabhupada's room in his Los Angeles quarters. Almost all of the GBC men were gathered. He put the question out very bluntly and personally. He asked us, "Are you convinced?" He added that if we were not convinced then we could not help him in his mission. He said as far as he was concerned, he *was* convinced. Prabhupada's putting the question to us in that way was a naked, unsettling moment. It caught most of us off guard. For myself, I didn't know what to think. I had surrendered to Prabhupada and was his initiated disciple, and I accepted his statements and the statements in the scriptures. But to say, "Was I convinced?" seemed to put it in a more demanding light. He wanted to know what was our actual realization, conviction, and faith. When the GBC members met after this meeting with Srila Prabhupada, we all agreed that his question had made us feel

uneasy. It was like he was asking us if we were fully surrendered, and the question caught us off guard as to our confidence in the reply. I remember distinctly the uneasiness he created among us. I don't think anyone spoke up and said, "Yes, I'm convinced." We just let the question hang in the air unanswered and took it to our minds and hearts to consider and make an honest reply. Actually, he didn't seem to want us to give him an answer right away, but he penetrated our psyches and our honest response.

### **Was Prabhupada Ever Constrained by What the Previous Acaryas Had Written? Was He Every Criticized by His Gobrothers for What He Wrote?**

I don't think that Prabhupada was ever constrained by what the previous *acaryas* wrote. He totally accepted the *parampara* Gaudiya Vaisnavas, and he quoted their commentaries in his purports. He was not constrained by them; rather he had full faith in them and offered their conclusions to his readers as conclusive proof. But Prabhupada was sometimes criticized by his Godbrothers. When one Godbrother was shown the *Krsna Book*, he said, "This is not the Tenth Canto." Another Gaudiya sadhu said to me that Prabhupada had written wrongly when describing Nanda Maharaja as Krsna's "foster father." Prabhupada considered these criticisms as envious remarks, and they did not affect his writing. The Western scholars who read Prabhupada's books mostly accepted them as true to Gaudiya Vaisnava *parampara*.

## Random Looks at Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.)

### **incredible** (adj.)

**1** : too extraordinary and improbable to be believed

**2.** : AMAZING, EXTRAORDINARY

// incredible skill

// an incredible appetite

// met an incredible woman

One definition says it is too improbable to be believed. This was the case with the Vrajavasis and Krsna's early miraculous activities of killing giant demons. Krsna's cowherd friends witnessed the events, but their parents couldn't believe that the young child could actually uproot the twin arjuna trees or kill Baka, the giant heron. But when Krsna lifted the Govardhana Hill to shield the residents from the rainstorm of Indra, they took shelter under the Hill and saw with their own eyes Krsna lifting the Hill with the small finger of His left hand. It was incredible but no longer improbable. The cowherdsmen were so bewildered by the event that after it was over they rushed to Nanda Maharaja and asked him who Krsna actually was. They knew Him as a dearest village boy, but now they had seen Him do something incredible. So who was Krsna actually? Nanda Maharaja told them that he could only say what he had heard from Gargamuni at Krsna's name-giving ceremony.

Garga said that this boy was as good as Narayana. The cowherd men accepted this and went home saying, “Let us take shelter of wonderful Krsna!”

**inconceivable** (adj.)

**a** : impossible to comprehend

**b** : UNBELIEVABLE

**inconceivability** (n.)

Srila Jiva Gosvami says unless one accepts the inconceivability of Krsna, one cannot understand Him. One of Krsna’s names is Acintya, inconceivable. He can do anything and everything, and nothing is impossible for Him. He is beyond the speculations of the philosophers and all conditioned souls.

**expatriate** (v.)

**1** : to leave one’s own country

**2** : to withdraw (oneself) from residence in or allegiance to one’s native country.

All conditioned souls in the material world are expatriates from their original abode, the spiritual world, where Krsna and His eternal parisads live in eternity, bliss and knowledge. We have left that eternal home and come to the material world, where we take a body according to our karma in one species of life or another. In the

human form of life, one identifies oneself with his “homeland” or nation. One can leave one’s own country, but he cannot escape the cycle of repeated birth and death in the material world. This can only be done when one gives up the bodily concept of life and identifies himself as spirit soul, eternal servant of Krsna. Then one becomes eligible to return home, back to Godhead, never to return again to the material world where birth, death, disease and old age take place.

**performance** (n.)

**a** :the action of representing a character in a play

**b** : a public presentation or exhibition

// a benefit performance

**c** : the ability to perform : EFFICIENCY

The conditioned souls in the material world are acting out or performing behavior that is under the control of the modes of nature (goodness, passion and ignorance). Our actions in the conditioned state are all false and illusory. When Krsna or His *avataras* descend to the world, They perform *lila*, independent play that is not affected by the modes of nature. Krsna comes in His spiritual body and carries out His own mission, beyond the stringent rules of the material energy.

*Bhagavad-gita*: “Whenever there is a rise of irreligion and a decrease in religion, at that time I descend Myself. In order to save the devotees and to annihilate the miscreants, I appear in every age.” (*Bg.* 4.7–8)