

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā
August 11, 2012

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Printed in the United States of America
Design: Arcita Dāsa

Limited Printing: 500 copies



THE BHAKTIVEDANTA BOOK TRUST
Los Angeles • Stockholm • Mumbai • Sydney

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā

The Most Blessed Event

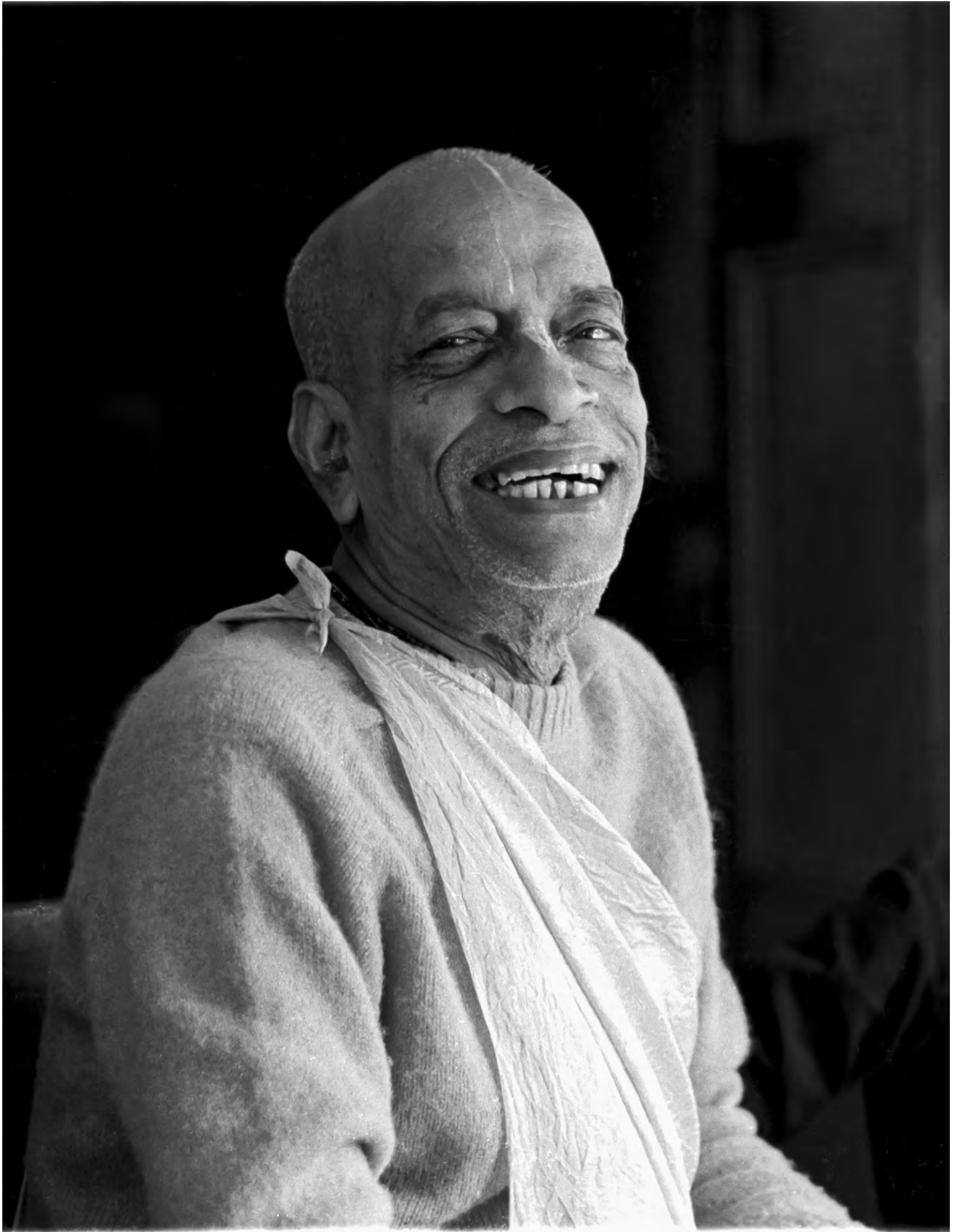
The appearance day of our beloved Spiritual Master

His Divine Grace

Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness



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Introduction

The present Vyāsa-pūjā book is the forty-fourth in an unbroken series, beginning in 1969. That first book (booklet, really, consisting of all of twenty-eight hand-numbered pages) gives an address list of the centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. All seventeen centers, almost all in the USA. The only international centers listed are Hamburg, London, and Montreal. It seems that any devotee who wanted to could write an offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and it was printed in the booklet.

Today the 304-page, large-format, hardbound Vyāsa-pūjā book represents only a small fraction of the hundreds of centers and many thousands of devotees who make up ISKCON. Yet the central feature remains the same: a genuine outpouring of love, devotion, prayers, and glorification directed toward Śrīla Prabhupāda. Like the devotees in 1969, those of today regard Śrīla Prabhupāda as their *guru-devatātmā*—their guru, worshipable deity, and very life and soul (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37 and 11.3.22). Through his books, his disciples and granddisciples, his audiovisual recordings, and his Society as a whole, Śrīla Prabhupāda can be as present today for his sincere followers as he was forty-four years ago for ISKCON’s pioneers. As Lord Kṛṣṇa is beyond time and space, so is Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Some highlights of this year’s book:

In the tradition of Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Jayapatāka Swami has written a Bengali song in honor of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here is the last stanza:

*premakalpataru nitāi-gaurera
kṛpā kaṇa labhibāre
niravadhi jaya- patākā hṛdaya
tomare śaraṇa kare*

“Desiring a drop of mercy of Nitāi-Gaura’s wish-fulfilling tree of love of Godhead, with all his heart Jayapatāka incessantly takes shelter of Your Divine Grace.”

On the theme of cooperation, a principle Śrīla Prabhupāda taught was central to the success of the Society and which he characterized as the essence of “unity in diversity,” Ravindra Svarūpa Prabhu has written a timely and cogent offering. An excerpt:

Bhakti is the yoga of cooperation; it is social yoga. It is to be cultivated in and exemplified by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. To be sure, we are a highly diverse group, with many members of distinct individuality, sometimes richly ornamented with idiosyncrasies. Yet as we become unified through our love for Śrīla Prabhupāda, we will realize the blessings of this yoga. Of course, as yoga, our discipline requires some austerity, as described by Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We must aspire after the humility of the grass underfoot by not seeking or welcoming any praise, honor, or recognition from others. In *bhakti*, the way up is the way down. We must seek the forbearance and magnanimity of the fruit tree by offering to others all respect and appreciation. We wish to remain undisturbed even when there is every reason to be disturbed. In this way, we will remain fixed and steady in our practice and so become increasingly closer to each other, to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and through him to all the previous *ācāryas* and saints, and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with his beloved associates. Moreover, with the powers and virtues thus acquired, we will transform ourselves, as individuals and as a society, so as to be able to encompass the entire world within the embrace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, fulfilling the destiny seeded within the name “International Society for Krishna Consciousness.”

His Holiness Giridhārī Swami, a GBC zonal secretary, miraculously and wonderfully regained his health after years of debilitating illness and was able to resume traveling and preaching last year. After

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recounting the role that his dear godbrother Bhūrijana Prabhu played in his recovery, he draws four lessons from his experience that are pertinent to all devotees:

First, keeping close and loving relationships with dear godbrothers is essential to progressive spiritual growth. I must associate with and serve my godbrothers as often as possible.

Second, the opportunity to serve the Vaiṣṇavas is most precious. I should never take it for granted. I must serve the Vaiṣṇavas as often and as much as possible—without reservation.

Third, *nāma-bhajana* is my most important service, and everything else is secondary. *Harināma* is what you came to give. You wanted us to “just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.” But you also wanted us to chant with love. I therefore pray that you bless me to chant without offense, with full attention and genuine love in my heart, praying for the mercy of Your Divine Grace, the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas, and the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.

Fourth, service to Kṛṣṇa is a rare opportunity. After so many lifetimes, somehow or other I have been given this gift. I must never take it for granted or regard it as some mundane duty or obligation. I must take full advantage. With great determination, patience, enthusiasm, and love I will strive to perform whatever service is given to me.

And finally, we welcome back Tucson this year after a year’s absence. We missed Sandāmanī Dāsī’s heartfelt poetic offerings. Here’s an excerpt from this year’s homage:

The preaching is evolving, and I am quite glad,
'cause now we have Skype, iPhone, and iPad
To reach out to more, your message so sweet,
Encounter thousands simply using a “tweet.”

But we can’t get distracted from the ultimate goal:
Chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, direct connection with our soul.
Diving deep into the books, dancing in *kīrtana* so sublime,
Becoming a pure devotee before we all run out of time.

Yes, we’re all running out of time in these bodies. There’s no denying that. But appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda never runs out; it just keeps expanding more and more. As it is said, *ebe yaśa ghuṣuk tri-bhuvana*.

Draviḍa Dāsa
Vyāsa-pūjā book editor

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

As Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, we worship Śrī Guru, Śrī Gaurāṅga, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. Our calendar year begins with the adoration of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu on Gaura Pūrṇimā, the holy day of His appearance. He has distilled for us the mature essence of Vedic literature, and we worship His divinity as the combined form of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested His most intimate associate Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, our *ādi-guru*, to accept the worship of Vyāsa-pūjā, the traditional observance held to honor the appearance day of the spiritual master, the representative of Vyāsadeva. When Nityānanda Prabhu was asked to garland the image of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, He did not. Rather, looking around in great ecstasy, He took the garland meant for Śrīla Vyāsadeva and placed it around the neck of His beloved Lord Gaurāṅga. This is most significant, for it gives us an indication of how, as Lord Nityānanda's followers, we must observe Vyāsa-pūjā. Śrī Gaurāṅga directs us to worship Śrī Nityānanda as the original guru, and Śrī Nityānanda teaches us that the worship of Śrī Gaurāṅga is the path of worship for this age. In this way, Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga taught their followers how to perform Vyāsa-pūjā.

As the *yuga-avatāra*, Lord Caitanya taught us how to worship and what the ultimate goal of all worship is. This creed of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is explained in a verse from the *Caitanya-mañjuṣā*, a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* often cited by Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid upāsanaṁ vraja-vadhū-vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalam premā pum-artho mahān
śrī-caitanya-mahāprabhor matam idam tatrādarāḥ naḥ paraḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the son of Nanda Mahārāja, is to be worshiped along with His transcendental abode, Vṛndāvana. The most pleasing form of worship for the Lord is that which was performed by the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the spotless authority on everything, and pure love of God is the ultimate goal of life for all men. These statements, for which we have the highest regard, are the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.”

For the worshipers of Guru, Gaurāṅga, and Rādhā-Govinda, each year reaches its culmination on Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, and by the arrangement of Providence the day that follows it, like a beloved servant, is Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā. As the great *senapati* (military commander) *guru* predicted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda is the eminent founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and the indisputable *śikṣā-guru* for every one of us who count ourselves members of his Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Lord Caitanya predicted that His name would be chanted in every town and village of this world. Though many regarded this prophecy as mere poetry or hyperbole, Śrīla Prabhupāda took it seriously and by his grace and spiritual power made enormous strides in fulfilling it. Today that prophecy continues to become a reality through the sincere *sevā* of his followers.

Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared penniless as he boarded the *Jaladuta* on that fateful August day in 1965, yet he carried with him the greatest treasure—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In the years that followed, the very writings and commentaries of the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana that were carried in a bullock cart by Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsācārya, and Śyāmānanda Prabhu, and which were assessed to be an invaluable treasure, were carried by Śrīla Prabhupāda across the seven seas of the world and made available in numerous languages.

Śrīla Prabhupāda planted the seeds to create “a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization,” as Nārada Muni described pure *kṛṣṇa-kathā* to his disciple Śrīla Vyāsadeva while instructing him in the First Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Today we are seeing those seeds fructify as we



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witness Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu garlanding the world with the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda described to us who is to be considered a genuine representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. In his purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya* 20.82, he quotes his Guru Mahārāja:

[A]ll writers after Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura who are pure devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and who have tried to describe the Lord's activities are to be considered like Vyāsa. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura is the original Vyāsadeva in describing *caitanya-līlā*, and all others who follow in his footsteps by describing Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastimes are also to be called Vyāsadeva. The bona fide spiritual master is called Vyāsa because he is a representative of Vyāsa. Worshiping the birthday of such a spiritual master is called Vyāsa-pūjā.

By this definition, Śrīla Prabhupāda must certainly be considered the preeminent Vyāsadeva for the modern era.

On this Vyāsa-pūjā day, although our *dīkṣā-gurus* may be many, we gather together in community to honor Śrīla Prabhupāda, the foremost representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva. This example of unity through *prema-saṅkīrtana* was given during Lord Caitanya's *līlā*. Putting aside our differences and all other engagements, we come together to offer Śrīla Prabhupāda the fruits of our actions of the previous year, and the flowers of our intentions, formalized and crystallized in the ritual of the day. This ritual is the external vessel that holds the internal mood and ideals we need to propel the actions of our lives during the course of the coming year.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī comments that the spiritual master is to be considered the *ātmā*, or very life, of the disciple, since real life begins when one is initiated by a bona fide spiritual master. What does it mean that he is my very *ātmā*? And what does it mean that “He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him”?

On this Vyāsa-pūjā day we pray to see through his words, to cherish his instructions as the barometer of the atmosphere of all the days of our lives. Our meditation on this day must be the light for all other days in the year. In other words, on this day we again offer him our very lives.

If *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is to be considered the boat for crossing over the dangerous ocean of this Age of Kali, and if the spiritual master is to be considered the able captain, then this day is perhaps the compass with which we assess our progress so far and our direction for the coming days. As we observe this day, all other days of our year are seen—that is, seen by the eyes of our introspection. For a disciple who aspires to authenticity, this day is a laying bare of the heart: to come before Śrī Guru and offer our very selves in all sincerity and simplicity, without false coverings of ego and defense. This is what it means to make Śrīla Prabhupāda our very *ātmā* and to live with him by following his instructions.

There is a story told by one of the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. After the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival at Śrīdhām Māyāpur, the disciples were leaving, going back to their homes. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta sat on a canvas chair on the front porch. Each of the disciples came to him to offer *daṇḍavat* obeisances before departing. Eager to hear what his Guru Mahārāja was going to say, one disciple sat behind him. He heard Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī say to his disciples, “Please do not deceive me!” The disciple sitting behind him became very alert. The festival had ended and everyone was going home, so how were they deceiving him? Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta said, “You gave assurances that you would do *kṛṣṇa-bhajana*. I also became attached to you in this relationship. You came for a few days, and now you are going back to that material world. Then I am deceived!”

If we gather together today to perform this ritual of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā for Śrīla Prabhupāda but this day does not propel and inspire our actions and intentions after we leave here, then we deceive him.

Once, just before his lecture at a Delhi pandal, I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda say something similar. In a small room just next to the stage, Śrīla Prabhupāda was speaking to a few guests. One elderly man, who appeared very devout, said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, “Swamiji, please give us your mercy! Give us your mercy!”

Śrīla Prabhupāda tersely replied to him, “I have already given you everything. Still you do not take. It is just like a man who has fallen into a well. He is being given a rope, but still he does not take.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us the rope that connects us to the great ancestry of our predecessor *ācāryas*—to the Six Gosvāmīs, to Lord Gaurāṅga, to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, to Śrī Nārada, to Brahmājī—and that lifts us

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aboard the great ark of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is nondifferent from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Today we can recommit to taking hold of that rope with all the strength at our command and remember that it is only by Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace that in this very life we can attain the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. In taking this rope, we link our otherwise useless lives to the world-changing revolution conceived of by Śrīla Vyāsadeva after hearing from Śrī Nārada.

It has been said that the most significant tribute one can offer a great personality is to establish a community based on the principles he taught. On the basis of the principles Śrīla Vyāsadeva taught in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda established a worldwide community of Vaiṣṇavas known as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Establishing, developing, and maintaining this community was his life's mission. On this Vyāsa-pūjā day let us once again offer our lives to the inconceivable adventure that is the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

May the fruits and flowers offered on this day be the fulfillment of the desires of Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga. May their blessings awaken our hearts to see Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda within and beyond all things, and to serve Them for Their pleasure. *Raso vai saḥ*. Their pleasure is the personification of infinite joy. May the taste and fragrance of Their pleasure surpass our imaginations and fulfill the deepest desires of every living being!

Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī



The Universal Teacher

The following speech was given by Abhay Charan Das (His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda) before the members of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Bombay, in February 1936, on the occasion of the appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“In the revealed scriptures it is declared that the spiritual master should be worshiped like the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and this injunction is obeyed by pure devotees of the Lord. The spiritual master is the most confidential servant of the Lord. Thus let us offer our respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of our spiritual master.”

Gentlemen, on behalf of the members of the Bombay branch of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, let me welcome you all because you have so kindly joined us tonight in our congregational offerings of homage to the lotus feet of the world teacher, Ācāryadeva, who is the founder of this Gauḍīya Mission and the president-*ācārya* of Śrī Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rāja-sabhā—I mean my eternal divine master, Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Sixty-two years ago, on this auspicious day, the Ācāryadeva made his appearance by the call of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda at Śrī-kṣetra, Jagannātha-dhāma, at Purī.

Gentlemen, the offering of such an homage as has been arranged this evening to the Ācāryadeva is not a sectarian concern, for when we speak of the fundamental principle of *gurudeva*, or *ācāryadeva*, we speak of something that is of universal application. There does not arise any question of discriminating my *guru* from yours or anyone else’s. There is only one *guru*, who appears in an infinity of forms to teach you, me, and all others.

The *guru*, or *ācāryadeva*, as we learn from the bona fide scriptures, delivers the message of the absolute world, the transcendental abode of the Absolute Truth. We have heard so many times: *mahā-jano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ* (“Traverse the trail which your previous *ācārya* has passed”), but we have hardly tried to understand the real purport of this *śloka*. If we scrutinizingly study this proposition, we can understand that the *mahā-jana* is one and the royal road to the transcendental world is also one. In the *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* [1.2.12] it is said:

*tad-vijñānārtham sa gurum evābhigacet
samiṭ-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham*

“In order to learn the transcendental science, one must approach the bona fide spiritual master in disciplic succession, who is fixed in the Absolute Truth.”

Thus it has been enjoined herewith that in order to receive that transcendental knowledge, one must approach the *guru*. Therefore, if the Absolute Truth is one, about which we think there is no difference of opinion, the *guru* also cannot be two. The Ācāryadeva to whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not the *guru* of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the Jagad-guru, the *guru* of all of us; the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly, while others do not obey him directly.

In the *Bhāgavatam* [11.17.27] it is said:

*ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ*

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“One should understand the spiritual master to be as good as I am,” said the Blessed Lord. “Nobody should be jealous of the spiritual master or think of him as an ordinary man, because the spiritual master is the sum total of all the demigods.” That is, the *ācārya* has been identified with God Himself. He has nothing to do with the affairs of this mundane world. He does not descend here to meddle with the affairs of temporary necessities but to deliver the fallen, conditioned souls—the souls, or entities, who have come here to the material world with a motive of enjoyment by the mind and five organs of sense perception. He appears before us to reveal the light of the *Vedas* and to bestow upon us the blessings of full-fledged freedom, after which we should hanker at every step of our life’s journey.

The transcendental knowledge of the *Vedas* was first uttered by God to Brahmā, the creator of this particular universe. From Brahmā the knowledge descended to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsadeva, and from Vyāsadeva to Madhva, and in this process of disciplic succession the transcendental knowledge was transmitted by one disciple to another till it reached Lord Gaurāṅga, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who posed as the disciple and successor of Śrī Īśvara Purī. The present Ācāryadeva is the tenth disciplic representative from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, the original representative of Lord Caitanya who preached this transcendental tradition in its fullness. The knowledge that we receive from our Gurudeva is not different from that imparted by God Himself and the succession of the *ācāryas* in the preceptorial line of Brahmā. We adore this auspicious day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā-tithi because the *ācārya* is the living representative of Vyāsadeva, the divine compiler of the *Vedas*, *Purāṇas*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

One who interprets the divine sound, or *śabda-brahma*, by his imperfect sense perception cannot be a real spiritual *guru*, because in the absence of proper disciplinary training under the bona fide *ācārya*, the interpreter is sure to differ from Vyāsadeva (as the Māyāvādīs do). Śrīla Vyāsadeva is the prime authority of Vedic revelation, and therefore such an irrelevant interpreter cannot be accepted as the *guru*, or *ācārya*, howsoever equipped he may be with all the acquirements of material knowledge. As it is said in the *Padma Purāṇa*, *sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ*: “Unless you are initiated by a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the *mantra* that you might have received is without any effect.”

On the other hand, one who has received the transcendental knowledge by aural reception from the bona fide preceptor in the disciplic chain, and who has sincere regard for the real *ācārya*, must needs be enlightened with the revealed knowledge of the *Vedas*. But this knowledge is permanently sealed to the cognitive approach of the empiricists. As it is said in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* [6.23]:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who simultaneously have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.”

Gentlemen, our knowledge is so poor, our senses are so imperfect, and our sources are so limited that it is not possible for us to have even the slightest knowledge of the absolute region without surrendering ourselves at the louts feet of Śrī Vyāsadeva or his bona fide representative. Every moment we are being deceived by the knowledge of our direct perception. It is all the creation or concoction of the mind, which is always deceiving, changing, and flickering. We cannot know anything of the transcendental region by our limited, perverted method of observation and experiment. But all of us can lend our eager ears for the aural reception of the transcendental sound transmitted from that region to this through the unadulterated medium of Śrī Gurudeva or Śrī Vyāsadeva. Therefore, gentlemen, we should surrender ourselves today at the feet of the representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva for the elimination of all our differences bred by our unsubmissive attitude. It is accordingly said in Śrī Gītā [4.34]:

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just approach the wise and bona fide spiritual master. Surrender unto him first and try to understand him by inquiries and service. Such a wise spiritual master will enlighten you with transcendental knowledge, for he has already known the Absolute Truth.”

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To receive the transcendental knowledge we must completely surrender ourselves to the real *ācārya* in a spirit of ardent inquiry and service. Actual performance of service to the Absolute under the guidance of the *ācārya* is the only vehicle by which we can assimilate the transcendental knowledge. Today's meeting for offering our humble services and homage to the feet of the Ācāryadeva will enable us to be favored with the capacity of assimilating the transcendental knowledge so kindly transmitted by him to all persons without distinction.

Gentlemen, we are all more or less proud of our past Indian civilization, but we actually do not know the real nature of that civilization. We cannot be proud of our past material civilization, which is now a thousand times greater than in days gone by. It is said that we are passing through the age of darkness, the Kali-yuga. What is this darkness? The darkness cannot be due to backwardness in material knowledge, because we now have more of it than formerly. If not we ourselves, our neighbors at any rate have plenty of it. Therefore, we must conclude that the darkness of the present age is not due to a lack of material advancement, but that we have lost the clue to our spiritual advancement, which is the prime necessity of human life and the criterion of the highest type of human civilization. Throwing bombs from airplanes is no advancement of civilization from the primitive, uncivilized practice of dropping big stones on the heads of enemies from the tops of hills. Improvement in the art of killing our neighbors by means of machine guns and poisonous gases is certainly no advancement from primitive barbarism, which prided itself on its art of killing by bows and arrows. Nor does the development of a sense of pampered selfishness prove anything more than intellectual animalism. True human civilization is very different from all these states, and therefore in the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* [1.3.14] there is the emphatic call:

*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata
kṣurasya dhārā niṣītā duratyayā
durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti*

“Please wake up and try to understand the boon which you now have in this human form of life. The path of spiritual realization is very difficult; it is sharp like a razor's edge. That is the opinion of learned, transcendental scholars.”

Thus, while others were yet in the womb of historical oblivion, the sages of India had developed a different kind of civilization, which enabled them to know themselves. They had discovered that we are not at all material entities, but that we are all spiritual, permanent, and indestructible servants of the Absolute. But because we have, against our better judgment, chosen to completely identify ourselves with this present material existence, our sufferings have multiplied according to the inexorable law of birth and death, with its consequent diseases and anxieties. These sufferings cannot be really mitigated by any provision of material happiness, because matter and spirit are completely different elements. It is just as if you took an aquatic animal out of water and put it on the land, supplying all manner of happiness possible on land. The deadly sufferings of the animal are not capable of being relieved at all until it is taken out of its foreign environment. Spirit and matter are completely contradictory things. All of us are spiritual entities. We cannot have perfect happiness, which is our birthright, however much we may meddle with the affairs of the mundane things. Perfect happiness can be ours only when we are restored to our natural state of spiritual existence. This is the distinctive message of our ancient Indian civilization, this is the message of the *Gītā*, this is the message of the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas*, and this is the message of all the real *ācāryas*, including our present Ācāryadeva, in the line of Lord Caitanya.

Gentlemen, although it is imperfectly that we have been enabled, by his grace, to understand the sublime messages of our Ācāryadeva, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, we must admit that we have realized definitely that the divine message from his holy lips is the congenial thing for suffering humanity. All of us should hear him patiently. If we listen to the transcendental sound without unnecessary opposition, he will surely have mercy upon us. The *ācārya's* message is to take us back to our original home, back to God. Let me repeat, therefore, that we should hear him patiently, follow him in the measure of our conviction, and bow down at his lotus feet for releasing us from our present causeless unwillingness for serving the Absolute and all souls.

From the *Gītā* we learn that even after the destruction of the body, the *ātmā*, or the soul, is not

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destroyed; he is always the same, always new and fresh. Fire cannot burn him, water cannot dissolve him, the air cannot dry him up, and the sword cannot kill him. He is everlasting and eternal, and this is also confirmed in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [10.84.13]:

*yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhiḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣu abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ*

“Anyone who accepts this bodily bag of three elements [bile, mucus, and air] as his self, who has an affinity for an intimate relationship with his wife and children, who considers his land as worshipable, who takes bath in the waters of the holy places of pilgrimage but never takes advantage of those persons who are in actual knowledge—he is no better than an ass or a cow.”

Unfortunately, in these days we have all been turned foolish by neglecting our real comfort and identifying the material cage with ourselves. We have concentrated all our energies for the meaningless upkeep of the material cage for its own sake, completely neglecting the captive soul within. The cage is meant for the undoing of the bird; the bird is not meant for the welfare of the cage. Let us, therefore,



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deeply ponder this. All our activities are now turned toward the upkeep of the cage, and the most we do is try to give some food to the mind by art and literature. But we do not know that this mind is also material in a more subtle form. This is stated in the *Gītā* [7.4]:

*bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuh khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

“Earth, water, fire, air, sky, intelligence, mind, and ego are all My separated energies.”

We have scarcely tried to give any food to the soul, which is distinct from the body and mind; therefore we are all committing suicide in the proper sense of the term. The message of the Ācāryadeva is to give us a warning to halt such wrong activities. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet for the unalloyed mercy and kindness he has bestowed upon us.

Gentlemen, do not for a moment think that my Gurudeva wants to put a complete brake on the modern civilization—an impossible feat. But let us learn from him the art of making the best use of a bad bargain, and let us understand the importance of this human life, which is fit for the highest development of true consciousness. The best use of this rare human life should not be neglected. As it is said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.9.29]:

*labdhvā sudurlabham idaṁ bahu-sambhavānte
mānuṣyam arthadam anityam apīha dhīraḥ
tūrṇaṁ yateta na pated anumṛtyu yāvan
niḥśreyasāya viṣayaḥ khalu sarvataḥ syāt*

“Human life is obtained after many, many births, and though it is temporary, it offers the highest benefits. Thus a sober and intelligent man should immediately try to fulfill his mission and attain the highest profit in life before another death occurs. He should avoid sense gratification, which is available in all circumstances.”

Let us not misuse this human life in the vain pursuit of material enjoyment, or, in other words, for the sake of only eating, sleeping, fearing, and sensuous activities. The Ācāryadeva’s message is conveyed by the words of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*anāsaktasya viṣayān yathārham upayuñjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate*

*prāpañcikatayā buddhyā hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate*

“One is said to be situated in the fully renounced order of life if he lives in accordance with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He should be without attachment for sense gratification and should accept only what is necessary for the upkeep of the body. On the other hand, one who renounces things which could be used in the service of Kṛṣṇa, under the pretext that such things are material, does not practice complete renunciation.”

The purport of these *ślokas* can only be realized by fully developing the rational portion of our life, not the animal portion. Sitting at the feet of the Ācāryadeva, let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is this universe, what is God, and what is our relationship with Him. The message of Lord Caitanya is the message for the living entities and the message of the living world. Lord Caitanya did not bother Himself for the upliftment of this dead world, which is suitably named Martyaloka, the world where everything is destined to die. He appeared before us four hundred fifty years ago to tell us something of the transcendental universe, where everything is permanent and everything is for the service of the Absolute. But recently Lord Caitanya has been misrepresented by some unscrupulous persons, and the highest philosophy of the Lord has been misinterpreted to be the cult of the lowest type of society. We are glad to announce tonight that our Ācāryadeva, with his unusual

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kindness, saved us from this horrible type of degradation, and therefore we bow down at his lotus feet with all humility.

Gentlemen, it has been a mania of the cultured (or uncultured) society of the present day to accredit the Personality of Godhead with merely impersonal features and to stultify Him by claiming that He has no senses, no form, no activity, no head, no legs, and no enjoyment. This has also been the pleasure of the modern scholars due to their sheer lack of proper guidance and true introspection in the spiritual realm. All these empiricists think alike: all the enjoyable things should be monopolized by the human society, or by a particular class only, and the impersonal God should be a mere order supplier for their whimsical feats. We are happy that we have been relieved of this horrible type of malady by the mercy of His Divine Grace Paramahansa Parivrājākācārya Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He is our eye-opener, our eternal father, our eternal preceptor, and our eternal guide. Let us therefore bow down at his lotus feet on this auspicious day.

Gentlemen, although we are like ignorant children in the knowledge of the Transcendence, still His Divine Grace, my Gurudeva, has kindled a small fire within us to dissipate the invincible darkness of empirical knowledge. We are now so much on the safe side that no amount of philosophical argument by the empiric schools of thought can deviate us an inch from the position of our eternal dependence on the lotus feet of His Divine Grace. Furthermore, we are prepared to challenge the most erudite scholars of the Māyāvāda school and prove that the personality of Godhead and His transcendental sports in Goloka alone constitute the sublime information of the *Vedas*. There are explicit indications of this in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* [8.13.1]: *śyāmāc chavalam prapadye śavalāc chyāmam prapadye*. “For receiving the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, I surrender unto His energy [Rādhā], and for receiving the mercy of His energy, I surrender unto Kṛṣṇa.” Also, in the *Rg Veda* [1.2.22.20]: *tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayo divīva cakṣur ātataṁ . . . viṣṇor yat paramam padam*. “The lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu are the supreme objective of all the demigods. These lotus feet of the Lord are as enlightening as the sun in the sky.”

The plain truth so vividly explained in the *Gītā*, which is the central lesson of the *Vedas*, is not understood or even suspected by the most powerful scholars of the empiric schools. Herein lies the secret of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. When we meditate on the transcendental pastimes of the Absolute Godhead, we are proud to feel that we are His eternal servitors, and we become jubilant and dance with joy. All glory to my divine master, for it is he who has out of his unceasing flow of mercy stirred up within us such a movement of eternal existence. Let us bow down at his lotus feet.

Gentlemen, had he not appeared before us to deliver us from the thralldom of this gross worldly delusion, surely we should have remained for lives and ages in the darkness of helpless captivity. Had he not appeared before us, we would not have been able to understand the eternal truth of the sublime teaching of Lord Caitanya. Had he not appeared before us, we could not have been able to know the significance of the first *śloka* of *Brahma-saṁhitā*:

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

“Kṛṣṇa, who is known as Govinda, is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal, blissful, spiritual body. He is the origin of all, He has no other origin, and He is the prime cause of all causes.”

Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.

ABHAY CHARAN DAS

For Members, Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Bombay