

ŚRĪ VYĀSA-PŪJĀ

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā
August 25, 2019

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AUGUST 25, 2019

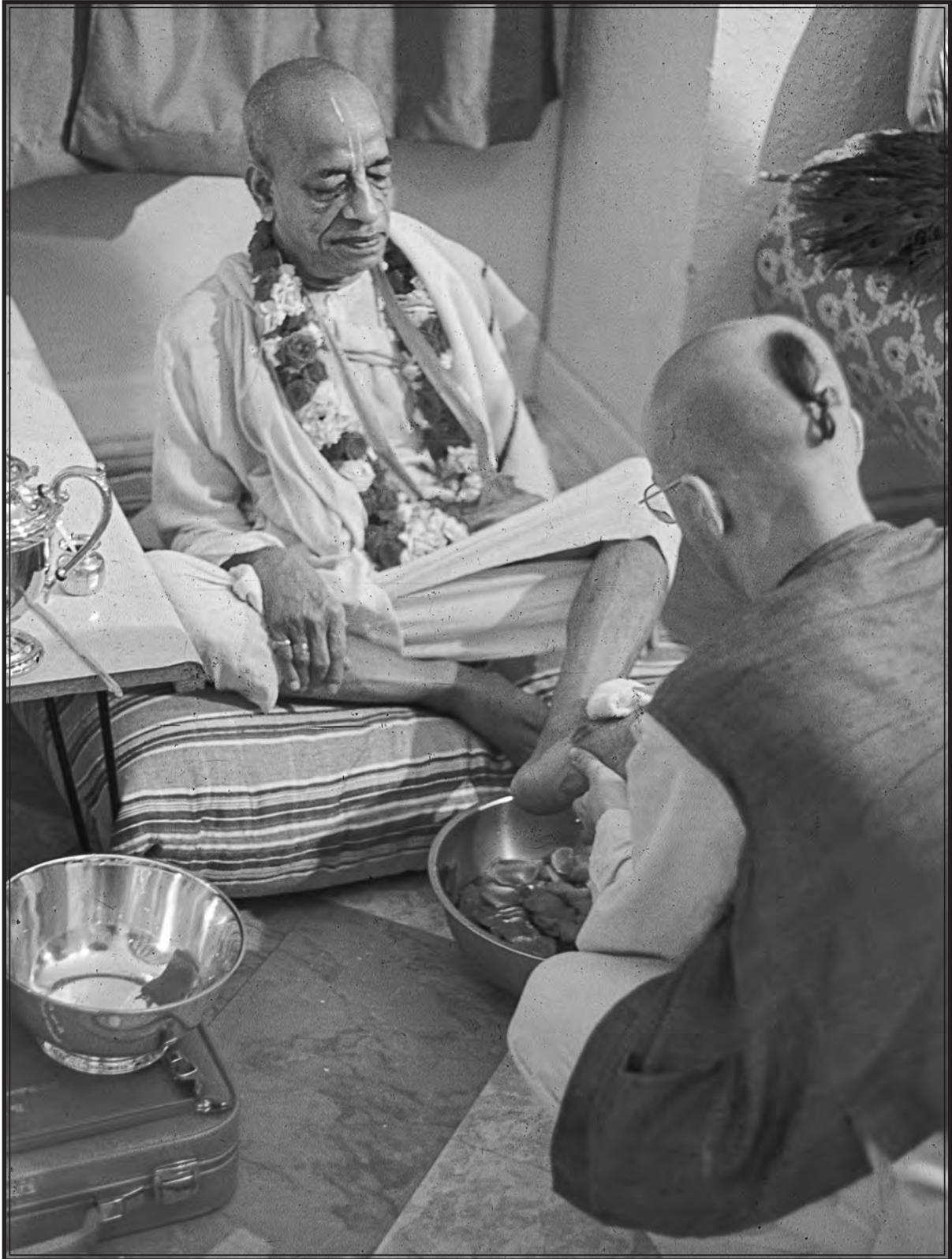
The appearance day of
our beloved Spiritual Master

His Divine Grace

Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Paramaharīsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-Śata Śrī Śrīmad

A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

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



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Introduction

In *The Nectar of Instruction*, in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport to Text 4, describing the six loving exchanges between devotees, he writes, “The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees.” One of those loving exchanges is “revealing one’s mind in confidence.” The annual Vyāsa-pūjā book facilitates confidential revelations of devotees feelings toward Śrīla Prabhupāda, written for the ISKCON community. And thus those who have written and those who will read the homages to Śrīla Prabhupāda in this book are participating in the sweetest form of *guhyam ākhyāti prcchati*—confidential revelation and inquiry concerning our beloved founder-*ācārya*.

Here are some of the highlights to be found in this 51st annual Vyāsa-pūjā book.

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami has written a moving summary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s life in a few pages. After recounting Prabhupāda’s life of pure devotion, infused with his great determination and his willingness to undergo any austerity to serve the mission of his spiritual master, Mahārāja gives a summary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s gifts to all of us and the whole world:

As amazing gifts were born out of the churning of the celestial milk ocean, by his churning of the ocean of ISKCON Śrīla Prabhupāda had given to the world 108 temples—many with magnificent Deities. He had initiated close to 5,000 disciples. Millions of books full of sublime Vedic wisdom had been placed into the hands of relief-hungry conditioned souls. There were farms, restaurants, schools, traveling bus parties, colorful Ratha-yātrās, and lively festivals spread across the globe. Lord Caitanya’s prediction that His holy name would reach every town and village was rolling forward, propelled by these great waves from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ISKCON.

Bhaktivaibhava Swami, continuing his series on the importance of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, this year focuses on the need for all followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda to study them regularly and scrutinizingly. Mahārāja has mined some essential quotes from Prabhupāda’s letters concerning the importance he placed upon reading his books:

I am glad to see how nicely you are reading my books. Please continue to do this. We need so many preachers who are soundly versed in the scriptures to convince the world to take to Krishna Consciousness. [Letter to Vrindaban Candra, 9 November 1970]

You may please me the most by reading my books and following the instructions therein and by becoming fully Krishna Conscious in this lifetime. [Letter to Bahūrūpa, 22 November 1974]

I have already answered the most important question. “How to please Kṛṣṇa?”—by following all the regulative principles that I have given you, chanting 16 rounds and reading my books scrutinizingly. Everyone must do these things, otherwise they cannot understand Krishna Consciousness. [Letter to Ādi-keśava, 16 January 1975]

Thank you for reading my books and appreciating them. Please continue to do so. That will help you advance nicely in spiritual life. By reading my books and chanting Hare Krishna, your life will become perfect. [Letter to Mr. Lourenco, 14 March 1975]

Varṣāṇā Swami offers an exquisite poem. Here is an excerpt describing the *kīrtana* Śrīla Prabhupāda

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led at his 1972 Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in New Vrindaban. I've heard this extraordinary *kīrtana* described before, but never so beautifully:

As you came before Their Lordships
To offer your *praṇāms*
You began to lead the indelible *kīrtan*
And the spiritual frontier
Emerged before our vision

Your ecstasy was contagious
Everyone was affected
Hundreds of eyes shed joyous tears
Hundreds of arms reached upward
Undulating with grace

Celestial voices joined with ours
Songs of nature formed the chorus
Echoes responded from surrounding hills

Noontime sun from high above
Shone down on us to see
Faces beaming with new-found hope
In brighter worlds beyond the sky

While our praise rose upward
Blessings descended in return
Your Vyāsa-pūjā lecture
Thereby affirmed

It seemed as if the heavens opened
For the mellows of Vṛndāvana to shower upon us
Cleansing the mirror of my soul from the dust of illusion
While subduing *saṁsāra*'s raging fire
Awakening a taste for devotional life

A euphoric feeling surpassing all comprehension
Distinct from all worldly experience
Immersed us in the ecstasy of unbounded joy
Amidst a delicate assemblage of fragrance and warmth
Color beauty luster and *rasa*

This impression grows ever more vivid
With the passage of time
I reflect on it often
For inspiration

As always, we have some newcomers contributing this year, showing how Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy is flooding every corner of this globe. For the first time we hear from the devotees in Managua, Nicaragua, who write:

Introduction

Once more we celebrate your transcendental appearance. This is another opportunity to glorify you, prostrate our humble hearts at your lotus feet, and thank you for allowing us on this side of the planet to participate in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission . . .

Another new voice comes from the devotees in Pattaya, Thailand, who write:

Although we were not able to be with Your Devine Grace physically, we feel very, very close to you through your books, your audio and video recordings, your pictures, and your representatives. We have no words to describe our gratitude for what you have done for us. Now what we have to do is thoroughly learn the knowledge you have made available to us and strictly follow the path of bhakti-yoga as you taught it.

Finally, our last new participants are the devotees operating the Bhakti Lounge in Johannesburg, South Africa. They eloquently write:

Your immense mercy having touched each of our lives, we have come together, a group of African youth, inspired to share this same mercy of yours far and wide. Your love having shaped us, we attempt to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa and foster love for Him both in our community and to those we reach out to. Serving together, we grow together, with hope that our impact on the world around us will be a true reflection of the values you have taught us, and that our efforts are pleasing to you. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the insurmountable grace you have granted us. We pray to become worthy dispensers of the same in this mission to spread the Lord's most merciful holy name.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to thank Kaiśorī Devī Dāsī and Rūpa Sanātana Dāsa for helping out this year with editing many of the offerings. Without their invaluable help, we wouldn't have made our deadline.

Draviḍa Dāsa
Vyāsa-pūjā Book Editor

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

Vyāsa-pūjā is an offering of our gratitude to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the literary incarnation of the Lord, and the whole disciplic succession—from Lord Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, to Nārada, to Vyāsa, and right down to the present day. The procedure for offering gratitude to Śrīla Vyāsadeva is to honor his foremost representative, the spiritual master, on his appearance day. Thus in today’s International Society for Krishna Consciousness, with many initiating spiritual masters, Vyāsa-pūjā is observed by their disciples on many days throughout the year. But the one Vyāsa-pūjā that *all* ISKCON members observe is the appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON and the main instructing spiritual master for all ISKCON members, now and forevermore.

When Śrīla Vyāsadeva received knowledge from his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, he decided to organize it into the four *Vedas*. Vyāsadeva could see that in the future, with the arrival of Kali-yuga, most of society would be unable to remember the Vedic mantras just from hearing them, so he had them written down, divided into four, and entrusted to his leading disciples. Then he wrote the *Purāṇas* (minus the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*) to explain the *Vedas*, and the *Mahābhārata* for the less intelligent masses. Then he wrote the *Vedānta-sūtra*, a summary of all Vedic literature.

Although Vyāsa thus engaged himself in welfare work for all people, he still felt dissatisfied. In the purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.4.30 Śrīla Prabhupāda states, “Śrīla Vyāsadeva appeared to have lost the clue and therefore felt dissatisfaction.” At this critical time his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, came to him and explained the cause of Vyāsadeva’s dissatisfaction: “You have hardly broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which does not satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless. Although, great sage, you have very broadly described the four principles beginning with religious performances, you have not described to such an extent the glories of the Supreme Personality, Vāsudeva.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.8–9). And then the next two verses:

*na yad vacaś citra-pādaṁ harer yaśo
jagat-pavitraṁ pragṛṇīta karhicit
tad vāyasaṁ tīrtham uśanti mānasā
na yatra haṁsā niramanty uśik-kṣayāḥ*

“Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can sanctify the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there.”

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmīn prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat
śṛṇvanti gāyanti grṇanti sādavaḥ*

“On the other hand, that literature which is full of descriptions of the transcendental glories of the name, fame, forms, and pastimes, etc., of the unlimited supreme Lord is a different creation, full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization. Such transcendental literatures, even though imperfectly composed, are heard, sung, and accepted by purified men who are thoroughly honest.”

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

After thus being advised by Nārada, Śrīla Vyāsadeva wrote *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the ripened fruit of all Vedic literature, for the welfare of the whole human society. This knowledge has been carefully passed down through the chain of disciplic succession to the present day, and I believe that all of us who have seriously heard, studied, and worshiped the *Bhāgavatam* have experienced a revolution in our impious lives.

Therefore we set aside this wonderful day for worshiping Śrīla Vyāsadeva and our *paramparā* by worshiping Vyāsa's most glorious modern representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda. On the order of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda brought the knowledge of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the teachings of the Six Gosvāmīs, and the Lord's holy name to the whole world. His mission was to save the fallen souls in the Western countries and throughout the world by spreading this knowledge. What an inconceivably priceless gift! How can we ever begin to repay him for opening our tightly closed eyes?

Vyāsa-pūjā is not just an offering of flowers and praise to Śrīla Prabhupāda, but an offering of our very lives. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja captured the mood of a true disciple in this prayer to Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva (*Bhāgavatam* 7.9.28):

*evaṁ janāṁ nīpatitaṁ prabhavāhi-kūpe
kāmbhikāmam anu yaḥ prapatan prasaṅgāt
kṛtvātmasāt surarṣiṇā bhagavan grhītaḥ
so 'haṁ katharṁ nu visṛje tava bhṛtya-sevām*

“My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead. Because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I ever leave his service?” In the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda says:

While teaching Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, *guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja*: one can achieve the seed of devotional service by the mercy of the guru, the spiritual master, and then by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. This is the secret of success. First one should try to please the spiritual master, and then one should attempt to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa himself says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.55) that “only by devotional service can I be understood in truth.” Śrīla Prabhupāda afforded this supreme opportunity to all people of the world, making “karma,” “guru,” “self-realization,” “*kīrtana*,” etc., household words. So many people have become interested in yoga, *kīrtana*, a vegetarian diet, and reading *Bhagavad-gītā* due to Prabhupāda's efforts. Who could have foreseen this revolution in consciousness?

Śrīla Prabhupāda did. In 1965, when he was still alone in New York City, he met a Mr. Ruben, a subway conductor, sitting on a park bench. They struck up a conversation, and Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that “There are temples and books. . . . They are there, but the time is separating us from them.” He had an absolute conviction that he would succeed because he was faithfully representing his Guru Mahārāja, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and the whole *paramparā*.

In 1966, with just a few followers and a handful of disciples, he decided to incorporate The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, ISKCON. International? He had only one center in New York. Yet Śrīla Prabhupāda's conviction was unshakeable. He could see temples and disciples all over the world—only time separated him from them.

In the articles of incorporation, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote seven purposes of ISKCON:

1. To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large, and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West, he saw that the people lacked any understanding of genuine spiritual knowledge, what to speak of the tools and techniques for realizing that knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda made it his mission to provide both, just as Śrīla Vyāsadeva wrote the *Mahābhārata* to train and educate the less intelligent class in spiritual understanding.

2. To propagate a consciousness of Kṛṣṇa as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

3. To bring the members of the society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, and thus to develop the idea within the members and humanity at large that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead. (Kṛṣṇa)

This education is in keeping with the mission of our *paramparā*. Śrīla Vyāsadeva, on the order of his spiritual master, Nārada Muni, spent his life making the Vedic literature available in Sanskrit, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the order of his spiritual master, made the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and other essential Vedic literatures available in English and many other languages.

4. To teach and encourage the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the congregational chanting of the holy names of God, as revealed in the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Kṛṣṇa came as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to break open the storehouse of love of God in this dark Age of Kali, and He predicted that in every town and village of the world His names would be chanted. Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Caitanya's *senāpati-bhakta*—the commander in chief of His army of devotees—fulfilled Lord Caitanya's prediction in a mere eleven years of worldwide preaching after founding ISKCON in July of 1966.

5. To erect for the members and for society at large a holy place of transcendental pastimes dedicated to the personality of Kṛṣṇa.

6. To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.

7. With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.

This is Śrīla Prabhupāda's unique vision of how to organize an institution whose mission is to impart transcendental knowledge and thus create a cultural revolution for the benefit of society. This mission is the very essence of our *paramparā*. Without changing the transcendental message, each *ācārya* adapts it for the time, the place, and the audience that will receive it. We understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a bona fide representative of Vyāsadeva because Prabhupāda embodies the teachings of Vyāsadeva and explains *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in a way that others can understand it, so that everyone can take advantage of this knowledge and go back to Godhead.

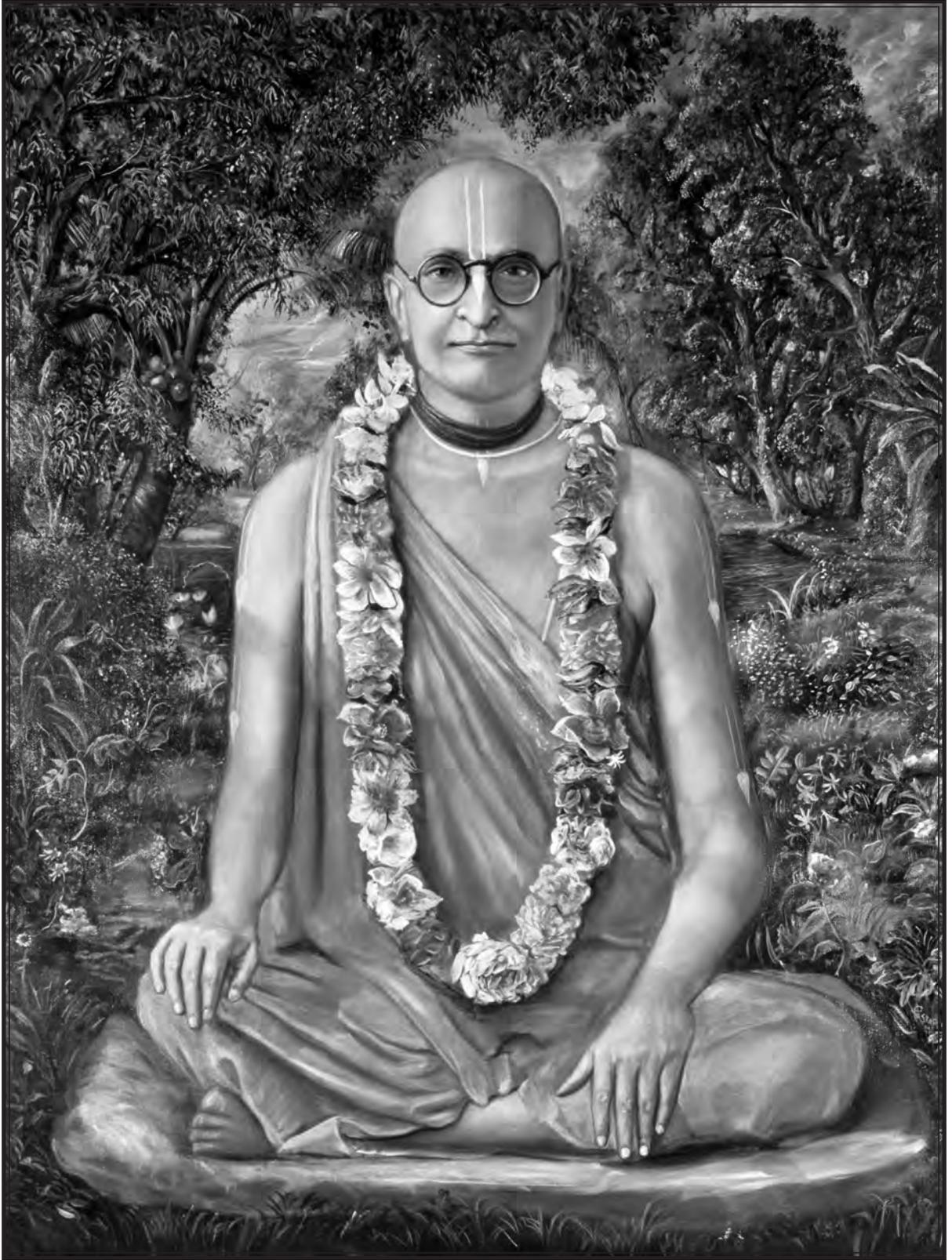
I have personally experienced (along with thousands of others) how my life has been transformed and saved by following Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, chanting sixteen rounds a day, adhering to the four regulative principles, and regularly hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, and so on. Not only have we been given this amazing philosophy, but we've been given a whole way of life, a cultural revolution.

Vyāsa-pūjā day is my favorite day of the year. It is so wonderful! Every morning throughout the year we offer our gratitude to Śrīla Prabhupāda—bowing down, offering prayers, and thanking His Divine Grace for saving us. But on Vyāsa-pūjā day we are given the opportunity to dive deeper into understanding what we are grateful for, and to express our gratitude more fully. To hear others share their realizations and express their gratitude to Prabhupāda never fails to open my eyes to even more reasons why I should feel

The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

indebted. Just as *kīrtana* is more relishable when lots of devotees raise their voices and sincerely chant together, calling out the Lord's holy names, so Vyāsa-pūjā day is the most relishable and blessed day of the year because we spend it with many devotees glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda and revealing our deepest feelings toward him. We all come together to glorify the pure devotee who brought Śrīla Vyāsadeva's message to the West and planted the *bhakti-latā-bīja* in our hearts. We should all take advantage of this Vyāsa-pūjā day to rededicate ourselves to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his great mission with our life and soul.

Rucirā Devī Dāsī
Alachua, Florida, USA



“Adore, Adore Ye All The Happy Day”

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the following poem in February 1935, on the occasion of the Vyāsa-pūjā celebration of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. It delighted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, especially the sixth stanza, which he felt captured the essence of his preaching against the Māyāvādīs. After reading this poem, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was especially keen that Śrīla Prabhupāda preach and write in English.

The following version of the poem was prepared from two sources: the version Śrīla Prabhupāda included in the March 1952 edition of his *Back to Godhead* magazine, and the version he wrote by hand on the back of a letter he sent Rāyarāma Dāsa on March 20, 1969.

1.
Adore, adore ye all
The happy day,
Blessed than heaven,
Sweeter than May,
When He appeared at Puri,
The holy place,
My lord and master,
His Divine Grace.

2.
Oh my Master,
The evangelic angel,
Give us thy light,
Light up thy candle.
Struggle for existence
A human race.
The only hope,
Your Divine Grace.

3.
Mised we are,
All going astray.
Save us, lord,
Our fervent pray.
Wonder thy ways
To turn our face.
Adore thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

4.
Forgotten Krishna,
We fallen souls

Paying most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around,
All distress.
The only hope,
Your Divine Grace.

5.
Message of service
Thou hast brought,
A meaningful life
As Chaitanya wrought.
Unknown to all,
It's full of brace.
That's your gift,
Your Divine Grace.

6.
Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved.
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.
This gives a life
Anew and fresh.
Worship thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

7.
Had you not come,
who had told
The message of Krishna,
Forceful and bold.
That's your right,

You have the mace.
Save me, a fallen,
Your Divine Grace.

8.

The line of service
As drawn by you
Is pleasing and healthy
Like morning dew.
The oldest of all,
But in new dress.
Miracle done,
Your Divine Grace.