

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā

Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā
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The Most Blessed Event

*The appearance day of
our beloved Spiritual Master*

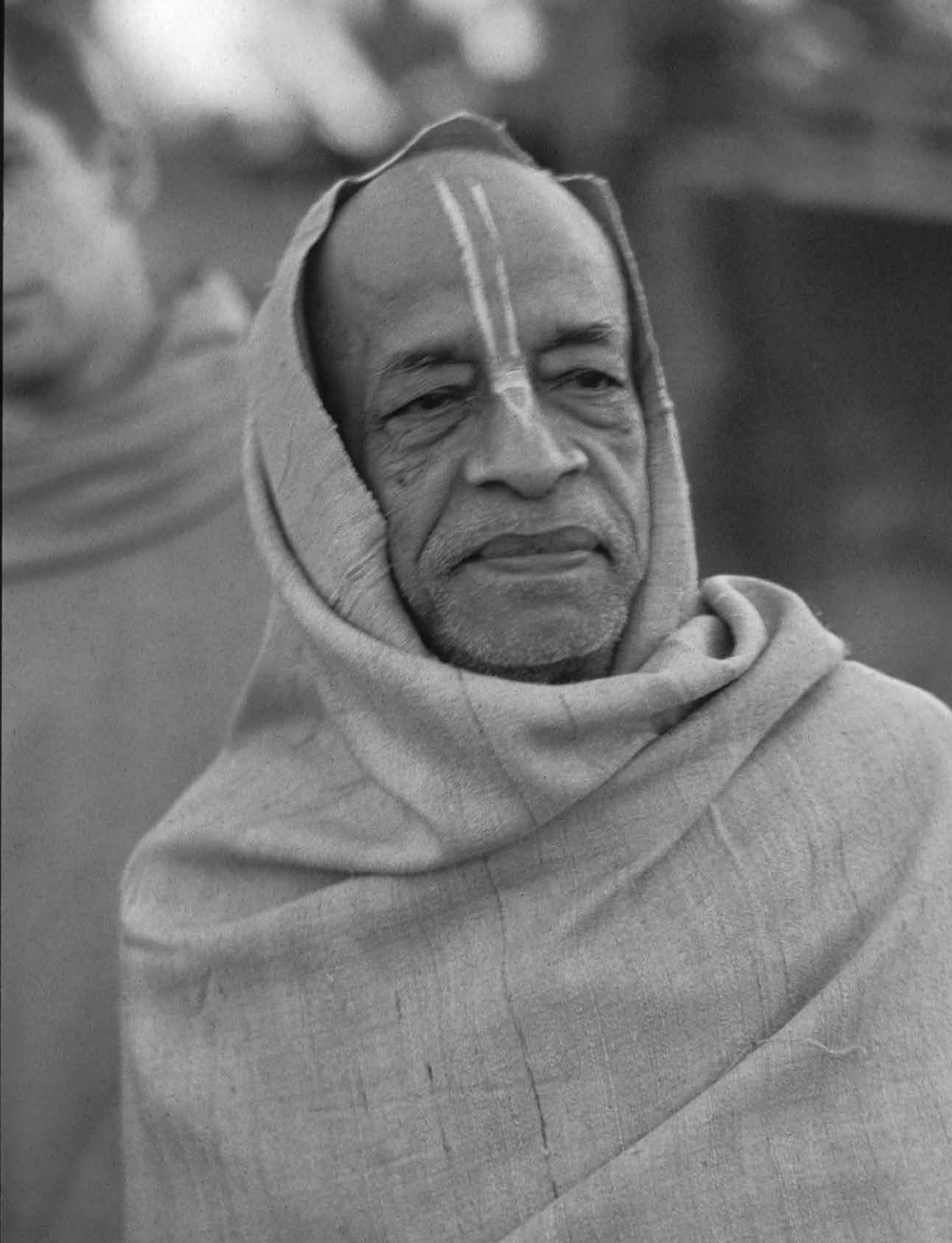
Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā

His Divine Grace

Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

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



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Introduction

This is the forty-fifth annual Śrīla Prabhupāda Vyāsa-pūjā book. Instituted by Śrīla Prabhupāda, it was meant to be part of the annual Vyāsa-pūjā celebration, a way for his disciples to formally express their devotion and prayers to him by writing a heart-felt offering and having it printed in a book that was offered to him on that blessed day.

As the movement grew, it quickly became impossible for every disciple to have an offering in the book, and so soon only leading disciples had their offerings published. Then as the years passed after Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure in 1977, gradually more and more offerings were being written by Śrīla Prabhupāda's granddisciples. Today the large majority are. The question has been raised: Do we really need the Vyāsa-pūjā book anymore, since most of the writers have their own spiritual masters, with their own Vyāsa-pūjā celebrations, and most of Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct disciples aren't able to write an offering for it? Well, with the establishment in 2010 of the *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* book, which accepts offerings from any devotee directly initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda, the latter issue has been resolved. But the former objection may still raise some doubt about the long-term viability or necessity of the traditional Vyāsa-pūjā book.

This year the Governing Body Commission produced a statement articulating the unique position of Śrīla Prabhupāda as founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON and the relationship every member of the Society has with him. An excerpt:

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is the preeminent guru for all members of ISKCON. All members of ISKCON, for all generations, are encouraged to seek shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda. All members of ISKCON are entitled and encouraged to have a personal relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda through his books, his teachings, his service, and his ISKCON society.

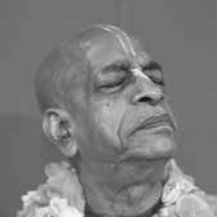
All along, the substance of the above statement has been the impetus for second-generation disciples to write offerings for Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā book. But now that the GBC has produced this formal statement—one that every ISKCON member is meant to read—we pray that the Vyāsa-pūjā book can continue perpetually, with offerings by Śrīla Prabhupāda's granddisciples, great-granddisciples, and great-great-granddisciples, long after the last direct Śrīla Prabhupāda disciple has departed.

As always, in the treasure chest of *guru-bhakti* known as Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā book, there are always a few gems that shine a little more brilliantly. This year I was especially enchanted by His Holiness Varṣāṇā Swami's offering. Here's an excerpt:

Being a plow boy from a farming background, I was drawn to your deep grasp of the sacramental nature of agriculture. In this context, cultivating the field means preparing the heart. Planting the seed means impregnating the fertile heart with the *bhakti-latā-bīja*. Humility means humus, the fertile soil in which the seed can take root. The necessary rains are the spiritual sacrifices we perform. And the wind, whispering through the growing vine, is the breath of life, the holy name. The harvest festival is the coming together to share the fruits of the spirit in *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. I found it intriguing that such a grasp of the sacramental dynamics of agriculture could be found in a *sādhū* from Calcutta.

Here's another gem: how Guṇagrāhi Mahārāja first got inspired to bow down in the temple:

Before I met you my heart had been broken by the only world I ever knew and could ever find—a world of false conceptions, illusory pursuits, and shattered dreams. The first time I came to the



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temple, saw your picture on the *vyāsāsana*, and watched the devotees bow down to you, I said to them, “When I feel something, I’ll bow down, but for now, I prefer to keep standing.” Soon after, though, your tidal wave of mercy hit me and literally knocked me off my feet. I found myself diving and surfacing in that wave with a relish I never felt before. The association, the *prasādam*, the chanting, *your* chanting, your words, the sound of your voice, devotional service! If I could have burrowed a hole in the floor to bow lower I would have done so.

And finally, here’s an excerpt from an offering from *Back to Godhead* magazine/Krishna.com, written by Vegavati Devī Dāsi. It perfectly encapsulates the mood of the younger generation of devotees—excited to be in the fire, spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide, but always recognizing Śrīla Prabhupāda as the source of their knowledge, inspiration, and blessings:

Over the course of these eleven years since Krishna.com was started, there have been seven million visitors to the “website all about Kṛṣṇa.” We pray that there will be more and more, that we and they may be ever more absorbed in the glories of Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental activities, devotees, teachings, and pastime places. We pray for your blessings in this endeavor, for only by your continued blessings can we hope to persevere and succeed.

Draviḍa Dāsa
Vyāsa-pūjā book editor



The Meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā

In his own Vyāsa-pūjā offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura in 1936, Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

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.

This statement affirms that although each representative of the disciplic succession is an individual, all are simultaneously categorized under the umbrella of *guru-tattva*, an energy of the Supreme Lord that manifests in innumerable forms for the benefit of all conditioned souls.

The tiny sparklike living entities in the material world cannot ascend to the spiritual dimension on their own. They do not have the power, knowledge, or intelligence to do so. Even the greatest, most powerful being in the entire universe, Lord Brahmā, was bewildered when he first appeared, and only when blessed with transcendental instructions from beyond this universe did he become aware of how to progress toward the goal of his life.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describes how spiritual, transcendental knowledge was originally transmitted directly by the Supreme Lord into the heart of Brahmā as the *Veda* (*tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye*). Lord Brahmā then transmitted these essential teachings to his son Nārada, who instructed his disciple Vyāsadeva, thus establishing a line of spiritual masters and their disciples known as the Brahma-sampradāya.

Originally there was only one *Veda*. But Śrīla Vyāsadeva, seeing the impending degrading influences of the Age of Kali, such as short memory and decreased intelligence, divided the *Veda* into categories and also explained the knowledge in supplementary works such as the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas*, headed by the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*—all to make it easier for common people to comprehend. He also compiled the information into books, whereas prior to this age Vedic knowledge had been transmitted orally.

*tataḥ saptadaśe jātaḥ satyavatyām parāśarāt
cakre veda-taroḥ śākhā dṛṣṭvā puṁso 'lpa-medhasaḥ*

“Thereafter, in the seventeenth incarnation of Godhead, Śrī Vyāsadeva appeared in the womb of Satyavatī through Parāśara Muni, and he divided the one *Veda* into several branches and subbranches, seeing that the people in general were less intelligent.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.21)

As Vyāsadeva divided and expanded the *Vedas* to make the knowledge easier to understand, each subsequent member of the *sampradāya* similarly passes this knowledge to his disciples in a way that they can understand, without changing the direct meaning. In this way, each member of the *sampradāya* is considered a representative of Vyāsadeva and is therefore worshipable by his disciples and followers.

This book, and offerings made in ISKCON temples throughout the world today, honor the thirty-second representative of this *sampradāya*, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who appeared on September 1, 1896, corresponding to the ninth day of the waning moon in the month of Śrāvaṇa. Each year on this astrological date disciples and followers open their hearts in love and admiration for their guru, gathering to read homages that glorify him and express their gratitude to him for his blessings upon them.

The practice of composing prayers and glorification inspires intimacy within one's heart, and hearing or reading such offerings will also excite spiritual emotions in those coming into contact with them. This is the meaning of Vyāsa-pūjā, which can be compared to cooking sugarcane juice. As the juice is



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heated, its sweet flavor increases and thickens. Similarly, as we hear and read these offerings, our love for Śrīla Prabhupāda will increase and our emotions thicken, bringing hearers and readers to higher and more intimate realms of spiritual experience.

by Dhruva Mahārāja Dāsa





“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.

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.

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

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

Forgotten Krishna,
We fallen soul
Paying most heavy
The illusion's toll.
Darkness around,
All untrace.
The only hope
His Divine Grace.

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

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

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.

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.

