

Srilaprabhupada Vyasa Puja



Srila Prabhupada often used the analogy of an ambassador when describing the spiritual master. As an ambassador is shown all respect due to his post, the spiritual master is respected as we would respect God due to his function as the Supreme Lord's representative. The etiquette of honoring the spiritual master, however, is not a dogmatic social convention, like those practiced on the political scene. The bona fide spiritual master is not an ordinary human being. His qualities are all transcendental to the modes of material nature, and by those equalities he endears himself to his disciples and helps them develop their love for him and for Sri Krsna. Although how he does this may not always be apparent, there are times when one can peep into the spiritual dimension and appreciate the spiritual master's uncommon nature. Such a circumstance occurred with Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana on Janmastami night, August 18, 1974. Srila Prabhupada was visibly ill, but he still insisted on greeting the governor and other dignitaries in the unfinished Krsna-Balarama temple. Despite extreme inconvenience, Prabhupada spoke publicly that night and then returned to his room, barely able to walk without assistance.

Not understanding Srila Prabhupada's fragile condition, while he was at the temple I entered his room and placed many gifts on his desk for his Vyasa-puja celebration the next day. When he returned to his room, I went into the garden and looked through Prabhupada's window, hoping to see him enjoy the gifts. Instead, what I saw gripped my heart with fear. Srila Prabhupada had collapsed across his asana and lay with his head motionless against the pillow. He looked feverish and weak, with no strength to move. I quickly ran to tell Prabhupada's servant of his serious condition. The next day Srila Prabhupada was too weak to attend his Vyasa-puja ceremony. All his disciples chanted and prayed for his recovery while going through the formalities of Vyasa-puja. Srila Prabhupada was the person to whom we had given our life, the person who had given us life. Despite our deep love for Prabhupada, however, we could do nothing more than pray for him that day. Twenty-four hour kirtana commenced in temples around the world as Srila Prabhupada's condition worsened. Amazingly, despite Prabhupada's ill health, he dutifully sent letters to various devotees who had given him gifts and written homages for his Vyasa-puja. We each received the same letter: I beg to

thank you for your kind appreciation on the Vyasa Puja day. Your sentiments are appreciated by me. It is stated by Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur, it is only by pleasing the spiritual master that one can be assured of pleasing Krsna. So my only request to my disciples all over the world on this day is to go on pushing on this movement with determination and sincerity, rigidly following the principles I have given you. I hope this meets you in good health. Your ever well-wisher, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami I venture to call this letter the “Vyasa-pujā Sutra” because it describes the essential meaning of Vyasa-puja, our relationship with Srila Prabhupada, our service to him, and the ultimate goal of that service. In this year’s Vyāsa-puja book one will find innumerable offerings, but one will also sense an underlying theme,-a thread of sentiment running through all of them—one of love and appreciation for Srila Prabhupada. From the incidents of Janmastami and Vyasa-puja in 1974 we learn just how determined and selfless Srila Prabhupada is, and why he is worshipable. Our debt to him is way beyond our ability to repay. As Srila Prabhupada wrote in his Caitanya-caritamṛta (Madhya 7.148, purport), “Each and every member of this Society was rescued from a very abominable condition, but now they are engaged in preaching the cult of Krsna consciousness.” Let us therefore keep pushing on this movement with determination and sincerity, rigidly following the principles Srilla Prabhupada has given us to attain the goal of pleasing Krsna. As most unqualified, wretched and fallen recipients of Prabhupada’s causeless mercy, let us seriously try to please him by following his instructions carefully.

Srila Prabhupad’s Appearance Day is a very special day for all ISKCON devotees as they joyfully glorify their eternal saviour Srila Prabhupada on His appearance day. Srila Prabhupada was sent by the Lord to fulfill Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s prediction- Prtvithe ache yata nagaradi grama, sarvatra pracara haibe more nama: In every town and village of the world, My name will be heard. Srila Bhakti Vinoda Thakura wrote in his Sajjonatosani, “Soon there will be a time when the chanting of Krishna’s name will be heard in England, France, Russia, Germany and America.” Srila Prabhupada appeared on Nanadotsava. Nandotsava means: Nanda Maharaja’s huge festival celebrating Krishna’s birth. Nanda Maharaja dressed in luxurious garments and distributed profuse charity to everyone in his kingdom. He gave away opulent cloth and ornaments and two million richly decorated cows to the brahmanas. Vraja was alive with vibrations of Vedic hymns and beautiful decorations and everyone was experiencing unending happiness. Bursting with bliss, the Vrajavasis expressed their joy by throwing butter, yogurt and ghee all around. One hundred years ago, on that most auspicious spiritual occasion, Srila Prabhupada appeared to fulfill the mission of Lord Krishna. Srila Prabhupada grew up as a pure devotee of the Lord and distributed Krishna Consciousness everywhere. Srila Prabhupada made a perfect appearance, led a perfect life and had a perfect departure. Srila Prabhupada lives forever through his books. This legacy will always provide the devotees with Lord Caitanya katha and teach everyone to chant the Maha mantra.