

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja

# **Vyasa is Guru; Vyasa is Right.**

[A lecture given during Srila Narayana Maharaja's Vyasa-puja celebration]

January 18, 2007 am: Kona, Hawaii

Today is my Vyasa-puja. MY Vyasa puja. This means it is my duty to worship Srila Vyasadeva. It is my duty to worship my Gurudeva, the entire guru-parampara, Krsna-tattva, Radha-tattva, Mahaprabhu-tattva, Gaura-Gadhadhara-tattva, Nityananda prabhu, Baladeva prabhu, and all other worshipful personalities. I did this today. The Sapta-pancakas were duly worshipped.

I have seen – and I also organized – the Vyasa-puja celebration of my Gurudeva. I have also seen the Vyasa-puja of Parama-pujyapada Srila Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja and Parama-pujyapada Srila Bhakti Pramoda Puri Maharaja. They all used to worship their Gurudeva, then the entire guru-paramapara, and then Radha-Krsna, Gaura-Nityananda Prabhu, Gaura-Gadhadhara and so on. There are seven pancakas: vyasa-pancaka, Krsna-pancaka, sanakadi-pancaka, panca-tattva-pancaka, upasya-pancaka, acarya-pancaka, and guru-pancaka. [\*See Endnote 1]

Every sannyasi in our disciplic line should worship like this on his birthday. On my Gurudeva's appearance day, after his disciples worshipped the guru-parampara, they worshipped him. I saw that at that time he told them with great humility, "I am not independently qualified to take your offerings."

Whatever qualities are in me, whatever I am doing and preaching – the credit for that belongs only to my Gurudeva and our guru-parampara. If any praise comes to me from the numerous devotees who are hearing my harikatha, that praise really does not belong to me. It belongs to my Gurudeva, parama-gurudeva (the guru of the guru), the guru-parampara, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Krsna.

For example, Sri Krsna instructed Uddhava in the 11th Canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam, and their conversation is called Uddhava-sandesh. I am simply repeating their words like a parrot. I am nothing. If I were not preaching their words, no one would be worshipping me today. Therefore, all worship goes to my Gurudeva's lotus feet. The false ego that "I am a great acarya" should not touch me. There should be no trace of this in my heart. I also tell the sannyasis who are preaching on my behalf that they should not have any false ego.

Today, I am offering Your gifts unto the lotus feet of my Gurudeva, and he will give them to our guru-parampara, to Sri Sri Radha-Krsna, Sri Gaura-Gadhadhara and all other worshipful personalities.

In Vedanta-sutra, Srila Vyasadeva wrote, "anandamaya abhyasat." \*[See endnote 2] The meaning is that the Supreme Truth is anandamaya, full of pleasure, and He is also the embodiment of pleasure. We are worshipping Him, chanting His name and engaging in all the limbs of bhakti. This is called abhyasat, devotional practices. Sankaracarya, Ramanuja, Madhvacarya, Visnusvami and Nimbadiya have all written commentaries on Vedanta-sutra, wherein they have given their philosophical concepts.

Sripad Sankaracarya saw that the Vedas and Upanisads state, "Vijnanam anandam brahma: The supreme reality is divine knowledge and bliss." (Brhad-aranyaka Upanisad 3.9.34)] He saw these Vedic texts stating, "Brahma is ananda," Brahma is rasa-svarupa (the embodiments of tasteful mellows)," and so on. He also saw the statement, anandamayo 'abhyasat.

Sankaracarya is an incarnation of bhakta Sankara, Sada-siva. By the order of his Master he played the role of rejecting the real meaning of the above-mentioned verses. Instead he preached, "Sarvam khalvidam brahma," meaning, "We are the same Brahman (Supreme Absolute Truth). We are that impersonal God." [The actual translation is: "There is no existence beyond Brahman." (Chandogya Upanisad 3.14.1)]. He preached, "Prajnanam brahma – knowledge is Brahman." [The actual translation is: "Prajna, pure knowledge is transcendental and is of the same spiritual substance as Brahman. (Aitareya Upanisad, 1.5.3)]

In his commentary of the phrase "anandamayo 'bhasyat," Sankaracarya wrote that Vyasadeva is anabajata-svat, meaning that Vyasa was somewhat ignorant.\*[See endnote 3] On one hand he considered Vyasa to be his Guru, but at the same time he said that Vyasa is ignorant. Therefore, his puja (worship) of Vyasadeva is not truly Vyasa-puja.

One who worships his Gurudeva should not be like Sankaracarya, thinking, "I know that my Gurudeva doesn't know everything. He is ignorant." This thinking is a great offense. We should be careful. I have heard this from my Gurudeva, and it is also written in Brahma-sutra. We should try to follow the self-realized Guru's words – the words he has received from his Gurudeva and Guru-parampara.

There are so many speakers, so in the evening they will have a chance to speak on guru-tattva. Those who want to serve the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha-Krsna should remember that it is not possible to do so without Guru. Not a trace of bhakti will come without surrender to the bona fide Guru.

There are three kinds of Guru-sevakas. The first-class disciples are those who, without any order, know the innermost heart's desire (mano-bhistam) of Gurudeva and follow. You should try to be like that. There is no need for Gurudeva to order such a disciple. A first-class disciple will automatically know what to do, and he will serve accordingly.

A second-class disciple will get an instruction from his Guru Maharaja and then follow that instruction.

Regarding the third-class disciple, even after his Gurudeva gives him an instruction, still he does not follow. He is a vaka (crane) – not a sevaka (disciple). Take out 'se' and what remains is 'vaka'. He is like the crane that stands in the water on one foot, with his eyes looking like they are closed in meditation, but are actually looking down at the water. He is waiting to see when a fish is swimming by, so that he can jump down and swallow it.

We should try to know the mano-'bhista (innermost heart's desire) of our Gurudeva. If you have a desire to serve, then you will realize what your Gurudeva wants. I have seen this in my Gurudeva, and I have written about this in his biography. He used to 'jump', without any order, to carry the mano-bhista of his Gurudeva.

sri caitanya-mano bhista sthapita yena bhutale  
svayam rupa kada mahyam dadati sva-padantikam

["When will Sri Rupa Gosvami give me the shelter of his lotus feet? Because he understood the innermost desire of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he was able to establish His mission in this world. He is very dear to the Lord." (Sri Prema-bhakti-candrika, Narottama dasa Thakura)]

Srila Rupa Gosvami knew the innermost heart's desire of his Gurudeva, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu never wrote any book. He only wrote the eight verses of Sri Siksastakam. Srila Rupa Gosvami knew what Mahaprabhu wanted, and he fulfilled His desires. He established the parakiya mood (paramour love) of Sri Krsna and the gopis in this world for the first time. Although it was written about in Srimad-Bhagavatam, the members of the Ramanuja-sampradaya, Madhva-sampradaya and other sampradayas were unable to appreciate the parakiya mood as the highest – and others were criticizing it. Srila Rupa Gosvami established by sastra everything Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu showed by His activities and wanted to give the world. This was the best service to Mahaprabhu.

So we should try to know the wish of our Gurudeva, and follow.

[\*Endnote 1 – On the seven pancakas:

guru-pancaka (Sri Guru, Paramaguru, Paramesthiguru, Paratparguru, Paramparatparguru); 2) acarya-pancaka (Sri Sukadeva, Ramanuja, Madhva, Visnusvami, Nimbadiya); 3) vyasa-pancaka (Sri Vedavyasa, Pail, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, Sumanta); 4) sanakadi-pancaka (Sri Sanat, Sanatkumara, Sanatana, Sanandana, Visvaksena); 5) krsna-pancaka (Sri Krsna, Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha); 6) upasya-pancaka (Sri Radhika, Krsna, Gaura, Gadadhara, Sri Gurudeva); and 7) panca-tattva (Sri Krsna Caitanya, Nityananda, Advaita Acarya, Gadadhara, Srivasa).]

[\*Endnote 2 – On Anandamayo 'bhyasat:

["Attachment to this body and to objects related to this body is nothing but tamah, or darkness. The sense of possessiveness, or 'my-ness', which we have towards the things of this world, is also tamah. On the other hand, to serve Krsna in our constitutional form is

light, and it brings complete and eternal happiness. Why? Because that Para-brahma is ananda and anandamaya – He is an endless ocean of happiness. In Sri Brahma-sutra it is stated, "Anandamayo 'bhyasat. If you practise bhakti-yoga to attain anandamaya, the embodiment of all happiness, then you can have real happiness." (Srila Narayana Maharaja's Interfaith Message of June 14, 2003)]

[“And if we understand properly about Krsna’s activities, then ananda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhavitabhih – we reach to the platform of ananda-cinmaya-rasa. We are seeking after ananda, bliss. That is the information from the Vedanta-sutra. Anandamaya abhyasat. We living entities, we are by nature blissful, seeking after happiness.” (Srila Prabhupada Lectures – Mayapur, March 29, 1975)]

[“In Vaikuntha, the spiritual world, there is no anxiety. Vaikuntha means "freedom from anxiety," and in Vaikuntha the liberated souls are always dancing, chanting, and taking prasada. There are no factories, hard work, or technical institutions. There is no need for these artificial things. In Vedanta-sutra it is stated, anandamayo 'bhyasat: (Vedanta-sutra 1.1.12) God is anandamaya, full of bliss and pleasure. Since we are part and parcel of God, we also possess these same qualities. So the goal of our yoga process is to join with the supreme anandamaya, Sri Krsna, to join His dance party. Then we will be actually happy. (Srila Prabhupada Lectures, Hyderabad, November 29, 1972)]

[The Lord is described in all scriptures as lila-purusottama, or the Personality of Godhead, who is by His own nature always engaged in transcendental pastimes. In the Vedanta-sutra He is also described as anandamayo 'bhyasat (Vedanta-sutra 1.1.12). The monists and impersonalists try with great difficulty to explain this sutra in diverse ways in order to support their imperfect theory of oneness and impersonality. However, the fact remains that ananda, pleasure, cannot be enjoyed alone. That variety is the mother of enjoyment is a well-known fact. (Elevation to Krsna Consciousness)]

\*Endnote 3 – On Sankaracarya saying his guru, Vyasadeva, was wrong:

[“In his Vedanta-sutra Srila Vyasadeva has described that everything is but a transformation of the energy of the Lord. Sankaracarya, however, has misled the world by commenting that Vyasadeva was mistaken. Thus he has raised great opposition to theism throughout the entire world. (Caitanya-caritamrta Adi-lila, 7.121)

#### PURPORT

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains, “In the Vedanta-sutra of Srila Vyasadeva it is definitely stated that all cosmic manifestations result from transformations of various energies of the Lord. Sankaracarya, however, not accepting the energy of the Lord, thinks that it is the Lord who is transformed. He has taken many clear statements from the Vedic literature and twisted them to try to prove that if the Lord, or the Absolute Truth, were transformed, His oneness would be disturbed. Thus he has accused Srila Vyasadeva of being mistaken. In developing his philosophy of monism, therefore, he has established vivarta-vada, or the Mayavada theory of illusion.”

In the Brahma-sutra, Second Chapter, the first aphorism is as follows: tad-ananyatvam arambhana-sabdadibhyah. Commenting on this sutra in his Sariraka-bhasya,

Sankaracarya has introduced the statement *vacarambhanam vikaro namadheyam* from the Chandogya Upanisad (6.1.4) to try to prove that acceptance of the transformation of the energy of the Supreme Lord is faulty. He has tried to defy this transformation of energy in a misguided way, which will be explained later. Since his conception of God is impersonal, he does not believe that the entire cosmic manifestation is a transformation of the energies of the Lord, for as soon as one accepts the various energies of the Absolute Truth, one must immediately accept the Absolute Truth to be personal, not impersonal. A person can create many things by the transformation of his energy. For example, a businessman transforms his energy by establishing many big factories or business organizations, yet he remains a person although his energy has been transformed into these many factories or business concerns. The Mayavadi philosophers do not understand this simple fact. Their tiny brains and poor fund of knowledge cannot afford them sufficient enlightenment to realize that when a man's energy is transformed, the man himself is not transformed but remains the same person.

Not believing in the fact that the energy of the Absolute Truth is transformed, Sankaracarya has propounded his theory of illusion. This theory states that although the Absolute Truth is never transformed, we think that it is transformed, which is an illusion. Sankaracarya does not believe in the transformation of the energy of the Absolute Truth, for he claims that everything is one and that the living entity is therefore also one with the Supreme. This is the Mayavada theory.

Srila Vyasadeva has explained that the Absolute Truth is a person who has different potencies. Merely by His desire that there be creation and by His glance (*sa aiksata*), He created this material world (*sa asrjata*). After creation, He remains the same person: He is not transformed into everything. One should accept that the Lord has inconceivable energies and that it is by His order and will that varieties of manifestations have come into existence. In the Vedic literature it is said, *sa-tattvato 'nyatha-buddhir vikara ity udahrtah*. This mantra indicates that from one fact another fact is generated. For example, a father is one fact, and a son generated from the father is a second fact. Thus both of them are truths, although one is generated from the other. This generation of a second, independent truth from a first truth is called *vikara*, or transformation resulting in a by-product. The Supreme Brahman is the Absolute Truth, and the energies that have emanated from Him and are existing separately, such as the living entities and the cosmic manifestation, are also truths. This is an example of transformation, which is called *vikara* or *parinama*. To give another example of *vikara*, milk is a truth, but the same milk may be transformed into yogurt. Thus yogurt is a transformation of milk, although the ingredients of yogurt and milk are the same.

In the Chandogya Upanisad there is the following mantra: *aitad-atmyam idam sarvam*. This mantra indicates without a doubt that the entire world is Brahman. The Absolute Truth has inconceivable energies, as confirmed in the Svetasvatara Upanisad (*parasya saktir vividhaiva sruyate* [Cc. Madhya 13.65, purport]), and the entire cosmic manifestation is evidence of these different energies of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord is a fact, and therefore whatever is created by the Supreme Lord is also factual. Everything is true and complete (*purnam*), but the original *purnam*, the complete Absolute Truth, always remains the same. *Purnat purnam udacyate purnasya purnam adaya* [Isopanisad Invocation]. The Absolute Truth is so perfect that although innumerable energies emanate from Him and manifest creations which appear to be

different from Him, He nevertheless maintains His personality. He never deteriorates under any circumstances.

It is to be concluded that the entire cosmic manifestation is a transformation of the energy of the Supreme Lord, not of the Supreme Lord or Absolute Truth Himself, who always remains the same. The material world and the living entities are transformations of the energy of the Lord, the Absolute Truth or Brahman, who is the original source. In other words, the Absolute Truth, Brahman, is the original ingredient, and the other manifestations are transformations of this ingredient. This is also confirmed in the Taittiriya Upanisad (3.1): *yato va imani bhutani jayante*. "This entire cosmic manifestation is made possible by the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead." In this verse it is indicated that Brahman, the Absolute Truth, is the original cause and that the living entities (jivas) and the cosmic manifestation are effects of this cause. The cause being a fact, the effects are also factual. They are not illusion. Sankaracarya has inconsistently tried to prove that it is an illusion to accept the material world and the jivas as by-products of the Supreme Lord because (in his conception) the existence of the material world and the jivas is different and separate from that of the Absolute Truth. With this jugglery of understanding, Mayavadi philosophers have propagated the slogan *brahma satyam jagan mithya*, which declares that the Absolute Truth is fact but the cosmic manifestation and the living entities are simply illusions, or that all of them are in fact the Absolute Truth and that the material world and living entities do not separately exist.

It is therefore to be concluded that Sankaracarya, in order to present the Supreme Lord, the living entities and the material nature as indivisible and ignorant, tries to cover the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He maintains that the material cosmic manifestation is *mithya*, or false, but this is a great blunder. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is a fact, how can His creation be false? Even in ordinary dealings, one cannot think the material cosmic manifestation to be false. Therefore Vaisnava philosophers say that the cosmic creation is not false but temporary. It is separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but since it is wonderfully created by the energy of the Lord, to say that it is false is blasphemous.

Non-devotees factually appreciate the wonderful creation of material nature, but they cannot appreciate the intelligence and energy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is behind this material creation. Sripada Ramanujacarya, however, refers to a sutra from the Aitareya Upanisad (1.1.1), *atma va idam agra asit*, which points out that the supreme atma, the Absolute Truth, existed before the creation. One may argue, "If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is completely spiritual, how is it possible for Him to be the origin of creation and have within Himself both material and spiritual energies?" To answer this challenge, Sripada Ramanujacarya quotes a mantra from the Taittiriya Upanisad (3.1) that states:

*yato va imani bhutani jayante yena jatani jivanti yat prayanti abhisamvisanti*

This mantra confirms that the entire cosmic manifestation emanates from the Absolute Truth, rests upon the Absolute Truth and after annihilation again reenters the body of the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The living entity is originally spiritual, and when he enters the spiritual world or the body of the Supreme Lord, he still retains his identity as an individual soul. In this connection Sripada Ramanujacarya gives the example that when a green bird enters a green tree it does not

become one with the tree: it retains its identity as a bird, although it appears to merge with the greenness of the tree. To give another example, an animal that enters a forest keeps its individuality, although apparently the beast merges with the forest. Similarly, in material existence, both the material energy and the living entities of the marginal potency maintain their individuality. Thus although the energies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead interact within the cosmic manifestation, each keeps its separate individual existence. Merging with the material or spiritual energies, therefore, does not involve loss of individuality. According to Sri Ramanujapada's theory of Visistadvaita, although all the energies of the Lord are one, each keeps its individuality (vaisistya).

Sripada Sankaracarya has tried to mislead the readers of the Vedanta-sutra by misinterpreting the words ananda-mayo 'bhyasat, and he has even tried to find fault with Vyasadeva. All the aphorisms of the Vedanta-sutra need not be examined here, however, since we intend to present the Vedanta-sutra in a separate volume.]

[The falsity of Sripada Sankaracarya's explanation of vivarta-vada and parinama-vada has been detected by the Vaisnava acaryas, especially Jiva Gosvami, whose opinion is that actually Sankara did not understand the Vedanta-sutra. In Sankara's explanation of one sutra, ananda-mayo 'bhyasat, he has interpreted the affix mayat with such word jugglery that this very explanation proves that he had little knowledge of the Vedanta-sutra but simply wanted to support his impersonalism through the aphorisms of the Vedanta philosophy. Actually, however, he failed to do so because he could not put forward strong arguments. In this connection, Srila Jiva Gosvami cites the phrase brahma puccham pratistha (Taittiriya Up. 2.5), which gives Vedic evidence that Brahman is the origin of everything. In explaining this verse, Sripada Sankaracarya interpreted various Sanskrit words in such a way that he implied, according to Jiva Gosvami, that Vyasadeva had very little knowledge of higher logic. Such unscrupulous deviation from the real meaning of the Vedanta-sutra has created a class of men who by word jugglery try to derive various indirect meanings from the Vedic literatures, especially the Bhagavad-gita. One of them has even explained that the word kuruksetra refers to the body. Such interpretations imply, however, that neither Lord Krsna nor Vyasadeva had a proper sense of word usage or etymological adjustment. They lead one to assume that since Lord Krsna could not personally sense the meaning of what He was speaking and Vyasadeva did not know the meaning of what he was writing, Lord Krsna left His book to be explained later by the Mayavadis. Such interpretations merely prove, however, that their proponents have very little philosophical sense.

Instead of wasting one's time falsely deriving such indirect meanings from the Vedanta-sutra and other Vedic literatures, one should accept the words of these books as they are. In presenting Bhagavad-gita As It Is, therefore, we have not changed the meaning of the original words. Similarly, if one studies the Vedanta-sutra as it is, without whimsical and capricious adulteration, one can understand the Vedanta-sutra very easily. Srila Vyasadeva therefore explains the Vedanta-sutra, beginning from the first sutra, janmady asya yatah [SB 1.1.1], in his Srimad-Bhagavatam (1.1.1):

Janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah sva-rat [SB 1.1.1].  
 "I meditate upon Him [Lord Sri Krsna], the transcendent reality, who is the primeval cause of all causes, from whom all manifested universes arise, in whom they dwell, and by whom they are destroyed. I meditate upon that eternally effulgent Lord, who is

directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations and yet is fully independent.” The Supreme Personality of Godhead knows very well how to do everything perfectly. He is abhijna, always fully conscious. The Lord therefore says in the Bhagavad-gita (7.26) that He knows everything, past, present and future, but that no one but a devotee knows Him as He is. Therefore, the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead, is at least partially understood by devotees of the Lord, but the Mayavadi philosophers, who unnecessarily speculate to understand the Absolute Truth, simply waste their time. Caitanya-caritamṛta, Adi 7.128]

[Sankaracarya’s theory states that the Absolute Truth is transformed. By accepting this theory, the Mayavadi philosophers denigrate Srila Vyasadeva by accusing him of error. They thus find fault in the Vedanta-sutra and interpret it to try to establish the theory of illusion. (Madhya, 6.172)]

[“Not accepting the transformation of energy, Sripada Sankaracarya has tried to establish the theory of illusion under the plea that Vyasadeva has made a mistake. (Madhya, 25.41)]

Editorial Advisors: Sripad Madhava Maharaja and Sripad Brajanath dasa

Editor: Syamarani dasi

Transcriber and typist: Vasanti dasi