

**VYASA-PUJA CELEBRATION: THE DIVINE APPEARANCE DAY OF
SRI SRIMAD BHAKTIVEDANTA NARAYANA GOSVAMI MAHARAJA**

January 26, 2009: Malaysia (morning)



[Sri Narayana Gosvami Maharaja's Hari-katha and Vyasa-puja festival was held at the Desaru Resort in Southern Malaysia, from January 23rd – 27th. About two hundred devotees attended, mostly from Malaysia and Singapore, as well as a few devotees from Australia, Russia, America, China and Hong Kong, India, and a few other countries.

On his Vyasa-puja day, Sri Maharaja came to the temple-room around 10 am, at which time he performed arati to the entire guru-parampara (disciplic succession of spiritual masters) and then to the Deities of Sri Sri Radha and Krsna.



An offering of hearts, in the form of flowers, to Srila Bhaktivedanta Vamana Gosvami Maharaja, Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja, Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, and the entire guru-parampara.



After Srila Maharaja completed the performance of the arati ceremony and the worship of his guru-parampara, the devotees present began to perform his guru-puja, after which he gave the following short lecture:]

First of all, I offer my heartfelt obeisances to my Gurudeva, nitya-lila-pravista om visnupada astottara-sata Sri Srimad Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja, and the same unto the lotus feet of my siksa-guru, nitya-lila pravista om visnupada astottara-sata Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja.

Today is Vyasa-puja. Why is it called Vyasa-puja? Why are we performing the worship (puja) of Srila Vyasadeva? It is because if Srila Vyasadeva had not come to this world, we would never be able to become liberated from material bondage in this world. He is an incarnation of Sri Krsna, the Original, Supreme Lord, and Krsna sent him to save us.

All living entities in this world have been suffering since the beginning of creation. They have no taste to perform bhajana (devotional service) of Krsna, and therefore Krsna told Vyasa, "Go and help them." Vyasa is the guru of all. The first guru is Brahma, then Narada, then Vyasa, and then Sukadeva Gosvami, and then our entire guru-parampara. We learn from them that we are not this mortal body; we are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna. We are eternal servants of Krsna, but we have forgotten this, and therefore we have been suffering from the beginning of creation. Even up until now, we are not liberated from that suffering.

We learn from the spiritual masters in our guru-parampara that there is no medicine for old age or death; no doctor or scientist can cure us from this. The only cure is chanting

the holy name and worshipping Sri Krsna, hearing about His sweet pastimes, and telling others about Him. Only this process can stop the cycle of birth and death. Those who are chanting the holy name and believe in the Supreme Lord Sri Krsna are happy. They will become ever-increasingly happy, and one day they will be liberated and definitely go to the Lord's own transcendental abode, Goloka Vrndavana, and serve Sri Sri Radha and Krsna there – especially in this line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Rupa Gosvami. If Vyasa had not appeared in this world, there would be no chance of liberation and the attainment of Krsna-prema.

We performed arcana of our guru-parampara, to Vyasa, to Madhvacarya and Ramanujacarya, to Gaura-Nityananda Prabhus, and to everyone in disciple succession.

My Gurudeva introduced this procedure for observing Vyasa-puja – panca-pancaka (five groups of five worshipful personalities), and then two more were added – upasya-pancaka and panca-tattva – which makes seven (*See Endnote 1). This was discovered by Srila Prabhupada Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, who found it in Sringeri Matha in South India. He introduced this system of worship, and my Guru Maharaja used to practice it. Therefore today, on my birthday, I have worshipped all of them.



Sripad Madhava Maharaja performing the panca-pancaka ceremony before the assembled devotees.

It is not the duty of the guru to take pranamas (offering of obeisances) and daksina (donations) from his disciples on his birthday. Rather, it is his duty to worship his gurudeva, guru-parampara, Vyasadeva, Radha-Krsna and all others in disciplic succession.

We see in Sri Caitanya-caritamrta and Sri Caitanya-bhagavata how the devotees of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu observed Vyasa-puja day, at which time all the Lord's devotees gathered in Srivasa-angana [*See Endnote 2]. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu had told them previously, "You should all observe Vyasa-puja in Srivasa-angana." Then, while

performing kirtana and the initial procedures of Vyasa-puja, Srivasa Pandit requested Nityananda Prabhu, “Please offer a garland on the neck of Vyasadeva.” Nityananda Prabhu replied, “Hmm, hmm.” He was hesitating in this way for about half an hour. After that, as soon as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived, he at once picked up the garland and offered it to Mahaprabhu.

Who is Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu? He is Krsna Himself, having taken the intrinsic mood of Srimati Radhika – He is Radha and Krsna combined. Thus, His mercy is more valuable than that of Radha and Krsna separately.

In chanting the holy names of Krsna, there is a consideration of offenses. However, regarding the chanting of the holy name of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Sri Nityananda Prabhu, simply by calling out, “O Gauracandra [Mahaprabhu]! O Nityananda!” tears will come to your eyes and all offenses will disappear. Nityananda Prabhu performed Vyasa-puja in the above-mentioned process, and in this way He demonstrated that by worshipping Radha-Krsna(,) or Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the worship of our entire guru-parampara and Vyasadeva is completed.

I have heard that today there is a solar eclipse beginning at 4:00pm. Therefore, we must take prasadam very soon; we cannot take any prasadam during the time of the eclipse. During the eclipse we should not take any grain, or even water, nor are we even permitted to pass urine or stool. After the eclipse, you should take bath in the ocean, in the Ganges, or any sacred place. The ocean is available here [Srila Narayana Gosvami Maharaja’s hari-katha festival took place at a resort in Desaru, Southern Malaysia, right next to the ocean], so you can take bath there or anywhere you like.

I want to mention one last thing. What is the meaning of guru-puja? Is it only offering some flowers at the lotus feet of Gurudeva? No. It is visvrambhena-guru-seva (service to gurudeva with intimacy). Give yourself fully to guru; surrender. You are not yet surrendered.

manasa, deha, geha, jo kichu mora
arpilu tuwa pade, nanda-kisora!

[Mind, body, family, everything I own I offer at Your lotus feet, O Nanda-kisora!
(Manasa, Deha, Geha, verse 1)]

In this prayer, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has said, “O Nanda-kisora, whatever I call my own – my children, mother, father, wife, husband, and any other relation – I offer to your lotus feet. Now I am like your dog, so whatever remnants you give me, I will take only that.” The disciple is not his own. He totally belongs to Gurudeva, and therefore he may not disobey him. Whatever activities the disciple performs should be to please Gurudeva, and therefore you will need to know how he is pleased.

Srila Rupa Gosvami pleased Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu:

sri-caitanya-mano bhistam sthapitam yena bhutale
svayam rupah 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 and he is very dear to the Lord” (Sri Prema-bhakti-candrika, Narottama dasa Thakura).

He preached the mission of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu by writing books such as Ujjvala-nilamani, Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Vidagdha-Madhava, Lalita-Madhava, and so many others. Srila Rupa Gosvami is also Vyasa (because He has given the process of pure, spontaneous bhakti to Sri Sri Radha and Krsna), and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the father of Vyasa (because Vyasa is His manifestation).

So, today is Vyasa-puja, or Guru-puja. You must try to give your entire heart to Gurudeva, keeping nothing for yourself. Everything belongs to Gurudeva, therefore chant, remember, and please him.

Now go at once to take prasadam, and after the eclipse you can go and take bath.

Gaura-premanande.



Kirtana after class

[*Endnote 1: “On Vyasa-puja day an acarya will worship guru, guru-parampara and upasya (worshipable personalities). According to this puja-paddhati, on that day one should worship the following groups of five:

1) guru-pancaka (Sri Guru, Parama-guru, Paramesthiguru, Paratpar-guru, Paramparat-parguru); 2) acarya-pancaka (Sri Sukadeva, Ramanuja, Madhva, Visnusvami, Nimbadiya); 3) vyasa-pancaka (Sri Vedavyasa, Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini, and Sumanta); 4) sanakadi-pancaka (Sri Sanaka, Sanatkumara, Sanatana, Sanandana, and

Visvakṣena); 5) Kṛṣṇa-pancaka, (Sri Kṛṣṇa, Vasudeva, Sankarsana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha); 6) upasya-pancaka (Sri Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, Gaura, Gadadhara, Sri Gurudeva); and 7) pañca-tattva (Sri Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Ācārya, Gadadhara Paṇḍita, Srivāsa Thākura).

It is the supreme duty of Sri Gaudīya Sarasvatī Vaiṣṇavas to follow the Vyāsa-pūjā paddhati used by Śrīla Prabhupāda.” (Bhakti Prajñāna Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, His Life and Precepts)

[Endnote 2: At the time of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, there was a meeting in the evening, after nāgārā-sankīrtana, in the house of Srivāsa Paṇḍita. In that meeting Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu announced, “Tomorrow is Vyāsa-pūjā. Srivāsa, we will observe Vyāsa-pūjā here in your courtyard. Do you have the paraphernalia?”

Srivāsa Thākura replied, “Oh, yes. I have the sacred thread, betel nuts, rice and all other required ingredients and paraphernalia.” Mahāprabhu then ordered, “We should be ready at nine in the morning.” All others came on time the next day, but Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally arrived somewhat late and saw that all others were waiting for Him. He asked, “Why are you waiting? Nityānanda Prabhu is My Guru, My guru-varga (senior). It seems that he is My elder brother, but I see him in relation to his Gurudeva, who is My Param-gurudeva (grand spiritual master). Nityānanda is My Gurudeva’s Guru; so He will do Vyāsa Pūjā.” [Nityānanda Prabhu had taken initiation from Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, the guru of Śrī Madhavendra Puri, who was in turn the parama-guru of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Nityānanda Prabhu was actually Śrī Madhavendra Puri’s god-brother, but He accepted him as His śikṣa-guru.]

Before Mahāprabhu’s arrival, Srivāsa Thākura, Sri Advaitya Ācārya and all others had requested Sri Nityānanda Prabhu to perform Vyāsa-pūjā. They had told Him, “Please begin.” Nityānanda Prabhu replied, “Yes, yes, I am just about to do it. I will do it right now.” But He was not doing it. He simply remained in his seat. Then, when Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu came, He at once ordered Nityānanda Prabhu, “Why are You delaying? You should begin Vyāsa-pūjā.” Nityānanda Prabhu then took a very beautiful and fragrant garland and placed it around the neck of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu, saying, “You are the same as Lord Kṛṣṇa,” and then He began to perform the aratī and worship of Mahāprabhu.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu became ashamed, thinking, “Why is He doing this?” Nityānanda Prabhu, who is Śrī Baladeva Prabhu Himself – possesses full knowledge of all tattva (established truths). In fact, His lotus feet stand on the head of all tattvas. He replied, “What I am doing is correct. We should try to please the worshippable deity of Śrīla Vyāsadeva – Rāsamayī Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is akhīla-rāsamṛta-sindhu (the ocean of the nectar of pure transcendental mellows). This is Vyāsa-pūjā.” (Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, January 21, 2004, Hawaii]

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