



VyasaPuja Offering 2008

By Atmavidya das



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Light Years Apart

O fateful day in nineteen-seventy-seven
when Mother Earth had lost her crown,
a planet, that was envied in heaven –
under an eerie spell. A haunted town.
Mission usurped – a ruthless Eleven
bent on dragging its glory down,
auspiciousness drowning
greedy blizzards howling,
until the light fails
and darkness prevails.

Our guiding sun, and cooling moon, had set
on the horizon of our limited vision,
children of Kali, caught in your net
still holding on to our cherished prison,
spiritual toddlers bereft of their mother
loving and caring, unlike any other.

O Prabhupad, master divine
nothing compares to you
and no one too.

Surely not the voted-in variety,
whose hallmark is anxiety –
craving for profit, distinction, adoration
soliciting laughter, applause, standing ovation
eager to make the crowd feel good
keen to impress and entertain,
basic philosophy not understood
traded in for personal gain,
immature audiences paying the bill
for inflated egos – O what a cheap thrill.
From one retreat to next retreat



– the word itself denotes defeat,
seminars, seminars, seminars
yield nothing but exposing the farce,
no cheering – no shakti
no spotlights – no bhakti
who needs all these wannabe stars.

You told us, that – indeed
one moon is all we need.

Nothing compares to you
and no one too.

No self-declared successor
who came to claim your legacy,
suggesting – you only gave the ABC
and even that be under lock and seal
and it is he, who holds the key
for him alone, it's to reveal.
Learned and senior, he well may be –
somehow, he does not appeal to me.

Whatever it be, that they purport,
all whistles and bells.
Of my life – only you are the Lord
and nobody else.

No pseudo academics, who alter your books.
Of all deviants – this type might truly be vile
deceptive in manners, and in their looks
folded hands and painted smile,
Vaishnav' attire complete with danda,
Chicago Manual of Style
they do succeed, in cardinal blunder.
Our life's very support, they dare to maim.
Responsible publishing – is what they claim.
Of all havoc that's been created,
this is the most severe.



How many times had you stated,
in instructions perfectly clear:
No more changes.

Master divine, our Prabhupad
far, far above – light years apart.

A class, an interview, or speech,
you never needed to prepare.
As Krishna's confidant, you could reach
any soul, any time, any where.
O Shastra in person, you would teach
spontaneously, right then and there,
not by technique or stagy scheme –
just compassion beyond esteem,
penetrating crust over crust
composed of greed, anger, and lust
reaching straight to our innermost core
where the embarrassed Jiva you saw.

Your words did never need varnish
as direct, as they were sublime
the vedic truth without garnish.
One case in point, one point in time:
A morning walk, along the shore,
One gentleman, just wanted more:
"Swami Ji, you keep telling us those things –
Two plus Two is Four...we learn..."
"...you want Five?" – Your swift return.

The instant thereafter,
does it need mention?
there was indeed laughter –
sheer joy of comprehension,
essential point, understood in a flick
it's the realized soul, it's not a trick.

You cautioned us all



to not jump ahead
so we might not fall
be patient instead.

Related to Krishna, whatever the mood
it is all about love, and all absolute.
Desire trees,
weeping streams of honey upon hearing that flute.
Hanuman's exclusive devotion, to Sita and Ram.
And Bhismadev?
For him, a wounded Lord holds special charm –
battleground love-bites from arrows and spears.
A paltry gift,
yet the most intense feelings – from Vipra Sudam.
Mother Yashoda's puzzlements, worries and fears.
Crowning it all – an afflicted gopi's elusive mood.
Very distinct Rasas, all unique – but all absolute.

You did not ask the Beloved of your heart
Boston pier, in sixty-five, while still aboard.
to please grant you success and a flying start –
but be a puppet, in the hands of the Lord.

Master divine, how may I say –
I know, it's your appearance day,
but in these dark and troubled times
I much prefer to skip the chimes.

To honor you, in adequate voice,
all attempts must certainly fail,
colorful phrases, words of choice
in front of your grace, only turn pale.

besides –
for all the words spoken
I have nothing to show
not even a token,
but one thing I know



whatever became
you never let go
you stayed in my heart
and –
with chanting the name
I never did part.
In my most sinful of days
even through the vodka haze.

Falling at your feet
with shame in my face
I have come to plead
with your Divine Grace
to send some rays of light,
spiritual strength. To guide
this old warship of yours
away from the moors.

Without preaching, life had turned stale.
I mean the front lines, facing the gale.
But without vaishnav' association
I am lost and weak, and sure to fail
So I want to extend my imploration
to include all the seasoned battleships
of your scattered and disbanded fleet
your true and honest disciples in need
dispersed and lonesome all over the globe
for as it turns out, in times like these,
it is them, who are humankind's hope.

Across the lands, across the seas
your Viduras and your Draupadis,
your Jatayus and your Vibhisans,
your grown-up gurukula girls and boys
who never really had a chance or choice.

And all of the others?
who too are sisters and brothers?



so-called leaders, and otherwise?
whom I severely criticize?

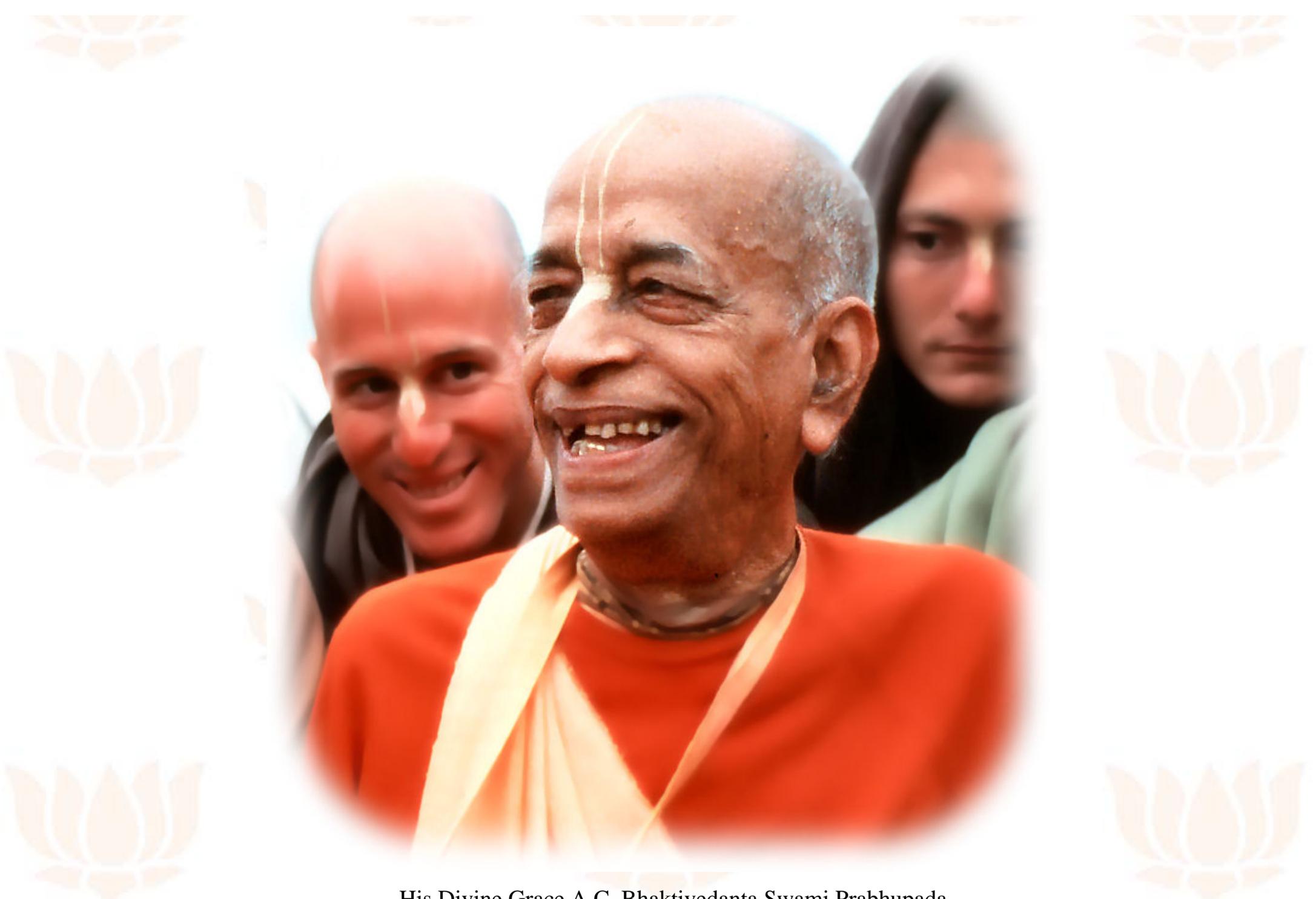
To them I have but one appeal:
stop and think, think again – and pause,
study the Gita – AS IT WAS,
but first and foremost – please get real.

Always praying for the shelter of your lotus feet,

Your humbled servant,
Atmavidya das

On your Shri Vyasa-puja day, 2008





His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada