

Vyasa-puja Offering to Srila Prabhupada, 2016

On your order, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I write “philosophical and educational books,” and am presently working on an overview of your stated plans for your great ISKCON mission. Assembling this book involves researching and classifying quotes from the huge corpus of your published instructions. It is a task that requires diligence rather than creativity, insightfulness, or writing virtuosity. This will probably be the most important literary undertaking of my life, and for years I have been looking forward to getting round to it. Yet now having started in earnest, I am continually beset with writer’s block.

Wondering why, I find that the waning of my enthusiasm stems largely from apprehension that such a compilation will at best be received with lip-service appreciation, because (as I noted in my 2014 Vyāsa-pūja offering submitted at your divine lotus feet) ISKCON has been hijacked by certain persons whose show of fidelity to you is a ploy to divert others from what you really want.

This was confirmed by the banning of my recent book *Women: Masters or Mothers?* As it is solidly based on your recorded instructions, its banning simply underscored that the administrative leadership of your ISKCON has been commandeered by persons who wish to redefine you and your mission. The situation is so abysmal that many devotees who perceive that ISKCON has palpably strayed from you feel powerless to help get the movement back on course.

Nevertheless, I go on writing, hoping that my voice – which is meant to reverberate your voice, and to urge others to hear you – will be acknowledged some time in the future (probably after my present body is dead and gone), when the deviations become so apparent that a large body of devotees will combinedly demand that ISKCON again become what you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, meant it to be. Actually, already the deviations are not trivial and should be obvious to all – which leaves us wondering just how bad things will have to get.



Śrīla Prabhupāda, this offering is presented to you in a mood similar to your own expressed feelings in your 1958 *Viraha-aṣṭāṣṭakam* tribute to your own guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. It is a mood of seemingly helplessly watching a unique and powerful spiritual movement founded by an extraordinary *ācārya* devolve into petty religiosity. Yet, echoing your *Viraha-aṣṭāṣṭakam*, I am not wholly discouraged. The preaching field has never been better, and notwithstanding the tremendous struggles involved, our fledgling *varṇāśrama* projects are underway.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my prayer to you is in words penned by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in loving desperation: *tomā kṛpā bine sakali nirāśā* - “without your mercy, all is hopeless”; *deha more padāśraya* - “grant me shelter at your lotus feet.”

I have no refuge other than Your Divine Grace.

Your feeble servant,
Bhakti Vikāsa Swami