I had the great privilege of dialoguing with Jayadvaita Swami as he reflected on the message of Ecclesiastes and the singular pleasure of reading his book in manuscript form. As a scholar of Ecclesiastes, I am deeply impressed with his grasp of the book’s message. And as one who knew little about Krishna consciousness (Krishna-bhakti) I came to a deeper understanding and appreciation of its spiritual value. I enthusiastically recommend this book to all.

Tremper Longman III

Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies

Westmont College

#### Vanity Karma is an excellent contribution to the emerging field of comparative Hindu-Jewish studies and Hindu-Jewish dialogue. It brings into an encounter the wisdom of Qohelet known as the book of Ecclesiastes and the wisdom of the Bhagavad gita and other related Hindu sources of wisdom such as the Bhagavata Purana and the Upanishads. An erudite scholar of Hinduism, Jayadvaita Swami reflects upon his Jewish roots through the lenses of Comparative Theology and the result is a fresh an accessible theological and contemplative treatise.

Dr. Ithamar Theodor  
Director, The Program for Hindu-Jewish Studies  
University of Haifa

“Commenting on another’s scripture is fraught with potential problems—reading one’s own religious views into the text, ignoring the text’s meaning in its native context, failing to consider prior commentaries and scholarship, and much more. But Jayadvaita Swami, with roots in both Jewish and Hindu traditions, has succeeded in writing a commentary that is at once scholarly and accessible, incisive and respectful. Swami’s commentary is not only deeply thoughtful but also fine literature, and readers will find themselves drawn relentlessly into the worlds of Ecclesiastes and the Bhagavad Gita. I highly recommend *Vanity Karma* to students of both the Bible and the Gita, and to anyone who seeks meaning.”

Dr. Ravi M. Gupta

Charles Redd Chair of Religious Studies

Utah State University

Vanity Karma comprises a remarkable set of spiritual reflections that defies literary genre categorization. This book is part spiritual autobiography with its roots in the counterculture, part exposition of Hindu devotionalism deeply grounded in classical Sanskrit sources, and part analysis of a section of the Old Testament, drawing from its associated body of text-critical academic scholarship. With his own forty years as a monk and swami in an orthodox Hindu devotional tradition grafted onto an earlier Jewish cultural upbringing, the author brings two equally ancient but culturally disparate voices into conversation, probing life’s ‘big’ existential questions – those of Qohelet in Ecclesiastes, and those of Krishna in the *Bhagavata* tradition. The result is not just a serious contribution to inter-religious dialogue, but a spiritual manual in its own right. *Vanity Karma* is a unique addition to the spiritual archives of our day and age, offering profound insights relevant to Truth seekers of any tradition.

Edwin Bryant

Professor of Hindu Religion and Philosophy

Rutgers University

In Vanity Karma, Jayadvaita Swami holds a bright and steady spotlight on an oft-neglected biblical text, the Book of Ecclesiastes, illuminating our gaze upon this mysterious manifesto from an unlikely yet relevant source -- the South Asian tradition of devotionalism dedicated to Krishna, the divine speaker of the Bhagavad Gita. As we follow the verse-by-verse unpacking of Ecclesiastes' dark vision of the human condition, we are treated to a careful examination from a fresh viewpoint that is attentive to modern scholarship on the text's rich meanings. At the same time, we are gradually introduced to a vision of Krishna-bhakti (devotion to Krishna) that, by responding cogently to Ecclesiastes, promises to expand our own vision, as contemporary readers, with deeper meaning for our lives, inviting us to rise thoroughly beyond the "vanity" that persistently plagues us individually and collectively."

Kenneth Valpey

Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

Oxford University