

Commentary on Damodara Ashtakam

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Iskcon Ujjain

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Iskcon Ujjain ki jai!

The project that was started by Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja. Now your Samadhi preparations are in? I just heard, of course Pushpa Samadhi is one Samadhi that is already there in Mayapur so Hari Hari. I am very happy to be with the devotees of Iskcon Ujjain. They are very dear to me as they were dear to Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja.

Of course his disciples from wherever they are joining us today on this conference and I think everyone else is also welcomed and so I am happy to be with you all this evening and happy month of Kartik, the month of Damodar.

Damodar Masa ki jai!

Of course we are almost towards the end of Damodara Masa here and today is Utthana Ekadasi. He has even gotten up today and it is a big celebration.

The Lord is up after His long rest of four months and so the devotees are very jolly, happy to have darsana of their Lord again and only five more days to go before completion of Damodar month. So it's not good news, we wish that it would go on and on and on and we would go on singing Damodarastaka and offer lamps to Yashoda Damodar. So it was two years ago that Bhakti Charu Maharaja and myself were together in the month of Kartik and that was in Noida.

Maharaja had been singing in the evening Damodarastak and I remember sitting next to him and listening to Bhakti Charu

Maharaja sing Damodarastak and during this month also I heard Maharaja's Damodarastak prayers several times so I thought 'I'm not singing today as I already sang.' And then Maharaja used to before singing or after singing songs, he used to explain those songs. He used to share the deeper meaning of those songs and Maharaja has done this with so many, many songs.

This is Bhakti Charu Maharaja style of presenting songs and astakas and so he would speak about and then he would sing also. Of course Srila Prabhupada also did that and Srila Prabhupada has written or spoken purports of many, many songs. So I thought why not remember Damodarastak which we have been singing everyday? So this is what we'll do.

**namamisvaram sac cid ananda rupam
lasat kundalam gokule bhrajanam
yasoda bhiyolukhalad dhavamanam
paramrstam atyantato drutya gopya**

So this is how damodarastaka begins with namami. I offer my obeisances unto that Isvara, that Parameshwar who is sat cit ananda. His form is sat cit ananda and He is wearing kundala.

lasat kundalam gokule bhrajanam

Of course He is in Gokula. This pastime of Krishna which has now become known as Damodar pastime, took place in Gokula during early morning hours and ekada. Sukadeva Goswami has said 'ekada..'

**ekadaa grha dasishu yashoda nanda gehini
karmantara niyuktasu nirmamantha svayam dadhi (S.B 10.9.1)**

This is how Sukadeva Goswami Maharaja begins recitation of this pastime and so Yashoda- mostly there and these two characters, Krishna and Yashoda. It is the dealing between the two of them which went on and on for quite some time that day. It lasted till late in the afternoon, the pastime was going

on. So unto that Lord I offer my obeisances.

yasoda bhiyolukhalad dhavamanam

Satyavrata Muni has described this pastime just in two verses and Sukadeva Goswami has described this pastime in a couple of chapters. So the couple of chapters have been condensed in two verses. So Krishna is afraid of Yashoda, isn't that amazing? That is also what Kunti Maharani also said in her prayers, that 'this is bewildering to see how Krishna who everyone else is afraid of is afraid of mother Yashoda.'

indro varshati yat bhayam

'Indra manages or he makes sure that it rains because he is scared of the Lord. The wind is blowing because the wind god is afraid of him. Like that everyone is afraid of him but here in this pastime the Lord is afraid of Yashoda. Isn't that bewildering?' Kunti Maharani says. It is difficult to understand this Krishna.

Krishna the Supreme Personality of Godhead claims

mayadhyaksena prakrtih

suyate sa caracaram (B.G 9.10)

I am the superintendent of this prakriti, I govern the wonderings of this cara and acara, and that Lord is afraid of Yashoda in this pastime and this is not a drama. Genuinely he is afraid, he is scared. He is playing the perfect role of being a child and children are scared when they do some mischief. Then the parents, especially the mother would come and catch hold and beat or slap. Children are scared, I think each one of us have that experience.

I remember I used to be scared and afraid of my mother when she would try and catch hold of me and 'she's going to beat me!' So Krishna has become child like that and He is displaying His fear, He's scared. He is afraid of mother

Yashoda and He is running here and there and Yasoda has finally managed to catch hold of Him and considering Him to be the offender, thief the robber of butter, she wants to punish Him and tie Him up to the mortar.

So Satyavrata Muni, these are his realizations and he is saying how

**rudantam muhur netra yugmam mrjantam
karambhoja yugmena satanka netram**

So the Lord literally begins crying. He is crying- rudamtam muhur which means again and again. He is sobbing.

yugmam mrjantam karambhoja yugmena satanka netram

Then with both of His fists He is wiping His tears. Satanka netram. Satanka, He is afraid of Yashoda and satanka netram. You could see the fear in His eyes.

muhuh svasa kampa tñirekhanka kantha

He is sobbing and crying and tears, you could see the three lines on His neck, that's part of the beauty of the Lord's neck or His features.

sthita graivam damodaram bhakti baddham

There's a locket hanging from the neck of little Krishna, and it is moving. This Satyavrata Muni he is minutely observing and giving those details which even Sukadeva Goswami has not got any of the details like this and he's zooming in on Krishna's form, or the features of Krishna's form and His body language as He is being tied up.

sthita graivam damodaram

So yes, it is mentioned 'Damodaram.' So the punishment is that Yashoda is going to tie his Uddara, the belly with Dam, with a rope and that is of course what she ended up doing with a

rope. That wasn't an easy task and it had taken a lot of time because every time, the rope she had was too short- two fingers short and she was making the rope longer by tying more ropes. She had to go to the Go-Shala and untie the cows and get the ropes which were tying the cows in the Go- Shala.

All the nine hundred thousand cows are wondering freely because all those ropes that were used for making the rope longer and longer and longer was still two fingers short. This was something amazing so finally, Sva bandhane. Krishna allowed 'okay okay. I can see your endeavour, your determination. I know you are not going to give up.' So the Lord is pleased with her endeavour. So her endeavour and Krishna's Kripa and then she succeeded.

So from that day onwards He became Damodar! Jai Damodar! Hari Hari. So what happened was the stealing of butter at home took place one day. One child or Yashoda's child rather, stole and ate butter and distributed that butter to the monkeys and then Yasoda tied Him to the mortar, considering the mortar also a culprit.

'He helped Krishna steal the butter so he also has to be punished.' So now you can see that five thousand years later and today what happened in Gokula one day, not a big deal- what's the big deal?! A child stole and ate some butter and then his mother tied him up. But this has become a world-known story, pastime and it has become immortal and eternal.

You cannot forget this, what happened that day. This is well alive, this is kept alive in something worth remembering, worth relishing in this pastime. And you know Krishna wants, if some thief is arrested and tied up, he never likes that a photograph of him be published or circulated. The world would come to know that he is a thief, he is a robber and he would try to make sure that if the police is dragging them to the court or prison house they put a mask on or put some cloth on their face. They want to hide as they want to make sure that

no-one knows them as a thief. But here this butter thief wants to make sure that 'Let the world know me as a butter thief!' He is immortalizing His pastime of stealing butter. In fact what He is immortalizing, what He wants to advertise is, well it's coming up.

tadiyesita jnesu bhaktair jitatvam.

This is what He wants to advertise. This is what the Lord wants the world to know that He can be captured by His bhaktas. Devotees could control Lord or govern Him.

aham bhakta paradhino' (S.B 9.4.57)

He has declared elsewhere that He is dependent upon His devotees.

This is the essence of this pastime, bhaktair jitatvam. 'My Bhaktas,' here Yashoda, has conquered Krishna, controlled Krishna. And He loves to see this happening, He enjoys this pastime or this kind of dealing. So whether this is bhaktair jitatvam or this as vatsalya rasa, the Lord is enjoying. vatsalya, vatsa means calf. Just like a cow loves the calf, so the calf is subordinate and dependent upon the mother cow. The cow even licks the calf. Feeling of reciprocation, rasa, bhava, bhakti, the feeling that is taking place between Yashoda and Krishna is called vatsalya.

And so the Lord wants to display this and He is doing that. This is one glaring example of this bhaktair jitatvam or aham bhakta paradhino. This is very rare example, glaring example of this bhaktair jitatvam.

**itidrk sva lilabhir ananda kunde
sva-ghosam nimajjantam akhyapayantam**

So the astaka continues itidrk sva lilabhir ananda kunde. He has summarized this Damodar pastime just in two verses and then immediately he says 'itidrk, like this. Lilabhir, Lilas like this, Damodar lila and other lilas. Ananda Kunde. This

produces so much ananda. So much happiness. How much happiness? Ananda kunde. You could fill up this ananda in a kunda, in a lake or in a ocean.

And then anandam buddhi vardhanam is also there. It is expanding, shoreless ocean. What kind of ocean? A shoreless ocean.

sva ghosam nimajjantam akhyapayantam

So a pastime like this then becomes the talk of the town and everyone is doing bodhayantah parasparam. The news spreads and the breaking news happens. 'You know what, you know what?!' Everyone is talking of this pastime and as they talk and hear they're blessed. They are swimming in ananda kunde.

bala caritani ca

Sukadeva Goswami describes that as Yasoda was churning butter that morning, that was diwali day. For your information if you did not know, this Damodar pastime took place in Gokula on the day of Diwali. It was on Diwali day that Krishna became known as Damodar. He was tied up on that day.

So while Yashoda was singing bal caritra, the pastimes of the Lord, she was singing, all the ladies are singing, others are singing and now we are singing! Srila Prabhupada has spread these pastimes through his books all over the world and so hasn't ananda expanded? It was limited to India limited or Vrndavana, Mayapur, Jagannath Puri and few some tirthas limited, but what has happened.

anandam budhi vardhanam pratipadam purnamrita asvadanam

So it is spread all over the world now and everywhere there is the talk of Damodar and his pastime. Everywhere devotees are offering lamps to Damodar and singing Damodastaka, so many seminars and talks and presentations happening so the Suka, the happiness as they recite and remember this.

punah prematas tam satavrtti vande

Unto such Damodar, I offer my obeisances, satavrtti, hundreds and hundreds of times.

krishna jinaka nam hai

gokule jinaka dham hai

aise shri bhagavan ko

aise shri bhagavan ko – kitne baar (how many times)?

baramvaar pranam hai (again and again I offer my obeisances unto Him).

So this astaka that Satyavrata Muni is composing he says ‘unto such Damodar, satavrtti vande. I offer my prayers, my obeisances unto such Damodar again and again.’ And he is starting with ‘namamisvaram. I offer my obeisances’ but then he is offering his obeisances every now and then in this astaka. Then again he is going to say at the end.

namas te ‘stu damne sphurad dipti dhamne

tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne

namo radhikayai tvadiya priyayai

namo ‘nanta-lilaya devaya tubhyam

How many times namah namah namah. He is singing like that. namas te ‘stu damne. He also says ‘I offer my obeisances unto that rope, not only namamisvaram. Not only my obeisances unto Ishwar but I offer my obeisances unto that rope also, that transcendental, brilliant, effulgent rope. Unto that rope I also offer my obeisances. Please oh rope accept my respectful obeisances.’

tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne

My obeisances also unto the belly of Damodar. Obeisances unto the rope and unto the belly, the Uddara of Damodar. Because your Uddara, your belly is the abode of the whole Vishwa (universe) which is within you. And this is where we understand ‘oh why was that rope always two fingers too

short?’ Although it was hundreds and thousands miles long, Krishna’s belly circumference is just twelve inches.

So why was Yashoda not able to tie that long, long rope? And this is revealed here in this astaka – tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne because within the belly, within Krishna is the whole vishwa, the whole Brahmanda. So how big is Brahmanda and how long rope do you need? The rope has to be how long to go around the Brahmanda as Bal Krishna also has shown to Yashoda herself.

‘Oh you ate dirt!’

‘No, no I did not eat dirt!’

‘Yes even Balaram says you have eaten dirt!’

‘No, no Maiya. I didn’t eat, I didn’t eat.’

So she opens His mouth and as Krishna opened His mouth, the whole dirt- the whole universe is made up of dirt, right? The earth. Brahmand is within Him so a long rope is required. So your Uddara your belly is not the way it looks! Krishna is Adhoksaja, Achintya also. So obeisances again and again are coming up and then

**varam deva moksam na moksavadhim va
na canyam vrne ‘ham varesad apiha**

So these prayers are also there as part of this astaka. varam deva moksam na moksa. varam deva, varesas apiha. ‘I know, I know you are varesa.’ Var means benediction and Isa means master. ‘You are the giver of benediction. You are Varadraj and you could give every and any benediction but to me oh Lord, moksha no, no, no! Please don’t give me moksha, I don’t want moksha.’

na canyam vrne ‘ham varesad apiha

na ca anyan, no Moksha, there’s no this or that.

**na dhanam na janam na sundarim kavitam va jagad isa kamaye
(Siksastaka 4)**

I don't want none of these things for my enjoyment, for my bhoga. I don't want to be bhukti kami. And then Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also has said in that Siksastaka 'mama janmani janmanisvare' also I don't want liberation. So similar sentiments are explained here. na canyam moksham.

I don't want liberation, moksha and no other this kind of benediction. 'So what do you want?' He says

**idam te vapur natha gopala balam
sada me manasy avirastam kim anyaih.'**

He says just this Gopala Bal. Idam te vapur natha gopala balam. This vapur, the form of Gopal Bal, Gwal Bal or Bal Gopal, Krishna Kanaiya Lal.

manasy avirastam. Let him enter my mind and let me only think of him and him alone. Kim anyaih, I dont care for anything else. Only Krishna, only Gopal. Idam te vapur natha gopala balam. My interest

Is this Gopala Balam, I wish to remember and think and do other things like serve him and offer my obeisances unto him and feed him and play with him. Yes I want to render all kind of service unto him.

All I want to do is,

**sravanam kirtanamm visnoh smaranam pada sevanam
arcanam vandanam dasyam sakhyam atma nivedanam**

This nava vidha bhakti, this Bhagavan, Gopal, Damodar. But (I dont want to do) none of this other stuff. This moksham and dhanam Janam. No, out! And then

**namo deva damodarananta visno
prasida prabho duhkha jalabdhi magnam**

Then he begins addressing the Lord, Sambodhan (addressing). Namo deva, again obeisances are there. I offer my obeisances unto who? Deva, this Damodar Deva, Krishna Deva, Adi Deva, Deva. In this Damodarastak he is offering his obeisances and why he is addressing him as Deva and Damodara, Ananta, Vishnu? Vishnu becomes Vishnau, like that. In address, in Sambodhan this happens by commentical arrangement.

Prasidah prabho. So Prabhu has become Prabho. 'Oh Prabho.' This is more correct to say, not 'Prabhu.' We are addressing someone so here also the Lord is Prabho, he is addressed so when you address him he becomes Prabho. So Deva, Damodara, Ananta, Vishnu, Prabhu. He is addressing the Lord and each one means so much. When you say 'Damodar' so many things you are reminded of. When you say 'Prabhu' or when you say 'Ananta,' when you say 'Deva.'

Each of these addresses have so much meaning associated with it. Hari Hari, yes the Lord has thousands of names. Vishnu Sahastra Nama is also there and there are so many more names. Dukha jalabdhi magnam, 'oh Lord look at me. I am observed in dukha jaal, janjaal. I am entangled very badly and am drowning in the ocean of misery here. Oh Lord have mercy, oh Lord.'

**Like ayi nanda tanuja kinkaram?patitam mam visame bhvambudhau
(Siksastaka 5)**

'My Lord I am yours, ayi nanda tanuja kinkaram- I am your servant oh Nanda tanuja. You are Nanda Tanuja and I am your Kinkara. See what happened? I have fallen in this ocean of material existence. So Kripaya, please pick me up.' As Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said in His own astak so similarly here we find krpa drsti vrstyati dinam batanu. Please shower your merciful glance upon me. And we skipped two and one in the middle there.

idam te mukhambhojam atyanta nilair

Again focusing on the Lord and his form. mukhambhoja, your

face is -lotus faced Lord. The seven different parts of Lord's form are lotus – like. One of them is the face and his eyes are lotus like, His hands are lotus like. His feet are lotus like, His navel is a lotus. So like that there are seven different parts.

idam te mukhambhojam atyanta nilair

Your complexion is nilair. The deep bluish- Ganaevasham, He is described like a fresh monsoon cloud. Prabhupada translates and compares Krishna's complexion as a fresh monsoon cloud. So atyanta nilair vrtam kuntalaih, That face and hair, vrtam means hidden or covered partially.

snigdha raktais' ca gopya

muhus chumbitam bimba raktadharam me

You have reddish lips and muhus chumbitam. Muhus means again and again and Cumbitam. As Yashoda kisses your face, your cheeks, then what happens? Bimba raktadharam me. Immediately that part of the face becomes reddish because it is so very tender and soft and Yashoda kisses. You can see the- you have here this experience Mataji's. That is also prayer, 'I wish to manasy avirastam. Let that image of you be settled in my mind.'

vrtam kuntalaih snigdha raktais' ca gopya

muhus cumbitam bimba raktadharam me

So these are whole minute details of the face of the Lord. Also during this pastime of Damodar and at other times she is kissing that face of you, Damodar. 'He Ananta, He Vishnu, He Prabhu, He Deva.' So I wish to just have that on my mind all the time. He says 'Alam, enough! This is enough and nothing else I look forward to. Alam laksa labhai. Labha means benefit and how much benefit? Hundreds and thousands of other benefits I am not interested! Full stop. Yes I want to just remember that Damodar.

**vrtam kuntalaih snigdha raktais' ca gopya
muhus cumbitam bimba raktadharam me**

Alam, this is enough. Alam laksa labhaih, I don't care for any other kind of benediction, benefit. And the this Damodar pastime doesn't end with Yashoda tying up Krishna to the mortar. It is also known as Ukhal Bandhan lila. Once he was tied up to the Ukhal, to the mortar, and then Yashoda was thinking 'now he cannot do any further mischief.

I have tied Him up.' Of course she was also thinking that he should be tied up otherwise she is scared that he may go away from home and it would be difficult to find him. 'If I leave him alone in this state when now he is kind of afraid and scared because he has stolen butter. He is an offender and so I was trying to chase him and I had a stick to beat him.'

And of course one time Yashoda had thrown that stick away or else he would have become more scared and that's why he was running faster and was trying to..It was difficult to catch hold of him so she threw away the stick. So she wants to tie him up and it is explained by the Acharyas that Yashoda is thinking 'if I don't tie him up he may go away and hide somewhere so he has to be tied.' So he was tied up and then Yashoda was busy with her home affairs. Housewives, a lot of things to do.

But then Krishna had- He wanted to do further mischief. Mischief after mischief after mischief. He had broken the pot in which Yashoda was churning butter that morning and he had stolen butter and he was distributing that butter to the monkeys. This is another mischief and like that and now he is tied up. But Krishna is thinking, 'no. I will do something more. I am unstoppable.' And then he enters the courtyard with the big mortar tied to his belly and that is-

**kuveratmajau baddha murtyaiva yadvat
tvaya mocitau bhakti-bhajau krtau ca**

So this is the other part of that pastime. This kind of interval here, he is tied up to the mortar but this is only half the story and then there were two trees, the sons of Kuvera. Manigriva and the other one Nalakuvera, they were cursed to become trees. 'Okay I also bless you. You become trees in Gokula in the courtyard of Nanda Maharaja and you two trees, you will be able to witness Krishna's pastimes and one day he will free you from this bondage and conditioning of being in bodies of trees.'

So that is what has happened so tvaya mocitau. So those Kuveratmajau, the sons of Kuvera, baddha- they were bound up. tvaya mocitau. He Damodar, you freed them. And not only you liberated them, freed them but bhakti bhajau krtau ca. You bestowed the mood of devotion unto them and in Srimad Bhagavatam there's a whole dialogue between these Kuveratmajau's the sons of Kuvera and Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna has spoken and the sons of Kuvera also have offered their prayers begging for mercy, begging for devotional service and then they have circumambulated Damodar. And he is still tied to the mortar and two of these sons they are going round and round in Parikrama. They offer their obeisances and having been blessed by Sri Krishna with Bhakti they departed.

So that's the other part of the pastime and the prayer is here in this astaka that.. The seventh verse starts with,
kuveratmajau baddha-murtyaiva yadvat

And then 'you freed them, you gave them Bhakti and so Tatha like that, me too me too. Please give me lots of Bhakti, lots of devotional service, a life of devotion.'

**na dhanam na janam na sundarim?kavitam va jagad isa kamaye
mama janmani janmanisvare?bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu also has prayed 'I want Bhakti.' So everyday as we were reciting this Damodarastaka and offering

our lamps to Damodar and we were also begging- that's if you were singing with understanding of what you were singing. So this is important and so Bhakti Charu Maharaja used to make us understand the meaning of the song before he would sing and he would get others to sing. So it's important, it's very important. You are singing and you don't know what you're singing, what is going on.

So we have been singing, begging and praying that

tatha prema bhaktim svakam me prayaccha

Give me- *tatha*, *bhakti* like you gave to the sons of Kuvera. Na *moksha*- he is again reminding, 'no *moksha* not for me, no no no!'

na mokse graho me 'sti damodareha

Don't give me *moksha* but give only *Bhakti* to me.' And then in concluding, again more obeisances. *namas te 'stu damne*, we said this, my obeisances unto the rope. *Sphurad dipti dhamne*. And you also have to pay attention to what you are reading and what you are saying, the pronunciation is also important, right?

namas te 'stu damne sphurad-dipti-dhamne, one is *damne* and one is *dhamne*. So we should pay attention to these details and pronounce it right, then understand it. Then accordingly one is *dam* which means rope and other one is *dham*. Because there is talk of *namah*, obeisances then the *dam* becomes *damne* and *dham* becomes *dhamne*. My obeisances unto *dham*, that is *dham namah dhamne*. *namah astu dhamne*. You make two sentences like that so *sphurad dipti dhamne*.

That rope is an abode of that effulgence, that effulgent rope and that's why it is called *dhamne*, *sphurad dipti dhamne*. *Dipti* is the effulgence, the light, the *Dipti* of that rope and that is *Dhamne*.

tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne

The rope is the abode of the light or effulgence and your belly is the abode of the universe. So both dhamne, sphurad dipti dhamne and sisvasya dhamne. Hence my obeisances unto the rope and my obeisances unto your belly, oh Damodar.

Then obeisances unto Radhika also, Radha is also remembered here and why Radha is remembered? Namo radhikayai tvadiya priyayai. You are Priya, she is your Priya and she is Krishna Priya, Radha is Krishna Priya and Radha is very dear to Krishna and she is tvadiya, she is simply yours. tvadiya priya, radha. So radha tvadiya priyayai, this is again chaturti, grammer. Vrindayai not Vrindaya, Vrindayai, this is something else.

namo ananta lilaya devaya tubhyam

Again, ananta lila oh deva, again my obeisances now unto your Ananta lilas- the unlimited pastimes which you perform. My obeisances unto all those lilas and especially my obeisances unto Damodar lila. So Damodarastak begins with obeisances, namah- namamisvaram and it ends with namah anata lilaya devaya tubhyam. So again this is amazing Damodarastaka and because Damodar is amazing his pastimes are amazing.

Everything about him is amazing and sweet adharam madhuram, everything is madhur madhur, sweet about the Lord. Madhuradi pater akhila madhuram. Madhuradi Pati, He is the master of sweetness and Akhila madhuram. Everything is sweet about this Lord, about Damodar, so Jai Damodar.

Yashoda Maiya ki jai and Damodar Astak ki jai.

Damodar Masa ki jai. Gokul Dham ki jai. Damodar lila ki jai.

Srila Prabhupada ki jai.

Srila Bhakti Charu Maharaja ki jai. Gaura prema anande hari haribol.