

# Kartika Mahatmya

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**Online class for ISKCON New York**

**29th November 2020**

Welcome, all the assembled devotees from different conferences. I thank ISKCON New York, Radha Govinda Deva ki, jai! This is their arrangement. They have ordered me to say a few words on the occasion of the last day of kartika. For you, New Yorkers, and devotees in the west, in America, it is last day. But for us, tomorrow is the last day.

Kartika is a very special month. ISKCON devotees, vaishnavas, they love this month. It is called as Kartika mass. It is also known as Damodara vrata, Urjja vrata. We follow this vrata. Radharani is worshipped during this month.

Rupa Goswami has strongly recommended that we observe this Kartika vrata, preferably go to Vrndavana and do Vrndavana vasa or Vraja vasa during this month of Kartika. And I know Srila Prabhupada did that in 1972 during Kartika. Srila Prabhupada was in the middle of his world tour but he dropped that and rushed to Vrndavana to be there during month of Kartika.

Fortunately, I also was there with Srila Prabhupada in 1972 during the month of Kartika and we stayed because Srila Prabhupada stayed. Of course, we did not stay at Radha Damodara, Srila Prabhupada stayed at Radha Damodara temple during month of Damodara. We had lots of associations, tones of associations with Srila Prabhupada during that month of Kartika.

Prabhupada did lots of sravanam, kirtanam. While he was doing kirtana, we were doing sravana. He was talking from Bhagavatam in the morning and Nectar of Devotion was the topic in the evening and kirtan during the day. We were celebrating

festivals throughout this month of Kartika. Later on, I started Vraja Mandal Parikrama and I had been having the opportunity to be in Vrndavana during the entire month of Kartika – 33 times, 33 years.

I thought we would just remember different festivals in this month of Kartika, revisit them, talking a little bit about them or reminding ourselves of those festivals; reviving our memories or review and revise; contemplate; do manana or cintana of those festivals so that they remain fresh in our memories; we do not forget or we stay high forever by remembering different festivals in month of Kartika. This month is famous for these festivals or festivities.

We do not have much time, so, we start. The month begins with Sharada Purnima.

Sri -badarayanir uvaca  
bhagavan api ta ratrih  
saradotphulla-mallikah  
viksya rantum manas cakre  
yoga-mayam upasritah [SB 10.29.1]

This is how Sukadeva Goswami begins describing this Sharada purnima, Rasa purnima and he has described this rasa of that Sharad Purnima night in 5 chapters of tenth canto. Describing Rasa dance which, finally, began. Many things happened prior to that, so we cannot go through all that.

Rasa dance means full of rasa. This festival is full of madhurya rasa or dominated by madhurya rasa. Some festivals are full of sakhya rasa, some are full of vatsalya rasa in the month of Damodara. The pastimes of Damodara or why He became known as Damodara. He was bound by Yasoda to the mortar, that is vatsalya rasa. During this month, some festivals are madhurya rasa mahotsava and sakhya rasa mahotsava and vatsalya rasa mahotsava.

Gopastami, we will be talking a little later on towards the

end, that is sakhya rasa, friendship. This whole month is full of rasa, nectarian month. We could hear the pastimes of Sri Krsna in this and that rasas. So, it begins with madhurya rasa in Sharad Purnima. We read this and Srila Prabhupada's Krsna Book also because there is the 10 canto, these 5 chapters. That day we try to read and remember and recite.

Sharad purnima night festival and Lord with millions of gopis "vadhu varga," the damsels of Vraja.

laksmi sahastra sata sambhrama seva manyam

"sahastra sata," hundreds and thousands of them dancing in the Rasa dance. Rasa dance was about to begin but then Krsna disappeared along with Radharani and then gopis were looking for Krsna everywhere. This is described in the five chapters. Finally, they only ended up finding Radharani. Then Radharani and the gopis go back to the banks Yamuna.

"Oh, we lost Krsna! But we did not lose Him in the forest. Let us try to find Him. We lost Him in the banks of Yamuna." So, they go back on the banks of Yamuna and that is where they sing a song called Gopi Geet. As they are chanting, remembering the Lord of their hearts, He appears in the middle of them. Gradually, the rasa dance begins, full of rasa. They are all enjoying rasa dance and that night became longest night, Bramha night and they went on and on with the rasa dance night.

So, Kartika festival begins with Sri Krsna Rasa yatra which is a Purnima. Kartika begins with a Purnima, full moon night, and Kartika ends with another Purnima with rasa dance. In fact, in Vrndavana, there is a talk of rasa dance, every night there is rasa dance night.

Moving on, because we have very limited time. Then we have a very major festival in month of Damodar. There is Bahulasthami, the appearance day or we would like to call the appearance night of Radha Kunda. Radha Kunda appeared in the

middle of the night on the Bahulastami day. Astami, that is eighth day or night, beginning from Purnima. That night also rasa dance was about to begin and gopis have started assembling, of course, Krsna had already playing His flute. Message had gone to gopis,

“Yes, tonight rasa dance here, in Vrndavana, on the banks of Radha kunda.” They all had started arriving but then Aristasura, the bull demon, arrived in the scene creating havoc, total disturbance. Everyone was scared and running hither and thither. So, Lord had to take care of this demon. He killed Aristasura. Haribol! Demigods, of course, had come and showered flowers upon the Lord and chanted His glories and Apsaras had danced and Gandharvas had done their beautiful singing and drums beatings. All that happen whenever Lord kills demons. Aristasura was killed and demigods had celebration.

Rasa dance were expected to begin and then the gopis and Radharani refused to.

“Well, stay away, stay away! You are a sinner! You have killed the bull!”

This whole dialogue we cannot get into the details of all this.

“Now, You have to take bath in all the holy places, rivers, kundas. Then we will consider being with You and dancing with you.”

So, Lord did not have to go anywhere. All the rivers and holy kundas had appeared and Shyama Kunda ki, jai! So, Lord took a holy dip.

“Okay, I am ready.” But then Lord said, “no. You are. You are sinners! You accused me so now You have to take bath in holy rivers and places.”

The gopis were endeavoring, they did create a kunda but no water. Finally, at middle of the night on Bahulasthami, Krsna proposed and the gopis and Radharani did not oppose.

“Okay, sacred waters are here in Shyama Kunda. Let them enter into Radha Kunda.”

So, that is what happened right in the middle of the night, at sharp midnight, waters of Shyama Kunda entered Radha Kunda. This way that midnight became the appearance night of Radha Kunda.

Radha Kunda – Shyama Kunda ki, jai!

Lord had declared,

“Your kunda will become more popular, known, famous and Your kunda is also dear to Me as You are dear to Me ”

That was Bahulasthami and appearance of Radha Kunda. Now, we could only talk of some of the festivals, not all the festivals. Some main festivals or some highlights of those festivals.

Then the middle of the month is Amavasya, no moon day or new moon day, which is celebrated as Deepavali. Jai Sri Rama! Rama had appeared or returned to Ayodhya in Treta Yuga. It was also month of Kartika in Treta Yuga. And Ayodhya was all lit besides so many other things, decorations, festivals too. Grand reception of Sri Rama and Lakshmana and Sita was taking place and they had literally lit Ayodhya with so many lamps. The darkness was over. Rama was here and He brought the light and delight to Ayodhya and Ayodhya vasis on Deepavali day, during month of Kartika.

On the same day, in Vrndavana, 5000 years ago, or we should say in Gokula Vrndavana, when Krsna was 3 years and 8 months old, He did stealing of butter at home. That day, Yasoda was trying to churn butter herself.

ekada grha-dasisu  
yasoda nanda-gehini  
karmantara-niyuktasu  
nirmamantha svayam dadhi [SB 10.9.1]

“ekada,” once upon a time, Sukadeva Goswami says. So, that was day of Dipavali. Yasoda was “svayam,” herself started churning the butter and Krsna had every reason to break that pot. We are not saying everything.

Yasoda was thinking, “Maybe, maybe, butter churned and fed to Krsna at home, Nanda Bhavana, is not of good quality. Probably, that is why he goes door to door finding better quality of butter. So, let me churn the butter myself.” Yasoda had done it but Krsna had spoiled the whole thing. He was hungry. As early morning as soon as children get up,

Although, He is supposed to be “atmarama,” self satisfied, but Sukadeva Goswami says that morning Lord had the desire of drinking the breasts milk of Yasoda. He had just started drinking but then Yasoda had dumped Him and gone into the kitchen to save the milk which was over flowing. Such a sweet pastime! I am trying to run through or jump through but difficulty go forward.

So, that day Krsna was caught red handed by Yasoda stealing butter from home. I say He was caught white handed with the butter. He was considered a thief, He was a thief and a thief had to be punished.

Krsna was scared and He was full of tears. She managed to catch hold and she had to tie. Finally, she managed to tie Him up. On that Dipavali day, Amavasya day, in the middle of Kartika, Bala Krsna became known as Damodara because the “udar”, the belly of Krsna was tied with the “dama,” rope to the motar .

“Dama” – rope, “udara” – belly. He became known as Makhana chora Damodara ki, jai!. This lila, in fact, dominates the

scene and our consciousness throughout this month of Damodara. Everyday, we have been offering lamps to Damodara and remembering that sweet pastimes, as sweet as butter or sweeter than butter pastimes of Sri Krsna in Damodara lila.

Then comes Govardhana Puja. What a festival! I should say that Amavasya, no moon day or night is over. Next day is a shukla paksha, is a bright fortnight. The first day of the bright fortnight is called Pratipada and that is the day the Vraja vasis have been doing Indra Puja, year after year. But now, when Krsna was some 7 years old, He convinced Nanda Maharaja and the residents of Vrndavana,

“Worship Govardhana instead! And you do not have to do any additional shopping. All the ingredients you have already collected so you use them for worship of Govardhana.”

First ever Govardhana Puja festival took place in the presence of Krsna and Balarama. Lord also had asked, “Not only you are doing Govardhana Puja but also today is the day of Go Puja and Brahmana Puja. Feed prasadam, even candalas should get prasadam from this Annakuta festival.”

So, that is what they did. Also the first ever Govardhana parikrama was performed by Vraja vasis that afternoon. First they did Govardhana puja then, they did Govardhana parikrama.

The next day, as per the tradition, I think it is an ancient, old tradition; brothers and sister all go to Vrishrama Ghata which is in Mathura and take a holy dip there. All brothers and sisters were busy taking a holy dip in Yamuna at Vrishrama Ghata, mean time the news of,

“Oh, they did not worship you, today!” This news reached Indra and he had sent Samvartaka clouds. Inundation takes place, water and flood everywhere. All the residents had approached Sri Krsna.

“Help! Help! If You could, help!”

Then, Krsna had then lifted Govardhana hill on Tritiya. This is third day. First day was puja, next day was taking holy dip at Vrishrama Ghata and third day on Tritiya Krsna lifts Govardhana hill. He became known as Giridhari. And there is no other pastimes as sweet like lifting Govardhana hill. The speciality of that pastime is all the residents of Vrndavana had assembled and taken shelter of that Govardhana hill and these were great times for Vraja vasis. Never ever they had the company of Krsna 12 hours a day, 12 hours a night, seven days, seven nights. Simultaneously, the vatsalya rasa, sakhya rasa, madhurya rasa, all the rasas were on display as a reciprocation and they were all drowning in this rasa.

itdrk sva lilabhir ananda kunde  
sva ghosam nimanjantam akhyapayantam

When Damodara-like lila the Lords performs and He fills kundas and lakes with “ananda,” bliss, by performing these pastimes, as He has lifted Govardhana hill. Indra is trying to flood Vraja with the rain water and Krsna has flooded Vrndavana with rasa – madhurya rasa, sakhya rasa, vatsalya rasa – and they were all drowning and swimming. They had great time.

Then, on the Navmi, on the ninth day of this Shukla Paksha, bright fortnight, by that time Indra was defeated and rain stopped. Krsna placed Govardhana hill back to its original place. But then we understand from Bhagavatam that the Lord of talk of town, one particular topic was being discussed they were wondering,

“Who is this Krsna? Or Nanda Maharaja is hiding His ID, identity from us. We have children also but no child have lifted Govardhana hill. He lifted the hill without much effort!”

They had to approach Nanda Maharaja and he had disclosed the fact which Garga aarya had shared with Nanda Maharaja. That chapter in Krsna Book is Wonderful Krsna. That was Navmi and



Govardhana was put back into its place.

Then Dasami and Ekadasi. Nanda Maharaja observed Ekadasi. Then, on Dvadasi he had gone to take holy dip in Yamuna and the agents or servants of Varuna had kidnapped or arrested and brought him to Varuna Loka. Krsna and Balarama had jumped into the Yamuna river and through water body they had reached and rescued Nanda Maharaja and brought him back. This has also happened during month of Kartika, that particular Kartika. There is a series after Govardhana.

Srila Prabhupada ki, jai! Then is Srila Prabhupada disappearance day festival. Oh, what to say? What to speak? We say disappearance but Srila Prabhupada kind of appears. To me, I feel Srila Prabhupada appears more on his disappearance day. We are reminded of events leading to that 14th November 1977. So many disciples of Srila Prabhupada, we were there, I was there. Srila Prabhupada wanted to go to Govardhana to attend Govardhana Puja, to participate in the Govardhana festival, riding on a bullock cart. He had asked me to arrange the bullock carts and travels too. We are reminded and our emotions are stirred up as we remember Srila, again, during month of Kartika in 1997. We were there on disappearance day. Every year we celebrate that festival of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance festival.

Gopasthami maha mahotsava ki, jai.

One asthami was Bahulasthami – Radha Kunda appearance night and then next asthami of the bright fortnight is Gopasthami. On this day Krsna became gopa. A mantra from Kartika Mahatmya says He was vatsapa. He had been taking care of the cows' calves. On chapter of the 10th canto of Bhagavatam says there was an ishta goshti was held by Nanda Maharaja and there was a lot of discussion and consideration. They ended up promoting Krsna. He was a calf herd boy. On Gopasthami day, He was made cowherd boy.

That day was a great day in Krsna's life and a there was a great celebration n Nanda Grama. All the cows were decorated and chanting of the mantras the cowherd boys were all excited and delighted to become cowherd boys, Krsna and Balarama now the cowherd boys. Yasoda proposing,

"Take the shoe or take the umbrella."

"No, no. We should just take care of the cows. That is our dharma."

dharma raksati raksitah

"If we take care of the cows then that dharma would protects us. Why are you worried, maiya?"

So, Krsna goes into the forest, no shoes, no umbrella. Lots more could be said about this Gopasthami day, another year. Subhala was sent by Krsna to bring Radharani over and that is another sweet pastime how he had gone to Javat with the excuse,

"Oh, I am looking for a calf. We have lost a calf!"

Jatila said, "why are you hanging around. There is residence here. Go to goshala, you may find your cow there."

So, he has gone and Radharani had managed to come to goshala.

Subhala said, " let's go."

Radharani says, "where?"

"To Krsna."

"How? Jatila is keeping an eye on Me."

Subhala was very smart He had managed, arranged for Radharani to wear cowherd boy clothes, gopa vesha. She was a gopi. So Subhala said,

“Okay, You catch hold of a calf right on Your chest and walk, passing by Jatila or Your home.”

So, that is what Radharani did and Subhala comes on the meeting point and then they both reached where Krsna was.

Okay, our time is up. Today is, for you, the last day of Kartika. It is also marriage day of Tulasi Saligrama vivah. Vrnda Devi has become Tulasi and Lord has become Saligram sila and Their vivah, Their marriage has also taken place on this last day of Kartika. It is also last day of Caturmasya, last day of Bhisma Panchak.

We should keep remembering this month and different festivities of this month. Like that we can maintain our connection with Vrndavana and that Vrndavana Krsna.

Okay, Gaura Premanande, hari hari bol! Thank you everybody for being with us. See you another time, another location, another festival.

Radha Govinda Deva, ki jai!  
ISKCON New York ki, jai!  
Srila Prabhupada ki, jai!

Devotee: “Maharaja there is one question, we want to take that.”

Please elaborate on Tulasi Saligrama vivah?

“I curse you, you become a tree!”  
“I curse You, You become the rock!”

So, this is another manifestation.

tulasi krsna preyasi nama namah

Tulasi is “preyasi,” beloved of Krsna eternally. They tied in the knot. There is also pastimes of the marriage. Some manifestation she had become wife of some demon, Jalandhara.

Jalandhara was powerful and he was defeating the demigods. Only if Jalandhara's wife, who was Tulasi, her chastity is broken then he will lose the power. Jalandhara was getting his power as his wife was chaste.

Then Krsna had disguised Himself and had approached Tulasi. Then demigods had become victorious. But then Tulasi had, eventually, found out who this person was not her husband but someone else. She then cursed and Krsna cursed to become stone. Otherwise, Vrnda Devi is a big role in Vrndavana. She is the event manager. Before lila is performed, or performance takes place, Vrnda Devi makes all the arrangements, whole setups for lila. So Vrnda Devi, Tulasi Devi, her status is almost like Radharani.

Okay.