

The Auspicious Kartik Masa Begins

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Chowpatty

Occasion: 1 st day of Kartik

Time to go back, just to stay in the mood of Damodara. Is that the mood? Damodara mood, Damodara month beginning today? Haribol! Or yesterday?

Actually, today is technically the first day of Kartik pratipada. Yesterday was purnima. Last night, we were dancing, you were dancing. Certainly, Radha Gopinath was dancing, not only with Radha Rani, with millions of Gopis. It's a rasa dance, famous rasa dance night.

Did you offer sweet rice? No, not in the morning for mangal arati bhoga, last night, on the rooftop, somewhere? So that the sun rays would get in there. Whenever the Gopis were tired, they would relish some of that sweet rice. Did you do that? Yes. So where is the sweet rice? [laughter].

In Krsna Balarama temple, right after mangal arati, we all rush to the pots of sweet rice. There is enough for everybody. Deenabandhu Prabhu makes announcement: "Sweetrice!

Special sweetrice!"

So that was, not just was, still is last night's pastime. It did not last for one of our nights. It lasted for how long? Entire night of Brahma. Did He stop? Has the rasa dance stopped now? No, Still on. Krsna appears once in a day of Brahma. And how long He dances in rasa? Whole night of Brahma. While that rasa which comes from rasa, the mellow of conjugal love. Yet, this morning that rasa is on and we are celebrating

yet another rasa here, vatsalya rasa. That was the rasa, the mellow, relationship between the Gopis and Krsna, Radha and Krsna and this one is between Yashoda and Krsna, residents of Braja and Krsna.

As I am talking, you are realising that I am not going to do the verse on the board. That is what I meant; let's stay in the mood that we have just created a little bit by singing Damodarashtak. We can condense this mood, every day for the next thirty days. And for all the time to come. Not that after thirty days we stop and do something else.

There is also an understanding. The most attractive pastime of the Lord is the childhood pastimes. Also, madhurya rasa is topmost. Krsna is rasaraj. He is the king of all the rasas. He is the source.

raso vai saha

He is the source of all the rasas, and He is the enjoyer also of all the rasas. To do that, of course, there has to be reciprocation between Him and His devotees. So, varieties of rasas, varieties of devotees. Varieties of spices of life. Krsna spices His life.

This pastime Damodara lila , has taken place in the month of Kartik on the day of Diwali.

sri-suka uvaca

ekada g?ha-dasisu

?yasoda nanda-gehini

karmantara-niyuktasu

?nirmamantha svayam dadhi S.B 10.9.1

This is how the pastime gets described by Sukdhev Goswami in the 10 th canto. He says ekad? – once upon a time. So that once upon a time was the day of Diwali. So that is during Kartik. The special rasa dance is from the day before, well

just the night before Kartik. Govardhan puja is in this month of Kartik. Bahula-ashtami and the appearance day of Radha Kunda are also in the month of Kartik. Gopashtami- Krsna becomes a cowherd boy. He was a calf-herd boy and then He becomes a cow-herd boy and then He became cowherd. And likewise, there are full of festivals this month. Srila Prabhupada also chose to enter the Lord's pastimes during this month.

Did I miss anything? This is also called uraja. Uraja vrat. What is uraja? Energy. And this energy is Radha Rani. This is also Radha Damodara. Not only Yashoda Damodara but also, Radha Damodara pastimes.

Srila Prabhupada stayed at Radha Damodara. Radha Damodara ki.. Jay! I remember the first time ever I went to Vrndavan was during Kartik. From Juhu we went and arrived at Mathura station. The first donga ride I had was from Mathura station to Radha Damodara temple. As we arrived, we took darsana. The first deity I had darsana of was Radha Damodara.

Beautiful! Then right after darsana of the deities, we rushed into Srila Prabhupada's quarters. It was during early morning hours that we had arrived. Srila Prabhupada was there by himself in a very small room. There was not even room for all this asana, if we were to place this asana, just maybe six inches. Tall, cushion, something in the back. Srila Prabhupada sat very humbly and powerfully at the same time. So, we had darsana. Devotees from Bombay were sitting around. Some in the front, some on the side. I was sitting right in the front.

Srila Prabhupada was talking and getting reports of Juhu Bombay and he was also looking at us, moving his head like a camera. But whenever his glance fell on me, he would stop, before he moved again. And when he was coming back then he would stop. So, I was wondering.

Why was that? Whether I did not have tilaka on, or the buttons were open, I was trying to understand why I was getting Srila Prabhupada's attention and then it went on, until he said, "STOP IT!" Then I realised what it was. Those days when I would hear with attention then I used to do this. [Demonstrates shaking his leg] You have probably seen people do this. This was getting his attention.

Then I stopped. I never did that again. So that was my first instruction in fact from Srila Prabhupada: "Stop it."

We had great good fortune being with Srila Prabhupada in the month of Kartik. This was in 1972. Other devotees had come from different parts of the world. Maybe forty-fifty devotees. It was the first Vrndavan festival being held. With those forty-fifty devotees, we thought so many devotees.

In 1973, I had come to get gayatri mantra- brahminical initiation. So, it was just me and Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada asked me "How many visitors come, in Juhu?" I said: "Lots of visitors come." Srila Prabhupada said: "How many?" I said: "Fifty-sixty visitors come." Prabhupada said: "So many!" So, fifty -sixty was so many. Now fifty-sixty visitors enter every minute. [Laughter]

So that Kartik festival was new to us. Everything was new. Vrndavan was new. Gurudas asked: "So what are we supposed to be doing?" Srila Prabhupada said: "Nothing much. Just chant twenty-four hours a day."

This month is considered to help in mantra siddhi – achieving perfection in chanting the holy names of the Lord. So, a lot of devotees come to Vrndavan also and they do a lot of chanting during this month. There are a lot of blessings of Radha Rani also. They come and do uraja vrata. You are sitting here as if Bombay does not exist. You are in another world. It's a concrete jungle. We are in the forest also here. It's

also Vrndavan. So many youths are also here. How many youths? I know some of you are young at heart. Under thirty. If you are under thirty raise your hand. Oh! You are not! Are you thirty-five? Oh, you are over thirty-five! I was trying to include you [laughter].

Times have changed. Youth are going to the temple during early morning hours. This wasn't happening for some time. So, times have changed. Everyone used to think when we get old, religion was for those who fail, failure. Only turning to God when there is some difficulty. After enjoying this life and the body and the senses and then the body gets rotten and then swaha. We want to enjoy it. Useless! When we get old, we will do. Now, we think: "What's the hurry?" So that attitude is changing. Sri Krsna Caitanya Mahaprabhu's movement is causing that change. We are very happy that the youth are stepping forward. Anyway, no one is old or young. This is again Dvandva.

dvandvatito vimatsarah [Bg 4.22]

Srila Prabhupada's disciple, Pancadravida swami said to Srila Prabhupada when he was sick "I am a young man. Could I offer my youth to you so that you could live longer? So that you may live, I don't mind if I have to leave." {Meaning his body} And that time Prabhupada said. "You are not young. I am not old."

I'll explain. One reporter said: "Swamiji, why are you offering sannyasa to your young disciples? It should be for the old."

Srila Prabhupada asked, "What is your definition of old?" Reporter: "One who is about to die is old." Srila Prabhupada said: "Well I am old. I am seventy five – eighty years old. My disciples are twenty-five, thirty years old. Yet, is there a guarantee that they will not die before me?" Do you understand what he is trying to say? Many of them did die.

So, one who is about to die is old. Who is not about to die? Anyone here? We take birth with a death certificate. Here it

goes, guaranteed. One thing guaranteed. If you are looking for a guarantee, one thing is certain, as sure as death.

What happened? We wanted to stay in the mood of Yashoda Damodara. Because of not having enough time I thought I would not do the Bhagavatam verse and just talk something about Damodara or Damodarastak. So, I will sing one song. You have probably heard. This is balakrsna, Yashoda Nandana. Yeah, so that will bring us back into the mood again of the childhood pastimes. So many of them. Stealing butter. Makhan choris. It's a very favourite pastime for the Lord and devotees also. There are so many, unlimited pastimes.

Like a wave, day and night, waves in the ocean.

So, this is in Gokul and it is night-time, or late in the evening. Yashoda is sitting in the courtyard of Nanda bhavan. Krsna is on the lap of mother Yashoda.

Yashoda cha maha bhaga.

Yashoda is very very fortunate. Krsna is lying where? On the lap of mother Yashoda. Then when Krsna looked up. What did he see? The moon. He thought this is some kind of a toy and he wanted to have that toy. Children think in terms of playing and eating. These two things they like the most. How to play with anything, any object, or eat it. The Lord is acting like a child of this world. That way He is hiding His identity. He is the creator of the moon. He knows what it is, yet He is playing ignorant.

maiya, chanda khilona laiyo

Please give me that toy, the moon and if you don't give me, I will roll on the ground, but not lie on your lap because you are not giving me the toy. So, hurry up.

Surbhi ko paiya – If you do not give me that toy. I will not drink Surabhi's milk anymore. What will you drink? Coka cola?

[Laughter]

Lord Krsna also asked: "Why is Balarama's sikha big one? My sikha is very tiny." Yashoda: "Because Balrama drinks milk. If you drink, then you will also have a bigger sikha." Now He says: "I will not drink milk! I don't care for my sikha!" Still, Yashoda is not taking any action. Yashoda proposes that there is a toy shop here. He says: "No, no, that one!" As Yashoda has not fulfilled his desire, He says "I will tell everyone!" Yashoda: "What will you tell?" Lord Krsna: "That I am the son of Nanda Maharaja."

Yashoda: "That's nice. You are the son of Nanda Maharaja! There's no problem. You may make that announcement." Lord Krsna: "I will also tell them that I am not your son! So, you better hurry up."

Like ultimatum. Krsna steals butter after He wakes up, right? He is already up. Now someone says I should wake Gopal up. Maybe in another brahmanda it's time to wake Him up, while He has already stolen lots of butter in another brahmanda.