

The Glories of the month of Kartika

Kartika Maas, also known as Damodara Maas is described in the scriptures as the best among months.

*tasmad vrata trayam hy etan mama tiva priyankaram
magha kartikayos tad vattathai vaikadasi vratam*

*vanaspatinam tulasi masanam kartikah priyah
ekadasi tithi nam ca ksetranam dvaraka mama*

*ete sam sevanam yastu karoti ca jitendriyah
same vallabhatam yati na tatha yajanadi bhih*



"Of all plants, the sacred Tulasi is most dear to Me, of all months, Kartika is most dear, of all places of pilgrimage, My beloved Dvaraka is most dear, and of all days, Ekadasi is most dear." - (Padma Purana, Uttara Khanda 112.3)

Karttika, or the festival of offering lamps to Lord Krsna, lasts the entire month of Damodara, (Karttika) starting from 8th Oct – 5th Nov, which glorifies Krsna's pastime of being bound with ropes by Mother Yashoda. Observing vrata in the month of Karttika is glorified in the Puranas.

"As Satya-yuga is the best of yugas (ages), as the Vedas are the best of scriptures, as Ganga is the best of rivers, so Karttika is the best of months, the most dear to Lord Krsna."- Skanda-Purana

The vrata begins on 1th October and one may observe the following foremost activities throughout the entire month of Karttika:

- ❖ Japa – chanting the holy names of the Lord
- ❖ Worship Krsna by offering ghee lamps, flowers, incense, food and etc
- ❖ Practice brahmacarya – celibacy
- ❖ Worship of Tulsidevi
- ❖ Give in charity
- ❖ Perform austerities

*damodara astakam nama stotram damodara arcanam
nityam damodara akarsi pathet satya vrata uditam
(HARI BHAKTI VILASA 16/198)*

In the month of Karttika, one should daily worship Lord Damodara and sing the Damodarastaka (the eight prayers of Lord Damodara) which pleases Lord Damodara, written by the sage named Satyavrata.

Throughout the entire month of Karttika one should daily offer ghee lamp (diya) to Lord Damodara (Krsna), while singing Damodara Ashtakam.

Srimati Radhika is the holy month of Kartik which precedes His month. Radharani is known as the Kartika-devata or Kartika Devi, in other words, Radhika is the goddess or presiding Deity of the month of Kartika.

The month of Karttika is the best of all months and it is on this month many special festivals take place. This year the following festivals will take place in the month of Karttika:

- * **Bahula-ashtami (The Appearance of Sri Radha kunda) – 14th October 2006.**
- * **Dipavali – 22nd October, 2006.**
- * **Govardhana-Puja, Go-Puja – 23rd October, 2006.**
- * **Jagadguru Srila Prabhpada Tirobhava Jayanti (Disappearance) – 26th October, 2005**
- * **Shri Krsna Rasayatra, Tulsi-Shaligrama Vivah – 5th November, 2005**

Month of Karttika, Urja Vrata, Damodar Utsav seva, Akash Dipa

*kartike'smin visesena nityam kurvita vaisnavah
damodara arcanam pratah snana dana vrata adikam*
(SKANDA PURANA)

Specifically in the month of Damodara (Karttika), one should daily worship Lord Damodara (Krsna) and take bath early in the morning, give charity and follow a fasting vow. This is the duty of Vaisnavas.

*niyamena vina viprah kartikam yah ksipen narah
krsna paran-mukhas tasya yasmad urjo'sya vallabhah*
(PADMA PURANA conversation between Narada Muni and Saunaka Rsi)

Oh brahmanas, any person who tries to observe a Karttika month without following rules and regulations properly, Lord Sri Krsna remains against them because this month (Karttika) is very pleasing to Him.

*yair na dattam hutam japtam na snanam na harer vratam
na krtam kartike putra dvijas te vai naradhamah*
(SKANDA PURANA)

Oh son Narada, those brahmanas who do not give charity in the month of Karttika, perform sacrifice, chant japa and fast for Lord Hari are the lowest of mankind.

*kartika khalu vai masam sarva masesu ca uttamam
punyanam paramam punyam pavananam ca pavanam*
(SKANDA PURANA)

The month of Karttika is the topmost of all other months. It is the most meritorious and purified of all other pure months.

*na kartika samo maso na krtena samam yugam
na veda sadrsam sastram na tirtha gangaya samam
kartikah pravaro maso vaisnavanam priyah sada
kartikam skalam yastu bhaktya sevate vaisnavah*
(SKANDA PURANA)

There is no other month equal to Karttika and there is no other yuga equal to Krta-yuga. There is no other scripture equal to Vedas. There is no other place of pilgrimage equal to Ganges, therefore, the month of Karttika is very dear to the Vaisnavas (people dedicated to Visnu).

*dvadasu api masesu kartikah krsna vallabhah
tasmin sampujito visnur alpakair apy upayanaih
dadati vaisnavam lokam iti evam niscitam maya*
(PADMA PURANA)

Among all twelve months, the month of Karttika is dear to Lord Sri Krsna. If somebody performs a little worship of Lord Sri Hari in this month, He offers that devotee His own abode. This statement is true.

*pravrttanam ca bhaksanam kartike niyame krte
avasyam krsna rupaivam prapyate muktidam subham*
(SKANDA PURANA)

Whatever one usually eats, if he gives up some of the ingredients of it in the month of Karttika, then he achieves the same auspicious form as Lord Sri Krsna undoubtedly.

*sarva dharman parityajya kartike kesava agratah
sastra avataram punyam srotavyam ca mahamune*
(SKANDA PURANA Lord Brahma speaks to Narada Muni)

Oh great sage, after giving up all varieties of religious functions, one should follow Karttika fast and listen to the narrations of Lord Sri Hari before His Deity form.

*palasa patra bhoji ca kartike puruso narah
nispapah syat tu naivedyam harer bhuktva vimucyate
madhyastham isvaram patram varjayed brahmane tarah*
(PADMA PURANA)

Any person in the month of Karttika, who eats on the leaf plate of Palasa the remnants of the Lord, becomes free from all sins and achieves liberation. Besides brahmanas (twice born persons), others are not advised to eat from this leaf because this leaf is said to be the leaf of the Supreme Lord.

*snanam jagaranam dipam tulasi vana palanam
kartike ye prakurvanti te nara visnu murtayah*

(PADMA PURANA Lord Krsna speaks to Satyabhama)

Any person who performs bathing in the month of Karttika, remaining awake, offering lamps, giving charity or planting and transplanting Tulasi, he achieves the same form as Lord Sri Visnu.

*kalpa koti sahasrani patkani bahuny api
nimesa ardhena dipasya vilayam yanti kartike*
(SKANDA PURANA)

If even for a short time somebody burns a lamp in the temple of Lord Sri Hari, then whatever sins he has acquired for millions of kalpas (one kalpa equals 1000 yugas) are all destroyed.

*yatha ca mathanad vahnih sarva kasthesu drsyate
tatha ca drsyate dharmo dipadane na samsayah*
(PADMA PURANA)

Just as by rubbing of two sticks of wood one can see fire, so by offering a burning ghee wick to the Lord in the month of Karttika, one can see his merits without a doubt.

*vaisnavo na sa mantavyah samprapte kartike mune
yo na yacchati mudhatma dipam kesava sadmani*
(PADMA PURANA)

Oh sage, a person who does not offer a ghee lamp in Lord Kesava's temple in Karttika, that foolish person is not addressed as a Vaisnava.

*ekadasyam parer dattam dipam prajvalya musika
manusyam durlabham prapya param gatim avapa sa*
(SKANDA PURANA)

One rat (female mouse) had once burnt a ghee lamp which was offered by someone else on Ekadasi day. By doing so, she achieved a rarely achievable human form and at last attained the topmost destination.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami writes in his Digdarsini-tika, "In this verse it is found that it is possible to attain the results of directly offering a lamp on Ekadasi. This history of the mouse is very famous in the Padma Purana, Kartika Mahatmya. (In a temple of Lord Visnu, there was a mouse living who was eating the ghee from the extinguished ghee lamps which had been offered by others to Him. One day when she felt hungry to eat ghee, she tried to eat the ghee from a lamp which was not yet extinguished. While eating ghee from the lamp, the cotton wick got stuck in her teeth. Since the ghee wick had a flame, the mouse started jumping in front of the Lord's Deity form and thus died due to fire. But Lord Sri Visnu accepted the jumping of that mouse with a lit ghee wick in her mouth as His arati. In the end He gave her liberation, the topmost destination.)

*mathurayam narair urje snatva damodaro'rcitah
krsna rupa hi te jneya na atra karya vicarana*

(PADMA PURANA)

Any person who worships Lord Damodara in the month of Karttika in the Mathura area, certainly achieves the same form as Lord Sri Krsna Himself.

*kartike mathurayam vai pujanad darsanad dhruvoh
sighram sampraptavan balo durlabham yoga tatparaih*

(PADMA PURANA)

Although a child, Dhruva Maharaja during the month of Karttika in the area of Mathura worshiped Lord Sri Damodara and immediately became fixed in his devotion, became worshipable by Saunaka and the other sages and saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face.

*sulabha mathura bhumau praty abdam kartikas tatha
tathapi samsarantiha nara mudha bhava ambudhau
yani sarvani tirthani nada nadyah saransi ca
kartike nivasanty atra mathure sarva mandale*

(PADMA PURANA)

Although Mathura (Vraja area) is easily available on the earth and Karttika is easily attainable in the year, but oh, what a great misfortune in the side of human beings who are still suffering in the ocean of material existence. In the month of Karttika, all of the places of pilgrimage, oceans, rivers and lakes come to Mathura area [but they do not take advantage of it.]

*asvinasya tu masasya ya sukla ekadasi bhavet
kartikasya vrata aniha tasyam kuryad atandritah*

(PADMA PURANA conversation between Lord Krsna and Satyabhama)

One should take a fasting vow for the month of Karttika without any laziness on the Ekadasi which falls in the light part of the month of Asvina (September-October).

*na grahe kartike kuryad visesena tu kartikam
tirthe tu kartikim kuryat sarva yatnena bhavini*

(SKANDA PURANA)

Oh beautiful lady, specifically, one should not take a vow of fasting in the Karttika month in the home or house. Always the endeavor should be made to go to a place of pilgrimage to make this vow and observe it there.

*tatah priyatama visno radhika gopikasu ca
kartike pujaniya ca sri damodara sannidhau*

(PADMA PURANA)

Among all other gopis, Srimati Radharani is the most dear to Lord Krsna. Therefore in the month of Karttika, one should worship Lord Damodara with Srimati Radharani near Him.

*damodara astakam nama stotram damodara arcanam
nityam damodara akarsi pathet satya vrata uditam*
(HARI BHAKTI VILASA)

In the month of Karttika, one should daily worship Lord Damodara and sing the Damodarastaka (the eight prayers of Lord Damodara) which pleases Lord Damodara, written by the sage named Satyavrata.

*sri krsna dasa varyo'yam sri govardhana bhudharah
sukla pratipadi pratah kartike'rcyu 'tra vaisnavaih*
(SKANDA PURANA)

On the first day of the light part of the month of Karttika, a Vaisnava should certainly worship the topmost servant of Lord Sri Krsna, Sri Govardhana Hill, early in the morning as it is found in the Srimad Bhagavatam, 10th Canto, 21 chapter, verse 18.

*mathurayam tatha saksat kratva caiva pradaksinam
vaisnavam dhama samprapya modate hari sannidhau*
(PADMA PURANA)

One who stays in the Mathura area, worships Govardhana, and goes around it, he goes to the abode of Lord Sri Hari and stays there happily.

*urje sukla dvitiyayam madhyahe yama arcayet
snanam krtva bhanujayam yama-lokam na pasyati*
(SKANDA PURANA and PADMA PURANA)

On the midpart of the second day of the light part of the month of Karttika one should worship Yamaraja and take bath in the Yamuna. If he does so, he will not have to go to the abode of Yamaraja.

*prabodhinim uposya eva na garbhe visate narah
sarva dharman parityajya tasmad kurvita narada*
(SKANDA PURANA spoken by Lord Brahma)

Oh Narada Muni, one who fasts on Prabodhini (when the Lord gets up) Ekadasi, does not enter again into the womb of another mother. Therefore, a person should give up all varieties of occupation and fast on this particular Ekadasi day.

*dugdhabdhih bhogi sayane bhagavan ananto
yasmin dine svapiti ca atha vibhudhyate ca
tasminn ananya manasam upavasa bhajam
kamam dadaty abhimatam garudanka sayi*
(PADMA PURANA)

One who fasts with one pointed intelligence on the day when the Supreme Lord Sri Hari, Who sleeps on a bed of the enemy of Garuda (snake) goes to take rest in the Milk ocean on the bed of Ananta Sesha and also the day He gets up, gets all of his desires fulfilled.

*bhaktiprada hareh satu namna ksata pravodhini
yasa visnoh para murtir avyakta aneka rupini
sa ksipta manuse loke dvadadi muni pungava*

(VARAHA PURANA conversation between Yamaraja and Narada Muni)

This Prabodhini Ekadasi is famous for rewarding devotion to Lord Sri Hari. Oh best of the sages (Narada Muni), the personality of Ekadasi is present on this earthly planet in an unmanifested form of Lord Hari.

Srila Sanatana Gosvami remarks in his Digdarsini-tika that one who exactly observes the Ekadasi fast by observing this, he directly worships Lord Sri Hari. This is the meaning of this verse. Therefore, Ekadasi is said to be equal to Lord Sri Hari Himself.

*catur dha grahya vai cirnam catur masya vratam narah
kartike suklapakse tu dvadasyam tat samacaret*

(MAHABHARATA)

A person who observed Caturmasya fast stated in four different ways should end his fast on the Dvadasi day on the light fortnight of the month of Karttika.

*evam ya acaret partha sobhanam dharmam apnuyat
avasane tu rajendra vasudeva puram vrajet*

(BHAVISYA UTTARA PURANA)

Oh son of Prtha, Oh best of the kings, one who follows his vows properly as it is stated here achieves the highest merit and at last goes to the abode of Lord Sri Hari, the son of Vasudeva.

*malati malaya visnuh pujito yena kartike
papaksara krtam malam hathat saurih pramarjjati*

(SKANDA PURANA conversation between Lord Brahma and Narada Muni)

In the month of Karttika (October-November), any person, if he worships Lord Visnu with Malati (white Jasmine) flowers, whatever sinful activities are registered for him by Yamaraja, death personified, are removed.

*kamalah kamalakantah pujitah kartike tu yaih
kamala anuga tesam janmantara satesu api*

(PADMA PURANA, UTTARA KHANDA)

Any person who offers lotus flowers to Lord Narayana, the dearest personality of Laksmidevi in the month of Karttika, Laksmidevi resides with him for hundreds of births.

The Way to Worship Sri Sri Radha-Damodara

In the Padma Purana it is said:

"Because She is the gopi most dear to Lord Hari, Sri Radha' should be worshiped along with Lord Damodara during the month of Karttika.

"Dressing Lord Damodara as a brahmana and Sri Radha' as His wife, one should worship them with nice garments, ornaments, and foods during the month of Karttika.

"O brahmanas, during the month of Karttika one should worship the Deity of Sri Radha. To please Sri Radha, Lord Damodara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will be pleased with that worshiper."

One should regularly recite the prayer called Damodarastaka, which was spoken by Satyavrata, which attracts Lord Damodara, and which describes the worship of Lord Damodara.

Sri Damodarastakam

Śrī Dāmodarāṣṭakam

(found in the *Padma Purana* of Sri Krsna Dvaipayana Vyasa, spoken by Satyavrata Muni in a conversation with Narada Muni and Saunaka Rsi)

"In the month of Kartika one should worship Lord Damodara and daily recite the prayer known as *Damodarastaka*, which has been spoken by the sage Satyavrata and which attracts Lord Damodara." (*Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa* 2.16.198)

(1)

*namāmīśvaraṁ sac-cid-ānanda-rūpaṁ
lasat-kuṇḍalaṁ gokule bhrājamānam
yaśodā-bhiyolūkhalād dhāvamānaṁ
parāmrṣṭam atyantato drutya gopyā*

"I offer my humble obeisances to the Supreme Controller, who possesses an eternal form of blissful knowledge, whose earrings glisten, who manifested Himself in Gokula, who ran from the wooden mortar in fear of Mother Yaśoda' but was ultimately caught, . . .

(2)

*rudantaṁ muhur netra-yugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātāṅka-netram
muhuh śvāsa-kampa-tirekhāṅka-kaṅṭha-
sthita-graiva-dāmodaraṁ bhakti-baddham*

. . . who cried and rubbed His frightened eyes again and again with His two lotus hands, whose necklace on His three-lined neck trembled as He breathed again and again, whose waist was surrounded by a rope, and who was finally bound by love.

(3)

*itīdrk-sva-līlābhir ānanda-kunḍe
sva-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantam ākhyāpayantam
tadīyeśita-jñeṣu bhaktair jitatvaṁ
punaḥ prematas taṁ śatāvṛtti vande*

"A hundred times I bow down before Lord Kṛṣṇa, who with pastimes like these plunges His own cowherd village of Vraja in pools of ecstasy, and who declares to them who know Him only as the supreme master and controller: I am conquered by My loving devotees.

(4)

*varaṁ deva mokṣaṁ na mokṣāvadhīṁ vā
na cānyaṁ vṛṇe 'haṁ vareśād apīha
idaṁ te vapur nātha gopāla-bālaṁ
sadā me manasy āvirāstāṁ kim anyaiḥ*

"O Lord, I do not ask for liberation, something better than liberation, or any other thing. O Lord, all I ask from You, the master of all blessings, is that Your form as a cowherd boy always be manifest in my heart. What need have I for any other blessing?

(5)

*idaṁ te mukhāmbhojam atyanta-nīlair
vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ śiṅgha-raktaiś ca gopyā
muhuś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktādharaṁ me
manasy āvirāstāṁ alaṁ lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

"May Your lotus face, decorated with glistening locks of hair and with bimba-fruit lips again and again kissed by the gopī Yaśodā, always be manifest in my heart. What need have I for a hundred thousand other blessings?

(6)

*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkha-jalābdhi-magnam
kṛpā-dṛṣṭi-vṛṣṭyāti-dīnaṁ batānu-
gṛhāṇeśa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dṛśyaḥ*

"O unlimited, all-pervading Lord whose belly was bound by a rope, I bow down before You. O master, please be kind to me, who am now drowning in an ocean of sufferings. Please shower Your glance of mercy on me, who am very poor, wretched, and foolish. O master, please come before my eyes.

(7)

*kuverātmajau baddha-mūrtyaiva yadvat
tvayā mocitau bhakti-bhājau kṛtau ca
tathā prema-bhaktim svakām me prayaccha
na mokṣe graho me 'sti dāmodareha*

"Even though You were tied up, You still freed Kuvera's two sons and made them devoted to You. Please give to me love and devotion as You gave it to them. O Lord Dāmodara, I will not accept impersonal liberation.

(8)

*namas te 'stu dhāmne sphurad-dīpti-dhāmne
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai
namo 'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam*

"Obeisances to Your rope, the abode of great splendor! Obeisances to Your belly, the resting-place of the universe! Obeisances to Your beloved, Śrī Rādhā! Obeisances to You, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose pastimes have no end!"

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HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

All glories to Sri Sri Radha Damodara

Bahula-Ashtami



On the Sat 14th of October is Bahula-Ashtami, the divine appearance day of Sri Radha-kunda in this universe. In Vrndavana every year, a special festival is celebrated on Bahula-Ashtami day marking this glorious event. According to the scriptures Radha-kunda is the most exalted holy place in the universe.

In *Padma-Purana* it is stated:

*govardhana girau ramye radhakundam priyam hareh
kartike bahula astamyam tatra snatva hareh priyah
naro bhakto bhaved vipras taddhi tasya pratosanam*

Oh brahmanas, in the beautiful Govardhana area there is a Radha-kunda (a lake of Radharani) which is very dear to Lord Sri Hari. One who takes bath in it on the eighth day of the dark moon night of Karttika, becomes very dear to Lord Sri Hari.

Similarly in *Sri Upadeshamrita* it is stated:

“The holy place known as Mathura is spiritually superior to Vaikuntha (Abode of the Lord’s personal expansions), the transcendental world because the Lord appeared there. Superior to Mathura Puri is the transcendental forest of Vrndavana because of Lord Krsna’s rasa-lila pastimes. And superior to the forest of Vrndavana is Govardhana Hill, for it was raised by the divine hand of Shri Krsna and was the site of His various loving pastimes. And, above all, the superexcellent Sri Radha-kunda stands supreme, for it is overflowed with the ambrosial nectarian prema of the Lord of Gokula, Sri Krsna. Where, then is that intelligent person who is unwilling to serve this divine Radha-kunda which is situated at the foot of Govardhana Hill.”

Radha-kunda lies at the foothill of Govardhana and beside Shyama-kunda, in the village of Aristagrama in Vrndavana. Here Lord Krsna killed the demon named Aristasura, who had assumed the form of a bull by his mystic power. After the death of the demon, Shrimati Radharani and gopis refused to associate with Krsna with saying “You have killed a bull and are full of sin. You should go and bathe in all the holy places.” Lord Krsna, not desiring to go out of Vrndavana, made a large hole, pushing His heel in the ground. All the holy rivers in person appeared before the Lord desiring to serve Him. They filled His pond and Krsna after taking His bath accused Radharani and the gopis of becoming affected by sin due to siding with a demon, although he was in the form of a bull.

Thereupon the gopis their bangles and dug a pond (kunda) to fill with water from Manasi Ganga, a lake some distance away. The holy places personified again to request Radha and Krsna to allow them to enter the pond of Shri Radha, and in this way the holy Radha-kunda became manifest on this planet. Radha-kunda is such an exalted holy place that even the great sages desire to visit this confidential and sacred lake of Sri Radha, but rarely get the opportunity to do so.

Since Lord Krsna’s pastime five thousand years ago, Radha-kunda had become lost and five 514 years ago Lord Krsna in the form of Lord Caitanya Himself discovered Radha-kunda in an abandoned rice paddy field. Afterwards Lord Caitanya’s dear disciples the six goswamis of Vrndavana restored this pond to its present grandeur, as it is visible today.

In the *Urdhvamnaya-tantra* it is stated that: “The aspiring devotee who recites *Shri Shri Radha-Kripa-Kataksha Stava Raja* one hundred times while in the waters of Sri Radha Kunda up to the thighs, navel, chest or neck attains complete perfection in religiosity, economic development, fulfillment of desires, and liberation - the power by which everything spoken will come true, and great opulence from attaining transcendental majesty. At that time one gets to meet Sri Radhika face to face, seeing Her even with one's own present eyes.”

Glories of Radha-kunda

Within the holy dhama of Vrindavana are twelve sacred forests where Lord Sri Krishna performed many of His wonderful activities. Of these twelve, the forest of Vrindavana is not only the largest, but also the most sacred because the rasa-lila was performed here. In the middle of this Vrindavana forest is the transcendental mountain Govardhana Hill, and situated at the northern most point of this great mountain is the sacred lake called Radha

kunda, where the most intimate of all the Lord's transcendental loving pastimes took place.

Within all the three worlds and beyond to the spiritual realm, there is no place more sacred and holy than Radha kunda. This has been confirmed in all Vedic literature's such as the Puranas and Itihas as well as by all the great sages of yore. Five hundred years ago the six Goswamis of Vrindavana also revealed through their teachings that of all the holy places within the universe, Radha kunda should be considered the holiest of all.

The reason that Radha kunda is considered to be the most holy place is because it is the personal bathing place of Srimati Radharani. When the Supreme Lord desires to enjoy transcendental mellows of divine love, Srimati Radharani manifest from the Lord's internal potency (hladini shakti) and perfectly reciprocates those loving feelings. At Radha kunda, some of the most intimate exchange of transcendental love between Radha and Krishna took place, and for this reason Radha kunda is very dear to Srimati Radharani.

The appearance of Radha kunda is transcendently related to the pastimes of Sri Krishna. One day during the month of Kartika, King Kamsa, the evil uncle of Krishna, received news that Krishna was grazing His cows near Govardhana hill. Kamsa immediately dispatched his most powerful demon, Aristasura to kill Krishna. The demon assuming the form of a gigantic bull charged to attack Sri Krishna. When the demon came close enough, Krishna caught him by the horns and repeatedly threw him with such force that the demon gave up his life. Even though the inhabitants of Vraja were happy at the killing of the demon, Srimati Radharani and Her gopi friends were upset at the killing of a cow.

Despite all explanations from Sri Krishna, Radharani informed Him that to wash away the sins of killing a cow, He would have to purify Himself by bathing in all the holy places of the universe. Instead of taking the trouble to visit all the holy places, Sri Krishna summoned them and requested them to reside in a large hole He made by striking His heel on the ground. In this way the Shyama kunda was filled by each and every holy place in the universe and then Krishna Himself took bath in it to purify Himself. Krishna then began teasing Radharani about the glories of His kunda.

Srimati Radharani, displaying transcendental anger, broke one of her bangles and began to dig into one of the hollows created by the hoof print of Aristasura. The other Gopis also broke their bangles and began digging with Radharani and soon they had dug a huge kunda. Amazed by this Sri Krishna offered to fill the kunda with the water from His kunda, but Srimati Radharani flatly refused. However all the holy places personified prayed to Srimati Radharani to let them reside in Her kunda, and when She finally agreed, they joyfully broke the banks of Shyama kunda and flowed into Radha kunda. Sri Krishna then immediately took a bath in Radha kunda and declared that henceforth any one bathing offenselessly in the kunda will achieve the same ecstatic love for Krishna that Srimati Radharani has.

After Sri Krishna returned to His spiritual abode, King Yudhisthira established Parikshit as the king of Hastinapura, and Lord Krishna's great grandson, Vajranabha, as the king of Mathura. King Vajranabha re-established many holy places linked with the pastimes of Sri Krishna. He installed many important deities and also excavated the Shyama and Radha kunda. Almost five thousand years later Caitanya Mahaprabhu visited Vrindavana and once again re-discovered these transcendental kunda which had been forgotten over the passage of time.

Following the instructions of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami established his bhajan kutir (place of worship) next to Radha kunda. Fulfilling his intense desire to develop the kunda and make them accessible to many devotees, the Lord motivated a rich merchant to make a generous donation to Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. The Radha and Shyama kunda under the supervision of Jiva and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami was developed with wide boundaries and steps around it. It has since then been very nicely maintained by pious kings and religious people.

Bathing in the Radha kunda offenselessly gives one the highest form of Krishna prema. However, a devotee has to be extremely cautious of committing offenses at this holiest of the holy places. Srila Prabhupada once said that it is very easy to go to hell by committing offenses at Radha kunda. Living on the banks or bathing in the kunda is meant for the very advanced devotees like Raghunatha Dasa Goswami who are beyond the bodily concept of life. However, taking three drops of water from the kunda and sprinkling over one's head gives one all the benefit of bathing in the kunda without the dangers of any of the offenses.

We would humbly request all serious devotees of Sri Krishna to visit this holiest of the holy places at least once in their life times and get the mercy of Srimati Radharani.

Based on Radha Kunda: The Holiest of the Holy Places by Rajasekhara dasa Brahmachari.

Dipavali – Dipa-daan



On the Sun 22nd of October this year is Dipavali. Dipavali symbolizes the light of transcendental realized knowledge, which dissipates the darkness of ignorance. On this auspicious day the followers of *sanatana-dharma* around the world worship Shrimati Lakshmidēvi, the goddess of fortune. But one may ask why Lakshmi alone? What about Narayana?

Nowadays people only worship Lakshmi for wealth, forgetting that Lakshmi is always under the control of Lakshmi pati, the husband of Lakshmi. She is always in the service of Lord Narayana. Srimati Lakshmidēvi attained perfection simply by serving the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. According to *Sri Brahma-samhita*

thousands of Laksmis serve the original form of the Supreme Lord, Sri Krsna in Goloka in many ways.

According to the Vedic scriptures Srimati Radharani is the origin of all forms of Lakshmi and Lord Sri Krsna is the origin of all forms of Narayana. Lakshmi is always situated on the chest of Lord Vishnu. She never separates herself from Lord Vishnu because without energy, there is no meaning to the energetic, and without the energetic there is no meaning to the energy.

Similarly, without Lakshmi there is no meaning to Narayana, and without Narayana, there is no meaning to Lakshmi. Because of this Lord Caitanya and great *acaryas* like Ramanujacarya and Madhvacarya have taught that first of all one must pay obeisances and worship the internal pleasure potency of the Supreme Lord. Thus the Lord and His potency are always referred to as Radha-Krsna, Sita-Rama, or Lakshmi-Narayana.

Those who are worshipping Lakshmi alone are simply wasting their time since according to *pati-vrata* dharma, the wife always goes where her husband goes. Similarly Lakshmi never goes where Her husband is not worshipped. But where Lord Narayana is worshipped, Lakshmi automatically comes there. If one wants Lakshmi, then one must worship Lakshmi [Lord Narayana] together with Lakshmi. Those who only want Lakshmi, but are not interested in Narayana will simply be ruined.

For instance, Ravana did not want Lord Rama. He only wanted to enjoy Shrimati Sitadevi, and thus ended up in his own destruction. A pure devotee prays to Lakshmi not for wealth, but for devotional service to Lord Narayana. This should be the attitude of one and all.

Lakshmidēvi is not an ordinary personality. She is one of the great servants of the Supreme Lord. Shri (Lakshmi) sampradaya is one of the four vaishnava sampradayas of which Lakshmidēvi is the original spiritual master. She in her capacity as a guru chose Shripad Ramanujacarya to lead her sampradaya and teach that only Lord Narayana is the object of worship. Shripad Ramanujacarya instructs that one must not worship Lakshmi for wealth, but for devotional service to Lord Hari. He further explains that Lakshmi is understood to be *cancala* (unstable) by nature, but she gives up her unstable quality and becomes stable wherever Lord Narayana is worshipped, providing all forms of opulences to that devotee.



Gaudiya Vedantacarya Srila Baladeva Vidyabhushana explained that Lakshmidēvi is nondifferent from Lord Vishnu, in that He is the Supreme Energetic and She is His

Supreme Energy. (*sei jaganmata lakshmi vishnur anapayini shakti*. This is confirmed throughout the shastra. Whatever form the Lord appears in, there is a corresponding Lakshmi form who acts as His eternal consort. In the *Vishnu Purana* it is stated: "Thus as the Master of the Universe, the god of gods, Janardana, makes descents, so does His companion Shri (Lakshmi). And again, when Hari became the son of Aditi, She was born from the lotus. And when Parashurama, the descendent of Bhrgu, was born She became the earth. When He was Rama, She became Sita; in Krsna's birth She was Rukmini. And in the other descents of Visnu, She was his companion. When He is a god She has a goddess' body and when He is a man, She is woman. She fashions her own body according to the body of Vishnu."

'Of all the manifestations of Lakshmidēvi, Srimati Radharani is the Supreme Goddess, just as amongst so many avatars of Godhead, Krishna is the supreme Personality of Godhead.'

This is confirmed in the *Brihad-Gautamiya Tantra*, which states, 'Shri Radhika is the Supreme Goddess. Her very nature is Krishna, for her very existence is permeated by Krishna. Therefore she is known as Krishnamayi or one who is full of Krishna. She is known as Paradevata, for she is the Supreme Goddess. All other goddesses are subordinate to her. She is the Supreme Lakshmi and her transcendental effulgence surpasses all conceptions of brilliance. She is the supreme enchantress, for she enchants Krishna Himself, who is capable of charming millions of cupids.'

Inviting the Goddess of fortune

When Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after an exile of fourteen years, the delighted residents welcomes Him by decorating the city with lights. Sita devi was an incarnation of Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune and Lord Rama was the supreme personality of Godhead, Vishnu. Factually, the denizens of Ayodhya were welcoming their worshipable Lord and His consort back amongst them.

This tradition has been carried forth for thousands of years when during the eve Diwali, people in India light their houses with diyas or small clay lamps and decorate their homes to welcome all prosperity and auspiciousness.

Lakshmi and Vishnu

In the material world, wherever there is Lakshmi devi, there is opulence's and wealth. That is why so many people pray to Her, to give them material comforts, wealth and riches. Being merciful, She is easily pleased and quickly rewards Her devotees by fulfilling their desires. However, these benedictions are of a temporary nature. This is why we often see people enjoying great wealth, and then may suddenly loose everything and become poor. Or despite wealth, they may be in bad health, mental anxiety or physical stress.

In a conversation with the demigods in the Mahabharata, Lakshmi devi states that being a woman, She is of a fickle nature. On Her own She does not stay long any where. She only stays where Her husband Narayana resides i.e with his devotees, *vaisnavas*. In the *Brahma-samhita*, Lord Brahma glorifies Krishna as being served my millions of goddesses of fortune

in His eternal Goloka dhama. As a chaste and devoted wife Lakshmi devi is always by the side of Her husband.

So generally Lakshmi devi may come and go as She pleases, but where ever there is Sri Krishna, Lakshmi devi will be invariably there. In the house of a Vaisnava where Sri Krishna is being worshipped, Lakshmi devi will dutifully reside with Her husband.

Indigent vaisnava

One of the popular mis-conceptions is that devotees of Lord Vishnu are generally poor. Certainly there seems to be some empirical evidence to substantiate this. However a closer look will show that this poverty is only superficial. The devotees enjoy real opulence since they have the constant association of the Lord and His faithful consort, Lakshmi devi. But in the mood of a devotee, they remain detached or use it for the service of the Lord.

The Lord is always eager to fulfill the desires of His devotees. When Sudama went to visit Krishna, even without his asking, Krishna made him rich beyond measure. However the only change in the life of Sudama was that he increased his service to the Lord and His devotees.

One of the earliest symptoms of devotion service is 'all-auspiciousness.' Devotional service to the Lord not only burns away all past and present reactions, it also infuses the devotee with all auspicious qualities. Where then can there be the question of devotees of the Lord being miserable?

Mercy of the Lord

Wealth, power, fame can interfere with one's spiritual advancement. As stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.88.8), *yasyaham anugrhnami harisyē tad-dhanam sanaih.* The Lord said to Maharaja Yudhisthira, ; "The first installment of My mercy toward a devotee is that I take away all his possessions, especially his material opulence, his money".; This is the special favor of the Lord toward a sincere devotee. If a sincere devotee wants Krishna above everything but at the same time is attached to material possessions, which hinder his advancement in Krishna consciousness, by tactics the Lord takes away all his possessions. An example of this is the Lord in the form of Vamanadeva taking away all the possessions of Maharaja Bali and bringing him to a point where he was completely dependant on the Lord.

However the Lord only does this to bring the devotee closer to Him. If a devotee would become bewildered or turn away from the Lord, then there is no reason for the omniscient Lord to deprive him of his wealth. And the rewards of the Lord are infinitely greater. Bali Maharaja was awarded everything that he was striving for and much more. Such is the magnanimity of the Lord.

Material detachment

The material wealth or its lack of is primarily a symptom of past karmic reactions. Vaisnavas are well situated in this knowledge. They are aloof to the miseries ordained by the laws of karma, since they simply depend on the mercy of the Lord. They accept misfortunes as a result of their past mis-deeds and good fortune as the mercy of the Lord. From such material detachment comes protection from the fickleness of fortune.

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Sukadeva Goswami advise men not to unnecessarily work like asses for things that are not ordained by destiny. Factually the material world is place of misery. True intelligence dictates that one must try a get relief from this material distress rather than work hard and get temporary relief by lording it over material nature. Thus, while the materialists are working hard to get some wealth, the devotees are working harder to use their precious form of human life to get lasting relief from material distress.

Enjoying Lakshmi without the Lord

Ravana had a demoniac mentality since he tried to enjoy Sita separate from Rama. For this he was killed. The same fate was also awarded to Hiranyakasyapu, Kamsa and many others who had embarked on the same course. The proper way to honor Lakshmi devi is by inviting Her worshipable Lord first and then with Her help serve the Lord Then and only then will there be lasting opulence and auspiciousness.

Hence on Dipavali day one must not worship Lakshmidivi alone, but should worship Lakshmi-Narayana, Sita-Rama, or Radha-Krsna together. This system of worship should be adopted not for only a particular day, but daily.

Govardhana-puja – Go-puja



introduced this festival.

When Krsna was present some 5000 years ago, towards the end of Dvapara-yuga, all the cowherd men of Vrindavana had arranged to worship Indra, the King of Heaven. But they gave up this worship, following the advice of Lord Krsna. Lord Krsna had strongly refuted to the worship of the demigods by rejecting the worship of demigod Indra.

Hence, instead all the cowherd men of Vrindavana performed a ceremony whereby they worshipped the cows, brahmanas (priests), and Govardhana Hill. In this way Lord

Govardhana-puja and Go-puja, or the worship of Govardhana Hill and the worship of the cows will be celebrated this year on Mon 23rd of October. This glorious festival falls on the very next day after Dipavali, which is also considered to be the New Year for the Hindus. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Krsna Himself

Krsna in the form of Govardhana accepted all the paraphernalia and foodstuffs offered to Govardhana Hill.

Glories of Giriraja Govardhana

Preparations for worship of Indra

One day, seven year old Krishna, became intrigued by the hectic activity going on in the His village of Vrindavana. His father, Nanda Maharaja, was busily directing all the preparations with the help of the village elders. Curious, Krishna began to inquire the reason behind all this from His father. But Nanda Maharaja being extremely busy, and thinking Krishna to be too young to understand, ignored His queries. However he could not contend with the persistence of Krishna and finally gave in. He explained that they were arranging for a big *yajna* (sacrifice) in the honor of Lord Indra, the king of the demigods. Since they belonged to the farming community (Vaisya), they were very dependant on timely rainfall for their crops and food grains. Lord Indra being the controlling deity of rainfall was therefore being propitiated by the *yajna* to ensure timely and sufficient rainfall.

Krishna dissuades His father

Krishna however began to dissuade His father from this sacrifice. Overtly, He took the position of a *karma-mimamsa*, a class of atheist philosophers that propose that since God is bound to reward or punish one in accordance with one's karma, a person should simply focus on performing his activity and enjoy the results. This argument was countered by Nanda Maharaja that while activity is essential, the mercy is also needed. Krishna however nullified these arguments saying that Indra sends rains even to the oceans, since he himself is duty bound to do so. Since demigods will be satisfied by the proper execution of duties, there is no need to worship them separately.



false pride from him.

Krishna instead proposed that they should worship the local Brahmans and Govardhana Hill. Since the Brahmans were the spiritual leaders of the community and Govardhana Hill was providing them with so many amenities like grass, water and shelter for the cows, which are the primary assets of the village community. Even though Krishna was debating from an atheistic view point, He had a higher purpose in mind. His descent to the world was to discourage the worship of demigods for material gains, and to establish the true position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He was aware that Lord Indra was very much proud of his position as the king of the demigods. Since Lord Indra is actually a great devotee, Krishna was also showing him His mercy by removing the illusion of

Nanda Maharaja agrees to Krishna

Even though Nanda Maharaja was very affectionate to Krishna, he was reluctant to give up the traditional ceremony they had been performing for years. So he offered a compromise, that the *Govardhana puja* would be done after the Indra yajna was completed. However this did not satisfy Krishna. He does not like wishy-washy compromises but clear and uninterrupted commitment. Finally out of affection for Krishna, the villagers lead by Nanda Maharaja relented and began to worship the Govardhana in accordance to the instructions of Krishna.

Thus was established the tradition of the worship of Govardhana, which is followed to this day in a festival called Annakuta. They began the worship by first circumambulating Govardhana Hill, a tradition that is followed even now. After Nanda Maharaja and the Brahmins concluded the ceremony, they were awed to see Govardhana personified, personally accepting the foodstuffs offered in the ceremony. They were joyfully surprised to see that Govardhana personified look exactly like Krishna, and from this we can understand that Govardhana is actually non-different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna. To this day, qualified devotees take small rocks (*shilas*) from the Govardhana hill to worship as the deity form of the Lord.

Lord Indra angered

Lord Indra was however most displeased with this. Even though he was aware of the position of Krishna, anger and pride caused him to become illusioned, a symptom that is common in present day materialists. Furious, he summoned the *Samvartaka* clouds, specially powerful clouds used at the time of cosmic destruction, and ordered them to pour rain over Vrindavana. So powerful were these rain clouds that soon entire Vrindavana was deluged under rain fall as thick as columns and as sharp as arrows, causing much pain to the people in Vrindavana. The inhabitants of Vrindavan were all pure devotees of Sri Krishna, and in distress turned to Him for shelter.

Govardhana hill lifted by Krishna

The omniscient Lord Krishna, very much aware of the machinations of Lord Indra, simply picked up the Govardhana hill and asked all the inhabitants of Vrindavana to take shelter under the hill with their families and animals. In this way, Krishna held the mountain up for seven days on the little finger of His left hand. By His mystic potency, no one felt any hunger, thirst or discomfort for the entire time they spent under the hill. Finally when Indra realized that he was actually up against the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he immediately ordered the clouds to stop. The inhabitants of Vrindavana happily went back, singing the glories of Krishna, and Krishna replaced the Govardhana hill to its original position.

Lord Indra forgiven

Now Lord Indra was terrified at his offenses. Knowing that Krishna is especially merciful to the cows, he enlisted the help of Surabhi, the personification of the cows in the spiritual

world. He stealthily approached Krishna in a secluded place and fell prostrate at His feet. In beautiful prayers, Lord Indra begged for forgiveness and the mercy of Krishna. Since Krishna is always favorably disposed to His sincere devotees, He forgave Indra and cautioned him against false pride. He also pleasingly received the worship from Surabhi and many other denizens of the heavenly planets.

The descent of Govardhana

In the *Padma Purana* it is mentioned that when the Lord descends to perform His pastimes, He does so accompanied by His associates and intimate paraphernalia. Part of the paraphernalia is the actual land where the pastimes are performed. Thus the entire tract of land known as Braja Mandala is said to have descended from the spiritual world into the material world. When Krishna wound up His pastimes, He left behind this holy *dhama* for His devotees to enjoy and draw inspiration from.

Along with the Braja Mandala also descended Govardhana hill on which Krishna performed so many of His childhood pastimes. Since the Lord personally picked it with His hands, it is considered non-different from Him. So enjoyable is this pastime of Krishna to His devotees, that He is also called Giridhari, meaning one who holds the mountain. When Krishna descended later in Kali-yuga as Caitanya Mahaprabhu, in the mood of His own devotee, He refused to set foot on Govardhana, recognizing it to be non-different from the Lord.

Vanishing Govardhana

In the *Garga Samhita*, it is said that Govardhana Hill was once cursed by Pulastya Muni, a powerful mystic and one of the sons of Lord Brahma. The curse was that every day Govardhana would reduce by the size of one seed of mustard. In accordance with the curse, Govardhana, which was initially two *yojnas* (sixteen miles) tall, has since been reducing in size. The scriptures say that as long as Govardhana hill and river Yamuna are present, there will be religiosity and God consciousness. On the day they disappear, which is predicted to happen some ten thousand years from now, Kali yuga will start in earnest and any semblance of religion will completely disappear.

So while we can, let us relish the pastime of Govardhana, and if and when we get the opportunity, take darshana and perform the most auspicious parikrama (circumambulate) of Govardhana.

All glories to Giri Govardhana and Giridhari !!

The Unique Position of Srila Prabhupada – World's greatest Acarya

JAGADGURU SRILA PRABHUPADA'S 29TH DISAPPEARANCE ANNIVERSARY

On the Thurs 26th of October is Jagadguru Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Astottara sata Sri Srimad Abhaya Caranaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami

Prabhupada's 29th Tirobhava Jayanti, the tithi on which His Divine Grace left his body and entered the transcendental abode of the Supreme Lord.



Srila Prabhupada's unique position has been very well summed up by HH Vishvesh Tirtha, the *pithadipati* of Sri Krsna Matha in Udupi in the following way in praise of Srila Prabhupada:

"Of all people, the devotee of the Supreme Lord is the greatest. And in order to become a devotee, one does not need to be born in any specific type of class or caste or nation. Devotion to Krsna was limited only to India but Swami Prabhupada took this devotion out of India and distributed it to anyone and

everyone all over the world. That's why today we can see that people from all over the world are accepting devotional service and becoming devotees of Krsna. In this way, they are becoming the best of humans.

The river Ganga is famous for her purifying effect. At one time, however, this Ganga did not flow through the earth planet. It is Bhagiratha who brought the Ganga from the celestial planets down to the earth planet. That is why Bhagiratha is celebrated. Swami Prabhupada, like Bhagiratha, brought the *bhakti-ganga*, down from above and flooded the whole world. In this way, Swami Prabhupada has done something which is much better than what Bhagiratha had done."

The unique position of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada is supported as follows:

Statement by Locana das Thakura (middle of the 16th century)-
In the Caitanya Mangala the future appearance of a great *senapati bhakta* who would preach Krishna consciousness all over the world is predicted.

In Sri Caitanya Managala Lord Caitanya said: *yadi papi chadi dharma dure dese yaya mora senapati-bhakta yaibe tathaya* "Taking the sharp sword of the congregational chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra, (nama-sankirtana) I will root out & destroy the demoniac mentality in the hearts of all the conditioned souls. If some sinful people escape and giving up religious principles go to far off countries, then my Senapati Bhakta will come at that time to give them Krsna consciousness. "

Statement by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu-

In the Caitanya-caritamrta the Lord Himself predicts "*Prthivite ache yadi nagaradi grama, sarvatra pracara hoibe more nama*" ("My holy name will be chanted in every town and village"). Srila Prabhupada fulfilled that prediction by his factual accomplishments.

Predicted by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura (middle of the 19th century)-

The statement in the *Sajjana-tosani* of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, regarding the future appearance of a great personality who would come to the west and preach the message of Lord Gauranga and fulfill the prediction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The following is a translation from the journal Vaisnava Tosani:

"Sriman Mahaprabhu did not descend with His associates to deliver a certain number of human beings in the land of India, but rather His purpose was to deliver and uplift all living beings in all countries of the world by preaching the eternal religion of all souls. He has personally said: *'Prthivi-parjanta jata ache desa grama, sarvatra pracara hoibe more nama'* ('My holy name will be preached in all the countries and towns that exist throughout the world' (Caitanya Bhagavata, Antya 4.126).

There are many kinds of religion in the world, and among all of them the highest development of religion is the congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's Divine Names. Of this there is no doubt. Alas! When will that day come (emphasis added) when all greatly fortunate souls in countries such as England, France, Russia, Prussia and America will take up banners, kettle drums, mrdangas and karatalas and thus cause the ecstatic waves of Hari Nama Kirtan and the singing of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's holy name to rise in the streets of their towns and cities? O when will that day come, when pure and transcendental Krishna prema (love of God) will be the only religion of all souls and all tiny sectarian religions will meet in the unlimited and universal religion of devotional service to Krishna, as rivers merge into the great ocean? O when will that day come?" (From the Sajjana-tosani of Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, late 1800s). And who fulfilled that wish and prediction of Bhaktivinode Thakura? - SRILA PRABHUPADA.



He was to be the prominent acarya for the next 10,000 years (see quote re law books for ten thousand years). From the definition of shakti-avesha avatar - divinely empowered personality - we see that Srila Prabhupada was such a person. Only a super-empowered personality could do what Prabhupada has done.

He also travelled throughout India and preached strongly against the Mayavadi impersonalist philosophy. He established Vaisnava philosophy in many places throughout India. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu personally preached throughout South India. He started a spiritual revolution that is still felt today.

However, all these acaryas stayed in India. Their literature and temples were confined to the Indian subcontinent. Prabhupada is the first acarya of the Vedic lineage who has ever travelled out of India and made so many Vaisnavas. He has presented in his numerous purports the true essence of the teachings of all the Vaisnava sampradayas. Thus in one sense he is the greatest acarya, because he has accomplished what no one else has done, in a most difficult environment and very tenuous circumstances.

Srila Prabhupada had been a bona fide representative of the previous acarya preaching the glories of Vaisnava philosophy all over the world through his books and teachings, and through his bona fide disciples and followers.

However, it should be noted that most of those acaryas took decades, if not their entire lifetimes, to accomplish their mission. But Srila Prabhupada in a short span of 11 years

accomplished what no one else in the entire history of India had accomplished. HE HAS FULFILLED THE PREDICTION OF SRI CAITANYA MAHAPRABHU.

The position of the Adi-Guru of the sampradaya (from Harinama-Cintamani by Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura, chapter 6, text 22) "*sadhu sampradaye acarya sakala siksa guru pratistha, adyacarya yini guru siromani puji'tanra yathocita*": "Within the community of saintly persons, all are teachers and established as siksa gurus or instructing gurus (sakala guru pratistha). He who is the original guru (adi-acarya) of the sampradaya is the crest jewel amongst all gurus (*guru siromani*). Thus it is proper to give him worship."

Footnote by Bhaktivinode Thakura: "A community of Vaisnavas is a community of saintly persons. They are able to give instructions about the disciplic succession mantra, the absolute truth, and the practice of sadhus. One should choose a worthy guru from the Vaisnava sampradaya if he wants to escape from such unbonafide sampradayas such as mayavada, etc. The explanation of the first guru of the sampradaya should be respected for his particular instructions. Srila Ramanujacarya, Srila Nimbarka and Sri Visnusvami - these are the first acaryas of their own sampradayas. Sri Madhvacarya is our original acarya."



HE IS THE GREATEST ACARYA OF THE MODERN AGE. He has proven it and established it especially in three ways:

1. His numerous and voluminous *bhasyas* (commentaries) and *tikas* and profuse practical arrangements to distribute these literatures all over the world in all kinds of languages.
2. By his powerful preaching and immaculate purity he has made thousands of Vaisnavas all over the world.
3. He has practically created the framework for a universal house of worship and a sanctuary in the age of Kali-yuga by establishing 108 temples, ashrams, farms, gurukulas, etc. and given specific, practical directions on how to manage these institutions for preaching the message of Lord Caitanya.

One South Indian guru of the Ramanuja sampradaya remarked in 1976 after viewing one of Srila Prabhupada's books and witnessing the preaching of some of his young disciples: "This person is the summum bonum of all acaryas." Thus it is the foremost duty of any sincere disciple and follower of Srila Prabhupada to emphasize the unique and distinct position and accomplishment of Srila Prabhupada as the *visva acarya*, or the world acarya, the Jagad Guru, by his accomplishments, and not merely by a self-given title. He is the actual sampradaya acarya to be surrendered to and fully served by all Vaisnavas and all preachers and preceptors in the future.

HE LIVES FOREVER BY HIS DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS AND THE FOLLOWER LIVES WITH HIM.

Srila Prabhupada - Founder-Acharya of the Golden Age

The Founder-Acharya has a special position for all time to come within the organized mission. In the Vaisnava line the previous acharyas selected and severely tested the earnestness and qualifications of their disciples. But among the special characteristics of the Founder-Acharya is his infinite compassion. He accepts all those who come and commands his disciples to do the same.

Harinama is the dharma of the Golden Age - '*kali kaler dharma nama sankirtana*', and one who preaches that dharma all over the world is the empowered Acharya - '*krsna sakti vina nahi tara pravatana*'.

Srila Prabhupada exercised the basic principle of Krishna consciousness, as envisioned by Srila Rupa Goswami (somehow or other), to engage everyone in the Hare Krishna movement. The extent of his efforts are unprecedented in the history of Vaisnavism. Thus he is the Founder-Acharya who has accomplished the objectives of the 'Visva Vaisnava Rajya Sabha', following in the footsteps of Srila Rupa Goswami.

In the *Sri Chaitanya Mangal* by Locana das Thakur, Lord Chaitanya speaks of a 'senapati' (great general), who will come after Him to accomplish His mission. It is clear that Lord Chaitanya's teachings were a preparation made by Himself for the use of another preacher, personally empowered by Him, who would launch His Sankirtana Movement on a global scale.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur yearned to see the day when fortunate non-Indian Vaisnavas would perform Harinama Sankirtan in different cities of the world (Sajjana Tosani 4.3, 'Nityadharmas Suryodoy'). In this article he announced that Mahaprabhu's prediction would shortly be fulfilled. He foresaw that all the Vaisnava sampradayas will be unified. "In a short time, there will be only one sampradaya and that will be the Brahma sampradaya. All other sampradayas will find their conclusions in this sampradaya."

"All smaller dharmas will enter like rivers into the ocean of Hari Nama and there will be only one religion - chanting the Holy Name of Krishna." (Vani Vaibhava Ch. 6)

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur spoke of the arising of a self-effulgent acharya from among his disciples who would demonstrate his prominence by preaching in a grand style. It is obvious from the predictions of the previous acharyas mentioned above that Om Vishnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacharya Astottara Sata Sri Srimad Abhaya Caranaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada is that self-effulgent Founder-Acharya.

In the Chaitanya-caritamrta (Antya-lila 7.11) it is stated: "In this age of Kali, real religious propaganda should induce people to chant the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. This is possible for someone who is especially empowered by Krishna. No one can do this without being especially favored by Krishna."

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "A first-class Vaisnava is he whose very presence makes others chant the holy name

Predictions Revealed in the Sastras

In the *Pratisarga* part of the *Bhavisya Purana*, Chapter 20 verses 71-73; we find the following prediction:

"Lord Jagannath, the Supreme Lord Sri Hari Himself, spoke these attractive words for the welfare of all: The mlecchas who are born from mixed countries ruled by descendants of Kasyapa (demons) and the sudras will become brahmanas by initiation. They will wear sikhas and brahmana threads and will become well versed in the uncontaminated fruit of the Vedas (Srimad Bhagavatam). They will worship Me by the Yajna prescribed by the Lord of Lords, the protector of Sacidevi, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu."

Forty-six years before the beginning of Kali Yuga, Vishnuchitta, one of the twelve great Vaisnava saints of the Sri Ramanuja Sampradaya predicted: "There will come a race which will tread the Earth with raised hands and vertical tilaka on their foreheads, who will chant the names of Hari; this will destroy the influence of Kali." (Divya-prabandha 1.10).

Sripada Ramanuja predicted: "The pure devotion to Sri Hari devoid of karma and jnana will grow and grow like a banyan tree covering the whole world, teaching everyone who takes shelter." (Prapannamrta tarpana - last chapter)

It is interesting to note in this connection how Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON is preaching '*jnana karmady anaavrtam*' to '*jare dekho tare*' in every town and village!

Sripada Madhvacharya predicted: "The real knowledge of the difference between jiva and Sri Hari and the service of Sri Hari will spread all over the world very shortly." (Anu Madhva Vijaya - last chapter)

In *Bhagavat Mahatmya* (Uttara khanda of Padma Purana) Bhakti personified says to Narada Muni: "*idam sthanam parityajya videsham ganyate maya*" - "I will leave this country, India, and go abroad."

It was certainly none other than Srila Prabhupada who fulfilled these predictions of the scriptures and the acaryas by spreading the teachings of the Vedas throughout the world.

All glories to Jagadguru Srila Prabhupada

Tulsi-Shaligrama Vivah



Shri Narasimha-shila, a form of Shaligrama-shila.

This year Tulsi-Shaligrama Vivah will be celebrated on Sun 5th of November. On this auspicious day the sacred marriage ceremony of Lord Vishnu to Srimati Vrindadevi, an eternal associate of the Lord took place. The Lord's form of Shaligrama-shila is very sacred and worshipped by the brahmanas in their homes, and Tulsi

(Vrindadevi) is married to this form of Lord Vishnu.

Srimati Tulsidevi is an expansion of Srimati Vrindadevi, the Vrindavana gopi in charge of arranging the details of Radha and Krsna's lila. By doing this she feels the greatest joy. She renders service to Krsna by being offered to His lotus feet.

The Lord appreciates the service of Srimati Tulsidevi more than the service of Lakshmi because Lakshmi, although stationed at the chest of Vishnu, sometimes has to go to satisfy His numerous devotees whereas Tulsidevi (Tulsi leaves) when placed on the lotus feet of the Lord remain fixed and never forsake her service position.

By the mercy, Vrindadevi has appeared in this material world as the Tulsi plant, giving us a chance to serve her and to beg her to bestow upon us her greatest boon – devotional service to the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord benedicted Tulsi by saying that He will not accept anything offered to Him unless Tulsi leaves are placed on the offerings.

In the *Skanda-Purana*, it is stated that: "Simply by seeing or touching Tulsi tree one can become relieved from all distress and diseases. Simply by offering obeisances to and pouring water on the Tulsi tree, one can become freed from the fear of being sent to the court of Yamaraja. If someone sows a Tulsi tree somewhere, certainly he becomes devoted to Lord Krsna. And when the Tulsi leaves are offered in devotion at the lotus feet of Krsna, there is full development of love of Godhead."

The *Skanda-Purana* further states: "Tulsi is auspicious in all aspects. Simply by seeing, touching, remembering, praying, bowing before, hearing about or simply by sowing this Tulsi plant, there's always auspiciousness. By circumbulating Srimati Tulsidevi all sins of a person are destroyed at every step, even the sin of killing a brahmana. Anyone who comes in touch with the Tulsi plant in the above mentioned ways lives eternally in Vaikuntha loka."

In the *Padma-Purana (Uttara-khanda Uma-Mahesvara samvada)* it is stated:

*tulasi jambavatityukta laksmyavesena samyuta
taya sampujayedbhaktya visnulokamavapnuyat*

"Tulasi is Jambavati with special presence of Laksmidevi and if one worships the Supreme Lord Visnu with devotion using Tulasi, such a person reaches the abode of Vishnu".

Tulsi leaves should only be picked during daylight hours everyday except on Dvadashi days (the day after Ekadashi). Also Tulsi leaves should only be offered to the Vishnu-tattva deities like Krsna, Rama, Vishnu, Caitanya and etc, but not to Lakshmi, Radha, Sita and other demigods like Shiva, Durga, Ganesha, Gayatri, and etc.



The Worship of Srimati Tulasi-devi

Srimate Tulasi devi is worshipped in the morning, after mangala-arati, when all the devotees should attend to her worship and circumambulation. First, obeisances are offered to Tulasi devi with the tulasi pranama mantra. Following, the tulasi-puja-kirtana song is sung while Tulasi-devi is offered incense, a ghee lamp, and flowers. When the song is finished, the assembled devotees circumambulate Tulasi devi four times, offering her water. During the circumambulation we are chanting the mantra: *yani kani ca papani brahma-hatyadikani ca / tani tani pranasyanti pradaksinah pade pade*. Finally, we again offer obeisances with the tulasi-pranama-mantra.

Sri Vrindadevi in Kamyavana

Lectures from Srila Prabhupada

April 7, 1970

Tulasi leaf is very, very dear to Visnu. All Visnu-tattva Deities require profusely Tulasi leaves. Lord Visnu likes garland of Tulasi leaves. Tulsi leaves mixed with sandalwood pulp and placed on the lotus feet of the Lord is the topmost worship. But we must be very careful that Tulasi leaves cannot be placed on the feet of anyone else except Lord Visnu and His different forms. Tulasi leaves cannot be placed even on the lotus feet of Radharani or on the lotus feet of the Spiritual Master. It is entirely reserved for being placed on the lotus feet of Krsna. We can place, however, Tulasi leaves in the hands of Radharani for being placed on the lotus feet of Krsna.

January 6, 1972

Tulsi Devi is a pure devotee of Krsna and she should be treated with the same respect given to all Krsna's pure devotees. Simply by worshipping her faithfully, a devotee can get himself free from all material miseries. In the Nectar of Devotion I have given two verses from the Skanda Purana, one of which is: "Tulasi is auspicious in all respects. Simply by seeing, simply by touching, simply by remembering, simply by praying to, simply by bowing before, simply by hearing about, or simply by sowing the tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the Tulasi tree in the above mentioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuntha world."

"SHRI VRINDA-DEVI ASTAKAM"

EIGHT PRAYERS GLORIFYING SRI VRINDA-DEVI

by Shrila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura

VERSE ONE

*gaangeya-caampeya-tadid-vinindi-
rocih-pravaaha-snapitaayma-orindeh!
bandhooka-bandhu-dhyuti-divya-vaaso,
vrnde! namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrinda! You are adorned with an extremely brilliant transcendental dress which is as red as a bandhuka flower. By your own supremely beautiful bodily luster, you put to shame the combined effulgence of pure gold, champaka flowers and lightning bolts. And also, by that same luster of yours, you are continuously bathing your own personal associates, namely all the moving and non-moving residents of the Vrindavan forest. We therefor offer our respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet.

VERSE TWO

*bimbaadharoditvara-manda-haasya-
naasaagra-muktaa-dyuti-dipitaasye!
vicitra-ratnaabharana-shriyaadhye!
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrinda! The Countenance of your face is especially radiant, being decorated by your gentle sweet smile (which has sprouted from your reddish lips resembling bimba fruits), as well as by being embellished with your pearl nose ornament. You are also endowed with loveliness by your body being decorated with multifarious, wonderfully jewelled ornaments. We therefore prostrate ourselves at your beautiful lotus feet.

VERSE THREE

*samasta-vaikuntha-shiromanau shri
krishnasya, vrindaavana-dhanya-dhaamni
dattaadhikaare! vrishabhanu-putryaa
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrinda! The supremely pure abode of Sri Krishna known as Sri Vrindavan- dhama, which is the crest jewel amongst all the planets of the spiritual sky, is presided over by the charming daughter of King Vrishabhanu, Sri Radhika. But She has awarded YOU with the power and authority to maintain this divine realm as your service to Her. This is why we offerer most heartfelt obeisances unto your beautiful lotus-feet.

VERSE FOUR

*tvad-aajnayaa pallava-pushpa-bhringa-
mrigaadibhir maadhava-keli-kunjah
madhv-aadibhir bhaanti vibhooshyamaanaa
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrindi! All the multitudes of Lord Madhava's love-sporting bowers become supremely beautified by being decorated under your direction with fresh leaves, sprouts, flowers, bees, deer, peacocks, talking parrots, all types of animals and birds, as well as with wonderful seasons headed by Spring. We therefore offer our respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet.

VERSE FIVE

*tvadeeya-dootyena nikunja-yoonor-
atyutkayoh keli-vilaasa-siddhih*

*tvat-saubhagam kena nirucyataam tad
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrinda! By your expertly intelligent service as a messenger for the Divinely Amorous Couple of the Bower, Their transcendental love-sports thereby become successfully fulfilled. Who in this world could possibly even speak of your great fortune? We therefore must simply bow down before your beautiful lotus feet.

VERSE SIX

*raasaabhilasho vasatish ca vrindaa-
vane tvadeeshaanghri-saroja-sevaa
labhya ca pumsaam kripayaa tavaiva
vrnde! numaste caranaravindas*

Oh Vrinda! Devotees who have the desire to participate in the rasa dance, who long to live eternally in Vrindavan, and who hope only to achieve devotional service to the lotus feet of your most beloved Lords, easily attain the everlasting fulfillment of all their desires by your most gracious mercy. We therefore bow down to your divine lotus feet.

VERSE SEVEN

*tvam keertyase saatvata-tantra-vidbhir
leelaabhidhaanaa kila krishna-shaktih
tavaiva moortis tulasee nri-loke
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

Oh Vrinda! Highly qualified sages, who are well-versed in the Tantras of the mode of pure Goodness (the scriptures written by the Lord's pure devotees), have praised you as being the personified energy of Lord Krishna known as lila-sakti (the energy that helps perform His pastimes). You are also very famous in this world for your appearance here in the form of the tree known as Srimati Tulasi Devi. Therefore we offer our most respectful obeisances unto your beautiful lotus feet.

VERSE EIGHT

*bhaktyaa viheenaa aparaadha-lakshaih
kshiptaash ca kaamaadi-taranga-madhye
kripaa-mayi! tvam sharanam prapanna
vrinde namaste caranaaravindam*

unately bereft of devotional service, and due to committing hundreds and thousands of offenses, we have been cast deep into the ocean of material existence; indeed, we are being tossed about by the terrible waves of lust, anger, greed, etc. Oh most merciful one! Our souls are surrendered unto you - and we offer our most respectful obeisances unto your divine lotus feet.

VERSE NINE

*vrindaashtakam yah shrinuyaat pathed va
vrindaavanaadheesha-padaabja-bhringah
sa praapya vrindaavana-nitya-vaasam
tat-prema-sevaam labhate kritarthah*

Whoever hears or recites these eight prayers in glorification of Sri Vrinda Devi, becoming just like a bumble bee that is always anxious to taste the sweet nectarine lotus feet of the Divine Couple (the Lords of Vrindavan) - such a person verily attains eternal residence in Vrindavan. Having finally achieved the supreme goal of life, one thus remains situated in the ecstatic loving service of the Divine Couple Sri Sri Radha-Madhava.

Duties in the Month of Kārttika

I surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who was tied about the waist with a rope, and who is the lover of Sri Radha. By His power one is able to serve His favored month: the month of Kārttika.

Especially in the month of Karttika a Vaisnava should regularly bathe in the morning, worship Lord Damodara, give charity, follow vows, and perform other spiritual activities. Here I will write when the month of Krishna begins and how one should worship the Lord during this month.

One Should Always Follow the Vow of Kārttika-vrata

In the Skanda Purana, in a conversation of Brahma' and Nārada, it is said:

"O best of the followers of religion, a person who does not follow the vow of Kārttika-vrata is a sinner. He is like a person who murders his father and mother.

"A person who does not follow the vow in this month that is dear to Lord Dāmodara finds himself outside all religious principles. He takes birth in an animal's womb.

"O best of sages, a person who does not follow this vow in the month of Karttika is a brāhmana-killer, a cow-killer, a thief of gold, and a perpetual liar.

"O tiger of sages, a widow especially who does not follow the vow of Karttika certainly goes to hell.

"If a householder does not follow the vow of Karttika, his pious and charitable deeds do him no good. They become like the screams of a person in hell.

"If a brāhmana spurns the Karttika vow, then Indra and all the demigods spurn him.

"O king of brāhmanas, a person who performs a hundred sraddhas and a host of yajñas, but does not follow the Kārttika vow, cannot enter Svargaloka.

"Especially a sannyāsi, vānaprastha, or widow who does not follow the Vaisnava Kārttika-vow go to hell.

"O king of brāhmanas, what good will study of the Vedas and Purānas do for a person who does not follow the Vaisnava Kārttika-vow?

"A person who does not follow the Kārttika vow finds his life's pious deeds burned to ashes.

"A person who does not follow the Kārttika vow finds that all his charity, great austerities, and mantra-chanting is useless.

"O Narada, if one does not follow the Vaisnava Kārttika-vow, seven births of his pious deeds become useless.

"O great sage, they who do not follow the auspicious Vaisnava Kārttika-vow are known as sinners in this world."

It is further said:

"O Nārada, a person who does not follow the Vaisnava Kārttika-vow loses the pious deeds of an entire life."

It is also said:

"O sage, a person who does not follow the Kārttika and Cāturmāsya vows is sinful like a brāhmana-killer. He is the most degraded person in his family.

What is the fate of the fools who do not offer pinda' to the ancestors on pitr-paksa, who do not observe the vow of Kārttika, who do not offer tarpana to the sages in the month of Srāvana (July-August), who do not observe Lord Visnu's swing-festival in the month of Caitra (March-April), who do not bathe in clear water in the month of Māgha (January-February), who do not follow the āmardaki vow during the time of the star Puṣya?

O Nārada, I do not know.

In the Padma Purāna, in a conversation of Sri Nārada and the sages headed by Sri Saunaka it is said:

"A human being in this world of karma who does not follow the vow of Kārttika takes the cintāmani jewel placed in his hand and throws it into muddy water.

"O brāhmanas, the month of Kārttika is very dear to Lord Krsna. That is why Lord Krsna turns His face from anyone who does not follow the Kārttika vow.

One Should Always Follow the Kārttika Bow by Bathing, Giving Charity, and Performing Other Pious Deeds

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"O son, brāhmanas who in the month of Kārttika do not give charity, perform yajñas, chant japa, bathe, or follow the vow to please Lord Krsna are the lowest of men."

It is further said:

"They who in the month of Kārttika do not give charity, perform yajñas, chant japa, or follow vows are thieves who rob themselves of their own valuables. They do not attain what they wish."

It is further said:

"O Nārada, they who do not worship Lord Krsna during the month of Kārttika reside, along with their ancestors, in hell."

It is further said:

"They who in the month of Kārttika do not worship Lord Krsna with love and devotion are chained and dragged to hell by the messengers of Yamarāja.

"He loses the rare human life he attained after many thousands and millions of births who does not worship Lord Visnu in the month of Kārttika.

"A person who in the month of Kārttika does not worship Lord Visnu, chant Lord Visnu's glories, or associate with the Vaisnavas, kills ten years of pious deeds."

A General Description of Kārttika's Glories

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"The pious result obtained by bathing in all holy places and giving all charities is not equal to one ten-millionth part of the result obtained by following the vow of Kārttika.

"All holy places, yajñas, daksinās, residence in Puskara, Kurukṣetra, and the Himalayas, and all giving in charity a pile of gold like Mount Meru, reside in Kārttika, Lord Kṛṣṇa's favorite month.

"The service one does to Lord Viṣṇu in the month of Kṛṣṇa is all eternal. O Nārada, I tell you the truth.

"Kārttika is the best of months, the most pious of pious deeds, the most purifying of all that purify."

It is further said:

"O Nārada, O king of brāhmanas, O great sage, rivers, mountains, and oceans will all be destroyed, but the month of Kārttika will never be destroyed.

"O sage, in the month of Kārttika neither pious deeds nor sins are ever destroyed."

"No month is like Kārttika. No yuga is like Satya-yuga. No scripture is like the Vedas. No holy place is like the Gangā.

"Kārttika is the best of months. Kārttika is always dear to the Vaiṣṇavas. O great sage, a Vaiṣṇava who with devotion serves Kārttika delivers his ancestors from hell.

In the Padma Purāna it is said:

"Of the twelve months, Kārttika is the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. To anyone who even slightly worships Lord Viṣṇu during its time, the month of Kārttika gives residence in Lord Viṣṇu's transcendental abode.

"As everyone knows, Lord Dāmodara loves His devotees. Lord Dāmodara's month, the month of Kārttika, also loves the devotees. The month of Kārttika thinks even the slightest devotional service is very big and important.

"Even though it lasts for only a brief moment, the human form of life is very rare and valuable. In the same way the brief month of Kārttika is also very rare and valuable.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is pleased by the offering of a single lamp during the month of Kārttika. Lord Kṛṣṇa glorifies anyone who lights a lamp for someone else to offer."

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"Other vows bring the results of a lifetime of pious deeds. The vow of Kārttika brings the result of a hundred lifetimes of pious deeds.

"O king of brāhmanas, a person who simply hears the glories of the Kārttika vow attains the result of fasting and bathing at sacred Akrūra-tirtha.

"By following the Kārttika vow one attains the result of going on pilgrimage to Vārānasi, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣāranya, Puskara, and Arbuda-tirtha.

"A person who never performs yajñas or offers śrāddha to the ancestors, but who does follow the vow of Kārttika, will go to the abode of Lord Viṣṇu.

"One who sometimes fasts during Kārttika attains liberation. He attains a glorious spiritual form like Lord Kṛṣṇa's.

It is further said:

"O best of sages, a brāhmana, ksatriya, vaiśya, or sūdra who follows the Kārttika vow will not take birth in a sinful family.

It is further said:

"O tiger of sages, liberation stands in the hand of anyone who follows the Kārttika vow as I have described it to you.

"He attains a great result who even very slightly follows the very sacred Kārttika vow, which is served by the demigods, sages, and pitās.

The Glories of Specific Pious Activities Performed During Kārttika

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"Charity, yajña, japa, and austerity performed in the month of Kārttika bring a result, O best of brāhmanas, that will never be destroyed."

It is further said:

"One who during the month of Kārttika gives a small gift to Lord Visnu attains a result that will never be destroyed. This is especially true when the gift is food.

"One who follows the auspicious Kārttika vow attains the result of an entire year of performing agnihotra-yajñas. Of this there is no doubt.

"A woman who spends the month of Kārttika in the circle where Lord Kesava stays becomes splendid like a dove in Svargaloka.

"One who regularly offers food to Lord Kṛṣṇa during the month of Kārttika does not suffer troubles. For as long as the fourteen Indras rule, he is free of troubles.

"One who during the month of Kārttika eats prasādam from a palāsa-leaf plate destroys all sins committed since the time of his birth.

"One who during the month of Kārttika eats prasādam from a palāsa-leaf plate attains all his desires. He attains the result of all pilgrimages. He never sees hell.

"The palāsa tree, which is called by the name Brahma, fulfills all desires. O best of sages, a sūdra should avoid the middle leaf of the palāsa tree. A sūdra who eats from such a middle-leaf plate goes to hell for as long as the fourteen Indras live.

"During the month of Kārttika giving sesame seeds in charity, bathing in a sacred river, talking about the Supreme Personality of Godhead, serving the devotees, and eating prasādam from a palāsa-leaf plate, all grant liberation.

"O king of brāhmanas, a person who during the month of Kārttika keeps an all-night vigil, in the presence of Lord Dāmodara staying awake until sunrise, attains the pious result of giving a thousand cows in charity.

"O king of brāhmanas, a person who during the month of Kārttika keeps an all-night vigil, in the presence of Lord Visnu staying awake until the last portion of the night, finds Lord Visu's spiritual abode in the palm of his hand.

"During the month of Kārttika serving the devotees, feeding the cows, talking about and worshiping Lord Visnu, and keeping a vigil until the last part of the night bring, in the Kali-yuga, a very rare result."

It is further said:

"One who bathes during the month of Kārttika attains the pious result of giving water and a thousand jaladhenus in charity when the sun is in Taurus.

"By once bathing during the month of Kārttika one attains the pious result of bathing in Lake Sannihatya' at Kuruksetra during a solar eclipse on a Sunday.

"O best of sages, they become free from death who offer food and water to the pitās during the month of Kārttika, which is dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

It is further said:

"O Nārada, I have personally seen that a person who happily reads Bhagavad-gita' during the month of Kārttika does not return to the world of birth and death."

It is further said:

"By circumambulating a temple of Lord Visnu during the month of Kārttika one attains at every step the pious result of performing an asvamedha-yajña.

"During the month of Kārttika a person who with devotion sings, plays a musical instrument, and dances before the Deity of Lord Hari attains a pious result that will never be lost.

"A person who during the month of Kārttika reads the thousand holy names of Lord Hari and the story of Gajendra's liberation does not take birth again.

"O Nārada, a person who during the month of Kārttika at the end of the night recites prayers and sings songs glorifying Lord Hari lives in Svetadvīpa with all his ancestors.

"O best of sages, one who offers food to Lord Hari during the month of Kārttika lives in Svargaloka for as many yugas as their were grains or crumbs in his offering.

"O best of sages, a person who burns incense of aguru and camphor before the Deity of Lord Kesava does not take birth again at the yuga's end.

"During the month of Kṛṣṇa, they who with love hear the topics of Lord Viṣṇu, even if they hear only half a verse or a fourth of a verse, attain the pious result of giving a hundred cows in charity.

"O great sage, please give up all other religious practice and simply hear the sacred scriptures in the presence of the Deity of Lord Kesava during the month of Kārttika.

"O tiger of sages, a person who during the month of Kārttika eagerly hears the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa delivers a hundred generations of his family.

"A person who in the month of Kārttika passes the time in pastimes of studying the holy scriptures burns away all his sins and attains the pious result of performing ten thousand yajñas.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is not as pleased with many yajñas and with charities of many cows, elephants, or other expensive gifts, as He is with discussion of scripture during the month of Kārttika.

"O tiger of sages, a person who during the month of Kārttika hears the topics of Lord Hari becomes free from the sufferings of hundreds and millions of births.

"O sage, a person who in the month of Kārttika regularly recites the verses of Srimad-Bhāgavatam attains the pious result of reciting all eighteen Purānas.

"O great sage, please give up charities and all other pious deeds. Instead engage in devotional service during the month of Kārttika and stay in the company of the Vaiṣṇavas.

In the *Padma Purāna* it is said:

"During the month of Kārttika one should sleep on the floor, remain celibate, eat haviṣya from a palāsa-leaf plate, and worship Lord Dāmodara. In this way one becomes free of all sins, goes to the spiritual world, attains a spiritual body like the Lord's, and enjoys the bliss of directly serving Lord Hari."

It is further said:

"A person who, for the entire month of Kārttika rises early, bathes, controls his senses, remains peaceful, chants japa, and eats only haviṣya, becomes free from all sins.

"A person who, for the entire month of Kārttika, eats only once a day becomes very famous, powerful, and heroic."

It is further said:

"A person who during the month of Kārttika eats from a palāsa-leaf plate becomes free from all sins. A person who eats the remnants of food offered to Lord Hari attains liberation. A person who is not a qualified brāhmana should not eat from the middle leaf of the palāsa tree."

It is further said:

"Lord Hari, the all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead forgives thousands of offenses and a host of terrible sins committed by one who worships Him during the month of Kārttika.

"A person who to Lord Visnu offers delicious pāyasa made with sugar and ghee, and then eats the remnants left by the Lord, attains the result of performing every day a great yajña. Lord Kṛṣṇa explains to Satyabhāmā:

"They who during the month of Kārttika bathe, keep an all-night vigil, offer lamps, and protect a tulasi forest, attain spiritual forms like Lord Visnu's.

"They who for three days do these pious deeds are offered all respects by the demigods. What, then, can be said of they who have performed these pious deeds for their entire lives?

The Various Parts of the Kārttika Vow

The parts of the Kārttika vow are: 1. Keeping an all-night vigil for the sake of Lord Hari, 2. bathing early in the morning, 3. serving Tulasi, 4. Properly concluding the vow, and 5. offering a lamp.

A person who follows these five vows during the month of Kārttika attains the full result of happiness and liberation.

"In a Visnu temple, a Siva temple, at the root of a banyan tree, or in a Tulasi forest, one should keep an all-night vigil for Lord Hari's sake.

"If, because of disease or misfortune, one is not able to bathe with water, he should bathe by chanting the holy names of Lord Visnu.

"If one is not able to bring the vow to its conclusion with an elaborate ritual, he should conclude the vow by feeding the brāhmanas.

"If one is unable to offer a lamp, he should light the lamps that others offer, he should carefully protect others' lamps from winds or other disturbances.

"If there is no Tulasi plant, one should worship a brāhmana-Vaisnava. If no brāhmana-Vaisnava is present, one should serve the brāhmanas, cows, bodhi tree, and vata tree to conclude the vow.

The Glories of Offering a Lamp During Kārttika

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"When one offers a lamp during the month of Kārttika, his sins in many thousands and millions of births perish in half an eyeblink."

It is further said:

"Please hear the glories of offering a lamp during the month of Kārttika, an offering that is very pleasing to Lord Kesava. O king of brāhmanas, a person who offers a lamp in this way will not take birth again in this world.

"By offering a lamp during the month of Kārttika one attains a pious result ten million times greater than the result obtained by bathing at Kuruksetra during a solar eclipse or by bathing in the river Narmada' during a lunar eclipse.

"O tiger of sages, for a person who thus offers a lamp burning with ghee or sesame oil, what is the use of performing an asvasmedha-yajña?

"Even if there are no mantras, no pious deeds, and no purity, everything becomes perfect when a person offers a lamp during the month of Kārttika.

"A person who during the month of Kārttika offers a lamp to Lord Kesava has already performed all yajñas and bathing in all holy rivers.

"When in the month of Kārttika there is no lamp burning before Lord Kesava, then the pious deeds in Svargaloka, Martyaloka, and Rasātalaloka scream with dissatisfaction.

"O brāhmana, when the pitās hear devotional verses and songs in the month of Kārttika, in that family will be born a son devoted to his father.

"The ancestors say: When someone in our family pleases Lord Kesava by offering to Him a lamp during the month of Kārttika, then, by the mercy of the Lord who holds the Sudarsana-cakra in His hand, we will all attain liberation."

It is further said:

"By offering a lamp during the month of Kārttika one burns away a collection of sins as big as Mount Meru or Mount Mandara. Of this there is no doubt.

"To one who either at home or in a temple offers Him a lamp during the month of Kārttika, Lord Vāsudeva gives a great result.

"A person who, after taking birth in the world of human beings, offers a lamp to Lord Kṛṣṇa during the month of Kārttika becomes very glorious and fortunate.

"A person who offers a lamp during the month of Kārttika attains a result that cannot be obtained with even a hundred yajñas or a hundred pilgrimages.

"Even a person addicted to all sins and averse to all pious deeds who somehow offers a lamp during Kārttika becomes purified. Of this there is no doubt.

"O Nārada, no sin exists anywhere in the three worlds that will not be purified by offering a lamp to Lord Kesava during Kārttika.

"A person who offers a lamp to Lord Kṛṣṇa during Kārttika attains the eternal spiritual world where there is no suffering.

"Now I will describe to you the pious result attained by a person who offers a lamp during the dvādasi day of Kārttika month.

"His ancestors and descendants, so many they cannot be counted, will enjoy for a long time in the worlds of the demigods, and then they will all easily attain liberation by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who holds the Sudarsana-cakra in His hand."

It is further said:

"O very fortunate one, a person who in order to play dice lights a lamp in Lord Kesava's temple purifies seven generations of his family.

"A person who offers a lamp in a temple of Lord Viṣṇu during the month of Kārttika attains eternal wealth, good children, fame, and glory.

"As fire is present in all wood and may be extracted by friction, so piety is always present in the offering of a lamp during the month of Kārttika. Of this there is no doubt.

It is further said:

"O king of brāhmanas, when someone offers Him a lamp on the full-moon day of the month of Kārttika, Lord Kṛṣṇa, finding that He does not have sufficient money to repay that gift, gives Himself in exchange for that lamp.

"O sage, a fool who does not offer a lamp in Lord Kesava's temple during Kārttika is not considered a Vaiṣṇava."

In the Nārada Purāna, in a conversation of Sri Mohini-devi and Sri Rukmāṅgada, it is said:

"Of all gifts the gift of a lamp during the month of Kārttika is the best. No gift is its equal."

In the Padma Purāna it is said:

"One who offers a steady lamp to Lord Hari during the month of Kārttika enjoys pastimes in Lord Hari's splendid spiritual world.

The Glories of Lighting Another's Lamp During the Month of Kārttika

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"By lighting another's lamp during the month of Kārttika one attains the same result as if he had offered food on pitr"-paksa or water on Jyaisha asādha.

"By serving the Vaisnavas and lighting the lamps they offer during the month of Kārttika one attains the result of performing many rājasūya and asvamedha yajñas.

"O tiger of kings, a person who in Lord Krsna's temple lights the lamps that others will offer during the month of Kārttika becomes free from the tortures of Yamarāja.

"O king of brāhmanas, by lighting the lamps that others will offer during the month of Kārttika one attains the result of having performed many great yajñas.

"Somehow or other a mouse once lit a lamp that someone offered on ekādaśi during the month of Kārttika. That mouse attained a rare human birth and then went to the supreme spiritual world.

The Glories of Lighting a Lamp on a Temple' Roof

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"O best of sages, when a lamp placed atop a temple's dome shines in all directions, then a great host of sins quickly flees to escape its light.

"A person who gives the entire earth, which wears the oceans like a belt, in charity to the brāhmanas does not earn even one sixteenth of the pious merit earned by one who places a lamp on the roof of Lord Krsna's temple.

"A person who gives ten million cows, all filled with milk and all the mothers of young calves, in charity to the brāhmanas does not earn even one sixteenth of the pious merit earned by one who places a lamp on the roof of Lord Krsna's temple.

"O great sage, a person who gives great wealth in charity to the Vaisnavas does not earn even one sixteenth of the pious merit earned by one who places a lamp on the roof of Lord Krsna's temple.

"O great sage, a person who places a great and costly lamp on a temple roof delivers a hundred generations of his family.

"They who with great devotion gaze at a palatial temple lit with a splendid lamp have not a single relative that lives in hell.

"When they see a human being offering a lamp to Lord Visnu, the demigods in Devaloka think: When, by performing that single pious deed, will this person join us here?"

"O best of sages, a person who places a lamp on a temple roof during the month of Kārttika does not find it difficult to attain the post of Indra.

The Glories of Offering Many Lamps During the Month of Kārttika

In the Skanda Purāna it is said:

"A person who lights many lamps inside and outside Lord Visnu's temple becomes a liberated soul. Holding a disc and conch, he attains a spiritual form like Lord Visnu's.

"When a person lights many lamps in Lord Kesava's temple, not a single of his hundred thousand closest relatives lives in hell.

"O sage, a person who makes Lord Visnu's temple splendid with many lights inside and outside, travels to the supreme abode on the path shining with light."

In the Bhavisya Purāna it is said:

"A person who makes the Lord's temple splendid with many lamps during the month of Kārttika, and especially during the ekādaśi or the dvādaśi of that month, becomes glorious like ten thousand suns. Traveling in a splendid airplane that fills the universe with light, he leaves this world of birth and death.

"For each lamp that he lit on the earth he is glorified on Visnuloka for a thousand years.

In the Padma Purāna it is said:

"A person who places a great lamp high in the sky during the month of Kārttika takes all his relatives with him to Visnuloka.

"Please hear the result obtained by a person who offers a lamp to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the sky or over the water during the month of Kārttika.

"He becomes wealthy, fortunate, and prosperous. He becomes a controller of others. He has good children. Everything before his eyes and in his home is beautiful. He becomes wise and learned."

It is further said:

"The wise say that a person who offers a lamp in a brāhmana's home during the month of Kārttika attains the result of offering an agnihotra-yajna.

"A person who places lamps on the royal roads, on crossroads, in brāhmanas' homes, at tree roots, in cow barns, in forests, in hidden places, and everywhere, attains a great result.

Padma Purana on Kartika vrata

Introduction - If one neglects to perform the Kartika Vrata all his pious merits amassed in the passed are burned to ashes; his study of the Vedas becomes futile; and his performance of japa, charity, and austerity becomes fruitless.

Glories of Kartika Vrata-Kartik is the best, the purest of purifiers, and most glorious of all months. Kartika month is particularly dear to Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa. This month is full of bhakta vatsalya. Any vrata, even the smallest, will yield huge results. The effect of performing a Kartika Vrata lasts for one hundred lifetimes, whereas ordinary vratas only last for one lifetime! As Kṛṣṇa says in Gita that He is the month of Nov-Dev, similarly, Srimati Radhika is the holy month of Kartik which precedes His month. Rupa Gosvami and others refer to Radharani as the Kartika-devata or Kartika Devi, in other words, Radhika is the goddess or presiding Deity of the Kartika Vrata.

Daily Offer-tulsi arotik, ghee lamp to Kṛṣṇa and sing Damodarastakam, bathe in Yamuna if possible, give charity to pure devotees.

Dont Eat: grains given by others, honey, sesame seeds, oils, hing, eggplant, loki, tasty foods like sweets and fried foods, samosas, pakoras.

Dont Do: cut hair, nails, use things of others, criticize Vaisnavas, Vedas or anyone, no oil on body, do not find faults in others or be envious.

Prayer before beginning: "O gopikas! By your mercy may Radha and Kṛṣṇa be pleased with my Kartika Vrata."

Benefits Observing Kartik Vrata: All sins flee from the heart. Perform other vratas one hundred times not equal to one performance of Kartik Vrata. All the holy places will live within your body. Proper performance of Kartik Vrata gives one a million times the result of chanting mantras, do yatras and other types of vratas. Those who worship Damodara in Vrndavana even once easily attain Kṛṣṇa bhakti. Dhruva Maharaja attained Hari darsana by worshiping Kṛṣṇa in Mathura during the Kartika month.

Summary of How to Follow the Kartika Vrata:

Remember--Kartika Vrata is a special time to worship Radha Damodara, and especially get the mercy of Radhika, since it is Her month, and She is very very easily pleased this month if one worships Her along with Her beloved Damodara.

Srila Prabhupada on When to Start Kartika Vrata: "In Vrndavana we should have Kartika Vrata, Urja Vrata, for one month beginning on Ekadasi (Pasanukusa) (Srila Prabhupada Tape 10/6/72)

Pasanukusa Ekadasi Morning: Offer prayer-"O Janardana, O Damodara, O Devesa who are accompanied by Radhika. During the month of Kartika, I will bathe early every morning for Your satisfaction."

1. Rise early every day by Brahma Muhurta, bathe, chant japa offer Mangala Arotik
2. Hear Srimad Bhagavatam, especially Radha and Krsna pastimes in Vrndavana, daily in association of exalted Vaisnavas, if possible. By regularly reading Srimad Bhagavatam during Kartika month, one gets the benefit of reading all the eighteen 18 Puranas. All other duties should be given up in favor of hearing the scriptures from sadhus during this month.
3. Chant continually in japa and kirtan, Krsna nama, do extra rounds and more kirtana with family.

Must maintain celibacy for entire month

Give up favorite food article for entire month (sweets, salties) Try to eat only once in a day.
if you can do and carry on ordinary works

Eat your meals only on palasa leaves (if possible, will give tremendous punya.)

No oil on body and NO EATING honey, eggplant, portal, pickles, red rajma beans, or sesame seeds, or urad dahl (no khichoris)

Daily sing the Damodarastakam, meditating on meaning

Daily offer a ghee lamp to Krsna Deity or photo (no need of picture of Mother Yasoda-Damodara or photo)

Daily offer arotik and prayers to Tulsi devi praying for eternal residence in Vrndavana and eternal service of the lotus feet of Radha and Krsna.

Daily chant the Radha-krpa katakasam, and Krsna krpa kataksam.

Also chant other prayers to Radha and Radha Krsna Yugala.

On Ekadasi, Dvadasis, and Purnima chant the one-thousand names of Radha

On the three Ekadasis in Kartik try to observe Nirjala Vrata and stay awake chanting hari nam, especially on the last one, Uttana Ekadasi, when Lord Visnu and all the demigods awake after four months slumber.

Donate charity to pure devotees

Offer special nice foods to Krsna for entire month. For example every day make sweet rice,(khira) which is the favorite food of Krsna.

BAHULASTAMI BATH IN Radha Kunda- "Anyone who bathes in Radha-kunda on Bahulastami becomes a dear devotee of Lord Krsna, because this act highly pleases Him." (Hari-bhakti-vilasa)

BREAKING THE Kartika Vrata FAST: After sunrise and within the paran breaking period on the Dvadasi day after Uttana Ekadasi (if you started your Kartik Vrata on Pasanukusa Ekadasi),-offer arotik to Krsna and dedicate your vrata to Radha and Krsna for Their pleasure, worship the Vaisnava brahmanas by offering them presents plus a prasadam feast including the items that you fasted from during Kartika (sweets, milk products etc.) After honoring the brahmanas then break your Kartika Vrata fast by honoring the foods you abstained from (such as urad dahl, sweets, or whatever items.) Chant Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare and Radhe Radhe Govinda, Govinda Radhe.....and taste the sweet feeling of spending the entire month absorbed in pleasing Radha and Krsna. Jai Srila Prabhupada!