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The Magnificence of Kartik Month



दामोदरं प्रपद्येऽहं श्रीराधारमणं प्रभुं ।
प्रभावाद् यस्य तत्प्रेष्ठः कार्तिकः सेवितो भवेत् ॥

*dāmodaraṁ prapadye'haṁ śrīrādhāramaṇaṁ prabhuṁ
prabhāvād yasya tat-preṣṭhaḥ kārtikaḥ sevito bhavet*

"I bow to Shri Radharaman, who is also known as Damodar. By his grace alone, we can properly observe his beloved month of Kartik." (*Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.1)

Kartik is a special time when we can please Shri Krishn easily. During this month, devotees take a vow or *vrat* to follow certain spiritual practices, and this is also known as Niyam Seva. In the *Bhakti Rasamrit Sindhu* (1.2.221), Shri Roop Goswami also refers to this *vrat* by the name of *urja*, meaning divine power. This month also belongs to the source of all divine power, the goddess of sacred love, Shri Radharani.

Those who follow the Kartik *vrat* are blessed beyond imagination. In the *Padma Puran* (quoted in *Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.23), Sage Narad says:

मानुषः कर्मभूमौ यः कार्तिकं नयते सुधा । चिन्तामणिं करे प्राप्य क्षिप्यते कर्दमाम्बुनि ॥

*mānuṣaḥ karmabhūmau yaḥ kārtikaṁ nayate sudhā
cintāmaṇiṁ kare prāpya kṣipyate karddamāmbuni*

"The month of Kartik is like the legendary gem, *chintamani*, which grants all wishes to those who possess it. But if you pass the month of Kartik without observing a vow, it is like throwing *chintamani* in a lake of mud."

The scripture recommends performing the Kartik *vrat* in a holy place rather than at home. But in particular, offering Kartik *vrat* in Braj is extremely powerful. The *Padma Puran* (quoted in *Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.156-162) says:

दुर्लभः कार्तिको विप्र मथुरायां नृणामिह । यत्रार्चितः स्वकं रूपं भक्तेभ्यः संप्रयच्छति ॥
भुक्तिं मुक्तिं हरिर्दद्यादर्चितोऽन्यत्र सेविनाम् । भक्तिञ्च न ददात्येष यतो वश्यकरी हरेः ॥

*durlabhaḥ kārtiko vipra mathurāyām nṛṇāmiha
yatrārccitaḥ svakaṁ rūpaṁ bhaktebhyaḥ samprayacchati
bhuktiṁ muktiṁ harirdadyādarccito'nyatra sevinām
bhaktiñca na dadātyeṣa yato vaśyakarī hareḥ*

"It is very rare for a human being to be able to be in Braj during Kartik. In Braj, Shri Krishn gives his very self to his devotees. In other places of the world, Krishn grants material blessings or liberation, but he rarely gives devotion, because devotion has the power to bring Krishn under its spell and control him completely."

सा त्वञ्जसा हरेर्भक्तिर्लभ्यते कार्तिके नरैः । मथुरायां सकृदपि श्रीदामोदरपूजनात् ॥
मन्त्रद्रव्य विहीनञ्च विधिहीनञ्च पूजनम् । मन्यते कार्तिके देवो मथुरायां यदर्चनम् ॥

*sā tvañjasā harerbhaktirlabhyate kārtike naraiḥ
mathurāyām sakṛdapi śrīdāmodarapūjanāt
mantradravya vihīnañca vidhihīnañca pūjanam
manyate kārtike devo mathurāyām yadarccanam*

"But when you worship Damodar (Krishn) in Braj even one time during Kartik, he easily grants this devotion to you. Even if the worship is done without proper mantras, rules and offerings, Krishn accepts it as the highest form of worship."

यस्य पापस्य युज्येत मरणान्ता विनिष्कृतिः । तच्छुद्ध्यर्थमिदं प्रोक्तं प्रायश्चित्तं सुनिश्चितम् ।
कार्तिके मथुरायां वै श्रीदामोदरपूजनम् ॥

yasya pāpasya yujyeta maraṇāntā viniṣkṛtiḥ

*tacchuddhayarthamidam proktam prāyaścittam suniścitam
kārtike mathurāyām vai śrīdāmodarapūjanam*

"Sins that otherwise would only be paid for after death are washed away by worshipping Krishn in Braj during Kartik."

कार्तिके मथुरायां वै पूजनाद्दर्शनाद्ध्रुवः । शीघ्रं सम्प्राप्तवान् बालो दुर्लभं योगतत्परैः ॥

*kārtike mathurāyām vai pūjanāddarśanāddhruvaḥ
śīghraṁ samprāptavān bālo durllabhaṁ yogatatparaiḥ*

"By worshipping Krishn in Braj during Kartik, the famous devotee Dhruv Maharaj attained the Lord's *darshan*, which is difficult for even the great *rishis* to attain. He attained this blessing despite being just a small child."

सुलभा मथुरा भूमौ प्रत्यब्दं कार्तिकस्तथा । तथापि संसरन्तीह नरा मूढा भवाम्बुधौ ॥

*sulabhā mathurā bhūmau pratyabdam kārtikastathā ।
tathāpi saṁsarantīha narā mūḍhā bhavāmbudhau ॥*

"India is right here, Braj is easy to reach, and the month of Kartik comes every year. Yet foolish people miss the chance to observe Kartik in Braj, and so they remain fallen in the ocean of repeated birth and death."



Spiritual Practices During Kartik



In addition to increasing daily practices like *jap*, *kirtan* and so forth, the scriptures mention specific practices for devotees to observe during Kartik. These are as follows:

Five Main Practices

The five main practices are mentioned by Shri Krishn in the *Padma Puran* (quoted in *Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.92). These are:

1. *Deep daan* or the offering of lamps daily
2. Bathing at dawn daily
3. *Jaagran* or staying up all night for Krishn's sake (this can be done on any day during the *vrat*)
4. Serving the *tulsi* plant daily
5. *Udyaapan* or holding a grand festival at the end of the *vrat*, which includes a fire offering or *havan*, feeding Brahmins and Vaishnavs, *go-daan* or giving cows away in charity, and other special events

Krishn goes on to say, "One should perform *jaagran* in a temple of Hari, a temple of Shiv, at the base of a *peepal* tree, or in a *tulsi* garden. If due to some misfortune, you are unable to find any water to bathe in, or if you are physically ill, then you can perform *snaan* just by chanting Harinaam."

If you are unable to perform *udyaapan*, then you can feed Brahmins according to your ability in order to complete the *vrat*.

If you are unable to offer lamps in Kartik, instead, you can re-light someone else's lamp which has gone out, or protect someone else's lamp from the wind. If there are no *tulsi* plants to serve, you may worship Brahmins and Vaishnavs instead. And finally, if you cannot do any of the above practices, then you can still complete the *vrat* by simply serving Brahmins, cows, and the sacred trees known as *peepal* and *banyan*." (*Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.95-98)

Other Important Practices

The scriptures also recommend the following practices during Kartik month:

- Chanting Damodarashtakam daily
- Hearing *Shrimad Bhagwatam Katha* daily in the association of Vaishnavs
- Living amongst devotees
- Serving saints
- Feeding cows
- Offering obeisances to Krishn, the *dham*, *guru parampara*, devotees and so forth
- Worshipping Krishn, especially by offering food, fruits, silver, gems and pearls to him

Further, one is advised to:

- Observe the *vrat* in a holy place instead of at home.
- Sleep on the floor.
- Otherwise, avoid sleeping in someone else's bed.
- Eat a limited diet and/or eat only once a day.
- Avoid applying oil on the body.
- Eat in silence.
- Stop all sinful actions like eating forbidden foods, theft, adultery and so forth when performing the *vrat*.

Material Benefits of Kartik Practices

Devotees following the Vrindavan mood offer Kartik *vrat* for Krishn's sake, without wanting any result but his happiness. Although the scriptures have also mentioned many material benefits of this *vrat*, these are not the main reason for observing it. Still, we have included just a few examples here:

- Observing Kartik *vrat* grants positive results that last forever.
- By limiting one's diet during Kartik, one gets *sarupya mukti* (a form like Narayan's).
- By offering a lamp during Kartik, amongst other benefits, all one's sins are burned up, one's ancestors attain *mukti*, and one gets a greater result than if he had offered everything he owns in charity.
- By reviving someone else's lamp, one never goes to hell.

- By placing a lamp on the spire of a temple, hundreds of generations of one's ancestors are delivered, even if the person was hired to do so.
- By lighting a lamp in the house of a Brahmin, you get the results of an *agnishtom yagya*.
- One who offers a *deep mala* – a row of lamps – inside and outside a temple of Shri Hari (Krishn) will, at the end of life, depart for the supreme abode on a path illuminated by those same lamps.
- Even one who just admires the temple when it is lit by lamps during Kartik never goes to hell.
- Each step of a *parikrama* around a temple of Hari during Kartik gives the result of an *ashwamedh yagya*.

In contrast, neglecting to observe the *vrata* yields negative results for one who worships the Lord with desires. The details of all the material and spiritual results of Kartik Vrat can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *Hari Bhakti Vilas*.

Guidelines for Offering Lamps During Kartik

The lamps we offer during Kartik should consist of a cotton wick soaked in either ghee or sesame (*til*) oil. No other oil should be used.

In addition to offering a single lamp to Krishn, we can also offer rows of lamps (*deep mala*), a lamp on the spire of a temple (*shikhar deep*), a hanging lamp (*akash deep*) or a lamp floating on water. We can also offer lamps to *tulsi*.

Krishn is also pleased if we re-light a lamp that was offered by someone else, or protect someone else's lamp from the wind. More information along with mantras for different lamp offerings can be found in the sixteenth chapter of *Hari Bhakti Vilas*.

Shri Radha-Damodar Puja

"Damodar" is a name of Krishn meaning "he who is bound by love" and his beloved month of Kartik also goes by the name of Damodar. During this month one should offer *puja* to Radha-Damodar (Radha-Krishn) in their deity form. The *Padma Puran* also states:

द्विजं दामोदरं कृत्वा तत्पत्नीं राधिकां तथा ।
कार्तिके पूजनीयौ तौ वासोऽलङ्कारभोजनैः ॥

*dvijaṁ dāmodaraṁ kṛtvā tat-patnīm rādhikāṁ tathā ।
kārtike pūjanīyau tau vāso'laṅkārabhojanaiḥ ॥*

"During Kartik, one should worship Shri Radha-Damodar in the form of a Brahmin and his wife by performing their *puja* with offerings of clothes, jewellery and fine foods." (*Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.196)

In one or both of these forms, one should perform this Radha-Damodar Puja and chant the Damodarashtakam every day throughout Kartik. (See page 9 for the text of this prayer.)

Sankalp and Starting the Vrat



In the *Padma Puran*, Shri Krishn says to Satyabhama, अश्विनस्य तु मासस्य या शुक्लैकादशी भवेत् । कार्तिकस्य व्रतानीह तस्यां कुर्यादतन्द्रितः ॥ *āśvīnasya tu māśasya yā śuklaikādaśī bhavet । kārṭikasya vratānīha tasyām kuryādātandritaḥ* - "On the Shukla Ekadashi of Ashwin month, one should give up laziness and begin the Kartik *vrat*." (*Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 16.168) The *vrat* continues until the Dwadashi following Devotthan Ekadashi. However, the option of beginning the *vrat* on Sharad Purnima or on Tula Sankranti is also given in the *Hari Bhakti Vilas* (16.183).

Krishn further instructs us on how to take the *sankalp* or vow on the first day of our *vrat*. He says that we should wake up in the last *yaam* of the night (any time within the period of about three hours before dawn), bathe, and then awaken Shri Krishn by offering prayers (*stavas*). After hearing *katha* on Vaishnav philosophy, we should celebrate Mangla Aarti at dawn, with singing and so forth, along with other Vaishnavs.

After Mangla Aarti, we should go to a river or *kund* and, after doing *aachman*, declare our *sankalp* (vow) to the Lord, pray to him, and offer *arghya* to him according to the rules.

Sankalp Mantra

कार्तिकेऽहं करिष्यामि प्रातःस्नानं जनार्दन ।
प्रीत्यर्थं तव देवेश दामोदर मया सह ॥

*kārtike'ham kariṣyāmi prātaḥ-snānaṁ janārdana
prītyarthaṁ tava deveśa dāmodara mayā saha*

"O Damodar! O Janardan! O Devesh! I perform this Kartik morning *snaan* for the happiness of you and Shri Radharani."

Prarthana Mantra

तव ध्यानेन देवेश जलेऽस्मिन् स्नातुमुद्यतः ।
त्वत्प्रसादाच्च मे पापं दामोदर विनश्यतु ॥

*tava dhyānena deveśa jale'smin snātumudyataḥ
tvatprasādācca me pāpaṁ dāmodara vinaśyatu*

"O Damodar! O Devesh! As I meditate upon you, I perform the act of bathing. May all my sins be destroyed by your grace."

Arghya Mantra

व्रतिनः कार्तिके मासि स्नातस्य विधिवन्मम ।
दामोदर गृहाणार्घ्यं दनुजेन्द्रनिसूदन ॥
नित्ये नैमित्तिके कृत्स्ने कार्तिके पापशोषणे ।
गृहाणार्घ्यं मया दत्तं राधया सहितो हरे ॥

*vratiṇaḥ kārtike māsi snātasya vidhivanmama
dāmodara gṛhāṅārghyaṁ danujendranisūdana
nitye naimittike kṛtsne kārtike pāpaśoṣaṇe
gṛhāṅārghyaṁ mayā dattaṁ rādhayā sahito hare*

"O Radha-Damodar! Having accepted the Kartik vrat, I am now performing praatah *snaan*. Please accept my arghya to you. In Kartik Maas all nitya and naimittik kriyas remove sins; hence, I offer you this arghya."

Thereafter, we should apply *til* [sesame paste or oil] on our body and chant the Holy Names of Shri Krishn, as we take *snaan* according to the rules. Afterwards, those who do *sandhyopasana* should perform it. Then return home. After that, we should cleanse the altar and draw a *swastik* [using sandalwood paste or *roli*] in front of the deity, and do his *puja* by offering *tulsi* with lotus, *malati*, *agastya* and other flowers that Krishn likes.

Paaran: Bringing the Vrat to a Close



In the *Kartik Mahatmya* section of the *Padma Puran*, it is written:

पारणं कार्तिके शुक्ले द्वादश्यान्तु ततश्चरेत् । कृष्णस्याग्रे निवेद्यथ व्रतं कृच्छ्राग्रमुत्तमम् । विष्णुलोकमवाप्नोति
भक्त्याभ्यर्च्य जनार्दनम् ॥

*pāraṇam kārtike śukle dvādaśyāntu tataścaret । kṛṣṇasyāgre nivedyatha vratam
kṛcchrāgramuttamam । viṣṇulokamavāpnoti bhaktyābhyaṛccya janārdanam ॥*

"One should end the *vrata* on Kartik Shukla Dwadashi, and perform Shri Krishn's *pūja*, offering the *vrata* to him. By doing so, one attains his eternal *dham*." (*Hari Bhakti Vilas*, 411)

Chapter 16 of the *Hari Bhakti Vilas* mentions a specific procedure for ending the *vrata* on this day if one has also observed the *chaturmasya vrata*. Otherwise, one should end the *vrata* like any other *ekadashi* (by eating the foods one gave up during the *vrata*) and awaken the gods.



Shri Damodarashtakam

A Prayer to Krishn who is Bound by Love

Spoken by Satyavrat Muni in the *Padma Puran*
Bhavanuvad inspired by *Sanatan Goswami's dig-darshini tika*

नमामीश्वरं सच्चिदानन्दरूपं
लसत्कुण्डलं गोकुले भ्राजमनम् ।
यशोदाभियोलूखलाद्भावमानं
परामृष्टमत्यन्ततो द्रुत्य गोप्या ॥

namāmīśvaram saccidānanda-rūpaṁ
lasat-kuṇḍalaṁ gokule bhrājamānam
yaśodābhiyolūkhalād-dhāvamānam
parāmṛṣtam-atyam tato drutyagopyā

I bow to Krishn, who is the Lord himself. The very form of existence, consciousness and bliss plays as a child in Braj. As he runs away from his mother, Yashoda, his earrings kiss his cheeks again and again – how blessed they are! But she runs faster and catches him from behind. (1)

रुदन्तं मुहुर्नेत्रयुग्मं मृजन्तम्
कराम्भोजयुग्मेन सातङ्कनेत्रम् ।
मुहुः श्वासकम्पत्रिरेखाङ्ककण्ठ
स्थितग्रैवं दामोदरं भक्तिबद्धम् ॥

*rudantaṁ muhurnetrayugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātaṅkanetram
muhuḥ śvāsakampa tri-rekhāṅka-kaṅṭha-
sthita-graivaṁ dāmodaraṁ bhakti-baddham*

Crying and shaking with fear, he rubs his teary eyes with his hands, smearing the kohl all over his face, hoping his mother will forgive him for stealing butter. His beautiful neck, graced with three natural lines, like a delicate conch shell, sparkles with pearls and gold. These ornaments tremble with his fearful sighs, as Yashoda binds him with the rope of her love. (2)

इतीदृक्स्वलीलाभिरानन्दकुण्डे
स्वघोषं निमज्जन्तमाख्यापयन्तम् ।
तदीयेषितज्ञेषु भक्तैर्जितत्वं
पुनः प्रेमतस्तं शतावृत्ति वन्दे ॥

*itīdṛk sva-līlābhir ānanda-kuṇḍe
svaghoṣaṁ nimajjantaṁ ākhyāpayantaṁ
tadīyeṣita-jñeṣu bhaktair jitatvaṁ
punaḥ prematastaṁ śatāvṛtti vande*

In this *lila* and so many others, the Brajwasis control him with love alone, and thus they drown in the sacred *kund* of bliss. These *lilas* prove that Krishn is only won by love, not by awe and reverence. Now the real glory of Krishn and his Brajwasis has been revealed. My infinite obeisances to their love! (3)

वरं देव मोक्षं न मोक्षावधिं वा
न चन्यं वृणेऽहं वरेषादपीह ।
इदं ते वपुर्नाथ गोपालबालं
सदा मे मनस्याविरास्तां किमन्यैः ॥

*varam deva mokṣaṁ na mokṣāvadhim vā
na cānyaṁ vṛṇe'haṁ vareśādapīha
idaṁ te vapur-nātha gopāla-bālaṁ
sadā me manasyāvirāstāṁ kim-anyaīḥ*

O Krishn! I know you can grant any wish, but I don't want anything from you. I don't want *mukti*, nor do I long for Vaikunth. I don't even want the bliss that comes from offering devotion to you. I only want you to stay forever in my heart as that darling cowherd boy of Vrindavan. (4)

इदं ते मुखाम्भोजमत्यन्तनीलै
वृतं कुन्तलैः स्निग्धरक्तैश् च गोप्या ।
मुहुश्चुम्बितं बिम्बरक्ताधरं मे
मनस्याविरास्तामलं लक्षलाभैः ॥

*idaṁ te mukhāmbhojam atyanta-nīlair
vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ snigdha-raktaiścagopyā
muhúś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktādharaṁ me
manasyāviraśtām-alam lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

May the dark lotus that is your face blossom forever in my heart, swarmed by the black bees of your curls, gleaming with those red berry lips, decorated on both cheeks by the kisses of a certain *gopi*. If a thousand other blessings were mine, what use would they be to me? (5)

नमो देव दामोदरानन्त विष्णो
प्रसीद प्रभो दुःखजालाब्धिमग्नम् ।
कृपादृष्टिवृष्ट्यातिदीनं बतानु
गृहाणेष मामज्ञमेध्यक्षिदृश्यः ॥

*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnam
kṛpā-drṣṭi-vṛṣṭyāti-dīnaṁ batānu
grhāṇeṣa māmajñam-edhyakṣi-dṛśyah*

O Damodar, I bow to you. Please have mercy on me! I am hopelessly tangled in a net of sorrows, sunk deep in the ocean of separation from you. I don't know how to live without you and it's breaking my heart. Please appear and shower me with the nectar of life from your merciful glance! (6)

कुवेरात्मजौ बद्धमूर्त्यैव यद्वत्
त्वया मोचितौ भक्तिभाजौ कृतौ च ।
तथा प्रेमभक्तिं स्वकां मे प्रयच्छ
न मोक्षे ग्रहो मेऽस्ति दामोदरेह ॥

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

Whilst bound yourself, you freed Kuver's sons and saved them from Sage Narad's curse. You gave them *moksh* and granted them sacred love for your lotus feet. But I do not desire *moksh*. O Damodar! Just please bless me with the same love that you gave to them. (7)

नमस्तेऽस्तु दाम्ने स्फुरद्दीप्तिधाम्ने
त्वदीयोदरायाथ विश्वस्य धाम्ने ।

नमो राधिकायै त्वदीयप्रियायै
नमोऽनन्तलीलाय देवाय तुभ्यम् ॥

*namaste'stu dāmne sphurad-dīpti-dhāmne
tvadīyodarāyātha viśvasya dhāmne ।
namo rādhikāyai tvadīya-priyāyai
namo'nanta-līlāya devāya tubhyam ॥*

I bow to Yashoda's precious rope, and to the darling belly it binds - which contains the whole universe. I bow to your Beloved, Shri Radha, to your infinite Vrindavan *lilas*, and to you. (8)



Shri Radha Kripa Kataksh Stotra A Prayer for Shri Radha's Merciful Sidelong Glance



Spoken by Lord Shiv in the *Urdhvamnaya Tantra*

मुनीन्द्रवृन्दवन्दिते त्रिलोकशोकहारिणि
प्रसन्नवक्त्रपङ्कजे निकुञ्जभूविलासिनि
व्रजेन्द्रभानुनन्दिनि व्रजेन्द्रसूनुसङ्गते
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*munīndra-vṛnda-vandite triloka-śoka-hāriṇi
prasanna-vaktra-paṅkaje nikuñja-bhū-vilāsini
vrajendra-bhānu-nandini vrajendra-sūnu-saṅgate
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

O daughter of Vrishbhanu, Shri Radhe! Praised by heavenly sages, you unburden the three worlds by taking away their sorrows. With the softness and beauty of a lotus flower, your face blossoms with joyful expressions as you play with your Beloved, Krishn, in the secluded, green hideaways of Braj. When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (1)

अशोकवृक्षवल्लरीवितानमण्डपस्थिते
प्रवालवालपल्लवप्रभारुनाङ्घ्रिकोमले
वराभयस्पुरत्करे प्रभूतसम्पदालये
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*aśoka-vṛkṣa-vallarī-vitāna-maṇḍapa-sthite
pravāla-jvāla-pallava prabhāruṅghri-komale
varābhaya-sphurat-kare prabhūta-sampadālaye
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*



A climbing vine on an *ashok* tree reaches above you, providing shade for you and your dainty lotus feet – feet which glow with coral strokes of lac dye (*alta*). Your hands, full of grace and beauty, bestow blessings of fearlessness upon the hearts of your devotees. O treasure trove of sacred love, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (2)

अनङ्गरङ्गमङ्गलप्रसङ्गभङ्गुरभ्रुवां
सविभ्रमं ससंभ्रमं दृगन्तबाणपातनैः
निरन्तरं वशीकृतप्रतीतिनन्दनन्दने
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*anaṅga-raṅga-maṅgala-prasaṅga-bhaṅgura-bhruvām
sa-vibhramaṁ sa-sambhramaṁ dṛganta-bāṇa-pātanaiḥ
nirantaram vaśī-kṛta-pratīta-nanda-nandane
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

On the blissful battlefield of love, you wield a bow in the form of your eyebrows. When you shoot the sharp arrow of your glance deep into Krishn's heart, he is spellbound, confused and overcome with the desire to receive your blessings. Everyone knows he is eternally bound by the magic spell of your love, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (3)

तडित्सुवर्णचम्पकप्रदीप्तगौरविग्रहे
मुखप्रभापरास्तकोटिशारदेन्दुमण्डले
विचित्रचित्रसञ्चरच्चकोरशावलोचने
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*taḍit-suvarṇa-campaka-pradīpta-gaura-vigrahe
mukha-prabhā-parāsta-koṭi-sāradendu-maṇḍale
vicitra-citra-sañcarac-cakora-śāva-locane
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

Your body emanates a divine, golden glow like lightning, or yellow *champa* flowers; your enchanting face shines brighter than a million autumn moons. Your playful eyes flutter like the most magnificent pair of young moon-loving birds (*chakor*), Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (4)

मदोन्मदातियौवने प्रमोदमानमण्डिते
प्रियानुरागरञ्जिते कलाविलासपण्डिते
अनन्यधन्यकुञ्जराज्यकामकेलिकोविदे
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*madonmadāti-yauvane pramoda-māna-maṇḍite
priyānurāga-rañjite kalā-vilāsa-panḍite
ananya-dhanya-kuñja-rājya-kāma-keli-kovide
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

You are intoxicated by your own youthfully charming mannerisms, for they give your Beloved such great pleasure. Your sweet sulking gives your Lover such bliss; so much so that your pouting has become a precious jewel in your adornment. The greatest scholar of the romantic arts, you are completely absorbed in the colours of love for Krishn. You are most fortunate of all, for only you give supreme pleasure to your Beloved! O queen of Vrindavan's forest havens! O queen of love, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (5)

अशेषहावभावधीरहीरहारभूषिते
प्रभूतशातकुम्भकुम्भकुम्भि कुम्भसुस्तनि
प्रशस्तमन्दहास्यचूर्णपूर्णसौक्यसागरे
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*aśeṣa-hāva-bhāva-dhīra-hīra-hāra-bhūṣite
prabhūta-śāta-kumbha-kumbha-kumbhi-kumbha-sustani
praśasta-manda-hāsya-cūrṇa-pūrṇa-saukhya-sāgare
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

Endless ecstatic moods adorn your form like a priceless diamond necklace. Your bountiful breasts resemble sacred golden urns, or the perfectly smooth, round forehead of a regal elephant. Your gentle smile sends fragrant sandalwood powder rippling across the ocean of joy that is you. O Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (6)

मृनालवालवल्लरीतरङ्गरङ्गदोर्लते
लताग्रलास्यलोलनीललोचनावलोकने
ललल्लुलन्मिलन्मनोज्ञमुग्धमोहनाश्रिते
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*mṛṇāla-vāla-vallarī taraṅga-raṅga-dorlate
latāgra-lāsyā-lola-nīla-locanāvalokane
lalal-lulan-milan-manojña-mugdha-mohanāśraye
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

Your arms are like tender lotus stems floating on waves of ecstasy, and your darling blue eyes dance like a climbing vine in the breeze. Your romantic mannerisms bring delight in the heart of Krishn; you are his only shelter, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (7)

सुवर्णमालिकाञ्चितत्रिरेखकम्बुकण्ठगे
त्रिसूत्रमङ्गलीगुणत्रिरत्नदीप्तिदीधिति
सलोलनीलकुन्तलप्रसूनगुच्छगुम्फिते
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*suvarṇa-mālikāñcita-trirekha-kambu-kaṅṭhage
tri-sūtra-maṅgalī-guṇa-tri-ratna-dīpti-dīdhiti
salola-nīla-kuntala-prasūna-guccha-gumphite
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

Three subtle lines grace the curve of your neck, along with necklaces of gold, necklaces of three strands and sparkling gems of three colours. Your bouncy black curls are playfully bound with strings of flowers, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (8)

नितम्बबिम्बलम्बमानपुष्पमेखलागुणे
प्रशस्तरत्नकिङ्किणीकलापमध्यमञ्जुले
करीन्द्रशुण्डदण्डिकावरोहसौभगोरके
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*nitamba-bimba-lambamāna-puṣpa-mekhalā-guṇe
praśasta-ratna-kiṅkiṇī-kalāpa-madhyamañjule
karīndra-śuṇḍa-daṇḍikā-varoha-saubhagoruke
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

A string of blossoms decorates your graceful waist; the bells of the jewelled belt that sits upon your curvy hips tinkle with great charm. The splendour of your thighs puts the tapered trunk of Indra's elephant to shame, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (9)

अनेकमन्त्रनादमञ्जुनूपुरारवस्खलत्
समाजराजहंसवंशनिक्वणातिगौरवे
विलोलहेमवल्लरीविडम्बिचारुचङ्क्रमे
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*aneka-mantra-nāda-mañju-nūpurā-rava-skhalat
samāja-rāja-haṁsa-vaṁśa-nikvaṇāti-gaurave
vilola-hema-vallarī-vidambī-cāru-caṅkrame
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

A host of powerful mantras resonate from the jingling of your anklets, a sound finer than the cooing of swans. The swaying of golden vines does not compare to the grace of your elegant movements, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (10)

अनन्तकोटिविष्णुलोकनम्रपद्मजार्चिते
हिमाद्रिजापुलोमजाविरिञ्चिजावरप्रदे
अपारसिद्धिर्द्धिदिग्धसत्पदाङ्गुलीनखे
कदा करिष्यसीह मां कृपाकताक्षभाजनम्

*ananta-koṭi-viṣṇu-loka-namra-padmajārcite
himādrījā-pulomajā-viriñcijā-vara-prade
apāra-siddhirddhidigdhā-sat-padāṅgulī-nakhe
kadā kariṣyasīha mām kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam*

Every Lakshmi in every Vaikunth worships you with humility. Even Parvati, Indrani and Saraswati receive your blessings. The radiant nails of your dainty toes shine with infinite divine powers, Shri Radhe! When will you bless me with a merciful glance from the corner of your eyes? (11)

मखेश्वरि क्रियेश्वरि स्वधेश्वरि सुरेश्वरि
त्रिवेदभारतीश्वरि प्रमाणशासनेश्वरि
रमेश्वरि क्षमेश्वरि प्रमोदकाननेश्वरि
व्रजेश्वरि व्रजाधिपे श्रीराधिके नमोऽस्तु ते

*makheśvarī kriyeśvarī svadheśvarī sureśvarī
triveda-bhāratīśvarī pramāṇa-śāsaneśverī
rameśvarī kṣameśvarī pramoda kānaneśvarī
vrajeśvarī vrajādhipē śrī rādhike namo'stu te*

Goddess of all fire offerings, empress of all holy rites, queen of all holy worship; Goddess of all the gods and goddesses; supreme knower of the timeless Ved; guardian of true teachings; Goddess of joy; Goddess of forgiveness; queen of the forest of joy, queen of Vrindavan, empress of Braj, Shri Radhe, I bow to you! (12)

इती ममाद्भुतं स्तवं निशम्य भानुनन्दिनी
करोतु सन्ततं जनं कृपाकटाक्षभाजनम्
भवेत् तदैव सञ्चितत्रिरूपकर्मनाशनं
भवेत् तदा व्रजेन्द्रसूनुमण्डलप्रवेशनम्

*iti mamadbhutam stavam nisamy bhānu-nandini
karotu santatam janam kṛpā-kaṭākṣa-bhājanam
bhavet-tadaiva sañcita trirūpa-karma nāśanam
labhet-tadā vrajendra-sūnu-maṇḍala-praveśanam*

When Shri Radha hears this potent prayer of mine, the devotee who chants it shall be blessed with a merciful glance from the corner of her eyes. Thus, that devotee's *karm* shall be destroyed and they will enter the pastimes of Eternal Vrindavan. (13)



Gopi Geet The Song of Separation



(*Shrimad Bhagwatam* 10.31.1-19 and 32.1-2)

Bhavanuvad inspired by Shri Vishwanath Chakravartipad Thakur's *Saratha Darshini tika*

गोप्युचुः
gopyūcuḥ

The *gopis* said...

जयति तेऽधिकं जन्मना व्रजः श्रयत इन्दिरा शश्वदत्र हि ।
दयित दृश्यतां दिक्षु तावकास्त्वयि धृतासवास्त्वां विचिन्वते ॥

*jayati te'dhikam janmanā vrajaḥ śrayata indirā śaśvadatra hi
dayita dṛśyatām dikṣu tāvakāstvayi dhṛtāsavāstvām vicinvate*

O Beloved! Our blessed home of Braj has become the most sacred place in all the universe, for you have graced it with your birth. Maha Lakshmi has devoted her entire being to this land in pursuit of you, her service filling it with prosperity. You bring joy to the hearts of everyone here; but not us. The intensity of this burning pain is enough to end our lives but we've already given over our life's force, which now resides within your heart. If you burned in separation for us the way we do for you, that very force would have burned too, ending our lives; yet here we are. But still, we don't ask that you end our pain. We only hope you will cast a glance our way and see the condition you've left us in. (1)



शरदुदाशये साधुजातसत्सरसिजोदरश्रीमुषा दृषा ।
सुरतनाथ तेऽशुल्कदासिका वरद निघ्नतो नेह किं वधः ॥

*śaradudāśaye sādhujātasat-sarasijodaraśrīmuṣā dr̥ṣā
suratanātha te'śulkadāsikā varada nighnato neha kiṃ vadhaḥ*

O giver of blessings! With eyes that outshine the radiance of autumnal lotuses in a pool of water, you pierced our unguarded hearts with glances of flaming arrows, setting us ablaze and leaving us to burn. O prince of love's delight! In complete surrender, we innocent young women gave ourselves to you with no expectation of anything in return. How could you, the ultimate lover of love, slay us with the weapon of your lethal eyes? (2)

विषजलाप्ययाद् व्यालराक्षसाद् वर्षमारुताद् वैद्युतानलात् ।
वृषमयात्मजाद् विश्वतोभयादृषभ ते वयं रक्षिता मुहुः ॥

*viṣajalāpyayād vyālarākṣasād varṣamārutād vaidyutānalāt
vṛṣamayātmajād viśvatobhayādṛṣabha te vyaṃ rakṣitā muhuḥ*

O great hero! There was a time when you would protect us from each and every danger. You saved our lips from the touch of poisoned water; you shielded us from drowning in the rains and lightning born of Indra's wrath; you rescued us from the terror of such powerful demons: Agha, Vyomasur, Arishtasur the bull demon and Trinavart the demon of windstorms. Do you remember? (3)

न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भवानखिलदेहिनामन्तरात्मदृक् ।
विखनसार्थितो विश्वगुप्तये सख उदेयिवान् सात्वतां कुले ॥

*na khalu gopikānandano bhavānakhiladehināmantarātmadr̥k
vikhanasārthito viśvaguptaye sakha udeyivān sātvatām kule*

We know you're not just the son of a *gopi*; you are the eternal friend of all beings and the only Lord in every heart. Brahma prayed for a saviour for the world and you, born in Satvata's dynasty, were the answer. Is it not your duty to save us as well? (4)

विरचिताभयं वृष्णिधुर्य ते चरणमीयुषां संसृतेर्भयात् ।
करसरोरुहं कान्त कामदं शिरसि धेहि नः श्रीकरग्रहम् ॥

*viracitābhayaṁ vṛṣṇidhurya te caraṇamīyuṣāṁ saṁsṛterbhayāt
karasaroruham kānta kāmadaṁ śirasi dhehi naḥ śrīkaragraham*

O sunlight blessing the lotus of your family, making them bloom with joy. Your gentle hand bestows all blessings and protects surrendered souls, taking away all their fears. Please place your lotus hand on our heads and save us from the poisoned arrows of desire. (5)

ब्रजजनार्तिहन् वीर योषितां निजजनस्मयध्वंसनस्मित ।
भज सखे भवत्किङ्करीः स्म नो जलरुहाननं चारु दर्शय ॥

*vrajanārtihan vīra yoṣitām nijajanasmayadhvaṁsanasmita
bhaja sakhe bhavatkinkarīḥ sma no jalaruhānanam cāru darśaya*

O mighty hero! Fiercest friend! Destroyer of Brajwasis' pain! Your powerfully sweet smile has destroyed our pride just as you wanted, so please show mercy towards us now and let us see your lotus face. (6)

प्रणतदेहिनां पापकर्शनं तृणचरानुगं श्रीनिकेतनम् ।
फणिफणार्पितं ते पदाम्बुजं कृणु कुचेषु नः कृन्धि हृच्छयम् ॥

*praṇatadehinām pāpakarśanam tṛṇacarānugam śrīniketanam
phaṇiphaṇārpitaṁ te padāmbujam kṛṇu kuceṣu naḥ kṛndhi hṛcchayam*

Your lotus feet, a treasure trove of beauty, danced fearlessly on the hoods of the serpent, Kaliya. The same lotus feet that take the cows to graze effortlessly crush the sins of surrendered souls. So without hesitation, please place those precious feet on our breasts so that they may extinguish the burning desire in our hearts. (7)

मधुरया गिरा वल्गुवाक्यया बुधमनोज्ञया पुष्करेक्षण ।
विधिकरीरिमा वीर मुह्यतीरधरसीधुनाऽऽप्याययस्व नः ॥

*madhurayā girā valguvākyayā budhamanojñayā puṣkarekṣaṇa
vidhikarīrimā vīra muhyatīradharasīdhunā'pyāyayasva naḥ*

Lotus-eyed boy, you hypnotise us with your enchanting voice and charming words of love. Our hearts are completely captured by you and we beg that you tighten your hold on us, so please submerge us deeper in the nectar of your kiss. (8)

तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनं कविभिरीडितं कल्मषापहम् ।
श्रवणमङ्गलं श्रीमदाततं भुवि गृणन्ति ते भूरिदा जनाः ॥

*tava kathāmṛtaṁ taptajīvanam kavibhirīḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇamaṅgalaṁ śrīmadātataṁ bhuvi gṛṇanti te bhūridā janāḥ*

From the stories of your pastimes flows nectar of the sweetest kind. Great devotees proclaim that the joy of heaven or *moksh* does not compare to this delight. Not only do your tales soothe the pain of sorrows in this world and destroy the sins of listeners, they also provide precious relief to those whose hearts ache in separation from you. Your pastimes bless the hearts of those who hear them with sacred love. Thus, the great souls who tell your stories are the givers of all givers. (9)

प्रहसितं प्रिय प्रेमवीक्षणं विहरणं च ते ध्यानमङ्गलम् ।
रहसि संविदो या हृदिस्पृशः कुहक नो मनः क्षोभयन्ति हि ॥

*prahasitaṁ priya premavīkṣaṇam viharāṇam ca te dhyānamaṅgalam
rahasi saṁvido yā hṛdispṛśaḥ kuhaka no manaḥ kṣobhayanti hi*

O cunning cheat! Memories of your smile, your passionate eyes and the love we shared combine to form sweet poison, giving pleasure that only transforms to pain in the end. (10)

चलसि यद् व्रजाच्चारयन् पशून् नलिनसुन्दरं नाथ ते पदम् ।
शिलतृणांकुरैः सीदतीति नः कलिलतां मनः कान्त गच्छति ॥

*calasi yad vrajāccārayan paśūn nalinasundaram nātha te padam
śilatṛṇāṅkuraiḥ sīdatīti naḥ kalilatāṁ manaḥ kānta gacchati*

But then, you have always loved to make us cry. When you leave to graze the cows, you torment us with worry that your feet, soft like flowers, could be hurt by stones or blades of grass. Even tender sprouts could harm your delicate feet. (11)

दिनपरिक्षये नीलकुन्तलैर्वनरुहाननं बिभ्रदावृतम् ।
धनरजस्वलं दर्शयन् मुहुर्मनसि नः स्मरं वीर यच्छसि ॥

*dinaparikṣaye nīlakuntalairvanaruhānanaṁ bibhradāvṛtam
ghanarajasvalam darśayan muhurmanasi naḥ smaraṁ vīra yacchasi*

And when you finally return home at the end of the day, with the beauty of your dark face exceeding that of a lotus, you tease us by keeping yourself and your swarm of Braj-dust-decorated black curls just out of reach. O how this wounds our hearts with desire. (12)

प्रणतकामदं पद्मजार्चितं धरणिमण्डनं ध्येयमापदि ।
चरणपङ्कजं शन्तमं च ते रमण नः स्तनेष्वर्पयाधिहन् ॥

*praṇatakāmadam padmajārcitam dharaṇimaṇḍanam dhyeyamāpadi
caraṇapaṅkajam śantamaṁ ca te ramaṇa naḥ staneṣvarpayādhihan*

O bliss incarnate! Please don't take offence. Kaliya offended you once but he attained your lotus feet upon surrendering to you. You forgave Brahma as well when he worshipped them too. Your feet are this earth's most priceless ornament. Please place those very feet on our breasts in forgiveness and adorn our chests with the jewels of your footprints. (13)

सुरतवर्धनं शोकनाशनं स्वरितवेणुना सुष्ठु चुम्बितम् ।
इतररागविस्मरणं नृणां वितर वीर नस्तेऽधरामृतम् ॥

*suratavardhanam śokanāśanam svaritaveṇunā suṣṭhu cumbitam
itararāgavismāraṇam nṛṇāṁ vitara vīra naste'dharāmṛtam*

Like Dhanvantri, you possess a divine medicine with the ability of ending all our pain. Though the nectar of your kiss cures the disease of separation, it is a costly remedy for it also makes our desire for you even more intense. This medicine can make anyone forget their unhealthy habits and attachments and instead attach themselves to you. It is a rare love potion but don't be afraid to give it away for free, o charitable hero! Though your flute is only a piece of hollow wood, when your kisses fill her with this nectar, her sighs become the most enchanting melody. Please shower that nectar upon us as well. (14)

अटति यद् भवानह्नि काननं त्रुटिर्युगायते त्वामपश्यताम् ।
कुटिलकुन्तलं श्रीमुखं च ते जड उदीक्षतां पक्ष्मकृद् दृशाम् ॥

*aṭati yad bhavānahni kānanaṁ truṭiryugāyate tvāmapaśyatām
kuṭilakuntalam śrīmuḥam ca te jaḍa udīkṣatām pakṣmakṛd dṛśām*

A single moment without you is like an eternity to us. When you to go the forest, we spend the whole day absorbed in unbearable sorrow. Even when you return we get no relief, for in Brahma's flawed creation, we are forced to blink, stopping us from receiving your continuous *darshan*. (15)

पतिसुतान्वयभ्रातृबान्धवानतिविलङ्घ्य तेऽन्त्यच्युतागताः ।
गतिविदस्तवोद्गीतमोहिताः कितव योषितः कस्त्यजेन्निशि ॥

*patisutānvayabhrāṭṛbāndhavānativilaṅghya te'ntyacyutāgatāḥ
gatividastavodgītamohitāḥ kitava yoṣitaḥ kastyajenniśi*

Hypnotised by the song of your flute, we have left our husbands and abandoned all relationships in sole pursuit of you. Why lure us to the forest just to leave us here alone and heartbroken? This anguish has us on the verge of death; o cheater, today, you've let us down. They call you Achyut, "the one who never fails"! But we know this isn't true, for you've failed us now, as we die without you. (16)

रहसि संविदं हृच्छयोदयं प्रहसिताननं प्रेमवीक्षणम् ।
बृहदुरः श्रियो वीक्ष्य धाम ते मुहुरतिस्पृहा मुह्यते मनः ॥

*rahasi samvidam hr̥cchayodayam prahasitānanam premavikṣaṇam
br̥haduraḥ śriyo vikṣya dhāma te muhuratispr̥hā muhyate manaḥ*

Our hearts are pierced with memories of you; like cupid's five arrows they hit one by one: soft words, a teasing glance, a smile... eyes filled with love, the touch of your broad chest, each and every image too painful to view. Drained of life, we drift out of consciousness, in longing for you. (17)

व्रजवनौकसां व्यक्तिरङ्ग ते वृजिनहन्त्र्यलं विश्वमङ्गलम् ।
त्यज मनाक् च नस्त्वत्स्पृहात्मनां स्वजनहृद्रुजां यन्निषूदनम् ॥

*vrajavanaukasām vyaktiraṅga te vṛjinahantryalam viśvamaṅgalam
tyaja manāk ca nastvatspr̥hātmanām svajanaḥṛdrujām yanniṣūdanam*

In our innocence, we were bound by your spell and dragged to this forest in the dead of night. We know you didn't bring us here to burn; we know your heart - you've called us here so you can fill our hearts with the sweet nectar of your love. We would only offer this back to you, so please, save us now so we can satisfy your craving with this love. (18)

यत्ते सुजातचरणाम्बुरुहं स्तनेषु
भीताः शनैः प्रिय दधीमहि कर्कशेषु ।
तेनाटवीमटसि तद्व्यथते न किंस्वित्
कूर्पादिभिर्भ्रमति धीर्भवदायुषां नः ॥

*yatte sujātacaraṇāmburuhaṁ staneṣu
bhītāḥ śanaiḥ priya dadhīmahi karkaśeṣu
tenāṭavīmaṭasi tadvyathate na kiṁsvit
kūrpādibhirbhramati dhīrbhavadāyusaṁ naḥ*

O darling boy, your lotus feet are so tender! When you place them on our hearts, we cradle them ever so gently, fearing our firm breasts may harm them. Why do you torment us by walking through the forest with such soft feet? Even though we are on the verge of death as a result of your heartless actions, we live on - for our lives reside in you and you don't burn for us the way we do for you, therefore death does not come. So please, just use our lives to lengthen yours, so you can play happily in the blessed forests of Vrindavan forever. (19)

श्रीशुक उवाच

śrī-śuka uvāca

Shri Shukdev said . . .

इति गोप्यः प्रगायन्त्यः प्रलपन्त्यश् च चित्रधा
रुरुदुः सुस्वरं राजन् कृष्ण दर्शन लालसा ।
तासामाविरभुक् छौरिः स्मयमान मुखाम्बुजः
पीताम्बर धरः श्रग्वी साक्षान् मन्मथ मन्मथः ॥

iti gopyaḥ pragāyantyāḥ pralapantyaś ca citradhā
ruruduḥ susvaram̐ rājan kṛṣṇa darśana lālasā
tāsāmāvirabhuc chauriḥ smayamāna mukhāmbujaḥ
pītāmbara dharaḥ śragvī sākṣān manmatha manmathaḥ

Thus, the *gopis* sang their song of separation with beautiful rhythm and melody, confessing their innermost secrets. As they cried with yearning for their Beloved, voices sweet and pure, Krishn appeared all of a sudden, draped in his shawl of brilliant yellow, wearing the widest smile on his enchanting face, adorned in a garland from Shri Radha; that boy whose love-filled arrows strike even Cupid down. (32.1-2)



Shri Radhakundashtakam



by Raghunath Das Goswami

Bhavanuvad based on Shri Anant Das Babaji's *Stavamrita Kana Vyakhya*

वृषभदनुजनाशान् नर्मधर्मोक्तिरङ्गौ
निखिलनिजसखीभिर्यत् स्वहस्तेन पूर्णम् ।
प्रकटितमपि वृन्दारण्यराज्ञा प्रमोदैस्
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे ॥

*vṛṣabha-danuja-nāśān narma-dharmokti-raṅgair
nikhila-nija-sakhībhir yat sva-hastena pūrṇam
prakaṭitam api vṛndāraṇya-rājñā pramodais
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

After Krishn killed the demon Vrishabhasur, a wonderful *lila* took place, which started with a playful conversation between Radha and Krishn. [Radha teased Krishn that killing the demon was a sin, because it had come in the shape of a bull, and that he needed to atone by bathing in all the holy waters of the world before he could touch her. Krishn then used his divine powers to call all the holy waters and create his own lake, Shyam Kund. After bathing in it, he challenged his Beloved to make her own lake.] Then a divine lake was formed by Radha and her *sakhis*, who personally filled it with water. In the end, the work was completed by reluctantly accepting some help from Krishn. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (For the full *lila* of Radha Kund's appearance, see the April 2018 issue of *Sandarshan*.) (1)

ब्रजभुवि मुरशत्रोः प्रेयसीनां निकामैर्
असुलभमपि तूर्णं प्रेमकल्पद्रुमं तम् ।
जनयति हृदि भूमौ स्नातुरुच्चैरप्रियं यत्
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे ॥

*vraja-bhuvi mura-śatroḥ preyasīnām nikāmair
asulabham api tūrṇaṁ prema-kalpa-drumaṁ tam
janayati ḥṛdi bhūmau snātur uccair priyaṁ yat
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

If anyone bathes in this divine lake, the tree of sacred love grows in the earth of their hearts. The form of love they receive is rarely attained, even amongst the *gopis* themselves. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (2)

अघरिपुरपि यत्नादत्र देव्याः प्रसाद
प्रसरकृतकताक्षप्राप्तिकामः प्रकामम् ।
अनुसरति यदुच्छैः स्नानसेवानुबन्धैस्
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे ॥

*agha-ripur api yatnād atra devyāḥ prasāda-
prasara-kṛta-katākṣa-prāpti-kāmaḥ prakāmam
anusarati yad ucchaiḥ snāna-sevānubandhais
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

Although Krishn is worshipped by the whole universe, he himself worships Radha Kund. When Radha shows her sweet sulking (*maan*), he bathes here and offers *seva* to the *kund*, hoping to gain her *kripa kataksh* – a merciful glance from the corner of her eyes. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (3)

व्रजभुवनसुधांशोः प्रेमभूमिर्निकामं
व्रजमधुरकिशोरीमौलिरत्नप्रियेव ।
परिचितमपि नाम्ना या च तेनैव तस्यास्
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे ॥

*vraja-bhuvana-sudhāṁśoḥ prema-bhūmir nikāmam
vraja-madhura-kiśorī-mauli-ratna-priyeva
paricitam api nāmnā yā ca tenaiva tasyās
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

But Krishn does not only serve this place to attain his desires; he serves because he loves this lake like he loves Radha, and he is the one who named it after her. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (4)

अपि जन इह कश्चिद् यस्य सेवाप्रसादैः
प्रणयसुरलता स्यात्तस्य गोष्ठेन्द्रसूनोः ।
सपदि किल मदीशादास्यपुष्पप्रशस्या
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे

*api jana iha kaścīd yasya sevā-prasādaiḥ
praṇaya-sura-latā syāt tasya goṣṭhendra-sūnoḥ
sapadi kila mad-īśā-dāsya-puṣpa-prasāsyā
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

The one who serves Radha Kund receives the greatest blessing; the vine of sacred love for Krishna grows in his heart. As the vine flourishes, tender buds of *seva* begin to appear, and when they burst into full bloom, the devotee becomes the maidservant of my beloved queen, Radha. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (5)

तटमधुरनिकुञ्जः क्लृप्तनामान उच्चैः
निजपरिजनवर्गैः सम्विभज्याश्रितस् तैः ।
मधुकररुतरम्या यस्य राजन्ति काम्यास्
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे

*taṭa-madhura-nikuñjaḥ klpta-nāmāna uccair
nija-parijana-vargaiḥ samvibhajyāśritas taiḥ
madhukara-ruta-ramyā yasya rājanti kāmīyās
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

On the banks of this lake there are many beautiful groves, filled with the sweet songs of bees. Each one belongs to one of Radha's *sakhis*, and they bear their names as well. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (6)

तटभुवि वरवेद्यां यस्य नर्मातिहृद्यां
मधुरमधुरवार्ता गोष्ठचन्द्रस्य भङ्ग्या ।
प्रथयतिमिथ ईशा प्राणसख्यालिभिः सा
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे

*taṭa-bhuvi vara-vedyām yasya narmāti-hṛdyām
madhura-madhura-vārtām goṣṭha-candrasya bhaṅgyā
praṭhayatimitha īśā prāṇa-sakhyālibhiḥ sā
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

On the bank of this lake, Radha and her *sakhis* tease each other and joke so sweetly about her Beloved, Krishna. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (7)

अनुदिनम् अतिरङ्गैः प्रेममत्तालिसङ्घैः
र्वरसरसिजगन्धैर्हारिवारिप्रपूर्णे ।

विहरत इह यस्मिन् दम्पती तौ प्रमत्तौ
तदतिसुरभि राधाकुण्डम् एवाश्रयो मे

*anudinam ati-raṅgaiḥ prema-mattāli-saṅghair
vara-sarasija-gandhair hāri-vāri-prapūrṇe
viharata iha yasmin dam-patī tau pramattau
tad ati-surabhi rādhā-kuṇḍam evāśrayo me*

In this water, filled with fragrant lotuses, the Divine Couple play every day. Their *sakhis* play with them, and all of them are madly in love. May this place of supreme beauty, Radha Kund, be my shelter. (8)

अविकलमति देव्याश्चारु कुण्डाष्टकं यः
परिपठति तदीयोऽस्मिन्दास्यार्पितात्मा
अचिरम् इह शरीरे दर्शयत्य् एव तस्मै
मधुरिपुर् अतिमोदैः श्लिष्यमाणां प्रियां ताम्

*avikala mati devyās cāru kuṇḍāṣṭakam yaḥ
paripaṭhati tadīyollāsi-dāsyārpitātmā
aciram iha śarīre darśayaty eva tasmai
madhu-ripur ati-modaiḥ śliṣyamāṇām priyām tām*

If one chants this prayer to Radha Kund with complete faith and dedication, offering themselves as Radha's maidservant, that person will soon have *darshan* of Krishna blissfully bound in her embrace, even in this very lifetime. (9)





Festivals of Kartik 2019



Papankush Ekadashi (Ashwin Shukla Ekadashi)

Wednesday, October 9th

This is the last Ekadashi before Kartik begins, and most devotees begin their Niyam Seva (Kartik resolutions) on this day.

Sharad Purnima/Sharadotsav (Ashwin Purnima)

Sunday, October 13th

Sharad Purnima is the full moon night when Shri Radha-Krishn and the *gopis* met for the Raas Lila. In the Radharaman Temple, Shriji (Radharamanji) wears white, and the whole temple is draped in white cloth. There is a special *bhog* of puffed lotus seed pudding (*makhane ki kheer*) and fried flatbread covered in powdered sugar (*chandrakala*). Shriji sits on a special golden throne.

Laghu Sharadotsav (Kartik Krishna Pratipad)

Monday, October 14th

On this night, Shriji sits on a special silver throne. There is a special *bhog* of calabash pudding (*ghia ki kheer*) and fried flatbread covered in powdered sugar (*chandrakala*). From this day until the following summer, the Rajbhog Aarti is performed with ghee wicks, rather than flowers, because autumn has come and the weather is now mild.

Bahulashtami (Kartik Krishna Ashtami)

Monday, October 21st

On Bahulashtami, devotees flock to Radha Kund in large numbers to take a midnight bath in the holy lake. The *Padma Puran* says: गोवर्धन गिरौ रम्ये राधाकुण्डं प्रियं हरेः। कार्तिके बहुलाष्टम्यां तत्र स्नत्वा हरेः प्रियः॥
govardhana girau ramye rādhākuṇḍam priyam hareḥ। kārṭike bahulāṣṭamyām tatra snatvā hareḥ priyaḥ - "Whoever bathes in Krishn's beloved Radha Kund near Govardhan on Bahulashtami during Kartik becomes very dear to him."

Ramaa Ekadashi (Kartik Krishna Ekadashi)

Thursday, October 24th

The first Ekadashi of Kartik is called Ramaa Ekadashi. From this day until the end of Kartik, Radharamanji sits in a *hathri*: a little silver house with open sides.

Dhanteras (Kartik Krishna Trayodashi)

Friday, October 25th

Dhanteras is the appearance day of Lord Dhanvantari. In the evening, a *chaupar* boardgame is placed before Shriji so that he can play with Radharani.



Choti Dipawali (Kartik Krishna Chaturdashi)

Saturday, October 26th

Shriji wears yellow clothes on this day. After his bath, the Goswamis touch *shirish patra* (lebeck leaves) to his body as an Ayurvedic medicine to protect him from the changing weather, and they offer ghee lamps to him. There is also a ghee lamp offering to Yamraj.

Dipawali (Kartik Amavasya)

Sunday, October 27th

On this day, Shriji wears a special crown called *kulah chandrika*, which is reserved for Dipawali (Diwali) and Raksha Bandhan alone, and *tilak* is ceremoniously applied to his brow. *Abhishek*, *pujan* and *aarti* of Maha Lakshmi is held and multiple special dishes are offered as *bhog* to Shriji. In the night time, every Goswami family comes to receive Shriji's blessings in the form of *prasad*.

Govardhan Puja and Annakut (Kartik Shukla Pratipad)

Monday, October 28th

On this day, Govardhan Hill is worshipped with *annakut* (a mountain of food) and many devotees perform Govardhan *parikrama*. In the Radharaman Temple, Shriji comes out on to the altar in the morning and is seated on a special throne. There is *abhishek* of Giriraj Shila, worship of a cow and a cowherd boy, and *puja* of Govardhan Hill. A replica of Govardhan Hill is made on the temple floor from fresh cow dung. Many, many special dishes are offered on this day as *bhog*.

Bhaiya Dooj/Yam Dwitiya (Kartik Shukla Dwitiya)

Tuesday, October 29th

This day is the appearance day of Yamuna's brother, Yamraj. Sisters honour their brothers on this day, and brothers and sisters bathe together in the Yamuna River.

Gopashtami (Kartik Shukla Ashtami)

Monday, November 4th

Gopashtami is the day when, as a child, Krishna was allowed to herd full-grown cows for the first time. In the Radharaman Temple, Shriji is dressed in *natvar shringaar*, which includes a bugle (*shringi*), cow-herding stick (*lakut*), flute (*murali*) and a special crown called *jura*, similar to the one he wears on Ekadashi. After Shringaar Aarti, *puja* is offered similar to that which is done on Govardhan Puja. The Goswamis ceremoniously apply *tilak* on Shriji's brow and offer gold coins to him.

Akshay Navmi and Yugal Parikrama (Kartik Shukla Navmi)

Tuesday, November 5th

On this day, many devotees perform a large *parikrama* through both Mathura and Vrindavan.

Devotthan Ekadashi (Kartik Shukla Ekadashi)

Friday, November 8th

On this day, Shriji wears a special crown. In the evening, a *kunj* is created with sugarcane, under which an offering of raw fruits and vegetables is made to Vishnu and the gods. Without any bells or gongs, soft prayers are recited to awaken them from their four-month sleep of *chaturmasya*. After awakening them, *abhishek* is offered to *shaligram shila* with the sound of bells and gongs, and his full *puja* is performed. Then Shaligram Dev is placed on a small chariot and taken on parade (*vijay yatra*) around the outer altar. Thereafter, ghee lamps are offered to Shriji and from this day till the end of winter, Shriji uses a blanket at night. This is the last day of Niyam Seva, and one should end their *vrat* the following morning. From this day and continuing for five days Tulsi-Damodar *pujan* is held before Mangla Darshan. The Bhishma Panchakam *vrat* also begins today and ends on Kartik Purnima (for details, see *Hari Bhakti Vilas*).

Maha Raas Purnima (Kartik Purnima)

Tuesday, November 12th

This is the last day of Kartik month. On this night, Shri Radha-Krishna and the *gopis* enjoy Raas Lila under the full moon. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to Vrindavan on this day, and in honour of his coming, a great procession is held in the streets of Vrindavan, starting around 4pm at the Amiya Nimai Mahaprabhu Mandir in Gopinath Bazar, and lasting until after midnight.

