



International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

At The Pier

ISKCON PHOENIX NEWSLETTER



a spiritual oasis in the valley of the sun



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*“athaca enecho prabhu kathā bolibāre
je tomār icchā prabhu koro ei bāre*

Translation: Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure, as You like.

*akhila jagat-guru! bacana se āmār
alañkṛta koribār khamatā tomār*

Translation: O spiritual master of all the worlds! I can simply repeat Your message, so if You like You can make my power of speaking suitable for their understanding.

*taba kṛpā ha'le mor kathā śuddha habe
śuniyā sabāra śoka duḥkha je ghucibe*

Translation: Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts, they will certainly feel englanded and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.”

(Excerpt of Markine Bhagavata-Dharma - Srila Prabhupada, 1965)



At The Pier

ISKCON PHOENIX NEWSLETTER

Hare Krishna,

We are happy to announce the revival of **At the Pier**, a newsletter originally created to highlight the activities, festivals, various programs and experiences happening at our local Yatra.

Before introducing this first edition, our team would like to offer our gratitude to our Founder-Acharya: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. His efforts allowed many of us to practice Krishna Consciousness and it is due to his mercy that we are allowed to chant the holy name and come together to create this newsletter.

As Kartik Month begins, we have chosen to dedicate the first edition of this revival to its significance. During this month, Mother Yashoda tied Lord Krishna to a wooden mortar. She tried her best to tie Him, but it was always two inches short no matter how much rope she added. Only after Mother Yashoda continued with sincere love and perseverance did Lord Krishna allow Himself to be bound.

These two inches carry a beautiful message: Lord Krishna always reciprocates our efforts if we approach Him with sincere love and devotion. In other words, these 2 inches represent His Mercy and His devotee's perseverance.

We celebrate Kartik Month not only by remembering this pastime, but also by reflecting on how we can cultivate these qualities in our own lives.

We hope that this revival of **At the Pier** will serve as a source of connection and inspiration for everyone, especially the youth of our temple.

We invite you to join us and contribute to this effort. May each edition give us an opportunity to celebrate our community and deepen our Krishna Consciousness.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve,

Jiya Pandya

Nectar of Damodarastakam

By Abhay Hanmod



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

In this brief overview, we explore the verse-by-verse nectar of the Damodarashtakam to deepen our meditation during this sacred month.

Summary:

1. The 1st verse depicts Lord Damodara as the Supreme Controller running out of fear from Mother Yasoda who catches the lord due to her running at a greater speed
2. The 2nd describes the lord of the universe crying seeing the stick in his mother's hand and being bound ultimately not with ropes but by mother Yasoda's pure love.
3. In the 3rd, sage Satyavrata tells us that by such pastimes he drowns the inhabitants of Gokula in ecstasy and reveals that he is only bound by pure love
4. In the 4th, sage Satyavrata begins a conversation with Damodar after the Lord asks him to request a benediction. To which the composer of the Damodarashtakam asks the lord for only one boon: the form of Bala Gopala in Vrindavana may ever be manifest in his heart
5. In the 5th, sage Satyavrata continues: May the image of your lotus face with its soft black hair, lips red like the bimba fruit, and which is kissed again and again by Mother Yasoda forever reside in my heart
6. In the 6th, sage Satyavrata prays to Damodar to deliver him and to become visible to his eyes
7. In the 7th, sage Satyavrata asks to to be delivered just as the lord delivered Nalakuvara and Manigriva from Narada's curse and that he only wants pure loving devotion to the form of Damodara

Nectar of Damodarastakam



8. However, the lord is hesitant. sage Satyavrata is asking for the very thing that will give him control over Lord Damodar, so Satyavrata immediately bows down to the rope of love and most importantly to Srimati Radharani for this benediction of pure love and bhakti.

In this holy month of Kartika let us invoke sage Satyavrata's desire for the pure love of Sri Radha-Damodar as we sing this wonderful prayer.



“To the Supreme Lord, whose form is the embodiment of eternal existence, knowledge, and bliss, whose shark-shaped earrings are swinging to and fro, who is beautifully shining in the divine realm of Gokula, who I (due to the offense of breaking the pot of yogurt that His mother was churning into butter and then stealing the butter that was kept hanging from a swing) is quickly running from the wooden grinding mortar in fear of mother Yasoda, but who has been caught from behind by her who ran after Him with greater speed--to that Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, I offer my humble obeisances.”

Sri Damodarastakam

(1)

namāmīśvarami sac-cid-ānanda-rūpam
lasat-kunḍalam gokule bhrājamanam
yaśodā-bhiyolūkhalād dhāvamānam
parāmr̥ṣṭam atyantato drutya gopyā

(2)

rudantami muhur netra-yugmami mṛjantam
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātāṅka-netram
muhuh śvāsa-kampa-trirekhāṅka-kaṇṭha-
sthita-graivami dāmodarami bhakti-baddham

(3)

itīdṛk sva-līlābhir ānanda-kunḍe
sva-ghoṣami nimajjantam ākhyāpayantam
tadīyeṣita-jñeṣu bhaktair jitatvam
punaḥ prematas tam śatāvṛtti vande

(4)

varami deva mokṣami na mokṣāvadhimi vā
na canyami vṛṇe 'hami vareṣād apīha
idam te vapur nātha gopāla-bālam
sadā me manasy āvirāstām kim anyaiḥ

(5)

idam te mukhāmbhojam atyanta-nīlair
vṛtami kuntalaiḥ snigdha-raktaiś ca gopyā
muhūś cumbitam bimba-raktādharami me
manasy āvirāstām alam lakṣa-lābhaiḥ

(6)

namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo
prasīda prabho duḥkha-jālābdhi-magnam
kr̥pā-dr̥ṣṭi-vṛṣṭyāti-dīnam batānu
gr̥hāṇeṣa mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dr̥śyaḥ

(7)

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

(8)

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

Sri Damodarastakam-Translation

1.To the Supreme Lord, whose form embodies eternity, knowledge, and bliss, whose earrings swing to and fro, who shines beautifully in Gokula, who quickly ran from the grinding mortar in fear of mother Yasoda, and who was caught from behind by her, who ran faster than He –to that Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, I offer my humble obeisances.

2. Upon seeing His mother’s whipping stick, He cried and rubbed His eyes again and again with His two lotus hands. His eyes were fearful, and His quick breathing shook the strand of pearls on His neck, which bore three lines like those on a conch shell. To that Supreme Lord, Sri Damodara, whose belly is bound with the ropes of His mother’s pure love, I offer my humble obeisances.

3.With these superexcellent childhood pastimes Lord Krishna drowned the residents of Gokula in pools of ecstasy. In this way He declared to those absorbed in knowledge of His majesty and opulence: **“I am conquered only by My pure loving devotees.”** With great love I again offer my obeisances to Lord Damodara hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times.

4.O Lord, though You can award all kinds of benedictions, I pray to You neither for the boon of impersonal liberation, nor for the highest liberation of eternal life in Vaikuntha, nor for any other such boon.O Lord, I simply wish that this form of Yours as Bala Gopala in Vrindavan may ever be manifest in my heart, for what use do I have for any other boon besides this?

5. O Lord, again and again Mother Yasoda kisses Your lotus face, which is framed by locks of soft black hair tinged with red and beautified by Your lips colored red like the bimba fruit. May this vision of Your lotus face be ever manifest in my heart.Thousands and thousands of other benedictions are of no use to me.

6. O Supreme Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. O Damoradara! O Ananta! O Visnu! O Master! O Lord, be pleased upon me. Shower me with Your merciful glances and deliver this poor ignorant fool immersed in an ocean of worldly sorrows and become visible to my eyes

7. O Lord Damodara, as a baby tied to a grinding mortar, You delivered Kuvera’s two sons from the curse of Narada and made them into great devotees. In the same way, please give me pure loving devotion for you. I long for this alone and have no desire for any kind of liberation.

8. O Lord Damodara, obeisances unto the brilliantly effulgent rope binding Your belly! Obeisances unto Your belly, the abode of the entire universe! Obeisances unto Your dear-most beloved Srimati Radharani! And obeisances unto You, O Lord, who display unlimited pastimes!

The Ashta Sakhis

The Eight Principal Companions of Srimati Radharani

Eternal friends. Ever in service. Embodiments of devotion, friendship and love.

"Through the sakhis' selfless service, Srimati Radharani's love for Krishna blossoms in all its sweetness."

"In the association of the sakhis, the pastimes of Srimati Radharani shine ever new."

Lalita Sakhi



Complexion: Bright golden yellow, defeating the luster of gorocana.

Dress Color: The brilliant, multi-colored hue of peacock feathers (mayura-pincha).

Birth Relation: 27 days before Srimati Radharani (Lalita Saptami, one day prior to Radhashtami).

Primary Service: Offering betel nuts (tambula) and camphor, and leading all the other sakhis.

Visakha Sakhi



Complexion: Cream-colored with a gentle tinge of red, resembling lightning.

Dress Color: Bright blue decorated with white dots, resembling a sky full of stars.

Birth Relation: Born at the exact same moment Srimati Radharani appeared (Radhashtami).

Primary Service: Making garments, applying cosmetics, and singing.

Champakalata Sakhi



Complexion: Yellowish-gold like a fully blossomed champaka flower.

Dress Color: Blue like a kingfisher's feather (shuka-pankha).

Birth Relation: 1 day before Radharani.

Primary Service: Offering clay pots, fanning the Divine Couple, and cooking.

Chitra Sakhi



Complexion: Saffron-colored or golden.

Dress Color: Shimmering glass-like or crystal-colored dress reflecting many hues.

Birth Relation: 26 days before Radharani.

Primary Service: Crafting clothing, jewelry, and playing logic riddles.

Tungavidya Sakhi



Complexion: Pale yellow, like the pollen of a lotus filament.

Dress Color: Deep rose or red.

Birth Relation: 15 days before Radharani.

Primary Service: Playing musical instruments (like the Vina) and singing divine philosophy.

Indulekha Sakhi



Complexion: Tan or golden-brown like molten gold.

Dress Color: Pomegranate-skin color (deep crimson-pink or scarlet).

Birth Relation: 3 days after Radharani.

Primary Service: Serving honey, reading palmistry, and acting as a messenger.

Rangadevi Sakhi



Complexion: Bright, radiant gold like a lotus filament.

Dress Color: Brilliant red.

Birth Relation: 7 days after Radharani (twin sister of Sudevi).

Primary Service: Applying scented oils, perfumes, and making flower garlands.

Sudevi Sakhi



Complexion: Bright golden (identical to her twin sister, Rangadevi).

Dress Color: Brilliant red.

Birth Relation: 7 days after Radharani (twin sister of Rangadevi).

Primary Service: Offering fresh water, managing forest paths, and training pets.

Summary Comparison Table

Sakhi Name	Complexion	Dress/Garment Color	Birth Relation to Radharani	Primary Seva (Service)
Lalita	Golden Yellow (Gorocana)	Peacock Feathers	27 Days Before	Tambula (Betel nuts)
Visakha	Cream-Lightning	Starry Blue Sky	Same Exact Moment	Clothing & Cosmetics
Champakalata	Champaka Yellow	Kingfisher Blue	1 Day Before	Cooking & Fanning
Chitra	Saffron Gold	Multi-colored Crystal	26 Days Before	Clothing & Riddles
Tungavidya	Lotus Filament Yellow	Deep Rose Red	15 Days Before	Music & Singing
Indulekha	Molten Gold	Pomegranate Crimson	3 Days After	Honey & Messages
Rangadevi	Bright Gold	Brilliant Red	7 Days After (Twin)	Perfumes & Garlands
Sudevi	Bright Gold	Brilliant Red	7 Days After (Twin)	Fresh Water & Forest Service

May the mercy of the Ashta Sakhis inspire us to serve Srimati Radharani with love, humility and dedication.

"Jaya Jaya Sri Radhe!"

How to Celebrate?

By Jiya Pandya



Hare Krishna!

As we enter this auspicious month of Kartik, we should take a moment to honor this time. Kartik is a special opportunity for devotees to deepen their love for Lord Krishna. He is especially merciful during this auspicious month because Srimati Radharani is the presiding Deity. One of the most beloved pastimes associated with this month is the beautiful pastime of Damodar lila.

In this pastime, Mother Yasoda tries to bind mischievous Lord Krishna to a wooden grinding mortar. Despite her best efforts, the rope was always two inches short. These two inches represent love and perseverance. Although Mother Yasoda tries her best, she can bind Krishna only when He agrees to be bound by her love. After surrendering to Lord Krishna, she was finally successful at binding Him.

During this pastime, Lord Krishna liberated the sons of Kuvera: Manigriva and Nalakubera.

Any service performed during Kartik results in especially great spiritual benefits. Therefore, we should take advantage of the Lord's special mercy and strengthen our spiritual practices. How can devotees make the most of this opportunity?

Chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra

We can attempt to chant more rounds attentively. Chanting is the most important thing we can do for our Sadhana. It is especially emphasized as the means of developing love for Lord Krishna.

Offer a ghee lamp

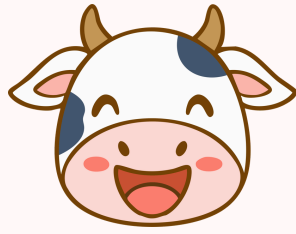
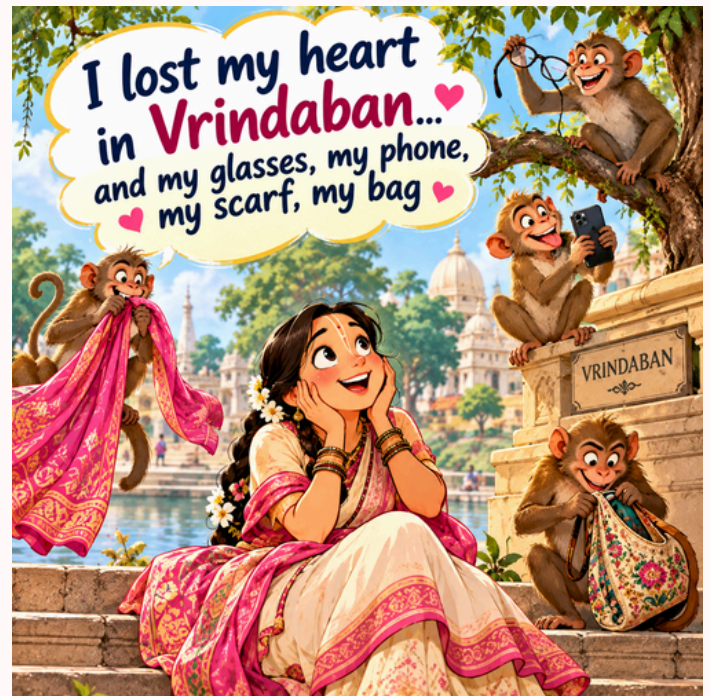
Ghee lamps represent light dispelling the ignorance and darkness in our heart. As we offer a ghee lamp, we can meditate on Lord Damodara and remember how He allows Himself to be bound by Mother Yasoda's love.

Damodarastakham

The Damodarastakham is a prayer composed of 8 verses that narrate the Damodar lila. Singing or reciting these verses helps us remember the Lord's extraordinary qualities and the sweetness of His intimate pastimes.

Of course, there are multiple ways to honor Kartik month. The above is just a wonderful place to begin. I encourage you all to set a goal and challenge yourself

'ALWAYS REMEMBER KRISHNA, NEVER FORGET KRISHNA'



Smile

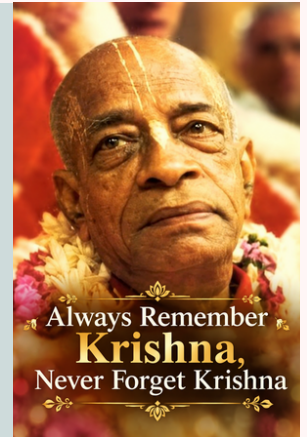
Do you have a joke to
share?
share it with us!



Our gratitude to the Vaishnavi
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for allowing us to share their "A
Spoonful of Laughter" section of
Devi Darpan

“That is the success of the movement, because younger generation, they are the flowers, the future hope of the country, of the world. If they take this movement seriously then the whole world will be happy.”

Srila Prabhupada Lecture—20 July, 1972



With gratitude,

Jiya Pandya

Abhay Hanmod

Aditi Hanmod - cover



**Join the
At The Pier Team!**

Email us at smdd@cox.net