

PRABHUPADA PASTIMES

going to walk through the forest?". "Yes". "Barefoot?". "Yes".

He then told me, "That forest is filled with scorpions and snakes. Don't go there now". I asked him, "What if I buy a pair of shoes?", but he told me it would not help. I did not know what to do so I started to walk back to Haridwar.

I walked across the bridge and started to walk back to Haridwar town. Then, all of a sudden, I heard the sound of a motor boat. I ran. I made it onto the boat just as it was about to leave. There was an important person on the other side of the river and the boat was going to pick him up.

When I returned to the house, I heard Srila Prabhupada was feeling quite ill. We used to take turns to attend Srila Prabhupada at night. Upendra Prabhu's shift was from 10pm to 12pm, I was from 12pm to 2am, Pramana Swami was from 2am to 4am and Tamal Krishna Goswami from 4am to 6am.

Around 1am Srila Prabhupada called me and said, "The time has come for me to leave this body. I want to die in Vrndavana. Make arrangements to take me to Vrndavana immediately". It was so shocking to hear Srila Prabhupada speak like this that I became stunned for a while, and then I ran downstairs to speak to Tamal Krishna Maharaja. I woke him up and told him what Srila Prabhupada had just said. Tamal Krishna Maharaja rushed up to Srila Prabhupada's room and Prabhupada repeated the same message, "The time has come for me to leave this body. I want to die in

Vrndavana so make arrangements to take me to Vrndavana".

We packed everything up that night. We planned to take Srila Prabhupada by train because travelling by car in India is not very comfortable. Tamal Krishna Maharaja and I went to the Haridwar railway station early in the morning. We wanted to book an entire carriage for Srila Prabhupada. However, we could not even get a seat in the first class compartment.

We decided to go by car. Srila Prabhupada's car was in Hrisikesh so we travelled to Delhi that day and stayed in the temple. Tamal Krishna Maharaja phoned many temples around the world. He told them that Srila Prabhupada was planning to withdraw his pastimes on this planet and everyone should come immediately.

Srila Prabhupada was very peaceful. It was summer time and very hot in Delhi. It was too hot for Srila Prabhupada to sleep inside so he decided to sleep on the roof. I was with Srila Prabhupada, just sitting there chanting. Srila Prabhupada was lying on his bed under the star studded sky. He looked over to where I was and asked, "Who is that?" I said, "It's me Prabhupada". Srila Prabhupada then asked me, "What are you doing?" and I told him, "Prabhupada I'm just attending you". "No", Srila Prabhupada replied, "you go to sleep. If I need you, I will call". I slept on the roof Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet. Prabhupada didn't call me and slept throughout the night.

Next issue: Vrndavana

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Spiritual Connections

A newsletter for the disciples and well-wishers of
His Divine Grace Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja

*nama om viṣṇu pādāya kṛṣṇa preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhakti cāru svāmin iti nāmine*



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Guru-maharaja's Personal Message:

The Most Precious Wealth of Krishna Consciousness

As the dedicated followers of His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada, our first and foremost responsibility is to practice pure devotional service according to the instructions of His Divine Grace. In order to spread this Krishna Consciousness movement all over the world Srila Prabhupada had to undergo so many difficulties, and that also at such an old age. He accepted this hardship so that the suffering conditioned souls all over the world could taste the nectarian bliss of Krishna Consciousness.

We are very fortunate that somehow or other we got this opportunity to taste that nectar. Therefore our duty is to protect this most precious wealth and utilise it with all sincerity. We should always be very careful not to lose this great wealth of Krishna Consciousness. We should always be very careful not to drift away from the shelter of Srila Prabhupada's lotus feet.

The only means to make spiritual advancement in this age is to chant the

Holy Name of Krishna offenselessly in the association of devotees.

The Hare Krishna Mahamantra is non-different from Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. Due to Srila Prabhupada's causeless mercy we got The Supreme Personality of Godhead along with His eternal consort Srimati Radharani. When our heart becomes completely purified from all material contamination, then the pure Name will manifest as Sri Sri Radha-Krishna in the temple of our hearts; then we will be able to enter into Krishna's eternal pastimes; then our lives will be successful in all respects.

We all joined ISKCON with that objective and we have to try our best to fulfill that mission with all sincerity.

Your ever well-wisher,

PRABHUPADA PASTIMES

In the last issue, I described how I began to cook for Srila Prabhupada again while he was in Bombay, and then travelled with him to Hrisikesh as his servant.

Hrisikesh is a very holy place with a lot of pilgrims. Many people wanted to see Srila Prabhupada and he was giving darshan to anyone who would come. Prabhupada was always willing to give mercy to whoever was willing to receive it.

Srila Prabhupada made himself available to whoever came to see him, but his health was not good. We felt he should not continue to exert himself so much and limited the time of darshan between 5 to 6 pm only. At 6 pm we would ask everyone to leave Srila Prabhupada's room and we continued to preach to those who were interested, in another room. We made a few devotees there during this time.

One day, a Bengali sadhu came. He was a yogi of some sort and I thought I would preach to him. When I started to speak to him, I realized that he was a hard core Mayavadi and we got into an argument. He was saying that Brahman realization is the highest. I quoted from Srimad Bhagavatam 1.2.11, *vadanti tat tattva-vidas tattvam ...*

I then told him that Brahman realization is only the preliminary experience of spiritual reality. Beyond that is Paramatma realization, and ultimately Bhagavan realization, the highest form of understanding the Absolute Truth. I told him that Brahman realization is only an external endeavour to understand the Absolute Truth. When a yogi reaches the outer limits of Brahman realization, he reached a dead end, and he cannot go beyond that. If he is fortunate then he gives up this external endeavour to understand the absolute, and projects his consciousness internally. That is the process of yoga-meditation and when he attains perfection he perceives Paramatma, the Supreme Personality of Godhead as Supersoul, within the heart of his heart and recognises himself as His insignificant servant. This is the beginning of Bhagavan realization, the highest understanding of the Supreme Absolute Truth.

That man was extremely argumentative and I was also determined to smash him, my voice was becoming louder and louder until I was literally screaming at him. When the man left, Upendra Prabhu told me that Srila Prabhupada wanted to see me. I suddenly realized, I was hardly ten feet away from Srila Prabhupada's room and I was screaming at the pitch of my voice. Srila Prabhupada must have heard everything I said, and He must be very angry with me

because of my impolite behaviour towards that sadhu.

There was always a special feeling about chastisement from Srila Prabhupada. It was not exactly fear but a combination of various strange emotions mixed with love, fear, respect and everything else all at once. It was an indescribable feeling of the heart. I was very tense as I went into Srila Prabhupada's room.

I asked Srila Prabhupada, "Srila Prabhupada! Did you call me?" "Yes," said Prabhupada, "what are you doing?" "Prabhupada, I was preaching". Prabhupada then asked me, "Oh! What were you preaching?" I thought Srila Prabhupada would really start chastising me now. In a faltering voice I told Srila Prabhupada about what that man had said and how I was preaching to him.

When I finished, Prabhupada was silent and I also remained quiet. I was anticipating a thunderbolt of Srila Prabhupada's chastisement would crack on my head at any moment. A long time passed and Srila Prabhupada did not say a word. Finally I asked Srila Prabhupada, "Prabhupada! did I say anything wrong?" "No", said Prabhupada, "whatever you said was very good". I could see he was happy that we were preaching from the scriptures.

"Prabhupada! did I say anything wrong?"

**"No", said Prabhupada,
"whatever you said was very good".**

I continued cooking for Srila Prabhupada. Sometimes he used to come to the kitchen and show us how to cook,

and on those days everyone used get involved. Although we were trying our best, Srila Prabhupada's health did not improve in Hrisikesh. One day there was a big storm and the electricity went out. Many electric poles were broken and lines were cut. It was a very difficult time for Srila Prabhupada. The whole day it was raining and there was no power. Srila Prabhupada could not work at night also. Srila Prabhupada felt very unhappy.

The next day, I went to look for a petrol lamp called "Petormax" to give Srila Prabhupada light to work. I found one in Haridwar, approximately six kilometres from Hrisikesh. When I tried to return to Hrisikesh, I learnt that the last boat had already gone. The only way back was to cross the hanging bridge called Laxman Jhula about two kilometres from there. So I walked there. The place was completely deserted. I was the only person on the bridge, and the ghostly wind in the dark night started to give me an eerie feeling.

I started to walk the two kilometres back on the other side of the river. As I was walking, I saw the road was leading into a forest path. At the edge of the forest there was a small grocery shop. The shop-keeper saw me and asked, "Where are you going?" I told him, "I'm going to 'Gangadarshan'", the name of the house we were staying in. The shopkeeper asked me, "Are you

(continued on page eight)

Translation of Sri Godruma Candra Bhajano Padesa

1. If you want your heart to be always absorbed in drinking the ambrosial mellows of the lotus feet of Lord Hari, then give up household life, which is full of quarrel and strife, and just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.
2. Material riches, youth, young duration of life and royal happiness - none of these are eternal. At any moment they may be destroyed. Give up all useless topics of mundane conversation and just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.
3. Oh friend, ultimately the pleasure to be had in the company of beautiful young women turns to fearfulness and distracts one from the real goal of life. Just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, with your mind intoxicated by the nectarean mellows of the holy name.
4. Krsna, the transcendental paramour, stands on the banks of the Yamuna with Radha, the daughter of Vrsabhanu, on His left side. He is absorbed in the pastime of playing soft melodious songs on His flute. Just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, Lord Caitanya, who is non-different from the son of Nanda.
5. He is Lord Hari, shining like molten gold and surrounded by His loving devotees in the midst of hari-kirtana. He is the ocean of mercy for the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.
6. Remaining devoted to the service of the Vaisnavas, being addicted to drinking the sweet nectar of the holy name of Hari, and with a mentality endowed with modesty, humility, and compassion, just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers.
7. Always worship Lord Gaura, the beautiful moon of Godruma's forest bowers, and call out the Lord, "O Yadava! O Madhava! O Hari! O Rama! O Janardana! O Kesava! O Beloved Lord of Radha!"
8. Just worship Lord Gaura, the moon of Godruma's forest bowers, and call out the Lord, "O Lord of Vrndavana forest, which lies along the banks of the Yamuna! O Lord of Govardhana Hill! O sun of the forest groves of Gokula! O giver of life to the rasa dance! O Gaurahari!"
9. Go to Navadvipa, the land of Lord Caitanya. Read and recite with great joy the wonderful pastime of Lord Gaurahari. Roll about in ecstasy on the banks of the Ganges, which are marked with the footprints of Lord Caitanya, and worship this Lord Gaura, the beautiful moon of Godruma's bowers.
10. Remember the wonderful pastimes of Gaura and Gadhadara. Become a servant of Gaura and Gadhadara. Listen to the beautiful narrations concerning Gaura and Gadhadara and worship Lord Gaura, the beautiful moon of Godruma's forest bowers.

reasoning.

Krishna said, "Let's arrange all this paraphernalia and foodstuffs for worshipping Govardhana Hill. We can make a big mountain of foodstuff". Hearing this, all the cowherd folk brought cart loads of food and stacked them up. They made a huge mountain with *malpuras* on the bottom, stacks of *puris*, *halavah* and huge amounts of *subjis* and sweets of all kinds. Fountains of *ghee* and rivers of milk decorated this huge mountain of food.

Krishna then said, "Let's offer this mountain to Giriraj, the king of Govardhan Hill". When the offering was finished, the form of Giriraj appeared and He was huge. He was almost touching the sky. Krishna said, "See! See! He came and He's eating". Everyone saw the gigantic form of Giriraj. He looked exactly like Krishna, except Krishna was small and Giriraj was monstrous.

Giriraj began eating by picking up large amounts of food in His hand and putting it into His mouth. He kept on eating and then drank all the water from the lakes, rivers and fountains. Everything became dry. Giriraj ate for a long time and was even mocking Krishna by making jestures with his left hand while He ate. Giriraj ate everything, but to everyone's amazement, as Giriraj put huge amounts of food in His mouth, that same amount would immediately be replaced and so the mountain of food retained it's original shape.

Giriraj was very pleased and the cowherd folks also became happy to see Giriraj was satisfied with their offering. The whole atmosphere was very joyous and the *bandis* (professional singers) were singing. In Vedic society, a group of people known as *bandis* or *charans* sing at different festivals. These *bandis* began singing, "Among all the rich people, King Nanda is the richest and most generous. Everyone is satisfied with this festival. All the demigods are pleased but surprisingly their King, Indra, remains sour".

When Indra heard about this he became very upset. He realised that a group of cowherd people had insulted him. He said, "This boy Krishna is just a cowherd boy and yet He dares

to ridicule me in this way. He doesn't know who I am! I will teach him a lesson! Why did these cowherd people stop my *puja* and worship a mountain? Just because a little boy told them to? Don't they have any intelligence? I will also teach them a lesson".

Indra immediately called for the *Sambartaka* cloud, the cloud of devastation. It is *Sambartaka* who floods the lower planetary system up to the heavenly planets at the time of partial annihilation of the universe. Indra also called for the wind. He told them to go and destroy Vrndavana.

They immediately obeyed and the residents of Vrndavana suddenly saw a dark cloud had appeared on the horizon and covered the entire sky. Cold winds came racing in from the north, and continuous lightening and thunder started to split the sky open. Everyone was

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afraid. They ran to put all the cows in the shed while the rain poured down in torrents. It was as if the whole place was about to be devastated. Scared, the cowherd folks ran to Krishna. "Krishna, Krishna save us!" Some wanted to go to a high place on Govardhana Hill but Krishna told them, "Don't worry, don't be afraid. I am here, Govardhana Hill is here. There is nothing to worry about".

Krishna knew what Indra was up to and He wanted to smash Indra's pride by worshipping Govardhana Hill. As the king of the demigods, Indra had become very proud and Krishna wanted to relieve Indra of this pride. Krishna also wanted to show everyone that He is the Supreme. Some people think that demigods are the most powerful personalities, so Krishna wanted to teach them that He is even greater

than the demigods. Krishna also established His supremacy in His pastime of bewildering Lord Brahma.

Now, to smash Indra's pride and show His supremacy, Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill on top of His little finger. Everyone was amazed to see that and Krishna smiled. "Father, did you see how Govardhana Hill became so pleased with us, He has lifted Himself up to give us protection. He is resting on my hand just like a bunch of cotton wool". Nanda Maharaja and the others were very worried. Krishna said, "Come, come under this mountain", but everyone was still worried. Krishna told them, "If I see you suffering, I will feel a lot of pain. I will feel tormented, My hand will begin to shake and the mountain may fall. Everyone should come down here quickly".

Entering the cave of Govardhana Hill, the

cowherd folk found a beautiful staircase. The cave was illuminated by many precious jewels in the walls and roof, and the floor was made of beautiful marble decorated with gems. The hollow of Govardhana Hill looked like the most exquisite royal palace, and all necessary amenities were there. Everyone was very happy to have the shelter of Govardhana Hill.

Krishna was standing in the center with Govardhana Hill on top of His left hand. Some senior *gopas* were concerned that Krishna would not be able to hold Govardhana Hill up for very long and helped Krishna by using their sticks to prop-up Govardhana Hill.

In the meantime, Indra sent lightening to survey the situation in Vrndavana. Lightening came back in a flash and reported that Vrndavana had been completely wiped out and not a single

soul had survived. Indra became very pleased and blessed lightning with a long life. Indra started to wonder what was happening in Vrndavana. He sent the servants of Pavanadeva, the wind god, to find out to what had happened. They returned very quickly and told Indra nothing happened. Indra was very surprised. He thought these servants didn't see things properly, so he sent the clouds. But they also came back saying nothing had happened.

Indra became both very angry and curious so he mounted his elephant Airavata and struck Airavata with his bow to make him move faster. Indra arrived in Vrndavana and saw an incredible sight. Govardhana Hill went up in the sky and was giving shelter to everyone like an umbrella. Indra thought that Govardhana had grown wings and was about to fly in the sky. Indra decided to cut the wings off and released his thunder bolt against Govardhana Hill. Indra released many thunderbolts on top of Govardhana Hill but nothing happened to him. Surprised, Indra began to wonder, "Who could have such powers as to defeat me? Is this boy Krishna actually Narayan? Is Narayan playing like a cowherd boy? If that is true then I better go to my Supreme Lord and beg forgiveness for my offenses".

When the residents of Vrndavana saw that the rain had stopped they came out of the cave of Govardhana Hill. Krishna was the last one to leave. When Krishna came out, Indra saw this personality playing as a little cowherd boy was none other than his worshipable Lord, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Indra approached Krishna with Surabhi, the cow of the heavenly planets.

Indra knew Krishna was very fond of cows and took shelter of Surabhi hoping Krishna would not be so angry with him. This shows us how we must approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead through His devotee. Surabhi can produce unlimited quantities of milk and she bathed Krishna with her milk while Indra offered his prayers of glorification and forgiveness to Krishna. This is how Krishna's Govardhana lila was performed.

Every mornig when Guru-maharaja is in Mayapur, he meets with all of his disciples to chant japa together. This japa session begins with Guru-maharaja leading everyone in singing one of his favourite bhajans. Below is one of these bhajans.

Sri Godruma Candra Bhajano Padesa

by Bhaktivinode Thakura (from Gitavali)

1

yadi te hari-pada-saroja-sudha
rasa-pana-param hridayam satatam
parihrtya grham kali-bhava-mayam
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

2

dhana-yauvana-jivana-rajya-sukham
na hi nityam anuksana-nasa-param
tyajagramya-katha-sakalam viphalam
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

3

ramani-jana-sanga-sikham ca sakhe
carama bhayadam purusartha-haram
harinama-sudha-rasa-matta-matir
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

4

vrabhanu-sutanvita-vama-tanum
yamuna-tata-nagara-nanda-sutam
murali-kala-gita-vinoda-param
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

5

hari-kirtana-madhaya-gatam sva-janaih
parivestita-jambunadabha-harim
nija-gaura-janaika-krpa-jaladhim
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

6

hari-sevaka-sevana-dharma-paro
harinamma-rasamrta-pana-ratah
nati-dainya-daya-para-mana-yuto
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

7

vada yadava madhava krsna hare
vada rama janardana kesava he
vrabhanu-suta-priya-natha sada
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

8

vada-yamuna-tira-vanadri-pate
vada-gokula-kanana-punja-rave
vada-rasa-rasayana gaurahare
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

9

cala gaura-vanam nava khanda-mayam
patha gaurahares caritani muda
lutha gaura-padankita-ganga-tatam
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

10

smara gaura-gadadhara-keli-kalam
bhava gaura-gadadhara-paksacarah
sru gaura-gadadhara-caru-katham
bhaja godruma-kanana-kunja-vidhum

Krsna's Pastimes in the Puranas Seminar Class Four: "Govardhan Lila"

The following is the Fourth in a series of six classes given by Guru-maharaja in his seminar "Krsna's Pastimes in the Puranas" during the Mayapur Gaura Purnima Festival 1993

Govardhan Lila

Krishna was seven years old when He saw Nanda Maharaja leading all the cowherd people of Vrndavana in organising a festival. Although Krishna had seen this festival before, out of curiosity He asked Nanda Maharaja, "Father, what is happening?" Nanda Maharaja was so busy he ignored Krishna.

"My father", said Krishna, "I am your son and you are my father. It is your duty to educate me properly". Nanda Maharaja still didn't answer so Krishna said, "Father, please tell Me what is the worship you are organising?, who is the personality to be worshiped? and what is the purpose of this worship?" Then also Nanda Maharaja didn't reply. He thought

Krishna was just a child so his questions needn't be taken seriously.

Nanda Maharaja continued organizing the

festival, but Krishna clung onto Nanda Maharaja. "My father, why don't you answer Me? Please tell me whether this worship is prescribed according to Vedic injunctions, or if it's a social custom? If it is a customary sacrifice, then you need to tell Me who the presiding deity is, what the proof of the sacrifice is and what the benefit of performing it is".

Surprised by serious questions from his little son, Nanda Maharaja took notice of Krishna and replied, "It's a customary sacrifice for pleasing Lord Indra". Hearing this Krishna told Nanda Maharaja and all the cowherd folks, "Something not prescribed by the Vedas shouldn't be taken so seriously". But Nanda Maharaja continued, "Our ancestors have performed this sacrifice for so long, it has become a hereditary custom and so it is important for us to perform this sacrifice". Krishna challenged this, "Tell me why you want to please Indra?" "Because", Nanda Maharaja replied, "Indra gives us rain, and as cowherd people we need

the rain for our cows to give us milk and for the crops to grow".

Krishna reasoned with His father, "Indra is just a demigod and demigods are bound by karma like everyone else. Whatever rewards they offer are only the result of karma, they can't give something on their own. They are dependent and cannot break the principals of karma to give extra rewards."

Nanda Maharaja still insisted and told Krishna how rain is very essential for cowherd people, so they had to do this puja (worship) to please Indra. "But father", Krishna said, "you don't actually depend upon Indra for rain because Indra offers the rain out of nature's

arrangement only. It's not because you are pleasing Indra that he is offering you rain. If that was so, why does it rain in the middle of the ocean where no-one offers any worship to Indra?"

Nanda Maharaja was surprised. This little child was so intelligent. Nanda Maharaja began to think whether it made sense. Krishna continued, "My father, as cowherd folks, we actually depend upon the mercy of Govardhan Hill. The pasturing grounds of Govardhana Hill provide the soft green grass for our cows, and the fountains and rivers offers us all the water the cows need. Govardhana Hill is giving us so many necessities, so instead of worshipping Indra, let's worship Govardhana Hill".

When Krishna suggested this, Nanda Maharaja, the senior gopas, Sunanda and Upananda, and everyone else agreed out of their love for Krishna. Love is superior to reason, so when you love someone, you accept whatever they say because of that love. Although Krishna gave the reason, the reason itself was not the most important thing. Their love for Krishna made them accept Krishna's