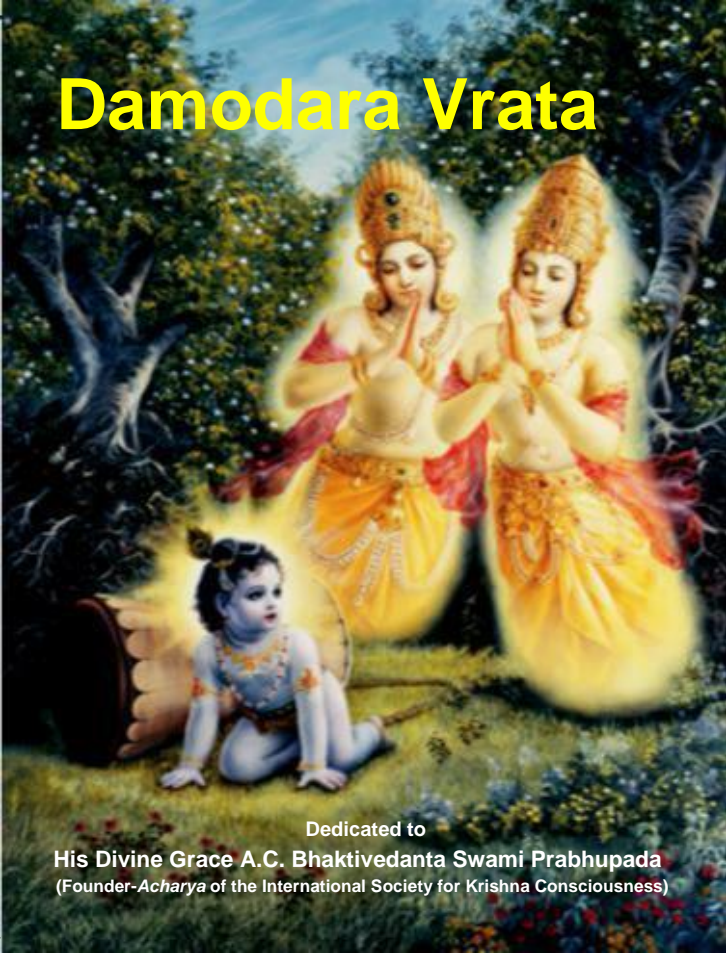


Damodara Vrata



Dedicated to

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
(Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness)



Importance of Damodara-*vrata*

In the *Padma Purana* there is a statement that one should perform the ceremonies for the Lord according to one's financial position. Everyone should observe the different ceremonies and celebrations of the Lord by all means. One of the most important of these ceremonial functions is called Urja-*vrata*.

Urja-*vrata* (also known as Damodara-*vrata*) is observed in the month of Karthika (October-November); especially in Vrindavana, there is a specific programme for temple worship of the Lord in His Damodara form. In Sanskrit, *dama* means rope and *udara* means belly. Damodara refers to Krishna's being bound with a rope by His mother, Yashoda.

It is said that just as Lord Damodara is very dear to His devotees, so the month known as Damodara or Karthika is also very dear to them. Devotees observe vows and undertake austerities in the month of Karthika to please the Supreme Lord.

The *Padma Purana* records the following statement of Suta Gosvami: If anyone fasts and observes the Damodara-*vrata* according to the rules and regulations, the Yamadutas (the messengers of Yamaraja) run away from him. The performance of Damodara-*vrata* is better than performing one hundred great sacrifices as prescribed in the Vedic scriptures.

Karthika is the best of the months and is very dear to Lord Sri Krishna. Srimati Radharani is the presiding Deity of this month. Any *vrata* observed in this month will yield more results and the effect of performing such *vrata* will last for one hundred life times. It is





said that the pious results obtained by bathing in all the holy places and giving various charities is not equal to even one ten-millionth part of the result obtained by following the vow of Karthika.

Anyone who worships Lord Vishnu in this month gets a residence in Vaikuntha. One who hears the narration related to Lord Hari in this month becomes free from the sufferings of hundreds and millions of births.

How to observe Damodara-*vrata*

The procedure to observe Damodara-*vrata* is given below:

Wake up early in the morning and take bath. The *Padma Purana* says: “One who bathes early in the morning during the month of Karthika attains the merit of bathing in all places of pilgrimage.”

Chant at least one *mala* of Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*.

You can optionally **observe a fasting vow during this month.** Gaudiya Vaishnavas fast from *urad dhal* for the whole month of Karthika. In the *Skanda Purana*, Lord Brahma informs Narada Maharishi: “One should follow Karthika fast and listen to narrations of Lord Sri Hari.”

Read the 9th and 10th chapter of the book *Krishna, the*

Supreme Personality of Godhead, authored by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, which speaks about the pastime of Damodara in detail. A summary of the pastime is also given in this booklet.



Cook varieties of vegetarian food stuffs and offer to Lord Damodara.

Perform Damodara-arati. You can sing the *Damodara-ashtaka* and offer a ghee lamp to Lord Damodara. The *Damodara-ashtaka* song is available in this booklet. You can also listen to the song at www.iskconbangalore.org/blog/damodara-ashtaka. In the *Padma Purana* it is said: “Anyone who offers a ghee lamp to Lord Damodara in the month of Karthika will be freed from all kinds of sins and he goes to the abode of Lord Hari.” The glories of offering ghee lamp is elaborately described in the next section.

You can also **offer a ghee lamp to Tulasidevi** and pray for eternal service at the lotus feet of Radha and Krishna.

You may also invite your neighbours, relatives and friends to participate in this sacred *Damodara-arati* and give them an opportunity to offer ghee lamps to Lord Damodara and accept the *prasadam* of the Lord.

Deepotsava Celebrations at ISKCON

Deepotsava is celebrated in all ISKCON centers in the month of Karthika. Devotees offer ghee lamps to Lord Damodara and sing the *Damodarashataka*. Visit your nearest ISKCON center to participate in the festival.

List of Hare Krishna centers is available in www.iskconcenters.org





Glories of offering ghee lamp in Karthika month

The following references are from the *Skanda Purana* (a conversation between Lord Brahma and Sage Narada)

If one offers a ghee lamp to Damodara in the month of Karthika, his sins of many thousands and millions of births perish.

Even if no mantras are chanted, no pious deeds performed and no purity observed, everything becomes perfect when a person offers a lamp during the month of Karthika.

Offering a lamp to Lord Keshava in the month of Karthika is equivalent to performing all *yajnas* and bathing in all holy rivers.

When someone pleases Lord Keshava by offering Him a lamp during the month of Karthika, then by the mercy of the Lord, the ancestors in the family will all attain liberation.

Whoever, either at home or in a temple, offers a lamp during this month, Lord Vasudeva gives a great result.

A person who offers a lamp to Lord Krishna during the month of Damodara becomes very glorious and fortunate.

No sins exist anywhere in the three worlds that will not be purified by offering a lamp to Lord Keshava during Karthika.

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



Damodara lila



Once when mother Yashoda was feeding her lovely son Krishna, she noticed that the milk on the stove was overflowing. So she put Krishna down and went to attend to this. Left alone by His mother, Krishna became very angry and broke the pot of butter kept there for churning. He took butter out of it, and with false tears in His eyes, He began to eat the butter in a secluded place.

Mother Yashoda sought Krishna all over. She found her son sitting on a big wooden grinding mortar kept upside down. On seeing His mother with a stick in her hand, Krishna got down from the grinding mortar and began to flee in fear. Mother Yashoda chased Him to all corners, trying to capture the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is never approached even by the meditation of great yogis.

The Supreme Lord was playing just like a little child for such a great devotee as Mother Yashoda. Finally, Mother Yashoda caught Krishna. Krishna was almost on the point of crying. His eyes became restless from fear.

Seeing that Her son was fearful, Mother Yashoda threw away the stick. To punish Him, she thought to bind Him with ropes. She did not know that it is actually impossible for her to bind the Supreme





Lord. When she tried to bind Him, she found that the rope was always short by two inches. She gathered more ropes from the house and joined them, but still she found the same shortage. In attempting to bind her son, she became tired. Then Lord Krishna appreciated the hard labour of His mother, and being compassionate upon her, He agreed to be bound up by the ropes.

Krishna, playing as a human child in the house of mother Yashoda, was performing His own selected pastimes.

Of course, no one can control the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But He agrees to be controlled by His pure devotees. Srila Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakura says that the incident of Krishna's breaking the pot of yogurt and being bound by mother Yashoda took place on the Dipavali Day. This pastime is elaborately described in the ninth chapter of the tenth canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*.



S modarashtaka

Composed by Satyavrata Muni and recorded in *Padma Purana* by Vyasa-deva



In the month of Karthika, one should worship Lord Damodara and daily recite the prayer known as *Damodarashataka*.

(Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa 2.16.198)

Sri Damodarashtaka

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

To the supreme controller who possesses an eternal form of blissful knowledge, whose glistening earrings swing to and fro, who manifested Himself in Gokula, who stole the butter that the gopīs kept hanging from the rafters of their storerooms and who then quickly jumped up and ran in retreat in fear of Mother Yaśodā but was ultimately caught—to that Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, I offer my humble obeisances. (1)

*rudantaṁ muhur netra-yugmaṁ mṛjantaṁ
karāmbhoja-yugmena sātāṅka-netram
muhuḥ śvāsa-kampa-trirekhāṅka-kaṇṭha-
sthita-graiva-dāmodaraṁ bhakti-baddham*

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 breathing quick, and as Mother Yaśodā bound His belly with ropes, He shivered in fright and His pearl necklace shook. To this Supreme Lord, Śrī Dāmodara, who is bound with His devotee's love, I offer my humble obeisances. (2)

*itīdṛk sva-līlābhir ānanda-kuṇḍe sva-ghoṣaṁ nimajjantam
ākhyāpayantam tadīyeśīta-jñeṣu bhaktair jitatvaṁ punaḥ
prematas taṁ śatāvṛtti vande*



Those superexcellent pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa's babyhood drowned the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy. To the devotees who are attracted only to His majestic aspect of Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṅṭha, the Lord herein reveals: "I am conquered and overwhelmed by pure loving devotion." To the Supreme Lord Dāmodara, my obeisances hundreds and hundreds of times. (3)

*varaṁ deva mokṣaṁ na mokṣāvadhiṁ vā na cānyam vṛṇe 'haṁ
vareśād apīha idaṁ te vapur nātha gopāla-bālaṁ sadā me
manasy āvirāstām kim anyaiḥ*

O Lord, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to You for liberation, nor eternal life in Vaikuṅṭha, nor any other boon. My only prayer is that Your childhood pastimes may constantly appear in my mind. O Lord, I do not even want to know Your feature of Paramātmā. I simply wish that Your childhood pastimes may ever be enacted in my heart. (4)

*idaṁ te mukhāmbhojam atyanta-nīlair vṛtaṁ kuntalaiḥ snigdha-
raktaiś ca gopyā muhuś cumbitaṁ bimba-raktā-dharaṁ me
manasy āvirāstām alaṁ lakṣa-lābhaiḥ*

O Lord, the cheeks of Your blackish lotus face, which is encircled by locks of curling hair, have become reddened like bimba fruit due to Mother Yaśodā's kisses. What more can I describe than this? Millions of opulences are of no use to me, but may this vision constantly remain in my mind. (5)



*namo deva dāmodarānanta viṣṇo prasīda prabho duḥkha-
jālābdhi-magnam kṛpā-dṛṣṭi-vṛṣṭyātīdīnaṁ batānu-grhāṇeśa
mām ajñam edhy akṣi-dṛśyah*

O unlimited Viṣṇu! O master! O Lord! Be pleased upon me! I am drowning in an ocean of sorrow and am almost like a dead man. Please shower the rain of mercy on me; uplift me and protect me with Your nectarean vision. (6)

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

O Lord Dāmodara, in Your form as a baby Mother Yaśodā bound You to a grinding stone with a rope for tying cows. You then freed the sons of Kuvera, Maṇigrīva and Nalakūvara, who were cursed to stand as trees, and You gave them the chance to become Your devotees. Please bless me in this same way. I have no desire for liberation into Your effulgence. (7)

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

O Lord, the entire universe was created by Lord Brahmā, who was born from Your abdomen, which was bound with a rope by Mother Yaśodā. To this rope I offer my humble obeisances. I offer my obeisances to Your most beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and to Your unlimited pastimes. (8)





