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2001 Nov 2 am - Vrndavana - Going to the Forests

[Respected Maharajas, Prabhus and Didis,  
Dandavat pranamas. Jaya Sri Sri Guru and Gauranga.

On Nov. 2, 2001 Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja took the 600 devotee-pilgrims in seven large buses from Sri Rupa-Sanatana Gaudiya Matha in Seva-kunja to Madhuvana, Lohavana, and a few other pastime places. There the devotees heard the harikatha of those places, decorated their heads, eyes, tongues, and hearts with the dust of those places, prayed to those places to replace the anarthas in their hearts with realization and love for the pastimes performed there, chanted harinama sankirtana, and honored Krsna prasadam.

Srila Maharaja did not speak very much English at these places, but much of what he did speak in English is presented herein:]

Tridandi Svami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja  
Sri Vraja-Mandala Parikrama,  
India, November 2, 2001 (am)

#### MADHUVANA

This place, Madhuvana, is very high-class. Krsna would come here with the cows for grazing, so that they could drink the sweet water, and He would also take bath here. He would call, "Niri-niri," and at once all the cows would come. He would then tell them, "dhiri-dhiri, chu-chu." Chu means drink. The cows knew the meanings of all Krsna's signals.

When Krsna and Baladeva left Vrndavana to go to Dvaraka, all the Vrajavasis were dying in separation from Them. They thought of Them at every moment. Krsna told Baladeva Prabhu, "I want to go to Vrndavana, but I cannot. Please go and pacify the Vrajavasis." Thus, leaving Krsna in Dvaraka, Baladeva Prabhu came to Madhuvana. Here He was always thinking of Krsna, always absorbed, as the gopis were always absorbed. He was always remembering Him, and in separation He would cry, "Krsna, Krsna." By such absorption, Baladeva's complexion became black, and therefore the vigraha of Baladeva here in Madhuvana is black. He was always drinking black rasa (like a juice), syama-rasa. Drinking 'syama-rasa' means that Baladeva was always thinking of Krsna. Being so absorbed, He also appears black.

Once Mother Yasoda was chastising Krsna. She accused Him, "You have stolen butter!"

Krsna said, "How is that possible? When could I have taken it? In the morning you send Me to Madhuvana with all the cows and cow-herd boys for cow grazing. The whole day I

am herding those cows, and I don't return until the evening. Now, when I come in the evening, you are calling Me a thief, saying that I steal butter. But I have not taken any butter! You must not be My mother. How can you be My mother if you can accuse Me of this? You are not really My mother and I am not really your son. I will go to the forest. I will not remain in your house any longer."

Then, immediately becoming very sorry, Mother Yasoda began weeping and said, "Oh, You are my son and I am Your mother. I know that You have not stolen any butter."

Now Krsna also became sorry, and He replied weeping, "No. I am guilty of this. I have taken the butter."

Both weeping, Yasoda and Krsna continued to argue in this way. Mother Yasoda kept saying, "No, no, You have not," and Krsna kept saying, "Yes I have."

Gaura Premanande.

## TALAVANA

By the mercy of akanda-guru-tattva Baladeva Prabhu and Nityananda Prabhu, we have come to this place called Talavana. Two tala trees are here. Krsna and Balarama came here and Denukasura was killed here. We are doing parikrama, we are chanting harinama, we are worshipping Hari, Guru and Vaisnavas, and we are hearing so much hari-katha. But where is the fruit? The fruit of these activities cannot be realized or seen by these eyes or senses because it is transcendental.

Our soul, and these activities of parikrama and so on, are transcendental. Where are all the fruits of these transcendental activities going? They are going to the transcendental atma. After some time, all maya will go away and you will realize the fruit. On the other hand, those activities that you perform with this body, by your karma, have no fruit. Don't be misguided by thinking that you are getting nothing from coming to the holy Dhama.

Many of you have come from very far away, from all over the world. You have done so much labor and spent so much money to get here. Don't think you are being cheated. A very high-class fruit is coming. We are seeing it, but you cannot see it. Guru can see, and Mahaprabhu Himself is seeing it. When you become mature in bhakti, then you will realize what wonderful fruit you have. Don't be hopeless. The fruit is coming, but you can't perceive it with your material senses. But Gurudeva can see everything. You should have strong faith in this.

You should always have honor and very strong nistha (faith), ruci (taste), and asakti (attachment). Then you will realize all these truths.

[Whatever else was spoken by Srila Maharaja in Hindi and Bengali, and also what his disciples spoke, appears now as the following excerpts from the just-published Vraja Mandala Parikrama book. This book was originally dictated by Srila Maharaja in Hindi about three years ago, and then the published Hindi edition was translated in English under his direction.]

## MADHUVANA

Madhuvana is situated south-west of Sri Mathura, about two-and-a-half miles from Bhutesvara Mahadeva. It is one of the twelve famous forests of Vraja. In Satya-yuga Bhagavan killed a demon called Madhu here, and therefore received the name Madhusudana. The name of this forest became Madhuvana. Madhuvana is as dear and sweet as Bhagavan Sri Madhusudana Himself.

Another name of Madhusudana is Madhava, because He is the dhava (priyatam or beloved) of Srimati Radhika who is sarva-laksmimayi, the foremost among all Laksmis. This Sri Madhava is the adhisthatri devata (presiding deity) of this forest. While taking bath here or performing acamana when visiting this forest, one should chant the mantra, 'om hram hrim madhuvanadhipataye madhavaya namah svaha.' Chanting this mantra makes parikrama of this forest successful. The present name of Madhuvana is Maholi Grama. On the eastern side of this village is Dhruva Tila, where the deities of the child Dhruva and his worshipable four-handed (Caturbhuja) Narayana reside. Dhruva performed severe austerities of Bhagavan here with the mantra given by Devarsi Narada. Being pleased with his worship, Bhagavan appeared before Dhruva and awarded him absolute monarchy of the entire earth for thirty-six thousand years and thereafter the imperishable Dhruva Loka. Dhruva Loka is the abode of Sri Hari within this universe.

In Treta-yuga, the risis, munis and other residents of this place were very afraid of the atrocities committed by the Madhu demon who had obtained a trident from Sankaraji after performing severe austerities. As long that trident remained in his hands, no demigod, demon or human being could defeat him. Although he was a prince in the surya-vamsa (sun-dynasty) he became very cruel and devoid of good conduct due to bad association. His father rejected him and banished him from his kingdom. Madhu lived in Madhuvana where he established a new kingdom and began to harass everyone. Mandhata, the highly illustrious king of the surya-vamsa, wanted to punish him and thus attacked him, but was killed by the trident given to the Madhu demon by Sankara. Before his death, Madhu Daitya gave that trident to his son, Lavanasura, with the information that as long as it was in his hands, no one could kill him. He said that instead, this infallible trident would kill his enemy.

With that trident in hand, Lavanasura thus became an oppressor even more cruel than his father. Distressed by his atrocities, the risis and maharsis from Madhuvana and surrounding areas went to Sri Rama in Ayodhya and humbly prayed for protection from Lavanasura. They informed Him of Lavanasura's might as well as his infallible trident

that made him invincible. It would only be possible to kill him when the trident was out of his hands.

In Ayodhya, Bhagavan Sri Ramacandraji coronated his younger brother Satrughnaji as the king of Madhuvana. Satrughnaji asked for the powerful deity of Sri Varaha that had been brought from Lanka for worship and Sri Ramacandraji happily gave Sri Varaha to him. Satrughnaji went with the risi and maharsis to the asrama of Valmiki Rsi and after receiving his blessings proceeded to Madhuvana. With bow and arrows in hand he arrived at the entrance of Lavanasura's cave when Lavanasura had gone hunting in the forest, having left his trident behind in the cave. When he returned to his cave carrying elephants, deer and many other animals that he had killed, Satrughnaji challenged him and a fierce fight ensued. Lavanasura tried to get to his trident somehow or other, but Sri Satrugna, the highly valorous and subduer of enemies, did not give him that opportunity. He cut off his head with his sharp arrows. He then settled the deserted Madhupuri and established Bhagavan Varahadeva there. This Adi Varahadeva is still present at the same place in Mathura. Bhagavan Madhava's dear Madhu Kunda is also there in Madhuvana, now called Krsna Kunda. Nearby is the cave of Lavanasura. On the bank of Krsna Kunda is the beautiful deity of Bhagavan Satrughnaji.

Towards the end of Dvapara-yuga, Sri Krsna would take lakhs of cows out to graze, walking behind them calling their names: "Dhauri! Dhumri! Kalindi!" etc. and making sounds to instruct them such as hiyo-hiyo (come, come), dhiri-dhiri (slowly, slowly), and tiri-tiri (come to the bank to drink water). He walked with Dau Bhaiya, playing His sweet flute, and laughing and joking as He placed His hands on the shoulders of the sakhas. And sometimes His thirsty eyes looked with sidelong glances at the gopis who were hiding in the kunjās. As the boys herded the cows, delightful uproars would break out amongst them. In this way, the sweet nectar of prema used to shower everywhere in Madhuvana, and it was relished by Sri Krsna and Sri Balaramaji. Hiding in the kunjās, or on the balconies or windows of their palaces, the Vraja-ramanis used to perform arati of Krsna with their loving sidelong glances, as He entered the forest and when He was returning. Krsna acknowledged His acceptance of this arati by the movement of His eyes. In separation from Krsna, these Vraja-badhū (young brides of Vraja) used to feel even a second to be like millions of yugas, and in meeting Him, a yuga to be like a fraction of a second.

The cow herding pastimes of Madhuvana are also as sweet as madhu (honey) and beyond description. While visiting Vraja, in Kali-yuga, about five hundred years ago, Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhuji came to Madhuvana where the sphurti (vision) of Sri Krsna's pastimes overwhelmed Him with ecstasy. Every year several pilgrim-groups take rest here.

It is well known that Dauji and the sakhas used to dance here, relishing the sweet nectar. Today one can also take darsana of the Deity of black Dauji here. The deep secret behind this Deity is this: After leaving Vrndavana and Mathura, Sri Krsna and Baladeva resided in Dvaraka with Their relatives. When Baladevaji heard about the restlessness and lamentation of Vraja and the Vrajāvasis in their separation from Krsna, He wanted to take

Krsna there. However, due to some delay in Krsna being able to go to Vrndavana, He went there alone and tried to console everyone as far as possible. When He saw their state of separation, however, He Himself became distressed in separation from Krsna. As He meditated upon Krsna's vraja-lilas and on Syama Krsna, and as He relished syama-rasa, He Himself took a syama-complexion. It is only this syama-rasa (nectar of Krsna) that is the madhu (sweet honey) Baladeva eternally relishes and thus remains immersed in the ecstasy of krsna-prema.

## TALAVANA

aho talavanam punyam yatra talairhato surah  
hitaya yadavananca atmakridanakaya ca  
(Skanda Purana)

"Oh! This is the same Talavana where Sri Krsna and Sri Balaramaji killed Dhenukasura for the benefit of the Yadavas and for the entertainment of the sakhas."

Talavana is situated about two-and-a-half miles southwest of Madhavana and was a beautiful, pleasant forest full of tala (palm) trees. Cruel Kamsa had appointed one of his followers, Dhenukasura, to guard this forest, which he carefully did along with many wives and sons. Only Maharaja Kamsa and his followers used to enjoy the sweet tala fruits of this forest, which was inaccessible to ordinary people.

One day, while herding the cows, Krsna and Baladeva together with the sakhas wandered near Talavana. The sakhas were very hungry, and they requested Krsna and Baladeva to protect them from the demon of hunger. They also expressed that they could detect the fragrance of sweet ripe tala fruits coming from a nearby place. Hearing this, Krsna and Baladeva took the sakhas to Talavana.<sup>1</sup>

Baladevaji shook a tree full of ripe fruit. The fruit started to fall on the ground making a 'dhap-dhap' sound and the cowherd boys jumped in ecstasy. Upon hearing the sound of the falling fruits, Dhenukasura, together with his followers, attacked Krsna and Balarama with great force, kicking them with their hind legs. Without strain or effort, Baladeva Prabhu caught the hind legs of the valorous Dhenukasura, whirled him around in the sky, and threw him to the top of a huge tala tree. The demon passed stool and urine and died. Krsna then started killing the followers of Dhenukasura and the entire Talavana became contaminated with the urine, stool and blood of the donkeys. All the tala trees fell upon each other and were thus destroyed. Later, when Talavana was cleaned up, it became easily accessible to the sakhas as well as to people in general.

There are some important and deep teachings in this narration. Sri Baladeva Prabhu is akhanda guru-tattva. Only by the mercy of Sri Gurudeva can a sadhaka protect his heart from ignorance. In other words, only Sri Gurudeva can remove all types of ignorance from a sincere disciple and infuse his heart with krsna-bhakti. Dhenukasura is the

embodiment of ignorance. Realization of krsna-tattva, bhakti-tattva and maya-tattva is possible by the mercy of Sri Baladeva Prabhu, the akhanda guru-tattva. Only then does bhakti to Krsna become strong and fixed. Due to foolishness, donkeys carry all kinds of loads in the material world. They tolerate the kicks of the she-donkeys and the beatings of the washermen, and they are very lusty. Due to their foolishness, those who do not perform bhajana of Bhagavan and are full of all the bad qualities of a donkey become very lean and thin during the rainy season when there is plenty of grass and became very fat during the summer when there is little grass. This is because when the donkey sees all the grass during the rainy season, he thinks that he has not eaten anything, and when he sees the lack of grass during the summer, he thinks that he has finished it all.

Balabhadra Kunda and the mandira of Baladevaji are here. Talavana is situated six miles south of Mathura and two miles south-west of Madhavana.

## KUMUDAVANA

Kumudavana, situated two miles west of Talavana, presently goes by the name Kudaravana. The kunda here is called Kumudini Kunda or Vihara Kunda. While cowherding, Sri Krsna, Sri Balaramaji and the sakhas used to roam throughout this beautiful place. Krsna Himself used to sport in this kunda with the sakhas and with sweet words He would call the cows here. Saying, 'cun-cun' He would make them drink water and then call them to the bank with 'tiri-tiri'. The boys garlanded each other with kumudini flowers. Sometimes, unseen by His sakhas, Krsna performed water sports (jal-vihara) with Srimati Radhika, Lalita, Visakha and other priya-narma sakhis here. There is currently a murti of Sri Kapiladevaji on the bank of the kunda. Bhagavan Kapila worshipped Svayam Bhagavan Sri Krsna at this place.

From here the pilgrimage of Vraja (vraja-yatra) proceeds to Bahulavana via Santanu Kunda. In the neighborhood on the other bank of this kunda are the pastime-places of Manako Nagara, Lagayo, Ganesara (Gandhesvari vana), Datiha, Ayore, Gaurai, Chatikara, Garuda-Govinda, and Uccagaon which are all worth visiting.

## DATIHA

This place is situated approximately six miles west of Mathura and two miles from Santanu Kunda. Krsna killed Dantavakra here. According to the Padma Purana, at the time of solar eclipse, Nanda and all the other Vrajavasis including Krsna's beloved gopis went to Kuruksetra to meet Krsna. Krsna repeatedly assured them with the words, "I shall soon return to Vraja," and sent all of them back to Vraja. Although the gopas and gopis returned to Vraja with Nanda Baba, instead of going back to Gokula Mahavana, they waited for Krsna near Datiha, on the other side of the Yamuna. The village where they resided while waiting for Krsna is called Magera or Maghera. After Krsna killed Sisupala, He came to Vraja and killed Dantavakra at this place. He then crossed the

Yamuna and met with His parents and the other Vrajavasis. Because Dantavakra was killed here this place is called Datiha.

## GARUDA GOVINDA

This place near Chattikara is where Krsna performed pastimes (vihara). One day while grazing the cows, Krsna was immersed in playing various games here with the sakhas. In their play Krsna made Sridama Sakha play the role of Garuda, climbed on his back and started playing as if Laksmipati Narayana Himself had mounted the back of Garuda. Even today can one take darsana of Govindaji with Sridama as Garuda.

## BAHULAVANA

Bahulavana is a very beautiful forest where Sri Hari's sakhi (gopi) Bahula resides. Bahula srihareh patni tatra tisthati sarvada. The present name of this place is Bati. It is situated seven miles west of Mathura, in between Radha Kunda and Vrndavana. There are two kundas here, namely Sankarsana Kunda and Mana Sarovara. Once, when Srimati Radhika, was in mana, She hid Herself in a kunja here. In separation from Her, Krsna became very distressed. With the help of the sakhis, He was able to find Her, and with great difficulty He pacified Her mana.

It is popularly believed that if a person who has a particular desire takes bath here he will get that desire fulfilled. In the temple on the bank of the kunda there are murtis of Sri Krsna, a tiger, a cow, its calf and a brahmana. According to folk-lore, once a cow named Bahula was drinking water from this pond when a fierce tiger attacked and caught her. She assured the tiger that she would return to be eaten after she had fed milk to her hungry calf and returned to the house of her master, a brahmana. She asked her calf to drink milk to his full satisfaction and told him about her promise to the tiger. The calf insisted on going with her without drinking any milk. The brahmana also prepared himself to go alone, leaving the cow and calf at home, thereby becoming a morsel of food for the tiger. In the end all three came to the tiger, each with a desire to sacrifice himself. At the same time Krsna manifested there, and the tiger underwent a change of heart. By the mercy of Krsna the brahmana returned home safely with the cow and calf.

Sri Radha Kunda is within Bahulavana, and for this reason there is a custom to take bath in Sri Radha Kunda on the day of Bahulastami. A huge assembly of people take bath in Sri Radha Kunda on that day. When Bhagavan Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu wandered around the different forests, He became overwhelmed upon seeing the natural beauty of this place. A very beautiful and heart rending description of this is given in Sri Caitanya-caritamrita (Madhya, chapter 17):

When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu entered Bahulavana, He was surrounded by the beautiful cows grazing there. They stopped eating the grass and, full of prema, began to bellow and

lick His body. Seeing the affectionate vatsalya of the cows, Mahaprabhuji became absorbed in the ecstatic waves of prema. When they were somewhat pacified, He began caressing the cows, who also did not want to give up His association, but were forced to with great difficulty by the cowherdmen. At that time Mahaprabhu was deeply absorbed in bhava and was weepingly calling out, “Kothaya Krsna? Kothaya Krsna? (Where is Krsna? Where is Krsna?)” Flocks of deer and does gathered there and without any fear began affectionately licking Mahaprabhu’s limbs. The suka, sari, kokila, papihe, and bees began singing the fifth note, and the peacocks proceeded to dance before Mahaprabhu. The trees and creepers became jubilant and filled with buds, new leaves, and flowers. With their arm-like twigs and branches they lovingly offered their flowers and fruits at the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu. Seeing these ecstatic emotions of the moving and non-moving entities of Vrndavana, Mahaprabhu became even more absorbed in bhava and called out in a loud voice, “Chant Krsna! Chant Krsna!” All the moving and non-moving entities of Vraja echoed His words. Sometimes Mahaprabhu clasped hold of the necks of the deer and does and cried piteously. They gazed at Mahaprabhu’s lotus face with love-filled glances and eyes full of tears.

Advancing a little further, Mahaprabhuji saw a suka and sari sitting on two opposite branches. A prema-kalaha (loving quarrel) glorifying Sri Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala was taking place between them.

Suka: My Krsna is madana-mohana, the enchanter of the mind of Cupid.

Sari: Yes. He is, as long as my Radha is at His left side; otherwise He is only Madana.

Suka: My Krsna held Giriraja on His finger.

Sari: Because my Radha transmitted sakti into Him, otherwise how could He have done so?

Suka: My Krsna is the life of the whole universe.

Sari: My Radha is the life of that life.

Suka: My Krsna’s head is decorated with peacock-feather.

Sari: Only because my Radha’s name is marked on that feather.

Suka: The peacock-feather on my Krsna’s head leans to the left.

Sari: Because it wants to bow down to my Radha’s feet.

Suka: My Krsna is the moon.

Sari: My Radha is the trap to capture that moon.

Suka: There is no need to quarrel uselessly. Let both of us together glorify Yugala Kisora.

Sari: I accept it with great pleasure.

In Govinda-lilamrita 13.29 Suka said:

saundaryam lalanali-dhairya-dalanam lila rama-stambhini  
tiryam kandukitadri-varyam amalah pare-pararddham gunah  
silam sarva-jananuranjanam aho yasyayam asmat-prabhur visvam  
visva-janina-kirtir avatat krisne jagan-mohanah

Suka then said, “He whose unparallel beauty plunders the wealth of patience of an innumerable multitude of women, whose world-famous glory astounds even Laksmidevi,



whose strength turns Giriraja Govardhana into a child's toy, who has unlimited qualities, whose simple disposition entertains everyone, whose glory substantiates the welfare of the entire universe; may Prabhu Jagamohana protect the entire world.”

In Govinda-lilamrita (13.30) Sari said:

sri-radhikayah priyata svarupata susilata nartana-gana-caturi  
gunali-sampata kavita ca rajate jagan-mohana-citta-mohini

Hearing this the Sarika replied, “Suka! Sri Radhika's prema, beauty, dancing, excellent calmness, expertise in music, the wealth of qualities, and poetic compositions, in other words Her erudition, are all so attractive that She attracts the heart of Sri Krsna, who enchants the heart of the entire universe.”

Suka then said (Govinda-lilamrita 13.31):

vamsi-dhari jagan-nari-citta-hari sa sarike  
vihari gopa-naribhir jiyam madana-mohanah

“Sarika! All glories to Sri Madhana-Mohana, the enchanter of Cupid, who carries a vamsi. He steals the heart of all the women in the entire universe, and enjoys and roams with the gopis.”

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu became so overwhelmed upon hearing this love-quarrel between suka and sari that He could not maintain His equilibrium and fell down on the earth in a faint. His companions somehow brought Him back to consciousness, after which He continued on His parikrama of Vraja.