

Tridandisvami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
SRI VRAJA-MANDALA PARIKRAMA AT GOVARDHANA
Sri Giridhari Gaudiya Math in Govardhana: November 2, 2002

Invocation:

namo maha-vadanyaya krsna-prema-pradaya te
krsnaya krsna-caitanya-namne gaura-tvise namah

["I offer pranama unto Sri Krsna-Caitanya, who is Sri Krsna Himself. Having assumed the golden hue of Srimati Radhika, He is munificently bestowing krsna-prema, the rarest of all gifts."]

bhajami radham aravinda-netram
smarami radham madhura-smitasyam
vadami radham karuna-bharardram
tato mamanyasti gatih na kapi

["I worship Sri Radha who has lotus eyes, I remember Sri Radha who has a sweet smile, and I speak of Sri Radha who is melted with compassion. There is nothing else for me. She is my life and soul."]

Lecture:

You are so fortunate to have come here to Govardhana, and that fortune is the causeless mercy of Sri Gurudeva, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Nityananda Prabhu, and Sri Sri Radha-Vinoda-bihari. Under the guidance of the Vaisnavas, you have been to Vrndavana, Madhavana, Talavana, Kumudavana, Bahulavana, Bhadravana, Bhandiravana, Baelvana, Lohavana, Mahavana, and other places. I was lamenting that although I had invited you all here, and you came from all over the world – from east and west, south and north – I have not been here with you. I was feeling the loss of your good company, and this has caused me unhappiness. But today we are together again, and I am so happy to see all of you. When I traveled to your counties on my previous world tours, it was very easy for us to associate together, and now I feel very fortunate because you have come from around the world to be with me in Govardhana.

Our parikrama is being managed extremely well, and it is going on very nicely. I offer my heartfelt blessings to all of you; and especially to Premananda prabhu, Tirtha Maharaja, Vana Maharaja, Aranya Maharaja, Rasananda prabhu, Padmanabha Maharaja, Sadhu Maharaja, Asrama Maharaja, and all others who are helping to make this parikrama a success. Premananda prabhu is managing the most important function – prasadam distribution to all of the devotees here. He is arranging everything for you, and if he were to stop his powerful service, everything would come to a standstill. You are engaged hearing a very high level of hari-katha, but if you are hungry you cannot accomplish anything.

Today we are here at Govardhana. Giriraja Govardhana is very kind; he is causelessly merciful. I came here for the first time in 1947 with my Gurudeva, Sri Srimad Bhakti

Prajnana Kesava Gosvami Maharaja. At that time we were engaged in the performance of Dvaraka parikrama, and we came here briefly while on that parikrama. Since then I have done Vrndavana Parikrama every year for the last fifty-five years. When we first started doing parikrama with my Gurudeva, we went with as many as 500 devotees. After some years he made me the Matha commander and caretaker of Sri Kesavaji Gaudiya Matha, and after his disappearance we continued the parikrama program. We began with nine or ten devotees, and Tirtha Maharaja was with us at that time. Now we number more than 500 devotees again, and another 200 are coming from Delhi and Mathura in the next few days. I am very gratified to see this.

Because of my recent illness, I was concerned that I might not be able to join you on this parikrama. However, by the causeless mercy of Giriraja Govardhana, I shall be able to participate to some extent. Although I am not allowed to walk very much right now, I will be fully recovered within a month, and then I will be able to walk more than before, to speak more than before, and to read and write more than before. I am hopeful that I will quickly complete the books that am working on, like Sri Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, Sri Ujjvala-nilamani, Sri Brhad-Bhagavatamrta, Sri Bhajana-rahasya, and others. Krsna is arranging everything to help me complete my work, and I am very pleased.

We will begin our program today at about 7:00am, with parikrama of Manasi Ganga. We will then go to the temple of Harideva, the predominating Deity of Govardhana, followed by a visit to Brahma Kunda where Lord Brahma performed austerities for several years. We will perform acamana at Manasi Ganga and visit Paranga Ghata, where Krsna, disguised as a boatman, enjoyed beautiful pastimes (nauka vilasa) by ferrying the gopis across the Bhagavati Manasi Ganga. Knowing that the gopis needed to cross to the other side, Krsna encouraged them to come in His boat saying, "O, come on! I will take you to the other side very quickly. My boat is well built and quite sturdy, and I am also a very strong and expert boatman."

The gopis were somewhat fearing this boatman, but it was becoming late in the evening so they climbed into the boat; and Krsna began to row it across the Ganges. When He was well into the middle of the river, Krsna spoke to the gopis in a worried voice. He said, "Actually, my boat is quite old and it has many holes – and water is leaking in. I am very weak, and I am not a good sailor at all." While speaking in this way, He began to rock the boat in such a way that it appeared it might sink at that very moment. He warned the gopis that the boat was in danger of going under, shouting, "The boat is too heavy! You will have to throw your pots of ghee and yogurt over the side of the boat!" Still the boat was rocking and unstable, and then He told the gopis, "Your ornaments are also heavy and are weighing us down. You will have to throw them into the water as well." As the boat continued to rock up and down and from side to side, Srimati Radhika became very fearful, and caught hold of Krsna and embraced Him. This is what Krsna wanted.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has written about this sweet pastime in his Sri Govardhanastakam (verse 7):

yatraiva gangam anu navi radham
arohya madhye tu nimagna-naukah
krsno hi radhanugalo babhau sa
govardhano me disatam abhistam

["In the middle of Manasi Ganga, Srimati Radhika was sitting in Krsna's boat. Krsna, dressed like the boatman, tried to sink the boat, and the terrified Radhika caught Him in Her embrace. May that Sri Govardhana fulfill all my desires."]

We will continue with our parikrama, going to the place of Cakresvara Mahadeva (north of Manasi Ganga), on to Sri Sanatana Gosvami's bhajana kutira, and then to the northern side of Manasi Ganga, which is the Mukharavinda (lotus face) of Sri Govardhana. If I am able, I will go to perform puja of Govardhana with you, as your representative, offering milk, flowers, and other paraphernalia.

I will not do parikrama with you on foot every day. I will do some parts of the parikrama by car and then return to the Matha. I am under strict orders from the doctors to allow a full month of complete rest, followed by another month of limited activity. Later on I will recuperate in Hawaii, which reminds me so much of Vrndavana. The ocean is like the Yamuna, and the nearby mountain is like Govardhana. It is very restful there.

Gaura premanande

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