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VARSA NA

[After gradually revealing Krsna's pastimes as he walked with the hundreds of international pilgrims up the hill called Brahma Parvata, the hill which is actually an incarnation of Lord Brahma himself, Srila Narayana Maharaja and the others arrived at the Sriji Mandira in Varsana. Then, after performing sankirtana of Srimati Radharani's glories, Srila Maharaja gave a short talk about the glory of Her dhama. Most of the devotees had been under the impression that Sriji Mandira is the birth-sight of Radharani, but Srila Maharaja explained, "This is one of the pastime places in Varsana, but Vrsabhanu Maharaja's palace was actually lower down the hill. The place where we are now sitting is the kunj of Srimati Radhika. On the way up the hill we saw Vilasa ghar, Dan ghar, Man ghar, Mayurkuti, and so many other places. This place was previously the kunj in which Krsna used to come to meet and pacify Srimati Radhika. This place is very elevated, because Krsna used to perform aradhana, worship, of Radhika here. Although Krsna is saktiman, the possessor of all power, and Radha is His power, still, everything, every pastime, and even every creation, cannot be done by Krsna without the help of Radhika. Krsna may desire anything, but who will fulfill His desires? Radhika will do everything.

In our evening-classes, at about 4 o'clock, the sannyasis and others will glorify Srimati Radhika. We will discuss, in this and the following classes, what is Radhika-tattva, what is Krsna-tattva; and how Krsna is serving Radhika. It is very late now, and therefore we are finishing this class and continuing our parikrama. After that we will go to our place.

Gaura Premanande! Jaya Jaya Sri Radhe! Jaya Jaya Sri Radhe! Jaya Jaya Sri Radhe!"

A few of the other places visited by Srila Maharaja and the devotees in Varsana, Yavat, and so on are presented to you in the following excerpts from his newly published Vraja Mandala Parikrama book. You will be happy to know that Srila Narayana Maharaja and the devotees who spoke the harikatha at the various pastime places also either read directly from the book as they spoke, or they read from it and then spoke. Even though Srila Maharaja himself originally dictated the information that created the book, still he sometimes read from it.]

VRSABHANU KUNDA

This kunda is situated east of the village of Varsana. Maharaja Vrsabhuna used to take his bath in this kunda every morning. He would also perform ahnika and other morning duties here. It has been described that in a previous kalpa Maharaja Vrsabhuna found Radhika in this kunda while bathing. She was a newly-born baby girl playing on a lotus flower in the water.

This charming sarovara is surrounded on all sides by jiyala trees. Sometimes, Srimati Radhika would bathe here and enjoy water sports together with Her sakhis. Rasika Vrajendra-nandana Sri Krsna would also bathe here, but at another ghata. He would then dive under the water, catch hold of the gopis' feet, and again emerge on His side of the kunda. Sometimes, Krsna would also sport with these gopis, playing hide and seek. This kunda is named after Maharaja Vrsabhanu.

SURYA KUNDA (Chota Bharana)

This kunda is situated about four miles north of Radha Kunda. Srimati Radhika used to come here with Her sakhis, especially on Sundays, on the pretext of performing worship of Mitradeva, or Suryadeva. At that time, Sri Krsna would also come here disguised as a priest, along with Madhumangala, and would perform the worship of Mitra-devata with great merriment.

Mitra has two meanings: it refers to Surya-devata (the Sungod) but also to prana-sakha, or Krsna Himself. Jatila would understand mitra to mean Surya-devata only. She could not comprehend the loving emotions of Radha-Krsna Yugala. This lila was performed in the third prahara of the day, after which Srimati would return to Javata along with Her friends and mother-in-law Jatila. Krsna and Madhumangala would also return from here to the company of the sakhis in the valley of Govardhana. Krsna's friends would run and meet Him; it was as if He had been gone for only a moment, having returned from some nearby place.

The kunj where the lila of surya-puja would take place is situated next to Surya Kunda. Since it is a place of loving enjoyment for Sri Radha-Krsna Yugala, it is also called Madana-rana- vatika. A beautiful temple of Suryadeva can also be found here. Today, Surya Kunda is also called Chota Bharana. On the west bank of this kunda the Gaudiya mahatma Sri Madhusudana Babaji used to perform bhajana. He was a greatly self-realised soul and rasika Vaisnava. Vaisnavas used to come to him from distant places to receive bhajana siksa. The famous Vaisnava Sarvabhauma Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja was a disciple of this mahapurusa.

Sri Jagannatha dasa Babaji also performed bhajana here for a long time, before moving to Sri Navadvipa Dhama. His bhajana-kuti and samadhi are in Sri Koladvipa. Sri Saccidananda Bhaktivinoda Thakura met Sri Jagannatha dasa Babaji at Surya Kunda. In the bhagavata-parampara, this siddha babaji is the guru (siksa guru) of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura.

KYON NAI (Konai)

This was an appointed meeting place of Radha-Krsna Yugala. Once, Sri Krsna was waiting for Srimati Radhika here. Some of Srimati Radhika's friends hid Her in a nearby kunj and arrived here early to test Krsna's eagerness to meet with Her. Very eagerly,

Krsna asked the sakhis, "Why has Kisoriji not come?" (Kyon na ai?) The sakhis answered in a way that increased Krsna's longing, "Abhimanyu is home today. Both Jatila and Kutila are also very vigilantly keeping watch, so She is unable to leave Her house. There is a very little possibility of Her coming to see You today." Hearing this, Krsna's face became sad and He was very distressed. Seeing Him so seriously afflicted by separation from Srimati pleased the sakhis, and they brought Srimati Radhika out from the nearby kunj, thus arranging Her meeting with Krsna.

Since Krsna asked the question, "Kyon na ai?" here, this place was named Kyon Nai, which in time degenerated into Konai, its present name. This village is situated four miles north of Sri Radha Kunda.

DIRGHAPURA (Dig)

Coming from Chattikara, Nanda Baba camped at Deravali; and from there he came to this place and camped here. In other words, he stayed here for some time before proceeding to Kamyavana. From Kamyavana, Nanda Baba went to Nandagaon. At this place, Sri Krsna shook or loosened (diga) the patience, religiosity and bashfulness of Srimati Radhika by the charm of His beauty and the sweetness of His venu. Hence, this place has been named Dig.

This place was also famous during Treta-yuga. Just as Satrugna and Bharata inhabited Mathura and Bharatapura respectively, so Laksmana resided in Dirghapura. There is the famous temple of Laksmana here. Krsna Kunda, Saksi Gopala Mandira and Rupasagara are some the places to be seen here. The Braja-yatra camps here while performing parikrama.

ADI BADRI

Once, Nanda and the other gopas and gopis desired to go to Badrinarayana in the Himalayas. Understanding this to be their heart-felt desire, Sri Krsna brought them here for darsana of Adi Badri. Adi Badri is the source of even Badri Visala, located in the Himalayas. One may have darsana of Badrinarayana, Nara-Narayana Rsi, Kuvera, Narada Rsi, Uddhava and others here.

Indra sent apsaras to break the tapasya of Nara-Narayana Rsi, but Nara-Narayana Rsi manifested Urvasi from their left thigh and shattered the pride of Indra. Just as Alakananda and Tapta Kunda are situated in Badri in the Himalayas, they are also present here. The water of the Tapta Kunda in Badri is hot, but the water of this Tapta Kunda here is presently cool.

A little further on from Adi Badri, on top of the hill, is the divine darsana of Budhe Badri, Gandhamadana Hill, Tapovana, and so on. This very attractive place is surrounded by

lush, green mountain ranges. This is the place of worship of many risis and munis and also of Gaudiya Vaisnavas.