Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

ISKCON

Festivals & Special Days

21 Oct — Dussehra / Ramachandra Vijaya

Celebrates Lord Ramachandra's victory over Ravana, and the triumph of good over evil. Also the appearance day of Srila Madhvacharya, a great teacher in the Vaishnava tradition.

22 Oct — Pasankusa Ekadasi

A special day for fasting and spending more time chanting, praying and remembering Krishna.

23 Oct

Break fast: 7:38–10:07 am.

Disappearance days of Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Goswami, great devotees and teachers in the tradition of Lord Caitanya.

25 Oct — Purnima

Lamp offering for Kartika begins. Sri Krishna's Saradiya Rasa-yatra and the disappearance day of Srila Murari Gupta.

26 Oct — Kartika (Damodara) begins

A special month for remembering Krishna and increasing our spiritual practices.

30 Oct — Disappearance of Srila Narottama Dasa Thakura

A great devotee and teacher, especially known for his beautiful devotional songs.

2 Nov — Bahulastami / Appearance of Radha Kunda

A special day connected with Radha Kunda, the sacred lake associated with Srimati Radharani and Krishna.





What Can Bind the Unlimited?

In the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition, the lunar month of Kartika, also known as the month of Damodara, is considered the most sacred time of the year. For spiritual practitioners, this month is a special opportunity. Any spiritual practice, prayer, or act of devotion performed during Kartika is said to bring many times its usual benefit. Even in a restricted environment, the essence of Kartika, developing a closer relationship with God, is fully accessible to anyone who is sincere.

The Damodara Pastime

One morning, Mother Yasoda was churning butter while singing about Krishna and thinking about her son.

Krishna came to her because He was hungry. Mother Yasoda stopped churning and took Him on her lap to feed Him.

Then she noticed that the milk on the stove was boiling over. She quickly put Krishna down and ran to save the milk.

Krishna was not happy about this! He became angry, picked up a stone and broke the butter pot. Then He found some butter and began feeding it to the monkeys.

When Mother Yasoda came back, she saw the broken pot and went looking for Krishna. She found Him sitting on an upside-down wooden mortar, giving butter to the monkeys.

When Krishna saw His mother coming, He ran away. Mother Yasoda chased Him and eventually caught Him. Krishna was crying because He was afraid of being punished.

Mother Yasoda decided to tie Him to the wooden mortar so He could not run away again. But when she tried to tie Him, the rope was two inches too short. She found more rope and joined it to the first piece, but it was still two inches too short. She kept adding more rope until all the rope in the house had been used, but it was still too short!

Mother Yasoda became tired from trying. Seeing how hard His mother was working, Krishna felt compassion for her and finally allowed Himself to be tied. Although Krishna is unlimited, He did not show His unlimited power to His mother.

What Does the Story Mean?

Krishna has many wonderful names, but Damodara means "one whose belly was bound by a rope".

Of course, no rope can really bind the Supreme Lord. Yet Krishna allowed Mother Yasoda to tie Him because of her pure love for Him.

This is the special lesson of the Damodara pastime: although Krishna is greater than everyone, He willingly becomes submissive to the love of His devotee.

Practical Ways to Observe Kartik

• **Offer a Lamp** (**or Mental Offering):** The most common practice is offering a small ghee lamp or candle to a picture of Lord Damodara each evening. If physical flames are not permitted due to safety regulations, you can practice manasa-puja; visualizing a bright, glowing lamp and offering it from your heart while circling it before the Lord.

• **Sing or Meditate on Damodarastakam**: Recite or reflect on the eight verses of the Damodarastakam prayer. These beautiful verses describe the sweet, loving nature of Lord Damodara and pray for the gift of pure devotion.

• **Increase Your Chanting**: Increasing your focus or adding extra rounds during this month carries immense spiritual merit. Try to set a steady daily vow to chant the Hare Krishna Mahamantra:

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,

Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare,

Hare Rama, Hare Rama,

Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

• **Read Sacred Pastimes:** Dedicate time daily to reading from Srila Prabhupada's books, particularly the chapters detailing Krishna's childhood pastimes in the Krsna Book or the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

• **Practice Simple Austerity:** Kartik is a traditional time for vows. You might choose a simple discipline that works for your environment, such as waking early for prayer, giving up a specific comfort food or snack, or strictly avoiding negative speech and gossip.

Chanting Tip

Chant to Build a Relationship

Yoga means connection with the Supreme Person, and chanting the Hare Krishna mantra is the most direct way to develop that connection.

Krishna is non-different from His name. When we chant, we are not simply repeating sounds that refer to God; we are calling out to Krishna Himself, who is personally present in His name.

This Damodara month, try chanting with this thought in mind: I'm calling out to Krishna, a real person (the Supreme Person!) with whom I can develop a loving relationship.

Chant with attention and sincerity. Rather than rushing through the mantra, listen to each name as you call out to Him. Just as Mother Yashoda's relationship with Krishna was personal and full of love, let your chanting become an opportunity to nurture your own relationship with Him.

The Glories of Kartik

"A person who offers a ghee lamp to Lord Krishna during Kartika attains the eternal spiritual world where there is no suffering." - Skanda Purana

"Just as there is no yuga equal to Satya-yuga, no scriptures equal to Vedas, no pilgrimage equal to Ganges, so there is no month equal to Karttika. Therefore Karttika is very dear to the Vaishnavas and they follow all its rules with proper devotion." - Skanda Purana



Getting Started

If you would like to begin practising Krishna consciousness and make the most of this spiritually special month, please write to us at the address below to order a Damodara Meditation Pack. It includes a pop-up altar where you can create a small space to remember Lord Dāmodara.

You are also very welcome to write to us with any questions about Krishna consciousness, chanting, meditation, or anything else in this newsletter. We would be very happy to hear from you and may include useful answers in future newsletters.

For your starter worship pack, please write to:

Mother Amala Manjari

Hare Krishna Chaplaincy

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