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## DAMODARA VRATA

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

We will observe *dāmodara-vrata* for one month, from 18<sup>th</sup> October to 17<sup>th</sup> November. The duty will be that in the evening you'll offer candle, a small candle, all of you, just before the deity; not within the room, outside the room; and chant the *Dāmodarāṣṭakam*.

— From a lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 1.8.31. Mayapur. 11 October 1974.

## BINDING THE BOUNDLESS

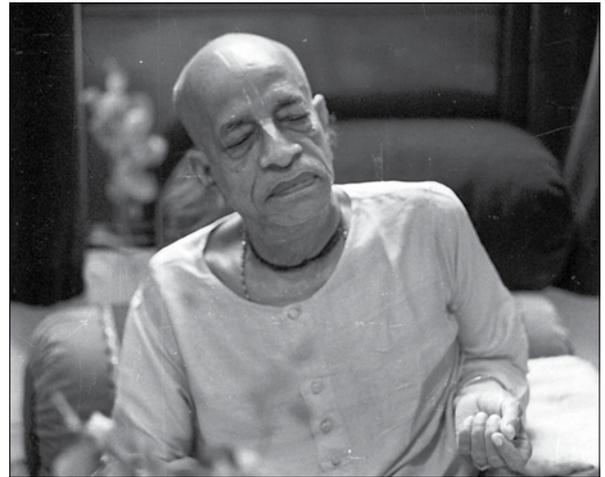
Srila Jiva Goswami's Bhagavat-sandarbha (27)

The all-pervasiveness of the Lord has been described in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.9.13 – 14) as follows:

*na cāntar na bahir yasya na pūrvaṁ nāpi cāparam  
pūrvāparam bahiḥ cāntar jagato yo jagac ca yaḥ  
taṁ matvātmajam avyaktam martya-liṅgam adhokṣajam  
gopikolūkhale dāmnā babandha prākṛtam yathā*

His [all-pervasive] body has no interior or exterior, he has no [transformations in the form of] past or future, he exists on one side (*pūrva*) as well as the other (*apara*); he exists before and after the universe; he is related to the world, and at the same time he is the world himself. Although he is imperceptible to mundane vision and beyond the grasp of material senses, Mother Yashoda saw him as an ordinary human and considered him to be her own child. Thus she tried to bind him up to the mortar using a rope, exactly like one binds an ordinary child.

Srila Sridhar Swami has commented as follows: “*Bandhana*, binding, is the act of tying up of an object



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

by fastening it with rope on all sides. Such an object has distinctions of one side and the other side. Binding is achieved by holding a rope next to one side of the object and fastening the rope around the other side. However, this verse says that such binding cannot take place in Krishna's case. Binding takes place when an object pervading all sides [such as rope] covers another object capable of being covered. However, the case here is exactly the opposite [because he is the one who is pervading everything on all sides, including the rope]. The verse also says that he is *jagat*, or the world himself. Since it is clear that there is nothing separate from him, therefore there can be no binding of him. Still, Mother Yashoda tried to tie up such a Lord.”

The term *jagac ca yaḥ*, he is the world himself, in the verse implies that he is the cause and the created

world is the effect. Without the cause, the effect cannot manifest. The rope is merely an effect, a fragment of an aspect of his energy, so how can he be bound up by such a rope? Certainly this is not possible, just as individual flames do not burn the fire which causes them to occur.

If he is all-pervasive, and it is known that nobody can bind up the universe, then how did she bind him up? In reply to this, the verse says that she thought him to be *martya-liṅgam*, a mortal, and *manuṣya-vigraham*, a human. This is also the opinion of Srila Sridhar Swami.

If he is a human then how can he be all-pervasive? The verse replies by saying he is *adhokṣaja*, beyond the grasp of material senses. He overpowers (*adho*) the knowledge acquired by the senses (*akṣa-ja*). His inconceivableness [simultaneous human body and all-pervasiveness] cannot be understood by any *pramāṇa*, means of understanding, such as *pratyakṣa*, direct perception, etc. It should be understood that he has all-pervasiveness even within that human body. By using the term *adhokṣaja* the verse automatically implies his unlimited expanse, even though it may not be explicitly highlighted.

Why could Mother Yashoda not understand that he is all-pervasive even in his humanness? The verse replies by saying that she considered him to be *ātma-jam*, her own son. The loving *rasa* named *vātsalya*, parenthood, has the special quality that due to containing an overflow of joy within itself it covers the tendencies to experience such [magnificent] aspects [of the Lord].

Such unawareness of his glories is in fact her glory, for her loving parental *rasa* [which caused her unawareness] is what brought about the process of binding him up. Her glories are articulated [by Srila Shukadev Goswami] as follows:

*nemaṁ viriṅco na bhavo na śrīr apy aṅga-saṁśrayā  
prasādaṁ lebhire gopī yat tat prāpa vimuktidāt*

Neither Lord Brahma, nor Lord Shiva, nor even the goddess of fortune, who is always the better half of the Supreme Lord, can obtain from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the deliverer from this material world, such mercy as received by the *gopī* Yashoda. (*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 10.9.20)

The verse simultaneously says *prākṛtam yathā*, just like an ordinary human, and *adhokṣajam*, beyond the grasp of the senses. This simultaneity refutes the misconception that although he is all-pervasive he [loses that all-pervasiveness and] reduces to a limited human by his *māyā*.

**[Translator's Note:** The *siddhānta* is that he is simultaneously all-pervasive and human, not that he was earlier all-pervasive and now became limited to a human form by his *māyā*. Such a proposal would be *māyāvāda*.]

If mundane objects that can be understood by ordinary logic display some impossible behaviour then such impossible behaviour can be attributed to the actions of *māyā*. However, in the case of he who is by his very nature transcendental to *māyā*, accepting the same proposition is nothing short of extreme foolishness. Such foolishness can be compared to the act of seeing the *vaḍabā* fire burning in the middle of the ocean and considering it to be the work of an ordinary magician.

**[Translator's Note:** According to Vedic literature there is an eternal flame burning in the middle of the ocean. This flame comes from the mouth of a mare named *vaḍabā*. This flame is God's arrangement to evaporate the excess waters that are deposited from the rivers in order to prevent the oceans from overflowing. If someone happens to see that fire and considers it to be the trick of a mundane magician then he is certainly foolish. An ordinary magician has no power to create such impossibilities. Similarly, attributing the humanness of the all-pervasive Lord to *māyā* is extreme foolishness for he is fully transcendental to *māyā*.]

The Veda [*Rg-veda* 10.129.6] too proclaims [his transcendence]:

*arvāg devā asya visarjanenāthā ko veda yata ābabhūva*

Even the heavenly demigods have appeared after the creation of this universe. Therefore, who actually can know the person from whom this universe appeared?

**[Translator's Note:** In other words, no one except Krishna himself knows himself fully. He is transcendental to everything and is not subject to the influence of the material energy, *māyā*. Srila Jīva Goswami now begins to give the *siddhānta* regarding the Lord.]

Finally, the conclusion conveyed through the verse is that the same person (Krishna) who was bound up is the one who is simultaneously all-pervading. Why? Because the terms *yasya* and *yaḥ*, referring to he who is all-pervading, and the term *tam*, he was bound up, in the original verse refer to the same entity, Krishna.

Also, as conveyed in the verse, the fact that Yashoda was unaware of his all-pervasiveness is what brought about his binding [for if she knew that he was all-pervasive it wouldn't have been possible for her to tie him up.]

[An all-pervasive entity cannot have a form.] A [human] form is possible only when there are limitations on his dimensions, since such a form includes hands, legs, etc., which have a fixed shape and a size. Therefore, the conclusion again is that a limited form and all-pervasiveness are both present in him simultaneously.

The fundamental truth is that the Lord is he who contains [and harmonizes] hundreds of mutually-conflicting qualities within himself. [What to speak of the Lord], it is seen that even in this world there are some objects that harmonize conflicting qualities, such as Ayurvedic medicines that simultaneously destroy the three opposing imbalances [*kapha*, *vāta* and *pitta*].

**[Translator's Note:** Usually an Ayurvedic medicine can destroy one imbalance but not the others, for these imbalances are mutually contradictory. However, some Ayurvedic medicines, such as *tri-phalā*, can destroy all imbalances simultaneously. In short, the containment of opposing qualities in a single object is not an impossible phenomenon even in this world. What then to speak of the Lord? Srila Prabhupada used to give a similar example that electricity can produce heat if passed through a heater as well as produce cooling if passed through a refrigerator.]

The all-pervasiveness of the Lord is also described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.34):

*panthās tu koṭi-śata-vatsara-sampragamyo  
vāyor athāpi manaso muni-puṅgavānām  
so 'py asti yat-prapada-simny avicintya-tattve  
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

I worship Govinda, the original Supreme Lord, only the tip of the toe of whose lotus feet is approached by the *yogīs* who aspire after the transcendental and betake themselves to *prāṇāyāma* by drilling the respiration; or by the *jñānīs* who try to find out the non-differentiated *brahman* by the process of elimination of the mundane, extending over thousands of millions of years.

A Vedic literature quoted in Sri Madhvacharya's commentary also describes [his containment of mutually contradictory qualities]:

*asthūlo 'naṇurūpo 'sāv aviśvo viśva eva ca  
viruddha-dharma-rūpo 'sāv aiśvaryaṭ puruṣottamaḥ*

Hari is neither large nor atomic. He is not intermediate-sized yet he is intermediate-sized. He is all-pervasive yet limited. He takes birth yet he has no origin. He is not of the world yet he resides in the world. He is with



Unknown artist

Krishna laughs as he plays holi

attributes yet without attributes. [In short, he contains all opposing qualities.]

The *Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad* (Uttara, 6<sup>th</sup> *kāṇḍa*) also says:  
*turīyam aturīyam ātmānam anātmānam ugram anugraṁ  
vīram avīram mahāntam amahāntam viṣṇum aviṣṇum  
jvalantam ajvalantam sarvato-mukham asarvato-mukham*

The Lord belongs to the fourth dimension [beyond the three modes of nature] yet doesn't belong to it. He is the supersoul of the world yet is not the supersoul. He is fierce yet gentle. He is strong yet feeble. He is large yet small. He is all-pervasive yet limited. He is effulgent yet shrouded in darkness. His unlimited mouths are everywhere yet they are not everywhere.

The *Brahma-purāṇa* also says:

*asthūlo 'naṇurūpo 'sāv aviśvo viśva eva ca  
viruddha-dharma-rūpo 'sāv aiśvaryaṭ puruṣottamaḥ*

The Lord is neither large nor atomic. He is not of the world yet he resides in the world. He contains and harmonizes opposing qualities, and due to showing this majesty he becomes known as Purushottam, the best among men.

Similarly, *Śrī Viṣṇu-dharma Purāṇa* says:

*paramāṅv-anta-paryanta-sahasrāmśāṅu-mūrtaye  
jātharāntāyutāmśānta-sthita-brahmāṅḍa-dhāriṇe*

[I offer obeisances] to the Lord who has various forms which are atomic in size as well as extremely small forms of the size of a thousandth part of an atom and who at the same time holds myriad universes within his belly.

Therefore, the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.4-5) also states:

*mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā  
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ  
na ca mat-sthāni bhūtāni paśya me yogam aiśvaram*

By me, in my inconceivable form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in me, but I am not in them. And yet everything that is created does not rest in me. Behold my mystic opulence!

The term *avyakta-mūrtinā* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse means that the form of the Lord is inconceivable to the faculties of mundane intelligence.

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.net).

## DIVINE DEEDS OF DAMODARA

### *Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja*

Mother Yashoda has bound up Krishna. He’s so fearful and afraid that he’s crying, *muhur netra-yugmaṁ mrjantam* — constantly he is rubbing his eyes, *karāmbhoja yugmena* — using his two lotus palms,



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## श्री कृष्णकथामृतबिन्दु

*sātaṅka-netram* — looking at his mother with fearful eyes, and *muhur-śvāsa-kampa* —breathing heavily.

This is a transcendental *lilā*. There is no question of grief in Krishna. He is full of supreme joy, *paramānanda-maya*. You should understand this in *tattva*. His dear friends see that he is tied up. He is in grief, and his mother is very angry and grave. The friends of Krishna don’t dare to go to Mother Yashoda, and they also cannot approach Krishna. What to do? Mother Yashoda has bound him to an *ulūkhala*, grinding mortar, on the veranda. They hide themselves behind some pillar or something where Mother Yashoda cannot see them, and they give Krishna a sign. “Hey! Come to the courtyard! Come to the courtyard! Come with that mortar, come! Just come down to the courtyard.”

Just see how his *priya-sakhas*, dear friends, are reciprocating with his mood. They want that their friend Krishna should be free from such bondage. What wonderful *bhāva* is demonstrated here! You should relish it. It is Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead who releases all living entities from material bondage. He is now in bondage and his dear friends are thinking how to release him from this bondage. This is pure *sakhya-bhāva*.

— From a lecture on *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.9.11. Mayapur. 29 February 1992.

## BLIND, DEAF, AND DUMB IN VRINDAVAN

### *Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati’s Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛtam (2.16)*

*parihāse ’py anyāpriya-kathana-mūko ’ti-badhiraḥ  
pareṣāṁ doṣānuśrutim anu viloke ’ndha-nayanaḥ  
śīlavan niśceṣṭaḥ para-vapuṣi bādhdhā-lava-vidhau  
kadā vatsyāmy asmin hari-dayita-vṛndāvana-vane*

Behaving like a mute man when it comes to speaking ill of others even as a joke; behaving like a completely deaf man when it comes to hearing other’s faults; behaving like a blind man when it comes to seeing the faults of others; behaving like a dead stone when it comes to using my body for giving even slight trouble to others — when will I reside in the dearest forest of Hari named Vrindavan in the abovementioned ways?

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.net)

