



Message From Our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri

This year, during Shree Mahaprabhuji's Pragatya Utsav at Shrinathdham Haveli, we learned about how lessons from His lifetime and Lilas provide useful teachings for problems we all see in society today, in the 21st century. We have spoken previously about the Bhaav behind Shree Mahaprabhuji's Lila's and His Swaroop, but this is the first time we learned about how His teachings can help social issues, all of which are particularly relevant to the youth today. The 9 themes were:

- 1) Environmental Conservation
- 2) Gau Seva
- 3) Suicide and Mental Health
- 4) Women Empowerment
- 5) Hunger and Food Waste
- 6) River Cleanups
- 7) Discrimination
- 8) Science and Religion
- 9) Religious Freedom

It is very pleasing to see you all discussing these themes in your satsangs. I encourage all the youth to learn from these Lila's and apply these principles in your day to day lives. In the future, the youth group can use these themes to address social issues in our world, guided by Shree Mahaprabhuji's teachings.

Lila - Damodar Lila

Once, seeing that her maidservant was engaged in different household work, mother Yashoda personally churned butter. While she churned butter, she sang the wonderful childhood pastimes of her son Krishna and relished thinking of Him. At that time Krishna appeared there and was hungry. He wanted her to stop churning the butter and feed Him first.

Mother Yashoda took her son on her lap and started feeding Him. While Krishna was sucking the milk, mother Yashoda smiled and enjoyed the beauty of Her child Krishna. Suddenly, the milk which was on the stove began to boil over. Just to stop the milk from spilling, mother Yashoda at once put Krishna aside and went to the stove. Left in that state by His mother, Krishna became very annoyed. He took up a piece of stone, He immediately broke the butter pot. He took butter out of it, and with tears in His eyes, He began to eat the butter in a secluded place.

In the meantime, mother Yashoda returned to the churning place after setting the overflowing milk pan in order. She saw the broken pot, in which the churned yogurt had been kept. Since she could not find her Lalan, she concluded that the broken pot was His work.

She smiled as she thought, "The child is very clever. After breaking the pot He has left this place, fearing punishment." After she sought all over, she found her son sitting on a big wooden grinding mortar, which was kept upside down. He was taking butter from a pot which was hanging from the ceiling on a swing, and He was feeding it to the monkeys.

After seeing her son so engaged, she very silently approached Him from behind. Krishna, however, saw her coming toward Him with a stick in her hand, and He immediately got down from the grinding mortar and began to flee. Mother Yashoda chased Him to all corners, trying to capture the *Purna Purshottam* (Supreme Personality of Godhead), who is extremely difficult to attain even by the meditations of great yogis. As part of this particular Lila, Shree Krishna was playing like a little child, running away from mother Yashoda, who was trying to capture Him. She tried to follow Him as fast as possible. Her hair loosened, and the flowers in her hair fell to the ground. Although she was tired, she somehow reached her naughty child and captured Him.

In order to punish Him, she thought of binding His hands with some ropes. She did not know it, but it was actually impossible for her to bind Shree Krishna. Mother Yashoda was thinking that Krishna was her tiny child; she did not know that the child had no limitation and was *Purna Purshottam* Himself. There is no inside or outside of Him, nor beginning or end. He is unlimited and all-pervading. Indeed, He is Himself the whole manifestation. Still, mother Yashoda, with her *bhaav*, was thinking of Krishna as her child. Although He is beyond the reach of all senses, she endeavoured to bind Him to a wooden grinding mortar. But when she tried to bind Him, she found that the rope she was using was short by two inches. She gathered more ropes from the house and added to it, but still she found the same shortage. In this way, she connected all the ropes available at home, but when the final knot was added, she saw that the rope was still two inches short. Mother Yashoda was smiling, but she was astonished. How was it happening?

In attempting to bind her son, she became tired. She was perspiring, and the garland on her head fell down. Then Shree Krishna, appreciating the hard labor of His mother, and being compassionate toward her, agreed to be bound up by the ropes. Krishna, playing as a human child in the house of mother Yashoda, was performing His own selected pastimes. Of course,



no one can control *Purna Purshottam* Shree Krishna. The pure devotee surrenders himself unto the lotus feet of the Lord. Similarly, the Lord also feels transcendental pleasure by submitting Himself to the protection of the devotee. This was exemplified by Krishna's surrender unto His mother, Yashoda.

Bhaavarth (Bhaav behind the Lila's):

In this Lila Shree Krishna teaches us 2 things.

Firstly, when Shree Krishna cries and creates havoc by breaking the pots when Yashoda attends to the milk instead of Him, He demonstrates that nothing is to be considered more important than Him and serving Him (His Seva). And secondly, that only when the Bhakt surrenders themselves to Shree Krishna can He be bound. Shree Krishna is not bound by anything but the bhaav of His Bhakts.

Basics Of Pushtimarg : Dhol, Paad, Kirtan

Kirtan (Haveli music) is similar to other Indian music except for one major difference - that other music is mainly meant for public entertainment while kirtan is meant and sung for *Anand* (bliss) of Shree Thakorji (in front of Shree Thakorji or in His absence), which makes it a form of bhakti. The devotee, by singing kirtans in this manner, gets their mind more and more absorbed in the swaroop and the Lilas of God.

Kirtans can be divided mainly in two categories:

1. Related to the super qualities of Shree Thakorji, Yamunaji, Mahaprabhuji, Gusaiji, etc.
2. Describing the Swaroop and Lilas.

The first one can be sung at any time but the best period for that is the time when *Seva* (worship) is not being performed or in separation (*Viraha*).

The second one can be sung in front of Shree Thakorji at the time of worship according to the time and utsav of the worship. They are sung in various proper ragas according to the season & according to the time and incident of the worship for e.g. at the time of awakening in the morning, bathing, offering Shringar & Bhog etc.

The kirtan system started right from the time of Shree Mahaprabhuji and it is popularly known as kirtans of '*Ashtachhap* (8) *Kavis* (poets)'. Out of these eight kavis, four were disciples of Shree Mahaprabhuji and the other four of Shree Gusaiji. Surdas, Kumbhandas, Parmananddas & Krishnadas were the disciples of Shree Mahaprabhuji while Nanddas, Chittswami, Chatarbhudas & Govindswami were Shree Gusaiji's disciples.

Gusainji is accredited for the colourful and illustrious Raag, Bhog and Shringar we see in Pushtimarg Seva today.

Below are descriptions of the various kirtans sung during the darshans of the day at a Pushtimargiya Haveli:

- **Before Mangala, the following is sung** : Kirtan of Mahaprabhuji, Kirtan of Gusaiji and Kirtan of Yamunaji followed by Jagave ko paad, to wake Shree Thakorji up.
- **During Mangal Bhog** : When Mangal Bhog is offered, the paads of Mangal Bhog i.e. '*Kalevu*' paads are sung.
- **After Mangal Bhog** : After Shree Prabhu has had His breakfast, Mangal Bhog, the paad '*Mangal Mangalam Vraj Bhuvi Mangalam*' is sung.



- **Shringar** : After Mangala darshan Shreeji resides on choking for snan, snan ke kirtans are sung, there after shringar are performed where shringar dharve ko paad are sung.
- **Shringar Darshan** : During the darshan of Shringar, the kirtans describing the present Shringar, as adorned by Shree Prabhu, are sung. For example, if Mukuta is offered, the kirtans describing the Shringar of Mukuta are sung. These are sung according to the season.
- **Gwal Darshan** : After this, Gwal Darshan is opened. During this, one paad of Palna is always sung. If the days of badhai are there, then badhai kirtans are sung.
- **Arrival of Rajbhog** : The Kirtanas of '*Van Bhojan*' i.e. '*Chaak*', '*Bhojan*', '*Vrajbhaktas home*', '*Bhojan at Nandbhavan*' and '*Bhojan at Nikunj*' are sung.
- **Rajbhog Sare** : At this time, the paads of '*Achavan*' and one pad of '*Biri*' is sung.
- **Utthapan Darshan** : Utthapan kirtans are sung to gently awaken the Lord from his afternoon nap.
- **Bhog Darshan** : The kirtans are sung in accordance with the Shringar and season.
- **Sandhya Bhog** : Before the darshan, the kirtans are sung in the Haveli. In sandhya also Aavni ke paad are sung, where Prabhu returns to Nandalay with cows.
- **Sandhya Darshan** : When Shree Prabhu's Shringar is taken off, during Sandhya Darshan, Avni ke paad are sung.

The following are also sung after Sandhya Aarti:

- **Byaru paad** - describing Shree Thakorji's evening (*Shayan*) meal, *Dudh ke paad* and *Biri ko paad*.

During the *Shayan* (evening) Darshan, the following are sung:

- **Maan ke paad** - As Shree Thakorji and Swaminiji perform Maan Lila.
- **Maan Milap ke paad** - As Shree Thakorji and Swaminiji get together in Maan Lila.
- **Shayan Sanmukh ke paad** - for evening Darshan of Thakorji
- **Podhave ke paad** - As we prepare for Thakorji to rest for the day.
- **Aashray Paads**: After this, the *Aashray* paads of Shree Mahaprabhuji and Shree Gusaiji are sung i.e. "*Dradh Ina Charanan Kero Bharoso*".

