



# SANDARSHAN

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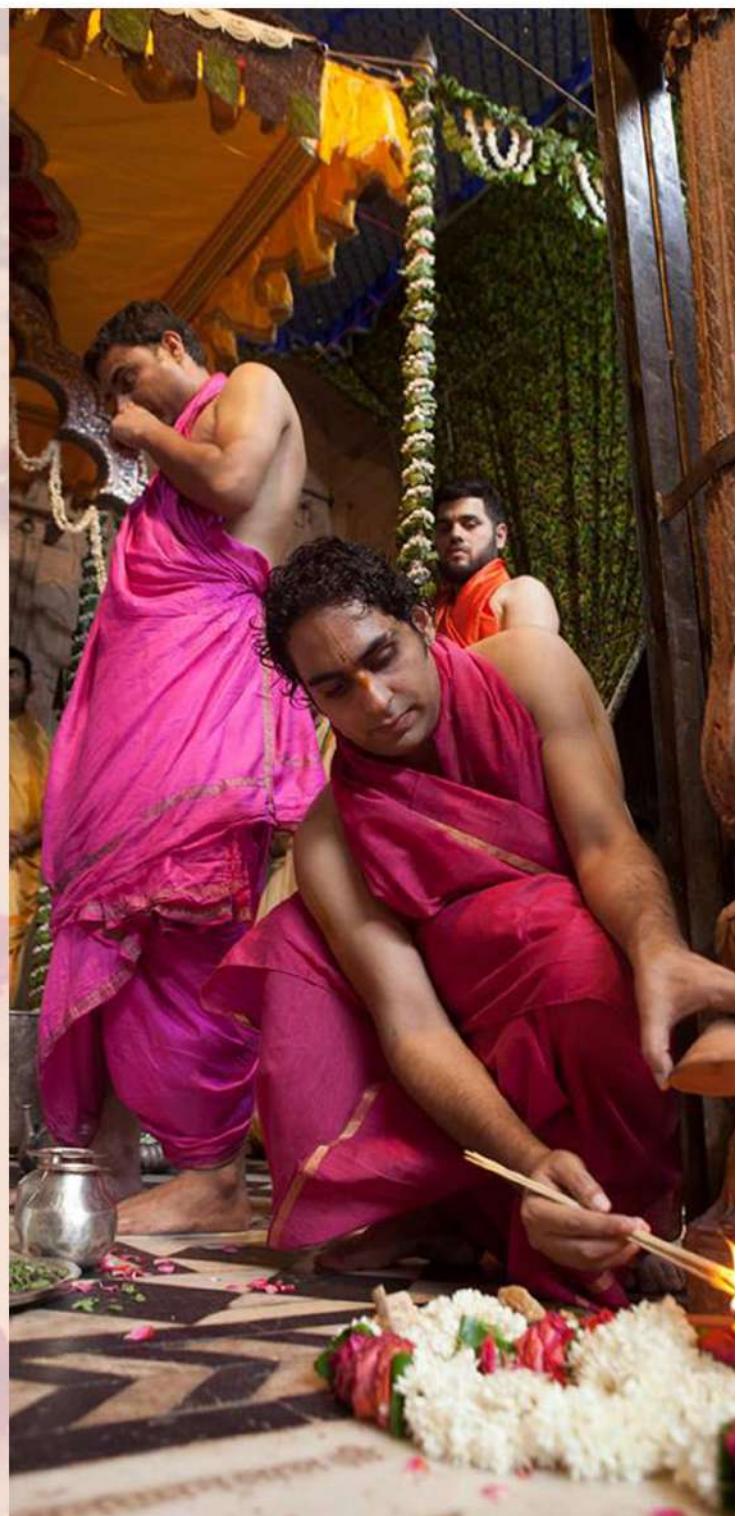
## The Right Time for Devotion

by Vaisnavacharya Chandan Goswami

Usually, people think that they should practice devotion when they are old. That all of their desires in this world should be completely satisfied first before they enter the path of devotion. But the satisfaction of one desire gives rise to a new one. The list of desires never ends. In response, Kabir Das says: "You can find yourself in the jaws of death, in the twinkling of an eye. Still you make no time for adoring the Lord. Do not say, 'It is the springtime of my life. Let me enjoy myself and leave worship for the winter of old age.' Who's to say you will live that long? The sword of death swings above your head. Love him now."

## Chaitra Purnima: The Appearance Day of Radha Kund

The holy lake Radha Kund holds a special place in the hearts of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's followers because the *kund* is a form of Radharani herself. Many saints have lived on her banks, to immerse themselves completely in spiritual practice. In the eternal *lila*, Shri Radha and Krishn spend every afternoon at Radha Kund, where they swim together, play games like *chau-* *upar* and enjoy their midday meal. Because of



its beauty and seclusion, Radha Kund is the Divine Couple's favourite secret meeting place.

Some say that Radha Kund appeared in the

month of Kartik on Bahulashtami, but this more likely signifies the day that Mahaprabhu rediscovered the kund about 500 years ago.

According to Jeev Goswami, Radha Kund appeared in this world on Chaitra Purnima:

एकादशस्य चैत्रपौर्णमास्याम् अरिष्टवधः  
*ekādaśasya caitra-paurnamāsyām arīṣṭa-vadhaḥ*

"Arishtasur was killed [and thus Radha Kund was formed] on Chaitra Purnima, when Krishn was eleven years old." (Commentary on the *Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 10.45.03)

The story of Radha Kund's appearance is told in the *Purans* and discussed by Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur in his commentary on the *Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 10.36.16.

Once a demon called Arishtasur attacked Braj, and Krishn killed him. But the demon was disguised as a bull, so Radha teased Krishn saying, "Do you know what a bad sin it is to kill

a bull? Don't you dare think of touching me! You will have to bathe in all the holy waters in the world before I would even consider letting you anywhere near me."

Accepting his Beloved's challenge with a smile, Krishn kicked the ground with his heel. At that moment, all the river goddesses appeared and bowed to him. "How can we serve



"you?" asked Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari and others. Krishn told them to join together and create a lake, where he then bathed. This lake is known as Shyam Kund.

"If you're going to give me a challenge, at least make it difficult," said Krishn. "Things that are impossible for you are easy for me. But I can't blame you girls for underestimating my talents. After all, your greatest accomplishment in life is making cowdung patties."

Radha smiled and said, "Is that so? You just watch what we're going to do!"

Radha and her *sakhis* found a deep hole made by the demon's foot, so they began to dig around it with their bare hands. Within an hour, the new lake was ready to be filled with water.

Krishn said, "What's that? Is that supposed to be your version of my lake? A big empty hole? Look girls, you obviously need some help. Do you want to take some water from my lake?"

"After you killed a bull and bathed in that lake, do you think that water is fit for anything, let alone for us?" said Radha. "I would rather walk 10 kilometres to Mansi Ganga and back a million times over, carrying the water in a pot on my head, than to take water from you."

True to their words, Radha and her *sakhis* headed towards Mansi Ganga and started filling clay pots with water. Carrying the heavy pots on their heads, they returned and poured the water in the large hole they had made. Again and again they repeated the process, but the water they brought was not nearly enough to fill the lake. Finally they all sat down, short of breath and perspiring, completely exhausted.

Till now Krishn had been sitting by his lake and watching them work. Thinking of offering his help again, he got up and started to walk towards Radha. But after seeing her unwelcoming expression, he turned right around and went back.

Krishn couldn't bear to watch Radha and the *sakhis* suffer anymore, but they were too stubborn to accept help from him directly. So he gave a signal to the river goddesses, who bowed to Radha and prayed:

"O Devi! Even Brahm, Shiv and Lakshmi cannot understand your glory. Only Krishn himself truly knows the depth of your greatness. Serving you gives him the greatest bliss, and he loves to decorate your lotus feet with red dye and jewelled anklets.

"Your Beloved wishes us to fill your lake, so that you can bathe there and cool your tired body. Please bless us with your *kripa kataksh* (merciful glance) and allow us to enter your lake."

Realising that these words of adoration were actually coming from her Beloved, Radha smiled and glanced at Krishn from the corner of her beautiful blue eyes. Then she said, "So be it." All of Braj rejoiced when the goddesses, in the form of water, flowed from Krishn's lake into Radha's, filling it up to the top.

Seeing the beauty of Radha Kund, Krishn declared, "Dearest Radhe! May your lake be forever greater and more famous than mine. I will swim and play in your lake every day. I love this lake just like I love you."

Radha replied, "Even if you kill a thousand demons here, your lake will always remain pure, and I will also bathe there. Whoever

bathes or lives near your lake is very dear to me."

That night Shri Radha and Krishn enjoyed the Raas Lila on the bank of Radha Kund, enchanting all of Braj with the nectar of their love.

The *Padma Puran* says:

यथा राधा प्रिया विष्णोस् तस्याः कुण्डं प्रियं तथा  
सर्वगोपीषु सैवैका विष्णोरत्यन्तवल्लभा

*yathā rādhā priyā viṣṇos tasyāḥ kuṇḍam priyam tathā  
sarva-gopīṣu saivaikā viṣṇor atyanta-vallabhā*

"Of all the *gopis*, Krishn loves Radha the most, and her lake is his favourite place of all."

Chaitra Purnima (The Appearance Day of Radha Kund) falls on March 31st this year.



## Akshay Tritiya and Chandan Yatra



Vaishakh Shukla Tritiya is known as Akshay Tritiya because any good action you do on this day becomes limitless (*akshay*). This makes Akshay Tritiya one of the best days for starting new projects or performing concentrated *sadhna*.

This day is also known as *chandan yatra*. The hottest part of the year has begun, so on this day, after eating his midday meal (*rajbhog*), Shri Radharaman Lal (Shriji) wears a dress made completely out of *chandan* – cooling sandalwood paste mixed with a special secret blend of camphor and herbs.

During summer in Vrindavan, the heat is so intense at midday that even the flames of the *aarti* lamp feel uncomfortable. Thus Radharamanji's *rajbhog aarti* is offered with

flowers instead of lamps from this day until Choti Sharad Purnima (the first day of Kartik). And in the evenings, Radharamanji comes out of his deity room, enchanting devotees with his close-up *sandarshan*. Throughout this period, Shriji enjoys cooling floral cottages (*phool bangla*), hand-crafted from jasmine and other fragrant flowers. And during *aulai* (late evening darshan), he wears minimal clothing embellished with flowers, as well as delicate flower ornaments such as necklaces, armlets and anklets.

The special food offering on Akshay Tritiya is sweets made of *sattu* – a mixture of barley and other grains ground into a fine powder. Cooling foods (*shital bhog*) like cucumber, melon and sprouts are also offered to Shriji on this day and throughout the summer.

# Akhteej (Akshay Tritiya)

by Gunmanjari Das Goswami

*śhrī-rādhāraman-lāl akhatīj  
paharē čandan bāgo aṅg mē priyā premaras bhīj  
det asīs sakhijan jovat bovat sukh ke bīj  
sāraṅg gāvē sukh upajāvē pāvē sītal čhīj  
palak pavan kī karē paraspas toū aṅg pasīj  
guṇmañjari jal jantra bharat hai let sevā sukh rīj*

In celebration of Akhteej (Akshay Tritiya), Shri Radharaman Lal wears clothes made of cooling sandalwood paste, moist with the love of his Darling, Priyaji. The *sakhis* offer sweet blessings to the Lovers as if they are sowing seeds of joy; they sing in *raag Sarang* for Shriji

as he drinks cooling refreshments. In an attempt to dry their perspiring bodies, the Beloveds fan each other with their eyelashes. Witnessing the effect of heat upon her dear ones, Gunmanjari fills the fountain with water and the Sweethearts relish her blissful seva.



# Upcoming Events:

## Shri Radharamanji's Appearance Day

On Vaishakh Purnima 475 years ago, Shri Radharaman Dev manifested from a *Shaligram Shila* worshipped by Gopal Bhatt Goswami, one of the main followers of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. From that time until today, Radharamanji's Appearance day is celebrated every year. This year, the 476th Appear-

ance Day of Radharaman Lal will be celebrated on April 30th. Starting at around eight thirty in the morning and continuing until after noon, Shriji's *maha-abhishek* will be performed at the Shri Radharaman Temple in Vrindavan. All devotees are most welcome to attend.

## In Memoriam: Shri Ramakant Goswami Maharaj

In the second edition of Sandarshan, we introduced you to Radharamanji's eldest servait, Shri Ramakant Goswami Maharaj. On March 8, 2018, Shri Radharaman Lal accepted Maharajji into his eternal *lila*. He was 99 years old.

Shri Ramakant Goswami Maharaj grew up in the Radharaman Temple's campus. His house was just next to Radharamanji's home, in the temple's *parikrama marg*. Even when his children moved out of Vrindavan, Maharaj stayed and continued to have Radharamanji's daily *darshan*. This he did with complete dedication,

even when his health made it very difficult for him. On one occasion, Maharaj suffered a heart attack. But shortly thereafter, he was seen in the temple taking *darshan* whilst holding on to his IV drip stand.

Maharaj used to say that when he was a child, Vrindavan was a place of *bhajan* only. This is not the case anymore. He said, "If you come to Vrindavan for business, you lose your *bhajan*." Those who were witness to his love for Radharaman and those who received his blessings are very fortunate indeed.

