



# THE DAMODARA PROGRAM

Organising the Spread of Krishna's Mercy to Every  
Town and Village

**Congregational Development Ministry  
Sri Jagannatha Mandir  
ISKCON Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA**

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**COVER:** The divine pastimes of the Lord are numerous in number, yet this pastime of affectionate love and mercy is what makes the Damodara-lila special, particularly during the *Kartika masa* (Oct-Nov). Mother Yasoda bound the Supreme Lord with love, and therefore showed us that even the unconquerable Lord, can be bounded by the unalloyed pure love of His pure devotees.

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Created for –

Congregational Development Ministry,  
Sri Jagannatha Mandir,  
ISKCON Kuala Lumpur,  
MALAYSIA.

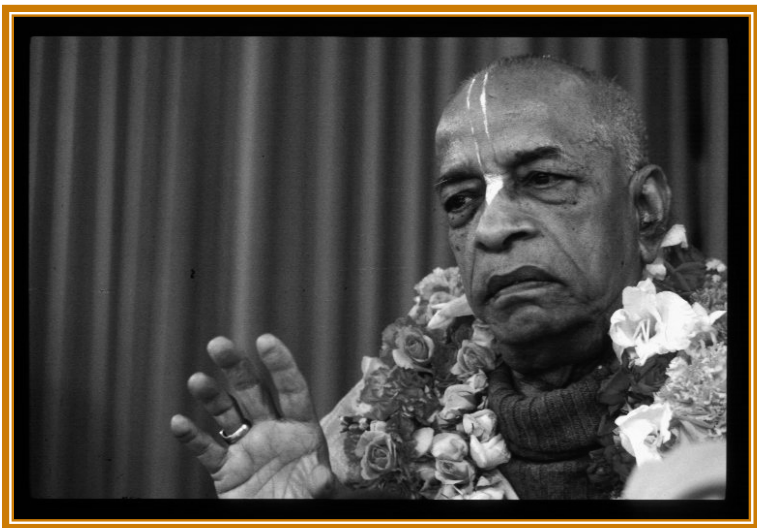


## Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, whose incomparable mercy inspired this program. Srila Prabhupada, travelled the globe saving the lives of fallen souls simply by giving them Krishna Consciousness.



We are deeply indebted to His Divine Grace, who brought about a spiritual revolution in the modern materialistic world. We pray that this Damodara Program gives satisfaction to Srila Prabhupada in presenting Krishna Consciousness to the mass people.



We also pray for the mercy of our Gurudeva, Godbrothers and Godsisters who are dedicated to the preaching mission of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.






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## Introduction



Hare Krishna,

Various unique, ingenious and creative ways have been employed by the disciples and grand disciples of HDG A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in expanding the Krishna Consciousness movement. The Festival of India, Polish Woodstock carnival, reggae bands like Celibate Lovers, rock bands, television productions, animated series, and radio presentation are among a few techniques used by devotees to preach the mission of Caitanya Mahaprabhu.


Here, at Sri Jagannath Mandir in Kuala Lumpur, we have for 5 years now performed the Damodara Festival on a large scale, spreading the mercy of Lord Damodara [Krishna] to about 500,000 people by simply providing them the chance to offer a ghee lamp to the deity form of Sri Damodara, as per the Vedic scriptures.

The Vedas state that this month of Kartika (*Damodara masa in Vaishnava Calendar*) is the most merciful and dear of months to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Hence, it is also said that one who offers a ghee lamp during this month to Lord Sri Krishna, achieves many benefits. This is but a fragment of the mercy of Sri Krishna.

Combining the act of offering the ghee lamp together with the chanting of the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, narrations of the Lord's sweet pastimes and honouring prasadam, it is surely to bring about a change in consciousness of the people at large.

The merciful quality of Vaishnavas is sung in all scriptural records. Srila Prabhupada proved this by crossing the ocean at the advanced age of 70 to deliver the fallen souls of Kali-yuga. By implementing this Damodara Program, we too can embody the spirit of *Jiva-daya*, being merciful to the conditioned souls who are oblivious to the bliss of Krishna Consciousness.

*Congregational Development Ministry, SJMKL,  
ISKCON Kuala Lumpur*



## Celebrating The Love That Binds Mother Yasoda To Her Son, Krishna

Lord Krishna has many glorious names like Gopal, Madhava, Mukunda, Hrishikesa, etc. The name, Damodara, means one who is bound by the ropes of love, and happened when The Lord was tied with a cord (daama) around His waist (udara), denoting a divine pastime in which Krishna's mother Yasoda bound Krishna for being mischievous.

Through his pure willingness to be finally bound by the pure love of Yasoda, His divine mother, He becomes submissive to His mother's love although in truth, no rope has the power to bind the Supreme Lord. It is this love that we hope to fill our hearts with, to bind Lord Krishna to us, eternally. This is beautifully illustrated in the Srimad Bhagavatam, which says, even though the Lord is greater than us in every single way, He is controlled and bound by the love of His pure devotee.

Lord Sri Krishna performed the Damodara *Lila* (pastime) to lovingly entice devotees to understand how much greater the pure love of a devotee is compared to the Almighty Lord of The Universe, that it enabled Him to be bound. Just sharing and speaking about this wonderful *lila* during the Damodara month pleases Lord Krishna so much that one becomes dear to Him.



## Glories of Damodara Month

(Kartika-masa)

Kartika-masa, also known as Damodara-masa, in accordance with Vaishnava calendars, is described in the scriptures as the best among months.

*tasmad vrata tra yam hy etan mama tiva priyankaram  
magha kartikayos tad vat tat hai vaikadasi vratam  
van aspatinam tulasi masanam kartikah priyah  
ekadasi tihi nam ca ksetranam dvaraka mama  
ete sam sevanam yastu karoti ca jitendriyah  
same vallabhatam yati na tat ha yajanadi bhih*




**Of all plants, the sacred Tulasi is most dear to Me, of all months, Kartika is most dear, of all places of pilgrimage, My beloved Dvaraka is most dear, and of all days, Ekadasi is most dear.**

**(Padma Purana, Uttara Khanda 112.3)**

The festival of offering lamps to Lord Krishna, lasts the entire month of Damodara, (Kartika, usually during Oct-Nov), which glorifies Krishna's pastime of being bound with ropes by Mother Yasoda. Observing vrata (austerities) in the month of Kartika is glorified in the *Puranas*. It is also mentioned that one who offers ghee lamps to Lord Damodara in this auspicious month and sings the Damodara *Ashtakam* (8 verses glorifying the Lord) will get rid of his past sins and develop *bhakti* (devotion) to Lord Damodara.

**"As Satya-yuga is the best of yugas (ages), as the Vedas are the best of scriptures, as Ganga is the best of rivers, so Kartika is the best of months, the most dear to Lord Sri Krishna."**

**"When one offers a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika, his sins in many thousands and millions of births perish in half an eyeblink."**



**“Please hear the glories of offering a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika, an offering that is very pleasing to Lord Kesava. 0 king of brahmanas, a person who offers a ghee lamp in this way will not take birth again in this world.”**

**“Even if there are no mantras, no pious deeds, and no purity, everything becomes perfect when a person offers a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika.”**

**“To one who either at home, or in a temple offers Him a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika, Lord Vasudeva gives a great result.”**

**“A person who offers a ghee lamp to Lord Krishna during Kartika attains the eternal spiritual world where there is no suffering.”**

**“By offering a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika one burns away a collection of sins as big as Mount Meru or Mount Mandara. Of this there is no doubt.”**

**“0 Narada, no sin exists anywhere in the three worlds that will not be purified by offering a ghee lamp to Lord Kesava during Kartika.”**



*(Source: Skanda Purana)*

**“One who offers a steady ghee lamp to Lord Hari during the month of Kartika enjoys pastimes in Lord Hari’s splendid spiritual world.”**

*(Source: Padma Purana)*

**“Of all gifts the gift of a ghee lamp during the month of Kartika is the best. No gift is its equal.”**

*(Source: Narada Purana, in a conversation of Sri Mohini-devi and Sri Rukmangada)*





## How To Offer Ghee Lamp?

Every day during this month we encourage everyone to offer ghee lamps to Lord Damodara Krishna. Everyone, indiscriminately – man, women, young and old can offer the ghee lamps. Ghee lamp offerings can be made in the morning or evening or during both times. The mini altar (included in the home kits) can be placed at the main altar in your home or anywhere suitable for offering of the ghee lamps.



- Only ghee must be used to burn the wick. Oil is discouraged.
- A simple bhajan can be sung during the puja. Best if the whole family is involved during the puja.
- While ringing the bell in your left hand show the ghee lamp in 7 circles clockwise around the picture of Lord Damodara. Then three times around the pictures of Pancha-tattva and Srila Prabhupada. After this, place the ghee lamp aside and let it burn till the end. Everyone in the home should take turns to offer the ghee lamp in similar manner.
- Singing of Damodara Astakam is very auspicious.(\*optional or at least the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra)
- Reading of Damodara's pastimes is very auspicious (\*optional) either before or after the puja
- Distribution of prasadam (sanctified lacto vegetarian food) is greatly encouraged (\*optional)
- Do not recycle the clay lamps, use fresh lamp and wick daily.



## Sri Damodara Astakam

(8 verses glorifying Lord Damodara)

Found in the Padma Purana of Kṛṣṇa Dvaipayana Vyasa, spoken by Satyavrata Muni in a conversation with Narada Muni and Saunaka Rishi.

*“In the month of Kartika one should worship Lord Damodara and daily recite the prayer known as Damodarastaka, which has been spoken by the sage Satyavrata and which attracts Lord Damodara.”*

*(Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa 2.16.198)*

(1)

namamisvaram sac-cid-ananda-rupam  
lasat-kundalam gokule bhrajamanam  
yasoda--bhiyolukhalad dhavamanam  
paramrstam atyantato drutya gopya

### TRANSLATION

To the Supreme Lord, whose form is the embodiment of eternal existence, knowledge, and bliss, whose shark-shaped earrings are swinging to and fro, who is beautifully shining in the divine realm of Gokula, who [due to the offense of breaking the pot of yogurt that His mother was churning into butter and then stealing the butter that was kept hanging from a swing] is quickly running from the wooden grinding mortar in fear of mother Yasoda, but who has been caught from behind by her who ran after Him with greater speed-to that Supreme Lord, Sri Dāmodara, I offer my humble obeisances.

(2)

rudantam muhur netra-yugmam mrjantam  
karambhoja-yugmena satanka-netram  
muhuh svasa-kampa-trirekhanka-kantha-  
sthita-graivam damodararm bhakti-baddham

#### TRANSLATION

[Seeing the whipping stick in His mother's hand,] He is crying and rubbing His eyes again and again with His two lotus hands. His eyes are filled with fear, and the necklace of pearls around His neck, which is marked with three lines like a conchshell, is shaking because of His quick breathing due to crying. To this Supreme Lord, Sri Dāmodara, whose belly is bound not with ropes but with His mother's pure love, I offer my humble obeisances.

(3)

itidrk sva-lilabhir ananda-kunde  
sva-ghosam nimajjantam akkyapayantam  
tadiyesita-jnesu bhaktair jitatvam  
punah prematas tam satavrtti vande

#### TRANSLATION

By such childhood pastimes as this He is drowning the inhabitants of Gokula in pools of ecstasy, and is revealing to those devotees who are absorbed in knowledge of His supreme majesty and opulence that He is only conquered by devotees whose pure love is imbued with intimacy and is free from all conceptions of awe and reverence. With great love I again offer my obeisances to Lord Damodara hundreds and hundreds of times.

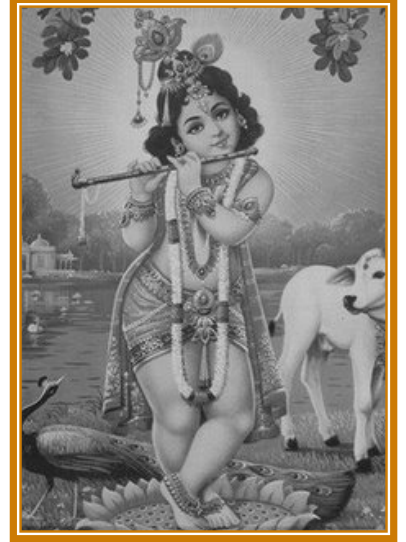


(4)

varam deva moksam na moksavadhim va  
na canyam vrne 'ham varesad apiha  
idam te vapur natha gopala-balam  
sada me manasy avirastam kim anyaih

#### TRANSLATION

O Lord, although You are able to give all kinds of benedictions, I do not pray to You for the boon of impersonal liberation, nor the highest liberation of eternal life in Vaikuntha, nor any other boon (which may be obtained by executing the nine processes of bhakti). O Lord, I simply wish that this form of Yours as Bala Gopala in Vrndavana may ever be manifest in my heart, for what is the use to me of any other boon besides this?



(5)

idam te mukhambhojam atyanta-nilair  
vrtam kuntalaih snigdha-raktais' ca gopya  
muhus cumbitam bimba-raktadharam me  
manasy avirastam alam laksa-labhaih

#### TRANSLATION

O Lord, Your lotus face, which is encircled by locks of soft black hair tinged with red, is kissed again and again by mother Yasoda, and Your lips are reddish like the bimba fruit. May this beautiful vision of Your lotus face be ever manifest in my heart. Thousands and thousands of other benedictions are of no use to me.

(6)

namo deva damodarananta visno  
prasida prabho duhkha jalabdhi-magmam  
krpa-drsti-vrsyati-dinam batanu-  
grhanesa mam ajnam edhy aksi-drtyah

#### TRANSLATION

O Supreme Godhead, I offer my obeisances unto You. O Damodara! O Ananta! O Viṣṇu! O master! O my Lord, be pleased upon me. By showering Your glance of mercy upon me, deliver this poor ignorant fool who is immersed in an ocean of worldly sorrows, and become visible to my eyes.

(7)

kuveratmajau baddha-murtyaiva yadvat  
tvaya mocitau bhakti-bhajau kṛtau ca  
tatha prema-bhaktim svakam me prayaccha  
na mokse graho me 'sti damodareha

#### TRANSLATION

O Lord Damodara, just as the two sons of Kuvera--Manigriva and Nalakuvara--were delivered from the curse of Narada and made into great devotees by You in Your form as a baby tied with rope to a wooden grinding mortar, in the same way, please give to me Your own prema-bhakti. I only long for this and have no desire for any kind of liberation.




(8)

names te 'stu damne sphurad-dipti-dhamne  
tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne  
namo radhikayai tvadiya-priyayai  
namo 'nanta-lilaya devaya tubhyam

#### TRANSLATION

O Lord Dāmodara, I first of all offer my obeisances to the brilliantly effulgent rope which binds Your belly. I then offer my obeisances to Your belly, which is the abode of the entire universe. I humbly bow down to Your most beloved Srimati Rādhārāni, and I offer all obeisances to You, the Supreme Lord, who displays unlimited pastimes.







## The Damodara Program

The Damodara Program idea was initially publicised and practiced by the congregation devotees of Sri Jagannatha Mandir, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in the spirit of spreading the mercy of Lord Sri Krishna in this most auspicious month to the masses. The efforts, after consistent successes yearly, have spread across borders and inspired other ISKCON temples around the world to do the same. The Damodara Program motive, is divided into two methods of approach and cultivation, one is the Damodara Harinam and the other the Damodara Home Puja.

### **Damodara Harinam (Carolling)**

This method of spreading the mercy of the Lord, obtains more number of people offering ghee lamps to Krishna, as every possible house in a selected harinama area is visited for a duration of 15 minutes per home. This gives a chance to as many people as possible to offer ghee lamps to His Lordship. Generally, devotees have adopted this method most because of its widespread reach in distributing the holy name and Krishna's mercy.

As more info is broadcasted through media to the public, especially on Deepavali day, the program is becoming increasingly popular with the local community. For example, our past temple president, (the late) HG Uttama Caitanya Dasa invited a local broadcasting station to record and air the glories of the Damodara month during the mass launching of the Damodara month. The following are done during the 15minute house visitation on a Damodara Harinam:

- Explanation of Damodara *lila* and glories of offering ghee lamps
  - continuous bhajan of Hare Krishna Maha Mantra or Damodara Astakam during offering ghee lamps
  - present the Damodara Home kit
- 
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The Damodara Home kit contains a specially designed altar cum calendar of Yasoda-Damodara, Srila Prabhupada and Gaura-Nitai. A CD containing Hare Krishna Maha Mantra bhajans and the Damodara Astakam is also presented along with some dry prasadam. Also, a handout of the Damodara Lila, along with glories of Srila Prabhupada and an invitation to the local temple's Sunday Feast is presented to the homes.

### **Damodara Home Puja**

This initiative focuses on the cultivation of homes that have shown amazing favourability during Damodara Harinams. A host home (devotee/non-devotee) is selected and the following is conducted; total duration of this type of program is about 1 hour

- simple bhajan Hare Krishna Maha Mantra / Damodara Astakam
- Damodara *Lila* narration
- Srila Prabhupada's glories
- offer ghee lamps
- distribute sumptuous prasadam
- special gift to host

This method allows the chosen home to invite family and friends to experience the bliss of Krishna Consciousness





## How The Damodara Program Can Benefit Your Home and Temple


The month long Damodara Festival provides an outstanding opportunity for devotees to reach out to the general public. It avails us of a unique platform for reminding past acquaintances of this auspicious month as well as another avenue to preach and seek out new contacts to increase the database of interested individuals.

Ultimately, the Damodara program serves as a congregational preaching tool, primed at promoting Krishna Consciousness through the awareness of Lord Krishna's pastimes, the chanting of the holy names, and through the divine mercy of the Lord, especially during this auspicious month. This will definitely benefit the temple by yielding more devotees and well-wishers, as the temple institution and ISKCON becomes more popular.


The Damodara program allows the planting of the seed of bhakti into the hearts of people, particularly so during this festive period when there is a general mood for worship and celebration.

With the specialized gift pack, a positive and favourable image about ISKCON can be established as devotees go out on their harinama. The activity of spreading Lord Krishna's mercy by allowing others to offer ghee lamps, exemplifies the Vaishnavas qualities. More importantly, it will serve to promote HDG Srila Prabhupada's mission.





## Damodara Lila: The Supreme Thief





Originally by Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaj




At the age of two or three, Krishna would go to the houses of the gopis and steal butter. The gopis were delighted to feed butter to Gopal, but they came to mother Yasoda and made complaints. As Gopal grew up, his wickedness also increased, and every day mother Yasoda would receive complaints from gopis. “Your son Gopal steals, steals, steals.” So mother Yasoda became angry and she thought very deeply, “Why is my son stealing? We have enough butter in our house. Why is he stealing from other houses?” She thought, “Oh, I have engaged the maidservants to churn the yogurt to make butter, I have not made it with my own hands. Therefore Gopal doesn’t like it and he goes to other houses to steal. From today, I’ll do it with my own hands.”

So with her own hands she milked the best cows available, and then churned the yogurt and prepared butter. She woke up very early in the morning and engaged in churning butter for Gopal. She was singing the glories of Gopal, while her hands were churning yogurt, the bangles on her wrists were producing a tinkling sound. Waking up and finding mother not there; little Gopal started crying.

Yasoda called him affectionately and Gopal came and tugged at her saree asking for a feed. Of course, mother Yasoda immediately embraced her dear son, and keeping Him in her lap she suckled him while rhythmically pulling the strings of the churning rod and singing Krishna's lilas to herself.

Desiring to enact another charming pastime, Krishna decided to break the sweet cosy serenity. At this time, at a distance, mother had put a big pot of milk on the stove and the milk was boiling. It began to swell up and pour over onto the ground. Noticing it, mother Yasoda immediately stood up, put Gopal on the ground, and ran to take the pot off the stove. Displaying a transcendental tantrum, Krishna, annoyed at having been so unceremoniously dumped on the ground and in his anger he broke a pot of butter which was







recently churned and quickly went to an adjacent room where He began to eat freshly churned butter kept in a pot there.




After attending to the overflowing milk, mother Yasoda returned and saw the big pot of butter completely broken to pieces and the entire butter poured out onto the ground. She could understand that this was the work of her mischievous Kannan and on the floor were his footprints. Tracing the footprints, mother Yasoda saw Krishna standing on the ulukhala, a large mortar for grinding spices.

Standing on the mortar He was stuffing butter hanging from a swing into his mouth and also generously distributing the butter to the monkeys who had assembled in the meantime. Yasoda wanted to catch Krishna red-handed. She quietly came from behind to catch him. When she came very near, he acted as though he had just noticed her and started running with his little feet patting the ground. Yasoda chased him with a stick to catch him. He, the God incarnate, whom Yogis find hard to catch and concentrate on in their minds, can He be caught so easily? One minute He seemed close, so easy to catch, the next minute He was far away. When this went on for some time, Yasoda began to perspire profusely. The flowers decking her hair fell on the ground. Gopal was running, but not straight but like a snake, running in a zigzag way. She became tired and her hair was all scattered.

At last, mother's eye fell upon the reddish lotus feet of Gopal. Those reddish lotus feet of the Lord are the object of meditation of the devotees. She thought, "Oh, such soft feet. If they are pricked by some thorn, Gopal will get so much pain." With this thought, she became morose. When the devotee's vision is fixed at the reddish lotus feet of the Lord, he becomes captured. Gopal thought, "Now I'll be caught. Mother is very tired, so I'll allow her to catch me." In this way mother Yasoda caught him.

Seeing mother in this angry mood, Gopal started crying. His earrings were shaking because of heavy breathing. His chest was moving up and down, and with his two palms he was rubbing his eyes. There was a black ointment that mother had put on his eyes





and this ointment had become smeared over his black face and the red palms of his hands, making it look even more beautiful.

The Supreme Lord, who is fearful to all demons, was crying out of fear, seeing the cane in his mother's hand. Thinking that her child was truly frightened, she threw the stick away. She, however, decided to chasten him so that he would not repeat it. She said, 'All right, I will not beat you, but I am going to tie you to this mortar. Let me see how you will do any mischief behind my back.' Saying this, she went inside to get a rope for tying him.



Holding him by one hand she went off in search of a rope. Finally finding a length of rope, she sat down and proceeded to tie him up to a tall heavy mortar standing in the veranda thinking he wouldn't be able to move from there for some time. Now, when the time came to knot the rope, the rope was just short by about two fingers.




Finding another piece of rope, she tied it to the first rope and winding it around Krishna's belly (Daam) to use up the slack she tried to knot it. Again it was short by about two fingers. Again and again she tried, and again and again she found the rope too short by two fingers.

Thus poor Maiya became very perplexed and tired, and Kannna, seeing His affectionate mother hassled and perspiring, allowed Himself to be bound. Being compassionate, He did not show her His unlimited potency.

After Mother Yasoda bound Krishna, she chastised him soundly and rose to attend to her household work. Seeing her gone, Krishna soon got bored and observed two yamala-arjuna trees, which were actually Nalakuvera and Manigreev, the two sons of Kuvera who had been cursed by Devrishi Narada to become trees. Remembering that Narada had prophesied that He (Krishna) would liberate the two demigods from the curse in Dwapara Yuga, he crawled toward the two tall trees dragging the heavy mortar behind him.

By His causeless mercy, Krishna decided to fulfill his dear devotee Narada's words. Dragging the mortar slowly he inched closer and closer to the two trees. Reaching the middle of the two trees which





were quite close together, Krishna crawled in between the trees and saw that the mortar was stuck in between, being too large to get through. He tugged, and tugged and gave the mortar one forceful pull.



There was a huge crashing sound as the two trees fell to the ground on either side of Krishna in an earth-shaking noise. The whole of Vrindavan heard the crash and trembled wondering what the noise could be. Mother Yasoda and all the household people ran helter-skelter trying to find Krishna through the dust haze that rose to the sky. Not finding her Kanu tied to the mortar Maiya almost fainted with anxiety.




Just then Nanda Baba also rushed into the house and found everyone in complete panic, crying and shouting and pointing to the yard. Running to where the dust was still thick and high he found his beloved Kanna apparently sitting peacefully in all the mess - two tall trees lying on either side of him.

Unseen to any human eyes, the two demigods who had been liberated from their curse and assumed their original effulgent forms glorified and eulogised the Lord and after paying their humble obeisances to Him had departed to their celestial realm.

When the twin arjuna trees fell to the ground, making a sound like the falling of thunderbolts, all the inhabitants of Gokula, including Nanda Maharaja, immediately came to the spot. They were very much astonished to see how the two great trees had suddenly fallen. At the same time, they were very much perturbed because such uncommon incidents were always happening to the child Krishna. While the elderly cowherd men were thus contemplating, the small children who were playing there informed the men that the trees fell due to Krishna's pulling the wooden mortar with the ropes to which He was bound.

Most of the cowherd men did not believe the statement of the children. They could not believe that such things were at all possible. Some of them, however, believed them and told Nanda Maharaja, "Your child is different from all other children. He just





might have done it." Nanda Maharaja began to smile, hearing about the extraordinary abilities of his son. He came forward and untied the knot to free his wonderful child. After being freed by Nanda Maharaja, Krishna was taken onto the laps of the elderly gopis. They took Him away to the courtyard of the house and began to clap, praising His wonderful activities. Krishna began to clap along with them, just like an ordinary child. The Supreme Lord Krishna, being completely controlled by the gopis, began to sing and dance, just like a puppet in their hands.

It is natural for children to have this nature of stealing, so in his childhood days Krishna stole butter. When he grew up, in his pauganda-lila between six and ten years of age, he stole the garments of the damsels of Vraja. And when he grew up a little bit in kaishora-lila, his boyhood days from eleven to fifteen, he stole the hearts of the gopis. As isvara, as the Supreme Lord, he also steals the papa-tava, the sin and afflictions of the bhaktas. He is the supreme thief, caura-graganya. He may steal you, only you are not worthy of stealing. If you prepare yourself, if you develop pure prema-bhakti, then Krishna will steal your heart. He is such thief, the supreme thief.

Chant....

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA**

**KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE**

**HARE RAMA HARE RAMA**

**RAMA RAMA HARE HARE**

....and be happy

