

# Govardhan Puja



Traditionally, the residents of Vrindavan including Nanda Maharaj and all the cowherd men would annually worshipped Indra, the King of Heaven, who is responsible for supplying water. However, Krishna convinced his father to forgo the sacrifice to Indra and instead worship Govardhan Hill. He explained to his father Nanda Maharaj “This cosmic manifestation is going on under the influence of three modes of material nature—goodness, passion and ignorance. These three modes are the causes of creation, maintenance and destruction. The cloud is caused by the action of the mode of passion; therefore it is the mode of passion which causes the rainfall. And after the rainfall, the living entities derive the result—success in agricultural work. What, then, has Indra to do in this affair? Even if you do not please Indra, what can he do? We do not derive any special benefit from Indra. Even if he is there, he pours water on the ocean also, where there is no need of water. So he is pouring water on the ocean or on the land; it does not depend on our worshiping him. As far as we are concerned, we do not need to go to another city or village or foreign country. There are palatial buildings in the cities, but we are satisfied living in this forest of

Vrindavan. Our specific relationship is with Govardhana Hill and Vrindavan forest and nothing more. I therefore request you, My dear father, to begin a sacrifice which will satisfy the local brahmanas and Govardhana Hill, and let us have nothing to do with Indra.” Krishna thereafter instructed Nanda Maharaj to proceed with the Govardhan puja by preparing various foodstuffs to offer to Govardhan, give charity to brahmanas and decorate the cows and feed them. The ceremony of offering various foodstuffs to the Govardhan is also called Annakuta festival. ISKCON temples across the world celebrate Govardhan puja annually by decorating and worshipping mountains of foodstuff which symbolize Govardhan mountain. Devotees at ISKCON celebrate the festival by performing abhishek to Sri Giriraja-shila, preparing huge quantities of bhoga which includes sweets, savories and other foodstuffs for offering and offer puja and food offering to go-mata (cow and calf).

## GoPuja



Lord Krishna, as the teacher of human society, personally showed by His acts that the mercantile community, or the vaisyas, should herd cows and bulls and thus give protection to the valuable animals. According to smriti regulation, the cow is the mother and the bull the father of the human being. The cow is the mother because just as one sucks the breast of one's mother, human society takes cow's milk. Similarly, the bull is the father of human society because the father earns for the children just as the bull tills the ground to produce food grains. Human society will kill its spirit of life by killing the father and the mother. It is mentioned herein that the beautiful cows and bulls were of various checkered colors—red, black, green, yellow, ash, etc. And because of their colors and healthy smiling features, the atmosphere was enlivening. (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Srimad Bhagavatam-3:2:29.purport.) "Similarly, this Bhagavad-gita is the essence of all Vedic literature, just like milk is the essence of the blood. Blood... The milk is nothing, but it is cow's blood transformed. Just like mother's milk. The mother's milk, wherefrom it comes? It comes from the blood, but transformed in such a way that it becomes nutritious to the child,tasteful to the child.Similarly, cow's milk also, a most nutritious and valuable food. So it is compared that this Bhagavad-gita is the milk of the cow of Vedic literature. And the milkman is Krishna Himself. And the drinker of the milk is..., we are, Arjuna, through Arjuna. So these things are there." (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. 3rd June 1968. Bhagavad Gita lecture.

Montreal.)"Personified dharma, he's inquiring from the cow. He's addressing cow, amba. Amba means mother. So cow is our mother. Why mother? Because from practical point of view, we drink milk. So how mother... How cow is not mother? She's mother. We are taking her milk. There are seven mothers according to Vedic-civilization:

atma-mata-guroh-patni

brahmani-rajapatnī

dhenur-dhatri-tathapṛithvī

saptaita-matarah-smritah. Real mother, from whose womb we have come to this world, real mother, atma-mata. Then guroh patni, wife of the teacher or spiritual master, guroh patni. Brahmani, the wife of a

brahmana. Atma-mata guroh patni brahmani raja-patnika, and the wife of the king, or the queen. She's also mother. Dhenu, the cow. Cow is also mother. And dhatri means nurse. Nurse is also mother. Tatha prithvi, and the earth, the earth is also our mother. That we say in country, in the country which we take birth, we say desa-matrika. In Sanskrit it is called desa-matrika. That is also mother. Mother land, mother language. So this... So many mothers we have got, out of which, cow is also mother. Therefore she's addressed as amba. Amba means mother. Still in Gujarat province, they call amba. And in U.P., United States, er, United Province, in India, they also call amba, or in a broken language they call amma. Still... That is from very long time, mother is... Amba-devi. There is a... From Amba-devi, there is a big temple of Mother Durga, Kali, in Bombay. So this Amba-devi was pronounced by the Englishmens as Bamba-devi, and from Bamba-devi it has come to "Bombay." Actually, there is a big temple of Amba in Bombay. From that name, instead of Amba, they have become Bamba. Just like from Sindhu, they have called, they have designated the inhabitants of Sindhu-desa as "Hindu." The Muhammadans, they pronounce s as h. So from "Sindhu," it has come to "Hindu." Otherwise, this "Hindu" name is not mentioned in any Vedic literature. It is given by the... This name is given by the other foreigners. Especially the Arabian countries, they used to call this nation, Bharata-varsha... Actually, Hindu is not a religion. Hindu is a name given by the foreigners. The religion is, of India, varnasrama-dharma, following the institution of four varnas and four asramas. That is varn... Or sanatana-dharma. Sanatana-dharma means eternal, eternal religion. Religion of human being is one. That is called sanatana. A living entity is described as sanatana. Mamaivamso jiva-bhuto jiva-loke sanatana. In the Bhagavad-gita you'll find sanatana, and Krishna is also addressed in the Eleventh Chapter as sanatana tvam. And there is another place, or spiritual world, which is also called sanatana. In the Bhagavad-gita you'll find, paras tasmāt tu bhavo 'nyo 'vyakto 'vyaktat sanatana. So this sanatana term is very important. The living entity is sanatana and God is sanatana and the spiritual world is sanatana, and the process by which your lost relationship with God established and you go back to home back to Godhead, that is called sanatana-dharma. Sanatana-dharma. That is our eternal relationship with God." (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. 15th January 1974. Srimad Bhagavatam lecture SB 1:16:19. Hawaii).