

The Glories of Giriraja

Welcome to this Kartik inspiration!

Today is Govardhan-puja. Ragnunatha Goswami offers a few beautiful lines about Govardhan. He says, “May Sri Govardhan always protect you! He received the adoration from Sri Krishna when Krishna effortlessly lifted him with His left hand and held him with great affection for seven days.

“May Sri Govardhan always protect you! Govardhan’s caves are decorated with the kunkum that fell from the bodies of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna.

“May Sri Govardhan, the stone slabs of which look exactly like the jewel-studded couch belonging to Sri Sri Radha and Krishna, always protect you!”

High words. Poetic words. Words that ring with ecstatic devotion. In the last glorification, Giriraja’s stone slabs are described to look like jewel-studded furniture, a couch to be precise. Yes, one can sometimes see this. However, it is very clear that to see Vrindavan or Giriraja, one needs to look with a new set of eyes. In Bhakti-ratnakara, chapter five, there is a statement by Raghava Pandit, “All the places where Krishna performed His pastimes— and that includes Govardhan—can only be seen in ecstasy by people who are fortunate.”

This ecstatic, or let us say at least love-felt vision, is very important in order to look past the litter that is sometimes around Giriraja; to look past these huge lakes of monsoon water that were there when I arrived in Vrindavan. These loving eyes can actually be used to see the transcendental reality.

There is a prayer of Ragnunatha Goswami, who says, “When will I wander around the slopes of Govardhan Hill constantly chanting, ‘Oh Radhe! Oh Krishna!’ as if being ecstatic, totally ecstatic?”

This is the mood in which we can relish Vrindavan.

Chant! And the chanting will have an effect on your heart. Sing while you are walking! Pray while you are stopping and standing before a holy place. Give some offering—a flower or a small amount of rupees. Do something to express affection and love. Then the new sets of eyes will spring into action.

In the Brihad-Bhagavatamrita, there is an interesting passage where Gopa Kumar tells a newcomer the secrets of seeing Vrindavan. He says, “Following the instructions of Sri Narada, I am always chanting the holy names of my beloved Sri Krishna, and I am residing in Sri Vrindavan, singing about and remembering His pastimes. Although I have attained this ecstatic condition while witnessing these pastimes of Sri Krishna, and I have kept these ecstatic feelings within the heart, I am feeling ashamed. How can I talk about this to anyone who comes new to Vrindavan?”

So, yes, look through the eyes of bhava, or devotion, and then you will be able to see Vrindavan as it truly is, in all its splendor. Then you will feel that Govardhan is the greatest servant of Krishna. Or you will see him as the Lord Himself, who is willing to accept your services. In any way in which you look at Govardhan, there is one principle: look through a new set of eyes!

Welcome to the next Kartik inspirations!

Ragnunatha Goswami
SACINANDANA SWAMI

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devotion, and you will be able to see
Govardhan as he truly is —
either as the greatest servant,
or as the Lord Himself.