

Dīpa-dāna-māhātmya

(The glories of offering an oil lamp to the Lord)

In *Skanda Purāṇa*, in the conversation (*saṁvāda*) between Śrī Brahmā and Śrī Nārada, it is said: “By offering a lamp for even half a moment in a temple of Lord Viṣṇu in the month of Kārtika, all sins are destroyed and one does not have to take birth again on Earth. O *muni-śārddula* (excellent sage)! What is the need to perform charity or other sacrifices in Kurukṣetra at the time of a solar eclipse, or in the Narmadā River during a lunar eclipse, for one whose *ghee* (clarified butter) or sesame-oil *pradīpa* (lamp) is kindled in a temple of Viṣṇu? In the month of Kārtika, all activities of the lamp offerer yield full benefit even if they are performed without the proper purificatory rites (*kriyā*), without the chanting of *mantras*, or without purity of body and mind (*śauca-hīna*). One who has offered a lamp in front of Lord Keśava in the month of Kārtika has already performed all types of sacrifices (*yajñas*) and bathed in all *tīrthas* (holy waters at places of pilgrimage). O Nārada! The ancestors say that any child born on Earth in their lineage, who satisfies Lord Keśava by offering a lamp in the month of Kārtika, will surely get liberation (*mukti*) by the grace of Lord Cakra-pāṇi (Śrī Viṣṇu who carries *sudarśana-cakra*). By offering a lamp in a temple of Lord Vāsudeva (Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Śrī Vasudeva Mahārāja) in the month of Kārtika, one receives an eternal spiritual destination devoid of all obstacles. O great sage! Present and future descendants of one who offers a lamp by burning camphor in the month of Kārtika definitely get liberation by the causeless mercy of Lord Cakra-pāṇi. O best of *brāhmaṇas* who are knowers of the *Vedas* (Vipendra)! In the month of Kārtika, by illuminating a temple of Lord Viṣṇu or an

abode of *Vaiṣṇavas* (devotees of Lord Viṣṇu) with an oil lamp, even for fun, one gains wealth, success, and fame, and seven generations of his forefathers and descendents are purified. O great sage! It is the duty of a poor person to offer a lamp during the month of Kārtika until Kārtikī Pūrṇimā, the full moon night marking the end of Kārtika, even if he must sell himself. A foolish person who does not offer a lamp in a Viṣṇu temple in the month of Kārtika is not eligible to be called a *Vaiṣṇava*.”

It is stated in *Padma Purāṇa* and *Nārada Purāṇa*, in a conversation between King Rukmāṅgada and his second wife Mohinī: “One who continuously lights a lamp near Śrī Hari in the month of Kārtika will attain a divinely radiant spiritual body and live in Viṣṇu-loka or Vaikuṅtha, the abode of Lord Viṣṇu. Offering a lamp in the month of Kārtika is more important than giving charity.”

In the Brahma-Nārada-*saṁvāda*, a conversation between Lord Brahmā and his disciple Nārada Muni in *Skanda Purāṇa*, it is stated that by lighting a lamp which belongs to others in the month of Kārtika, and by serving *Vaiṣṇavas*, one attains the fruits of great sacrifices (*mahā-yajñas*) like *anna-dāna* (giving sanctified food or Lord Kṛṣṇa's grain *prasāda* in charity) and Rājasūya sacrifice. “O best of learned *brāhmaṇas* (*Vipendra*)! Many people have attained a rare human birth simply by lighting someone else's lamp in a temple of Śrī Hari in the month of Kārtika. Donating the entire Earth with all of its oceans, or giving in charity millions of cows and calves, is not equal to even a sixteenth-portion of the pious merit accrued by placing a lamp on the top of a temple of Lord Viṣṇu. O great sage! Even if one gets paid, if one lights a lamp inside or on top of a temple of Lord Hari, one-hundred generations of his forefathers and descendants

will be liberated. O best of learned *brāhmaṇas*! What to speak of lighting a lamp on top of Lord Viṣṇu's temple, even those who just see a temple of Lord Viṣṇu adorned by lit-up oil lamps in the month of Kārtika are glorious. None of their family members will ever go to hell to suffer atrocities at the hands of the Yama-dūtas (messengers of Yama-rāja, the superintendent of hell). The demigods desire the company of persons who offer lamps in a temple of Lord Viṣṇu. O best of sages! By offering a lamp on the top of a temple of Lord Viṣṇu until *Kārtikī Pūrṇimā* in the month of Kārtika, one easily attains *bhagavat-pārśadatva*, a position as an eternal associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

Dīpamāla-Māhatmya

(The glories of lighting up a series of oil lamps
on the top of a temple of Lord Viṣṇu)

In a dialogue between Lord Brahmā and Sage Nārada in *Skanda Purāṇa*, it is said that for those who artistically arrange a series of lit-up oil lamps (*dīpa-mālā*) outside and inside a temple of Lord Hari, the millions born in their family lineage will never see hell. Such persons attain *sārūpya-mukti*, a form identical to that of Lord Viṣṇu, and they reach the supreme abode of Vaikuṅṭha. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* states that those who light a lamp containing *ghee* on Dvādaśī (twelfth day of the lunar cycle) or *Utthāna Ekādaśī* (eleventh day of the lunar cycle) in the month of Kārtika, especially at the time of Lord Viṣṇu's awakening from His four-month slumber during *cātur-māsya* (four months of the rainy season), are glorious. They attain a bodily luster as bright as ten-thousand suns, and they board a divine airplane which takes them to the abode of Lord Viṣṇu, *Viṣṇu-loka* or *Vaikuṅṭha-loka*.

Ākāśa-dīpadāna-māhātmya

(The glories of lighting an oil lamp and offering it to the sky)

It is said in *Padma Purāṇa* that those who light a lamp up towards the sky for the satisfaction of Lord Dāmodara Keśava in the month of Kārtika attain wealth, prosperity, opulence, and a virtuous son. Later they will be born as a *sulocana-viśiṣṭa* scholar (scholar who has wonderful eyes), and in the end they purify their family lineages and go to *Viṣṇu-loka*.

Ākāśa-dīpadāna-mantra

(*Mantra* to be chanted while offering a lamp to the sky)

dāmodarāya nabhasi tulāyām lolayā saha
pradīpante prayacchāmi nabho'nantāya vedhase

—(Statement of *Padma-purāṇa*
as quoted in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* 16/66)

O Damodara! I am offering a lamp to the sky in the month of Kārtika for the pleasure of You and Mahālakṣmī (the original Goddess of Fortune) Śrīmatī Rādhikā. O Eternal Lord! O *Vidhātā*! I offer obeisances unto You.