

# Dandavats Diary

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## ▼ Day 1

- mind already tripp'n about "how we going to do this?" Had to make it equipoise by reminding it of how vandanam (prostrations) gave us shelter when we couldn't chant japa, couldn't hear, was somehow away from sankirtana, and mind was too disturbed to do manana (focus deliberation) on Bhagavan's glories
- As JG writes in Bhakti Sandarbha "Vandanam (offering obeisances) is prescribed separately for devotees who...feel themselves unfit to render service to Bhagavan's feet, to meditate on his qualities, or to engage in other practices. They exert their full attention simply in offering namaskāra to Bhagavan. This very namaskāra is also counted as arcana (worship of the deity) of Bhagavan"
- It's also a point of great inspiration that Krsna's most secret teaching out of all most secret topics (sarva-guhyatama) which constitutes his highest instruction (parama vacah) brings to the fore the practice of obeisances to Him, Sri Krsna specifically: man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru.
- We first went to manasi ganga, Harideva (the presiding deity of Govardhana where Krsna is said to have lifted Govardhana), and cakaleśvara mahadeva

(Siva) and sought blessing and then began.

- The mantra that I invoked before offering my first obeisance (a practice I hope to maintain without) and which held me through today's experience is a couple verses from PadmaPurana and Brahma-vaivarta purana respectively: "In the word namah (obeisance), the syllable ma refers to the ahankrti (self asserting ego/separate I-sense) and the syllable na means the negation of that. Therefore the word namah indicates the living being's conscious relinquishment of the false sense of independence...." "For those devoid of ahamkara, Sri Kesava is not at all distant. But for those full of ahamkara, mountain ranges stand between them and Bhagavan"
- "Let's shrink those mountain ranges baby"...body drops, namah!
- As the body is getting more and more "dirty" (from the empirical perspective) the image of a baptism is invoked in my mind and the holy water is the vraja dhuli (dust of Vraja). May the separateness-bhāva (prthag-bhava) dissolve in the holy waters of the vraja dhuli during this extended baptism of the soul.
- As clothes were coming off due to the combination of the heat and the speed we were going this first day (it's giving mode of passion), and as we're being stared at (perhaps being foreigners engage in this practice is quite the spectacle for the locals) creating a feeling of being exposed and vulnerable, the gopi vastra harana Lila (Krsna stealing the clothes of the unmarried gopis) appears in my mind space a part of whose import is complete self-surrender; baring one's soul; a pure-nakedness before Krsna.
- I found these lofty meditations so inspiring—baptism in vraja dhuli, emerging from such holy (dust) water naked, cleanse of the coverings of ego etc., and becoming
- a bare-soul before the Beloved for true love-communion (bhakti-yoga)—that I found myself smiling and jolly through the start of this yajna for Her pleasure.

## ▼ Day 2

- The resistance of the soul to utter self-surrender and dependence on Bhagavan represented in the difficulty of the body continuously offering obeisance

- The sweat from the body are the tears the soul couldn't shed when confronting the extent of her resistance. May the dust of Braj accept these somatic tears as supplication in exchange for my baptism in its dusty-wasters
- The whole time I was chanting I can't do this!
- This is indeed the fact. It's Grace that we're grounded in moment to moment like the sun-ray whose existence is grounded in the sun disk moment to moment.
- Although doing parikram in a group, we struggle/suffer alone. The subjective experience of one completely closed off to the other while in the process of namah. In the end it's between me and the only other Person who has access to the privacy of consciousness. We're alone with the Alone (in so far as there's no other Reality similar or dissimilar to it).

### ▼ Day 3

- today woke up in felicitous anticipation to do parikrama
- The reason? Cause-less Grace in so far as Grace's reasons are Her own and contained within the interiority of being (svarupa-shakti) and therefore ever mysterious to the deductions of a empirical self (ego, mind, senses)
- Still, while in the midst of namaskara, we mused that there is a joy in being allowed to offer obeisances
- One of our team —the one most enthuse for this experience compared to the apprehensive rest of us —fell a little sick and was unable to participate this morning
- We think ourselves doers in the world of nature which is a flagrant false egotism (and 3.27 BG); and this is all the more so in the world of Supranature where we exist , in a sense, as mere objects to be handled by that beatific world
- We aren't the agent of bhakti (atah Sri Krsna namadi...) but at best an instrument to be use provided our seva unmukha fine tuning is on point
- If so, then we're being allowed to offer obeisances, an opportunity rarely gifted
- Shea told me as we past a sadhu missing a hand, "I have all my limbs by Grace making it possible to offer obeisances. So why am I complaining. I should be

grateful for the chance that is being gifted to me” Siddha also on the first day expressed how he immediately felt it impossible to do the dandavat parikram, but then thought, “I can at least offer today whatever is possible and I should be grateful for that.”

- Feeling a gratitude for such a divine dispensation, ie the privilege of being allowed, is certainly joyous
- The overflow of joy even expanded our 1hr commitment to a 2-hour obeisance-rapture
- I don't imagine all days will be like this, but we are thankful for the felicitous and numinous now

## ▼ Day 4

- woke up today still pretty stoked about the opportunity to offer my body in continuous obeisances although having a nightmarish time with sleep
- SB 10.9.18 appears prominently in my mind during japa: sva-mātuḥ svinna-gātrāyā visrasta-kabara-srajaḥ || dr̥ṣṭvā pariśramaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛpayāsīt sva-bandhane “Because of mother Yaśodā’s hard labor, her whole body became covered with perspiration, and the flowers and comb were falling from her hair. When child Kṛṣṇa saw His mother thus fatigued, He became merciful to her and agreed to be bound.”
- Kṛṣṇa seeing her parisramam “comprehensive labor” which wasn’t only internal, but manifestly somatic—svinna-gātrāyā (perspiration)—then his kṛpa-sakti came to the fore and Kṛṣṇa was bound by Mother Yaśoda
- If I had to write a book about this experience I think I would called it Somatic Tears: [Insert cool tag line here]
- Although I believe the śrama (labor) becomes comprehensive (pari) when heart-voice-body together perform obeisance (hṛd-vāg-vapurahir vidadhan namas te), there’s something very visceral and substantial and believable in physically sweating in hopes of “binding Kṛṣṇa” (in case of pure bhakti sankalpa) or “obliging” his kṛpa for separate interest (in case of bhakti/mukti sankalpas)

- The image of somatic tears as the currency (yajna) for genuine communion with Krsna is indelibly imprinted on my mind
- Thank Krsna he sent me this meditation before I started today. It held me together as I was suffering allergy, making the whole process doubly harder.

## ▼ Day 5

- another sleep disturbed night due to allergy
- End up talking to two close friends at 2am undergoing a sort of breakdown and dissolution of relationships and life situations
- My “advice” (casual suggestion), vandanam (obeisances) to Krsna who has appeared in the form of life-dissolving circumstances: tasyaiva me 'ghasya parāvareṣo vyāsakta-cittasya gr̥heṣv abhīkṣṇam || nirveda-mūlo dvija-śāpa-rūpoyatra prasakto bhayam āśu dhatte “The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of both the transcendental and mundane worlds, has graciously overtaken me in the form of a brāhmaṇa’s curse. Due to my being too much attached to family life, the Lord, in order to save me, has appeared before me in such a way that only out of fear I will detach myself from the world.” SB 1.19.14
- It’s all good (as we use to say as kids) because it’s all God, and to that Goodness we should offer our vandanam
- This was a helpful meditation as I’m struggling with my health, but seem to have just enough to continue the program. So it all good (although it feels like headache, and hard time breathing, etc.) cuz it’s all God! Sigh.
- I hear Sacinanda Maharaj got sick the last time he did dandavat parikram and tenaciously carried on. His image is my shelter rn.
- Our prayer coach shared with Shea a beautiful image that held me today (and likely in the future). A triangle the apex of which represents a life of sacrifice; and at the two nadir points death and hope. In the center of our triangle is our target: bhāva.

## ▼ Day 6

- “Today our goal is at least the Nrsimha Temple” a physically struggling me avers. Shea retorts, “The goal is to give 100% of the little percent that we have” or

perhaps that we are ontologically.

- So minute we are as jivas, like .0001 percent of the Absolute (obviously not literally) and if we give 100% of that insignificant percent, we become like sprinkles on the cake! Certainly a cake doesn't require sprinkles, but how attractive a cake becomes with sprinkles! We shine when we give 100% of our (ontological) insignificance to Krishna in vandanam.
- This meditation held me today.
- We paused as we watch the sun rise and illumine Govardhan. Shea tells me of an incident she perceived yesterday of a baby monkey with missing hands and feet (yikes). Utterly helpless it screamed out to its mother, and to hear that scream; the helplessness of it, the desperation, the need in it. "Like this we are to call for our Lord and Lady" Shea asserts.
- Why can't I? The general spiritual disease is we are oblivious to our (true) necessity, as we pursue artificial "needs" imposed by the guna-maya aspect of maya-sakti. This has been amplified in contemporary times as the beast of technology has powerfully disconnected us from our selves and each other as we're sucked into a hyper-reality to be manipulated by algorithms programmed by God knows who. We hear theology/metaphysics of KC and are alerted to our root necessity, but then are confronted by our utter apathy to it; thus unable to cry like this monkey rather with the voice or the body (in vandanam).
- tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ batedaṁ...(SB 2.3.24) the "steel frame heart" utterly apathetic to Ultimate Beatitude, the implication of which is we become apathetic to even our own self (and its truest need)
- May this continuous baptism in the vraja dhuli cleanse me of my apathy.

## ▼ Day 7

- missing a day felt like weeks! Am I falling for Girirāja's sevā?
- A friend said I might be missing the dopamine, I suppose akin to a runner's high? That may be a (inadequate imho) phenomenal explanation of a spiritual causal

event. I prefer to think it's something more in the domain of how Vrtrasura has sung: "O lotus-eyed Lord, as baby birds that have not yet developed their wings always look for their mother to return and feed them, as small calves tied with ropes await anxiously the time of milking, when they will be allowed to drink the milk of their mothers, or as a morose wife whose husband is away from home always longs for him to return and satisfy her in all respects, I always yearn for the opportunity to render direct service unto You."—SB 6.11.26

- This (mis/re)interpretation of spiritual causal affects in terms of material causal events reminded me of my prayer coach's re-interpretation of the so-called evolutionary imperative of "survival of the fittest" in terms of its spiritual causal underpinning: "Before receiving connection to the higher world and thus awakening comprehension of atemporal reality the jiva invests mightily in her latest role [the current material body-mind complex] dramatically acting out its pleasures and pains, hopes and dreams, cultural and ideological views of life, etc., with compulsive hope that 'this will be the one!' The Muse inspiring her masterful method acting is denial of death. She would toil forever to satisfy a constitutionally insatiable body-mind if it could at least be permanent. Deep down, the fear of failing to attain lasting identity is what motivates the fight for survival; not biological instinct to live, but intense spiritual necessity to have a permanent personality."—Śrī Gaura Yuga: A Reformation Manifesto for the Global Gaudiya Mission and Call to Prayer
- Material phenomena, being contingent forces, are not grounded in themselves. They are grounded in a Necessary, self-existent (ie not contingent on anything outside of itself) Reality, viz (in our language) the advaya-jnana-tattva—Brahman-Paramatma-Bhagavan—ultimately svayam-Bhagavan vrajendranandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
- It's wise and deep to investigate experience up to the point of the mystery (etāvad eva jijñāsyam tattva-jijñāsunātmanaḥ SB 2.9.36) that allows us to see the unity of the dependent realities (aśrita-tattva) with the Independent Reality (aśraya-tattva) and in the inner-sanctum of that mystery experience life for the wonder and miracle that it is, including the possibility that what we feel when offering ourselves on the alter of God-communion is more than just dopamine, albeit the somatic system may register it as such!

- Shea has two more weeks before leaving Govardhan. In consideration of the triangle symbol — death-sacrifice-hope w/ bhāva in the center as our target — Shea offers a meditation that sees her only having two weeks to live! And how should that time be spent? In sacrifice (full namaskāra of body-voice-mind) carrying the hope that the chrysalis of a life given fully is dissolved and transfigured into the butterfly of a bhāva informed existence.
- It's interesting how denial of death sabotages the intensity of the self-giving life, practically cutting us off from the sense that the actualization of our deepest most necessary hope is a realizable potential in the here and now.
- Shea shares another gem from our prayer coach “Move slowly, step by step, but with urgency.” When we move too fast we tend to end up in artifice due to lack of sufficient integration of information, knowledge,
- experience (I guess kinda like not chewing the food enough and just swallowing it). This explains the fake everything of the postmodern world! If there's no urgency we tend towards laziness and corruption.
- So it was today, we moved slowly, but intentionally and it was an ecstatic day! Plus our third “teammate“ (air quotes b/c we're ultimately alone with the Alone) caught up with us today!

## ▼ Day 8

- a literal 500 monkeys at the starting point today! They're being fed nicely here at Govardhan, that is why they're way more śānti (peaceful) than the monkey mafia in vraja!
- They're lined up in a row at one point like devotees during prasād serve out and as we offer namaskāra, we're practically at their feet
- This has been a sweet experience through out—being at the feet of the dogs who are resting, or cows, or goats, or hogs, or (often naked) village toddlers, or Vaisnavas; and ants and other insects I don't know the names of
- Krishna in His final instructions to Uddhava (11 Canto, Chapter 29) speaks about antaranga-bhakti (interior devotion) a process He considers “the most complete” out “of all methods”: “A person of pure heart should see Me alone (Krishna [mām eva īkṣeta] as oppose to say Paramātmā), the Supreme Self (svayam-



Bhagavan) as fully present internally and externally in all living beings as well as his own self and as devoid of all covering like space” [11.29.12]

- Sheltered in this vision of nonduality [jñānam kevalam āśritaḥ], one is enabled by the vision of equality [sama-dṛk] to honor all of life — a brahmana, an outcaste, a thief, the sun, a mere spark, the tender hearted or the cruel — precisely because one specifically intuits the existence of Svayam-bhagavan within and pervading them; and this is the mark of embodied wisdom (pandita). [11.29.13-14]
- The result of this embodied wisdom born from the womb of true recognition of svayam-Bhagavan Kṛṣṇa’s ubiquity is the sloughing off (like a snake sloughing off its old skin) of those ancient saboteurs of communion, viz. rivalry (toward equals), envy (toward superiors) and disdain (toward inferiors) along with ahamkara. [11.29.15]
- Now here’s the clincher! As a practical
- putting into practice of this teaching on antaranga bhakti, Kṛṣṇa recommends sarva-namaskāra—obeisances to everybody (ain’t going lie the Oprah meme “you get a car, you get a car, everybody gets a car came to mind
- “Being unconcerned with his own associates who jeer at him, abandoning all prejudice based on bodily identity, and giving up all sense of shame, HE SHOULD FALL ON THE GROUND LIKE A STICK, offering obeisance even to a dog, an outcaste, a cow, and a donkey.” [11.29.16]
- This practice (sarva-namaskāra) as a psycho-somatic-vocal expression should continue until the Sun of Krishna (specifically) rises from the horizon of this fully integrated practice [11.29.17] and the vision of the dark Lord lights up the world, revealing it as a manifestation of the Absolute (Brahman) [11.29.18].
- “I consider this process alone of intuiting My existence within all living beings through the faculties of one’s mind, speech, and body, to be the most complete of all method.” [11.29.19]
- All glories to obeisances!

## ▼ Day 9

- Today a dear friend has come to join us being inspired by our dandvat parikram adventures that we've been sharing
- Incidentally, one of our team, although having caught up to us, started much later than we and he wasn't sure how far he should go. When he decided to stop he happened to see the mark I leave in the sand after paying obeisances. In my head it's looks like a peacock feather, he called it the symbol of namah.
- Either way, he reported to me how seeing the imprint in the sand, one after another after another, invoked in his mind the meaning of parampara (one after another) and how by following parampara one not only gains confidence in trajectory, but can take heart again (after a period of bewilderment and/or dispirited-ness) knowing there were great souls before you who courageously treaded a path and left it behind as an inheritance shining bright like a (Polaris) diamond: "O Lord, who resemble the shining sun, You are always ready to fulfill the desire of Your devotee, and therefore You are known as a desire tree [vāñchā-kalpataru]. When ācāryas completely take shelter under Your lotus feet in order to cross the fierce ocean of nescience, they leave behind on earth the method by which they cross, and because You are very merciful to Your other devotees, You accept this method to help them." [SB 10.2.31]
- His reflection immediately invoke my remembrance of part of a poem (a prayer really) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow called A Psalm of Life from which (I heard) Śrī Bhaktivinoda Thakura took inspiration when writing his Saragrahi-Vaisnava poem:

*Lives of great men all remind us  
 We can make our lives sublime,  
 And, departing, leave behind us  
 Footprints on the sands of time;  
 Footprints, that perhaps another,  
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
 Seeing, shall take heart again.  
 Let us, then, be up and doing,*

*With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.*

- we may not consider or my in fact know without doubt that we are not great. Still, a genuine endeavor in the direction of Beatitude has much power to uphold and upbuild the spirit.

## ▼ Day 10

- I feel like I'm in flow" I say to my inquiring sister when she asked me how I was doing as we past the half-way point at Dhangati and were about to begin the second-half of the rite in the busiest location at the busiest time!
- This was after an insane day were I did a morning dandavat parikram session, held a program from 150 Russian devotees, then went on full walking parikram, with small ekadasi lunch in between, before we began this night session to meet our daily commitment to prostrations (cuz our morning was cut a lil short so I could tend to the invitation at the Russian program)
- I should be completely exhausted, not only physically, but mentally. And yet "I'm feel like I'm in flow" is what came out.
- It was like a tiny experience of a sudden ullāsa of the heart breaking through the damns of resistance and nothing empirical could stop the flow—not a tired body-mind complex; not an insanely packed street where rickshaws and bikes are dangerously zooming passed your head and feet...nothing
- Like Kunti praying that her devotion flow like Ganga toward the sea of Godhead, a facsimile of what such an experience might be like appeared opened to me this day

## ▼ Day 11

- unlike the previous day, there is no "flow" this morning
- It's like breaking through one constricting circle of resistance and experience the annulus of greater freedom, but within no time

- encountering yet a new constricting circle in the now realized fortress of concentric circles; another liminal space to be crossed. Sigh.
- The pain of becoming —ie the pain of transfiguration and apotheosis— and the pain of remaining as one is and developing all the little and big neuroticism that spring from the soil of stagnation is not the same.
- It's a trade off— neuroticism for apotheosis or vice versus. Each obeisance representative of the choice being made moment to moment — every knee paining, elbow paining, heart resistant moment.
- My mind is brought to the ocean of devotees from one of our ISKCON youth yatras. All looking the same like the ocean of milk! But out of the ocean comes the moon, goddess laksmi, and before that that terrible poison. So the standardized forms (even of devotion communities/institutions) may need to be outgrown for true individuation before our Lord and Lady. But a terrible poison may have to be endured for it to be possible.
- What a strange paradox that to individuate, conformity to standardized forms (or maybe even ritual practices?) may stagnate, but only by a perfect conformity (of heart) to the Absolute (translated to and conflated with standardized religious forms) is individuation made possible. This spirit stuff full of these bewildering almost wilderness of paradoxes.
- Anyway, “Be different” (a sort of motto I've adopted over the years). The other option, as poetically and frighteningly put by Joseph Campbell is not giving: “Full circle, from the tomb of the womb to the womb of the tomb, we come: an ambiguous, enigmatical incursion into a world of solid matter that is soon to melt from us, like the substance of a dream. And, looking back at what had promised to be our own unique, unpredictable, and dangerous adventure, all we find in the end is such a series of standard metamorphoses as men and women have undergone in every quarter of the world, in all recorded centuries, and under every odd disguise of civilization.”
- Down I go...just one more!

## ▼ Day 12

- the way up is down; falling (like stick) upward (to the homeland of the soul)

- To be or not to be is indeed the question! A deeply spiritual one. Turns out this statement of Shakespeare through the voice of Hamlet is about suicide!
- One of the unique faculties of human existence is we can choose death and even choose how we want to die (extenuating circumstances notwithstanding). To gain a (divine) life, we must lose a (egocentric) life. Egocide! Choosing (metaphysical) death over (mundane) life, so that (divine) life may triumph over (samsaric) death!
- Another one of those strange paradoxes of the spirit world.
- death and life is a paradox most of humanity hasn't figured out. Die to live! This held me today, a little less resistant than yesterday and a little more hopeful. Down I go!

## ▼ Day 13

- we reached Radha Kunda after a demon (ie hardcore) shift of obeisances in the morning and evening yesterday
- This morning at the busiest time we are starting our parikrama of Radha Kunda onward to the last 1/4 of the rite and I'm experiencing the greatest resistance yet!
- Empirically, we did like 4 plus hours cumulatively so the body just hasn't recovered and needs more rest. Last night also I started having terrible loose motions. Great! Some sort of stomach flu is onset.
- Still my resistance is not primarily physical (despite the stomach issue). I take it this might be a little superficial, for wherever the heart/mind is the body generally adapts. I've already interpreted physical resistance as representative of a much deeper metaphysical issue.
- It was more fun when offering obeisances on my own calculated terms; a lot more testing of the will-to-serve when asked to do namaskāra outside the neat and comfortable settings I began with

- Shea's sankalpa to close the circle after an extenuating circumstance came up for her lessening her days in the dhama, along with her ekagra mental state to actualize her sankalpa has created a powerful flow in her which I am now dependent upon. (Sankalpa+ekāgra=flow)
- As SP writes: "As the river flows on till she reaches the sea, similarly pure devotional service flows by the association of pure devotees till it reaches the ultimate goal, namely, transcendental love of God. Such a flow of devotional service cannot stop. On the contrary, it increases more and more without limitation. The flow of devotional service is so potent that any onlooker also becomes liberated from the influence of the modes of passion and ignorance." [SB 1.5.28]
- Also another: "Anyone who is trying to be aloof from this Krishna Consciousness Society and yet engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for this is not possible. From this statement by Dhruva Mahārāja it is clear that unless one is associated with devotees, his devotional service does not mature; it does not become distinct from material activities." [SB 4.9.11]
- River of grace comprised of the powerful ekāgra sankalpas of bhaktas carrying us to the sea of Completion (Purnatama svayam Bhagavan Kṛṣṇa or the closing of the circle in context). Just by seeing such a river, one can become liberated (SP) from provincial concerns (like stomach flu weaken body and internal apathy) and dial into the beatific Infinite that truly carrying us all, but who like the thread behind the pearl necklace is often overlooked.

## ▼ Day 14

- Today is Govardhan Puja and Shea is fixed on closing the circle on this day as our specific puja to Govardhana
- It's clear I have some sort of stomach flu at this point. I just feel like vomiting all day, and yet here I stand and fall (or the body rather) being dragged to Completion
- What an extraordinary gift the body is! Like the Abrahamic traditions, Vedānta (and yoga schools) tends to emphasize what appears to be a hard split between matter and spirit (at least for the novices) which usually translates in the mind as "matter bad; spirit good"

- Holding on to this thinking probably longer than is healthy often leads to an animosity towards one's own (empirical) self; as one attempts to bury the "bad-matter" self behind the screen of the symbols of the "good-spirit" self— ie a certain dress, a certain jargon, a certain way of acting, a liturgy, an ideology, a lineage, etc. — ending up an open wound screaming for reconciliation and healing but unheard by the self
- I've now come to appreciate the purpose of teaching the distinction of matter and spirit as meant to actualize our wisdom eye so that we abandon the relationship of exploitation of the body for paltry things and honor the body as the gift from God that it is
- It is our Prabhu that gifts the body for the pursuit of dharma-artha-kama-moksa [10.87.2 SB]
- The primordial elements of nature (mahat, ahankara, etc.) prayed to the Lord (3rd Canto Ch 5) that He may enter them by his śakti of cohesion so that the bodies for performing the respective sadhanas (including bhakti) is made possible. Dandvat parikram would not be possible without the gift of this body.
- dṛtaya iva śvasanty asu-bhṛto yadi te 'nuvidhā || mahad-aham-ādayo 'ṅḍam asṛjan yad-anugrahataḥ "Only if they become Your faithful followers are those who breathe actually alive, otherwise their breathing is like that of a bellows. It is by Your mercy alone that the elements, beginning with the mahat-tattva and false ego, created the egg of this universe." [10.87.17] The obeisances of the body before God (along with mind, and voice) is the ultimate consummation of that prayer and gift of primordial nature's elements in tandem with God's grace. It is the ultimate honoring of the their song and their gift!
- And for those who may not yet experience the Theophany that is life right (numinous) now, this offering obeisances is the height of intelligence and cleverness: "This process is the supreme intelligence of the intelligent and the cleverness of the most clever, for by following it one can in this very life make use of the temporary and unreal to achieve Me, the eternal reality." [11.29.22 SB]
- So as we sealed the circle a rite that started two weeks ago, and I struggle to hold back vomiting, I am thankful for the gift of the body. Despite its condition,

persevering — no doubt due to all sorts of mysterious grace— and doing me, the soul, a good turn.

## ▼ Post Dandavat Parikrama Reflection: Intercessory Prayer

I've heard from some well wishers that it might've been an imprudence to share my Dandavat Parikram experience with the public. One well wisher spoke of the loss of merit by advertisement of the rite (canakya's austerities should be done alone came to mind). Another well wisher spoke of das Gosvami's command to give up dambha (deceit, pride) in his Manah-Siksa to which advertisement of the rite (in his opinion) cannot but expose the heart. Others shared their performing of the rite and their assiduously insuring the privacy of the act.

I give the benefit of the doubt that these were spoken out of well wishing and not reproach. And although the intelligence, no doubt in tandem with the rubbed ego, was quick to vindicate me by various argumentation, I thought why lose my soul in argumentation [SB 6.4.31] especially when I agree with them!

Usually when I come to India on pilgrimage, I share nothing—not a picture; nor a video; nor a post; nothing. A pilgrim's journey is for himself in his ongoing quest for theosis. My intuition and my well wishers speak to the sabotage of the potentiation of theoria when one's rites are advertise.

Still I shared; not as an intellectual deliberation upon the spiritual implications, but as the overpouring of enthusiasm, like the overflow of boiling milk not carefully tended to. Perhaps with more careful thought, i would've contained my enthusiasm in light of all the negative implications aforementioned (and perhaps more). I'll leave it before Godhead to judge this indiscretion.

That said, still I rejoice in the affect of the sharing also. Some of the beautiful messages I received speaking to renewed hope; desire to embrace a life of devotion again after being secularized ; or feelings of being prayed for through our acts of namaskara to Giriraj revealed to me the intercessory nature of the rite, albeit inadvertently.

In this regard (my God-) sis at one point during the first half of the rite shared an image that has been indelibly imprinted on my mind since she said it. I believe we were near the pink and decorative Govinda Kunda gate when she spoke of humans



as priestly stewards intended to intercede on behalf of other species of life who could not directly perform upasana. For ex. offering flowers grown by trees; bathing the deity with milk from cows; feeding the species on one's propriety with prasada, etc.

The Cataka bird, she said, takes water only from the rain cloud. When (if) rain comes it may only take a few drops, while the rest of the rain nourishes the environment surrounding the cataka. Similarly, upasana characterized by prostrations (in this case) is like our cataka-song calling for the downpour of Grace from the dark rain-cloud of Krishna. Being infinitesimal, how much Grace can be held from a downpour of the rain cloud of infinite magnitude? Though the downpour may be in response to the Cataka's song, the beneficiaries are not limited to the Cataka; and so the cataka, even in singing out of its own necessity, ends up performing an act of intercessory prayer for all of life! How much more powerful perhaps if upasana is performed as an intentional act of intercessory prayer?!

My mother always speaks of my life of devotion as "anchoring the light." A simple prostration before Divinity seems insignificant due the infinitesimality of the jivas. But its gravitational pull on Divinity, drawing His resplendence toward the humble pilgrim can light up the whole world!

"Henceforward, may all our words describe Your pastimes, may our ears engage in aural reception of Your glories, may our hands, legs and other senses engage in actions pleasing to You, and may our minds always think of Your lotus feet. May our heads offer our obeisances to everything within this world, because all things are also Your different forms, and may our eyes see the forms of Vaiṣṇavas, who are nondifferent from You."—Nalakuvera and Manigriva to Kṛṣṇa