

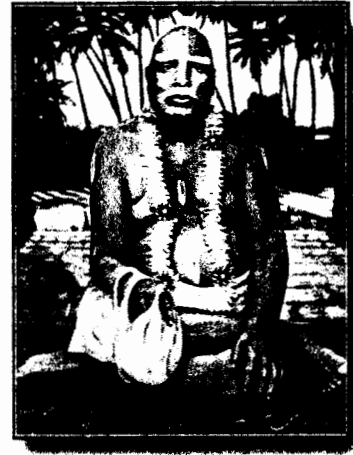
Śrī Puruṣottama-māsa-mahātmnya

THE GLORIES OF

# ŚRĪ PURUṢOTTAMA

## MONTH

By Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



### TWO DIVISIONS OF SĀSTRA—SMĀRTA AND PARAMĀRTHA

The Vedic ārya-sāstras are divided into two sections—*smārta* (literature based on *smṛti*) and *paramārtha* (transcendental literature based on *śruti*). Those who are eligible (*adhikāri*) for the *smārta* section do not have any natural inclination or taste for the *paramārtha-sāstras*. The thoughts, principles, activities and life goal of every human is constituted according to his respective *ruci* (inclination). Generally, *smārtas* accept those scriptures which are in accordance with their respective *ruci*. Having greater *adhikāra* for *smārta-sāstra*, they do not demonstrate much regard for *paramārthika-sāstra*. Providence is the agent behind the creation of these two divisions. Therefore, undoubtedly the maintainer of the world must have a hidden purpose in having made such an arrangement.

As far as I understand, the purpose is that the *jīvas* sequentially make progress in their level of consciousness by remaining steadfast in their respective *adhikāra*. By deviating from one's *adhikāra*, one falls down. According to one's activities, a person attains two types of *adhikāra*—*karmādhikāra* and *bhakti-*

*adhikāra*. As long as one maintains his *karmādhikāra*, he derives benefit from the path shown by the *smārta* section. When he enters *bhakti-adhikāra*, by transgressing the *karmādhikāra*, then he develops a natural *ruci* (inclination) for the *paramārthika*, or transcendental, path. Therefore, providence has made these two divisions of *sāstra*: *smārta* and *paramārtha*.

### THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF SMĀRTA SĀSTRA ARE COMMITTED TO KARMA

The *smārta sāstra* has made various types of rules and regulations in order to help one attain *niṣṭhā*, steadfastness, in *karmādhikāra*. In many instances, it even demonstrates indifference towards *paramārtha sāstra* to make people attain specific *niṣṭhā* in such rules and regulations. In reality, although *sāstra* is one, it manifests in two ways for the people. If the *jīva* gives up *adhikāra-niṣṭhā*, he can never attain auspiciousness. For this reason, the *sāstras* have been divided into two: *smārta* and *paramārtha*.

ADHIMĀSA (EXTRA MONTH), ALSO CALLED MALA MĀSA (IMPURE MONTH), IS DEVOID OF ALL AUSPICIOUS ACTIVITIES

By dividing the whole year in twelve parts, the *smārta-sāstras* have ascertained the auspicious, or religious, activities for these twelve months. All the *karma*, religious activities which are part of the *varṇāśrama* system when allotted to the twelve months, leave the extra month (*adhimāsa*) devoid of any such activity. There is no religious performance in *adhimāsa*. In order to keep lunar months and solar months in tally, one month has to be excluded every 32 months. The name of that month is *adhimāsa* (extra month).<sup>1</sup>

*Smārtas* have discarded this extra month, considering it abominable. They gave it names such as *mala māsa* (impure month), *cora māsa* (thieving month), and so on.

FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARAMĀRTHA-ŚĀSTRA, ADHIMĀSA IS SUPERIOR AND ADVANTAGEOUS FOR HARI-BHĀJANA

On the other hand, the most worshipable *paramārtha-śāstra* acclaims *adhimāsa* as the most outstanding month for transcendental activities. Since life in this world is temporary, it is not proper to spend any part of one's life meaninglessly. It is imperative for the *jīva* to remain continuously engaged in *hari-bhajana* at every moment. Thus, the *adhimāsa*, which comes every third year, may also become useful for *hari-bhajana*. This is indeed the deep meaning of *paramārtha-śāstras*. Even though *karmīs* perceive this month to be devoid of all auspicious activities, for the deliverance of all the *jīvas*, *paramārtha śāstra*, on the other hand, has ascertained that period as the most conducive for *hari-bhajana*. *Paramārtha śāstra* says, "He *jīva*! During this *adhimāsa* why should you remain lazy in *hari-bhajana*? Śrīmad Goloka-nātha Himself has ascertained that this month is the best of all. It is superior even to the greatly pious months of Kārttika, Māgha and Vaiśākha. In this month, you should perform *arcana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with special rules, or moods, for *bhajana*. You will thereby attain all types of perfection."

THE HISTORY AND GLORIES OF ADHIMĀSA AND HOW IT RECEIVED THE NAME PURUṢOTTAMA

The glories of *adhimāsa* are mentioned in the thirty-first chapter of the *Nāradya Purāṇa*. *Adhimāsa* considered the sovereignty of the twelve months and saw that he was being slighted. He went to *Vaikuṇṭha* and related his dilemma to Śrī Nārāyaṇa. Out of compassion, *Vaikuṇṭha-pati* took *Adhimāsa* with Him and appeared before Śrī Kṛṣṇa in *Goloka*. After hearing about the distress of *malamāsa* (the impure month), Śrī Kṛṣṇa's heart melted and He spoke thus:

### Puruṣottama month is superior even to the greatly pious months of Kārttika, Māgha and Vaiśākha.

*aham etair yathā loke prathitah puruṣottamaḥ  
tathāyam api lokeṣu prathitah puruṣottamaḥ*

*asmai samarpitāḥ sarve ye guṇamayī samsthītāḥ  
mat-sādrśyam-upāgamya māsānām adhipo bhavet*

*jagat-pūjyo jagat-vandyo māso 'yam tu bhaviṣyati  
sarve māsāḥ sakāmāś ca niṣkāmo 'yam mayā kṛtāḥ*

*akāmaḥ sarvakāmo vā yo 'dhimāsam prapūjayet  
karmāṇi bhasmasāt kṛtvā mām evaiṣyaty asaṁśayam*

*kadācin-mama bhaktānāmaparādheti ganyate  
puruṣottama-bhaktānām nāparādhaḥ kadācana*

*ya etasmin-mahā mūdhā japa-dānādi-varjitāḥ  
sat-karma-snāna-rahitā deva-tīrtha-dviḥ-dviṣaḥ*

*jāyante durbhagā duṣṭāḥ para-bhāgyopajīvanāḥ  
na kādacit sukhaṁ teṣāṁ svapne 'pi śaśa-śṛṅgavat*

*yenāhamarcito bhaktyā māse 'smin puruṣottame  
dhana-putra-sukhaṁ bhūṁikvā pascād-goloka-vāsabhāk*

"He *Ramāpati*! Just as I am celebrated in this world by the name *Puruṣottama*, similarly, this *Adhimāsa* too will be renowned in the world by the name *Puruṣottama*. Now I offer all My qualities to this month. Becoming like Me, from today onwards, this *Adhimāsa* is the monarch of all the other months, and is the most worshipable and most adored in the world. All other months are *sakāma*, that is, they will grant worldly desires. This month, however, is *niṣkāma*. Those who worship this month, either without any desires (*akāma*) or with all types of desires, will have all their *karmas* burnt. Then they will achieve Me. My *bhaktas* sometimes commit offenses, but in this

<sup>1</sup> It is stated in *Śrī Sūrya Siddhānta* that in one *mahāyuga* there are 1593336 extra months and 51840000 solar months. Therefore, there is one extra month after every 32 months, 16 days and 4 hours of the solar calendar.

Puruṣottama month, they will be protected from committing any offense. In this *adhimāsa*, those greatly foolish persons who neglect to perform auspicious activities, such as *japa*, giving in charity, visiting and bathing at the holy places, and who are envious of the *dvijas* (*brāhmaṇas*) are deemed wicked, unfortunate and living at the cost of others. Thus, they will not attain a scent of happiness, even in their dreams. Conversely, those who are filled with *bhakti* will take advantage of this Puruṣottama month to perform *arcana* to Me. After enjoying worldly happiness, such as wealth, sons and so on, they will eventually attain residence in Goloka.

THE GLORIES OF PURUṢOTTAMA  
MONTH IN THE CONTEXT OF  
DRAUPADI'S HISTORY

Many episodes from the *Purāṇas* are narrated in the context of the glories of Puruṣottama month. One such example is Draupadi. In her previous life, she was the daughter of Medhā Rṣi. Even after hearing of the glories of Puruṣottama month from Durvāsā Rṣi, she neglected to observe that month. As a result, she attained many sufferings in that life and became the wife of five husbands in her birth as Draupadi. During their exile, the Pāṇḍavas followed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions to observe *puruṣottama-māsa-vrata* and thus crossed over all their sufferings. As it is said:

evam sarveṣu tīrtheṣu bhramantaḥ pāṇḍunandanāḥ  
puruṣottama-māsādya-vrataṁ cerur vidhānataḥ  
tadante rājyam atulam avapur gata-kaṇṭhakam  
pūrṇe caturdaśe varṣe śrī kṛṣṇa-kṛpāya mune

"He Muni! During the period of their exile, the Pāṇḍavas traveled throughout all the holy places, and by the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa they observed Śrī Puruṣottama

*vrata* with all rules and regulations. As a result of this they completed their fourteen years of exile without any obstacles and at the end attained an unparalleled kingdom."

THE ACCOUNT OF KING DṚDHADHANVĀ  
AS SPOKEN BY VĀLMĪKI REGARDING  
PURUṢOTTAMA VRATA

Puruṣottama-māsa is glorified in the account of King Dṛdhadhanvā's previous birth. At Badarikāśrāma, Nārada heard the procedure of the *vrata* from Nārayaṇa Rṣi, which Vālmiki Muni then related to King Dṛdhadhanvā in answer to the king's questions. Just as the rules of *ahanika* (*gāyatri mantras*) for *brāhmaṇas* are ascertained in *dharma-sāstras*, similarly, the obligatory activities for one observing Puruṣottama *vrata* are also delineated, beginning from the *brahma-muhūrta* hour.

Just as I am celebrated in this  
world by the name Puruṣottama,  
similarly, this *adhimāsa* too will be  
renowned in the world by the name  
Puruṣottama. Now I offer all My  
qualities to this month. Becoming  
like Me, from today onwards, this  
*adhimāsa* is the monarch of all the  
other months, and is the most  
worshipable and most adored in the  
world.

RULES FOR BATHING IN THE  
MONTH OF ŚRĪ PURUṢOTTAMA

Regarding the rules for  
bathing during Puruṣottama  
month, it is said:

samudragā nadi-snānam-  
uttamaṁ parikṛtitaṁ  
vāpi-kūpa-tadāgeṣu madhyamaṁ  
kathitaṁ budhaiḥ  
grhe snānam tu sāmānyam  
grhasthasya prakṛtitaṁ

"There are three types of  
baths as declared by the wise.  
Bath in the rivers which meet  
the ocean is the topmost. Bath  
in lakes, ponds and wells is the  
second best, and bath in one's home is an ordinary  
bath."

For one who is observing Śrī Puruṣottama *vrata*,  
after taking bath he should observe the following:

sapavitrena hastena kuryād ācamana-kṛtyāṁ  
ācamya tilakaṁ kuryād-gopi-candana-mṛt-snayā  
urdhhuapūṇḍra mīmṣaṁ saumyaṁ daṇḍākāraṁ prakalpayet  
śaṅkha-cakrādikaṁ dhāryaṁ gopi-candana-mṛt-snayā

"After bathing one should perform *ācamana* with clean hands. One should then make paste of *gopicandana* clay and wear simple, beautiful, straight *urddhvapūṇḍra tilaka* on his forehead and the marks of conch, disc and so on, on his body."

THE EXCLUSIVE WORSHIP OF ŚRĪ ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-KṚṢṆA IS OBLIGATORY IN PURUṢOTTAMA MONTH

The worship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the obligatory activity of Puruṣottama month.

*puruṣottama-māsasya daivatam puruṣottamam  
tasmāt sampūjayed bhaktyā śraddhayā puruṣottamam*

Vālmiki said, "He Dṛdhadhanvā! Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the presiding deity of the Puroṣottama month. Therefore, being filled with *bhakti-śraddhā*, you should worship Puruṣottama Śrī Kṛṣṇa with sixteen types of paraphernalia every day of this month. As it is said:

*śoḍaśopacārais ca pūjayet puruṣottam*

"The worship of the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is indeed obligatory in Puruṣottama māsa."

*āgaccha deva deveṣa śrī kṛṣṇa puruṣottama  
rādhayā sahitā cātra gṛhāṇa pūjanam mama*

ACTIVITIES FORBIDDEN IN THE MONTH OF PURUṢOTTAMA

All the rules and regulations regarding Śrī Puruṣottama *vrata*, which we have presented above from these *sāstras*, should be followed by religiously devoted persons of all the *varṇas* (castes). The *Nārāḍya Purāṇa* concludes by saying that in the holy place of Naimiṣaranya, Śrī Suta Gosvāmī spoke to the assembled devotees as follows:

*bhārate janurāsāḍya puruṣottam-uttamam  
na sevante na śṛṇvanti gṛhāsakta narādhamāḥ  
gatāgataḥ bhajante 'tra durbhagā janmajanmani  
putra-mitra-kalatrāpta-viyogād duḥkha bhāgināḥ  
asmin māse dvija śreṣṭhā nāsacchāstrany udāharet  
na svapet para-sayāyām nālapet vitatham kvacit  
parāpavādān na krayān na kathañcit kadācana  
parānnañca na bhunṅjita na kurvita parakriyām*

"Even after taking birth in India, those who are the lowest of mankind remain attached to household life and never hear the glories of Śrī Puruṣottama *vrata*; nor do they observe it. Such unfortunate persons undergo the suffering of repeated birth and death and the distress inflicted by the separation from sons, friends, wife and other relatives.

"O best of the *dvijas*! In this Puruṣottama month, one should not uselessly discuss worldly literature or mundane poetry. One should not sleep on the bed of others nor indulge in discussions of worldly sense enjoyment. One should not criticize others, eat foodstuffs cooked by others, or perform activities prescribed for others."

THE OBLIGATORY ACTIVITIES IN THE PURUṢOTTAMA MONTH

*vittasāthyam akurvāno dānam dadhyād dvijātaye  
vidyamāne dhane sāthyam kurvāno rauravam vrajet*

*dine dine dvijendrāya dattvā bhojanam-uttamam  
divasasyāṣṭame bhāge vraṭi bhojanam ācāret*

*indradyumnah śatadyumno yauvanāśvo bhagīrathah  
puruṣottamam ārādhya yayur bhagavadantikam*

*tasmāt sarva prayatnena saṁsevya puruṣottamam  
sarva sādhanataḥ śreṣṭhaḥ sarvārtha phala-dāyakaḥ*

*govardhana-dharam vande gopālam gopa-rūpinam  
gokulotsavam-īśanam govindam gopikā-priyam<sup>2</sup>*

*kaundīnyena purā proktam imam mantram punaḥ punaḥ  
japam-māsaḥ nayed bhaktyā puruṣottamam-āpnuyāt*

*dhyāyen-navaghana-syāman dvibhujam muralidharam  
lasat pita-patam ramyam sa-rādhām puruṣottamam*

*dhyāyam dhyāyam nayan-māsaḥ pūjyam puruṣottamam  
evam yah kurute bhaktya svābhīṣṭam sarvam āpnuyāt*

"Giving up miserliness, one should give in charity to the *brāhmaṇas*. If a person remains miserly even though he has wealth, his miserliness will be the cause of his going to Raurava (one type of hell). Everyday one should feed the Vaiṣṇavas and *brāhmaṇas* with the best foodstuffs. A person who is following the vows should take his food in the eighth part of the day. Indradyumna, Śatadyumna, Yauvanāśva and Bhagīratha attained *sāṁpya*, close association of Bhagavān by worshiping the Puruṣottama month. One

<sup>2</sup>"I worship the lifter of Govardhana, Gopāla, who has the form of a gopa. He is the festival of Gokula (*gokula-utsava*), the Supreme Controller of all (*īśvara*), and He is Govinda the beloved of the gopis (*gopikā-priyam*)."

should perform service to Puruṣottama with all of one's endeavors. Such service to Puruṣottama is superior to all types of *sādhana* and fulfills all variety of desires. In a previous age, Kauṇḍilya Muni repeatedly chanted the *mantra* 'govardhana-dharam vande'.... By chanting this *mantra* with devotion during Śrī Puruṣottama month, one will attain Śrī Puruṣottama Himself. One should devote Puruṣottama month to constantly meditating upon *nava-ghana dvibhujā muralidhara pitāmbara* Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Śrī Rādhā. Those who do this with devotion will have all their cherished desires fulfilled."

THE OBSERVANCE FOR TRANSCENDENTALISTS — SVANISṬHA, PARANISṬHA AND NIRAPEKṢA

There are three types of transcendentalists: *svaniṣṭha*—those who are steadfast in their personal vows; *paraniṣṭhita*—those who are steadfast in following the vows set forth by their respective *ācāryas*; and *nirapekṣa*—those who are indifferent to the above two types of steadfastness<sup>3</sup> All the activities mentioned above for Puruṣottama month are prescribed for *svaniṣṭha* transcendentalists. *Paraniṣṭhita bhaktas* are eligible to observe Puruṣottama *vṛata* according to the rules and instructions of Kārttika *vṛata* prescribed by their respective *ācāryas*. *Nirapekṣa bhaktas* respect this sacred month by daily honoring *śrī bhagavat prasād* with one-pointed attention, following some routine for *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* of *śrī harināma* according to their capacity.

The following statement from *Viṣṇu Rahasya*, which is the topmost instruction of *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, recommends:

*indriyārtheṣu-asaktānām sadaiḥ vimalā matiḥ  
paritoṣayate viṣṇuṁ nopavāso jīātmanah*

"Those whose intelligence has been purified by *bhakti* are detached from the inclination for sense enjoyment. The intelligence of such persons is naturally pure; therefore, they are *jīātma*, they have conquered their minds. It is by their innate *bhakti*, rather than by *upavāsa* (fasting) and other such activities, that they have purified their minds and are thus able to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa at all times."

THE INNATE RUCI (INCLINATION) AND OBLIGATORY ACTIVITIES OF EKĀNTIKA BHAKTAS

Therefore, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī has concluded his book *Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* by presenting the following statements for one-pointed devotees:

*evam ekāntinām prāyaḥ kīrtanam smaranam prabhoḥ  
kavātām param-prītyā kṛtyam-anyaṁ na rocate  
bhāvena kenacit preṣṭhah śrī mūlter-anghri sevane  
syād icchyaśām svatantrēṇa sva-rasanaiva tad-vidhiḥ  
vihiteṣu eva nityeṣu pravartante svayam hite  
ityādy ekāntinām bhāvi mahātmayam likhitam hi tat*

"*Ekāntika bhaktas* (one-pointed devotees) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa consider *śrī kṛṣṇa-smarana* and *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* alone to be the most fulfilling and valued activities. Generally, they do not engage in any other *aṅgas* of *bhakti* besides these two, which they cultivate with great love and affection. Their eagerness for these *aṅgas* is so strong that no other activity can captivate their taste. They develop an intense desire to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a specific mood. Therefore, they render service to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with moods which are favorable to their own *rasa*, along with some independence (to give up the injunctions which are unfavorable to their cultivation). This alone is their *vidhi*. The *ekāntika bhaktas* are not bound to follow all the rules and regulations which have been prescribed by the ṛṣis. The moods of the *ekāntika bhakta*'s inborn, natural disposition generally remain prominent. This is their glory."

ADHIMĀSA IS DEAR TO BHAKTAS AS THERE IS NO DISTURBANCE FROM THE KARMA-KĀṇḌA IN THIS MONTH.

The *bhaktas* observe Śrī Puruṣottama month according to their respective *adhikāra*; this means according to the distinctions of the moods of *svaniṣṭha*, *paraniṣṭhita* and *ekāntika bhaktas*. Bhagavān Vrajanātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the sovereign of this month; therefore, *adhimāsa* is dear to every *bhakta*. This is because, incidentally, in this month no disturbance from the *karma-kāṇḍa* can come to obstruct the performance of one's *bhakti*. ❧

(Translated from *Śrī Gaudiya Patrika* 2/4)

<sup>3</sup>*Svaniṣṭha* and *paraniṣṭhita bhaktas* are generally householders and *nirapekṣa bhaktas* are renunciates.