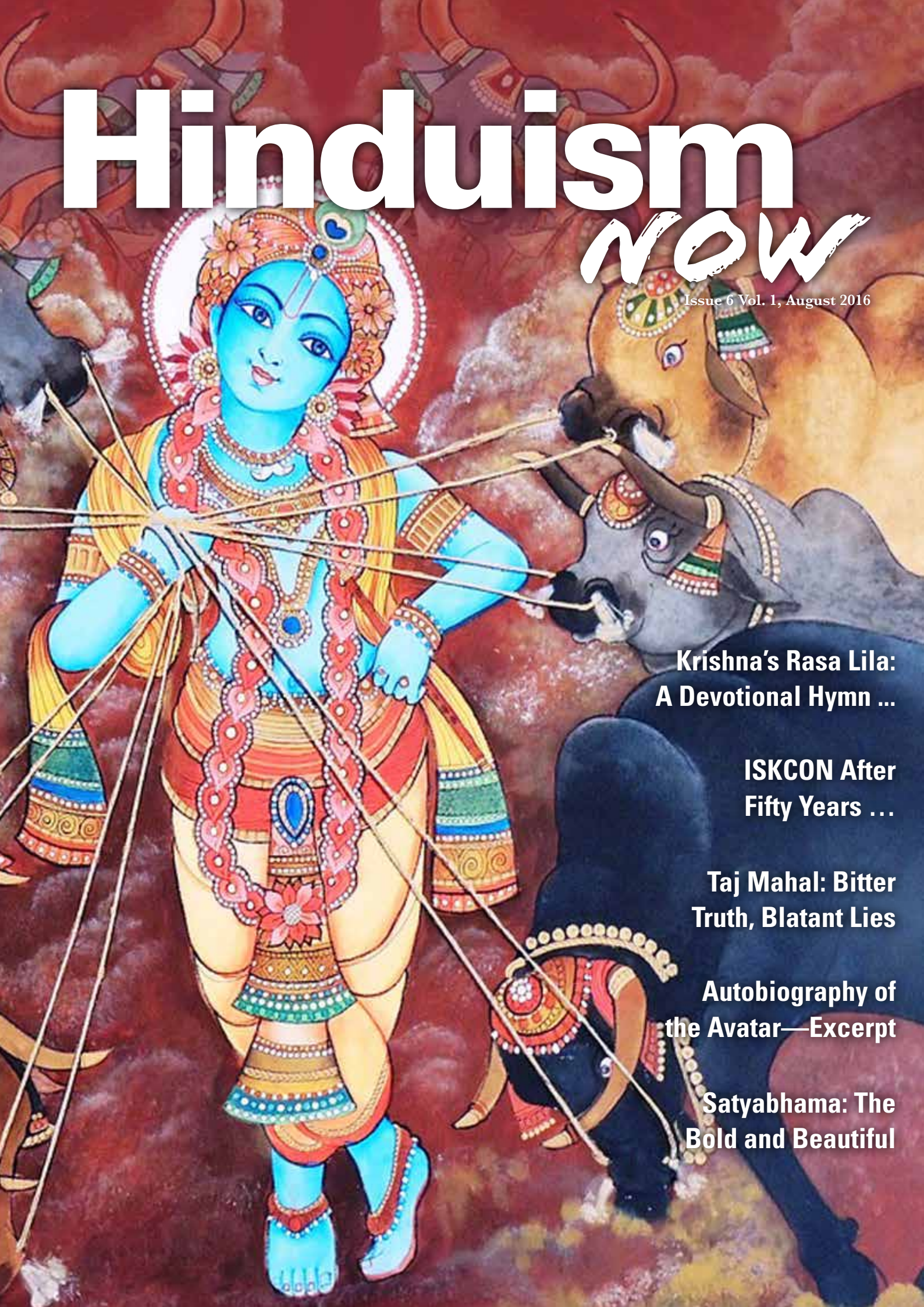


# Hinduism

**Now**

Issue 6 Vol. 1, August 2016



**Krishna's Rasa Lila:  
A Devotional Hymn ...**

**ISKCON After  
Fifty Years ...**

**Taj Mahal: Bitter  
Truth, Blatant Lies**

**Autobiography of  
the Avatar—Excerpt**

**Satyabhama: The  
Bold and Beautiful**

## Hindu Calendar—August 2016

02 August	Shravana Amavasya, Darsha Amavasya, Hariyali Amavasya, Mangala Gauri Vrat *North, Aadi Amavasai, Aadi Perukku
04 August	Chandra Darshan
05 August	Hariyali Teej, Andal Jayanthi
06 August	Vinayaka Chaturthi
<b>07 August</b>	<b>Nag Panchami</b>
08 August	Kalki Jayanti, Skanda Sashti, Shravan Somwar Vrat
09 August	Mangala Gauri Vrat
10 August	Tulsidas Jayanti
11 August	Masik Durgashtami
12 August	Varalakshmi Vrat
14 August	Shravana Putrada Ekadashi
15 August	Damodara Dwadashi, Shravan Somwar Vrat, Pradosh Vrat, Independence Day
16 August	Mangala Gauri Vrat, Simha Sankranti
17 August	Rigveda Upakarma, Hayagriva Jayanti, Malayalam New Year
<b>18 August</b>	<b>Shravana Purnima, Raksha Bandhan, Narali Purnima</b>
19 August	Gayathri Japam, Bhadrpada Begins - North
21 August	Kajari Teej, Sankashti Chaturthi, Sangada Hara Chathurti *Tamil, Bol Chothe *Gujarat
22 August	Nag Pancham *Gujarat
23 August	Balarama Jayanti, Randhan Chhath *Gujarat
24 August	Shitala Satam *Gujarat, Adya Kali Jayanti, Ashtami Rohini
<b>25 August</b>	<b>Krishna Janmashtami, Kalashtami</b>
26 August	Dahi Handi, Rohini Vrat
28 August	Aja Ekadashi
29 August	Paryushana Parvarambha, Pradosh Vrat
30 August	Masik Shivaratri
31 August	Darsha Amavasya



## Contents

Message from the Avatar.....	3
Hinduism Around the World.....	7
Janmashtami—Celebrating a Purnavater.....	10
<b>Main Feature</b>	
Birth of Lord Krishna.....	12
An Incurable Prankster.....	15
Purnavater Krishna.....	18
Decoding the 16,000 Wives of Krishna.....	20
Krishna and Arjuna—An Eternal Relationship.....	22
Krishna & Draupadi—Friends First.....	24
Jayadeva's Radha in Gita Govinda.....	26
Rasa Lila —A Devotional Hymn	
Sent to Future Generations.....	28
<b>Special Feature</b>	
ISKCON—After 50 Years.....	32
<b>Other Columns</b>	
The Curse and End of the Yadava Clan.....	36
<i>Autobiography of the Avatar—</i>	
Memories of Meenakshi.....	38
Taj Mahal—Bitter Truth, Blatant Lies.....	40
The Astika Schools of Thought.....	44
Aparigraha—Forge Your Identity.....	47
Nithyananda Yoga—The Original Yoga... From the Origin.....	48
Nithya Kriya Cure for Food Allergies.....	50
Sushruta, Originator of Surgery.....	52
<i>Bhagavad Gita—Seek with the</i>	
Guidance of a Master.....	54
Sant Tukoba.....	56
Satyabhama—The Bold and Beautiful.....	60
The Thulabharam that Tamed Bhama's Arrogance.....	62
Understanding Mantras—Hanuman Chalisa.....	64
Chanakya's Neeti—Part IV.....	66
The Digambara School of Jainism.....	68
Jain Basadis—Marvel of Larger-than-Life-Architecture.....	70
Teertha Sthala Guruvayur.....	74
Srimad Bhagavatam— Poonthanam Attracts Shiva.....	76
Prahlada—The Embodiment of Integrity.....	78
Jataka Tales—The Crane and the Crab.....	80
Life is Bliss.....	82

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### ***My Dear Ones,***

My commitment to you has been to continue with my interception of the sacred secrets embedded in the Upanishadic verses and also lead you to manifest the various powers of Sadashiva. Remember, Agamantha is straight harvesting. And I have a bountiful harvest to share with you based on what Sadashiva revealed in Varanasi and back here in Bidadi over the past few weeks.

## ***Message from the Avatar***

First, peace and friendliness with the whole universe is a prerequisite for manifesting powers. Each Upanishad starts and ends with a verse that is called the Shanthi Pada. It reinforces the truth that all knowledge is towards achieving peace with oneself, peace with the world and peace with the universe. The Shanthi Pada of *Keno Upanishad* is not just a peace prayer, it is a peace declaration. It declares for the integration of body and sense organs to happen and be established in the truths declared by the Upanishads. Only this abiding results in lasting peace. This is the space of Oneness for which all powers are just a side effect and just a play.

Second, use your WILL to manifest what you want. The ability to will is a unique power that only human beings have. It is the umbilical cord that connects you with the Cosmos. Use your will and declare what you want to manifest in your life, including powers, and see them come alive. Declaration happens to be the purest form of prayer as it emanates from the space of Oneness. There is no option for the Cosmos other than to make such declarations come alive. Your maturity is nothing but being integrated with your will.

Third, declare Shivatvamasi. Declare Sadashivoham. This is the best declaration there is. This is sweeter than Brahman as it is not just an experience but an expression also. When you are in this plane, your oneness with Sadashiva naturally reflects as extraordinary powers getting casually expressed. This declaration is also your access to the secret life of Sadashiva. When you take his name, do puja, japas, etc. you are part of His public life. Once in a while He gives darshan and fulfils what you want. When you are an enlightened being, you become part of his private life. You will enrich yourself and a few people around you and guide them to a better life. When you declare Sadashivoham, you become part of His secret life. You are then an incarnation and Sadashiva rushes to express through you. He does not feel threatened when more and more people declare Sadashivoham and repeat it as many number of times.

Fourth, even when (due to some lingering self-doubt), things do not manifest the way you want and the pace at which you want, do not divorce the divine and guru from your life. Never deny the existence of Brahman, the Cosmic Consciousness. Negating Existence, Brahman is like denying a board on which one writes 'there is no board' or like denying the existence of a father who has always nurtured you.

Fifth, use TARKA as a tool to manifest powers. Tarka is intra-analyzing, arguing, debating with yourself or with a group the great Truths of Life, till it becomes a foundation and base of your Life. And only with great Satsangis, the spiritual community tuned to Satsang (the company of truth) such a Tarka revealed by Sadashiva becomes possible.

Sixth, follow a faith system that empowers you eternally. Such a faith system has the following characteristics:

- retaining pure questioning that is devoid of any assumptions or conclusions
- protecting you from cultural shocks when you discover the truth for yourself and
- allowing the space for addition to the tradition happen based on his / her own spiritual discovery.

Religious leaders of the world have the responsibility to lead humanity through faith systems that adhere to the above tenets. Where we fail is when people do not want to affiliate with any religion. Disillusion with religion happens when what they discover for themselves is not aligned to the belief system shared with them. This makes the role of Guru most significant in the life of a human being.

My Guru Poornima message for this year is Mahadevarahasya.

- i. The essence of Vedas (Vedanta) and Agamas (Agamanta) is Shivatvamasi. This is His initiation. Your experiential expression or declaration of this truth is Shivoham / Sadashivoham.
- ii. When you declare Shivoham, Mahadeva does not feel threatened because he knows resources are endless. He is going to support you, encourage you to manifest Shivoham completely.
- iii. Mahadeva has nothing to gain from you other than fulfilling you by manifesting Himself through your being..

Live it. Will it. Manifest it. Radiate it.

Be blissful!

***His Holiness Paramahansa Nithyananda***

## HINDU FESTIVALS



### NAG PANCHAMI AUGUST 07, 2016

Nag Panchami is a traditional worship of snakes or serpents observed by Hindus throughout India and Nepal. Serpent deity made of silver, stone or wood or the painting of snakes on the wall are given a bath with milk and then revered.



### RAKSHA BANDHAN/NARIYAL POORNIMA AUGUST 18, 2016

Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival which celebrates the love and duty between brothers and sisters. On this day, a sister ties a rakhi (sacred thread) on their brother's wrist. This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being, and the brother's lifelong vow to protect her. A speciality dish is that made of coconut (nariyal) which is a must to be served on this day.

## From the Editor's Desk



After a lull on Hindu festivities, comes the deluge, literally and figuratively, as Bharatavarsha welcomes the monsoons and a string of festivals that follow suit. No other people in the world have as many festive celebrations as the Hindus do, making them the most vibrant, colorful, joyous, and celebratory human beings in the world! From now until November, in regular intervals of 10-15 days, the subcontinent will witness one major Hindu festival after another. It will start with Nag Panchami (Serpent Worship) on August 8.

A hoary tradition coming down from very ancient times, India and Nepal are the only countries where the serpent, particularly the sacred cobra, is worshipped on this day. Nag Panchami is a homage to the end of the Sarpa Satra yagna started by king Janmejaya of Hastinapur, to annihilate the entire snake world or Naga Loka, as a vengeance on Vasuki the serpent-king, for killing his father Parikshit. The yagna was stopped with the intervention of a brahmin Astika on Shukla Paksha Panchami day in the month of Shravan. Since that day, the festival is observed as Nag Panchami.

Another uniquely Hindu festival is Raksha Bandhan which falls this year on August 18—a day when brothers and sisters strengthen their bonds of duty and promises to love and protect each other. On this day, a sister ties a rakhi (sacred thread) on her brother's wrist. This symbolizes the sister's love and prayers for her brother's well-being, and the brother's lifelong vow to protect her.

But neither of these festivals can match the fervour, ecstasy, vibrance, dance, vermilion drenching festivities that will mark Janmashtami on August 25, to celebrate the birth of the last great purnavata, Lord Krishna. He who descended on earth nearly 9,000 years ago to bring an end to the chaos, pain, suffering, and evil in the world. He who is immortalised in this famous verse of the *Bhagavad Gita*,

*Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya, Glanirva Bhavathi Bharatha,  
Abhyurhanam Adharmasya Tadatmanan Srijami Aham.  
Praritanaya Sadhunam Vinashaya Cha Dushkritam,  
Dharmasanthapnaya, Sambhavami Yuge-Yuge.*

We do not slot, categorise or even try to define an avatar, particularly not Krishna. Which is why we allowed different people to give us a glimpse into his world—from his miraculous birth, to his innumerable pranks, the immense rasa lilas, the intensely longing relationship with Radha and the gopikas, the larger-than-life yet eternal bond with Arjuna, the sweet sakha-sakhi relationship with Draupadi. Krishna had more than 16,000 wives—or did he? We decode the myth of the 16,000 and also give a glimpse into the bold, haughty, naive yet incredibly beautiful world of Satyabhama, Krishna's warrior-wife. With an entire dance form Bhama Kalapam to define her many splendored qualities, need we say more about this ethereal beauty? His mission accomplished Lord Krishna was also to bear witness to the annihilation of his Yadava clan, bringing to fruit the curse of the ill-fated Gandhari, matriarch of the Kaurava clan, for not preventing the Kurukshetra War that destroyed her entire family.

The single credit for taking Krishna Consciousness, Hindu traditions, Bhagavatam scriptures and literature, vegetarianism, and Vedic organic living to every corner of the world goes to ISKCON. Driven by the passionate relentless efforts of its founder Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who began it all at the ripe young age of 60 years! On its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Stephen Knapp (Nandanandana Dasa), in a touching tribute, tells us about the major contributions of ISKCON to the world.

In the end, *Hinduism Now* is much more than Sri Krishna. Read on for many of our regular columns and do give us your feedback and comments.

HAPPY JANMASHTAMI.

Usha K Kent



# KRISHNA'S WORLD

SRI NITHYA MUKTHANANDA

Hinduism idolizes its heroes—warriors, leaders, philosophers and artists; it reveres those who take us closer to consciousness; but above all, it totally worships the rarest of the rare being who is Poornavatar—an ideal incarnation—who is a warrior, leader, philosopher, artist and satguru, all in one—and the first example of such a poornavatar is Lord Krishna. No wonder, for billions worldwide, the mention of Hinduism brings up the image of Lord Krishna as its quintessential symbol, and his divine song *The Bhagavad Gita* as the essence of Hindu thought and philosophy. Many interfaith references in books<sup>1</sup> or songs, refer to Krishna as the representative personality of Hinduism. The *Bhagavad Gita* has no doubt solidified its place in the spiritual core of the world's collective psyche.

The *Bhagavad Gita* has influenced so many Western thinkers and philosophers like Aldous Huxley, Thoreau and Emerson. Oppenheimer, the world famous physicist, learned Sanskrit just to read the *Bhagavad Gita* in the original, citing it later as one of the most influential books to shape his philosophy of life. Upon witnessing the world's first nuclear test in 1945, he instantly

quoted chapter 11, text 32, "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." Einstein's famously said "When I read the *Bhagavad Gita* and reflect about how God created this universe everything else seems so superfluous."

A few years ago Bloomberg magazine asked whether the *Bhagavad Gita* has become the hip new source for management wisdom in the West. It said that phrases from the *Bhagavad Gita* are popping up in management tomes and on web sites of consultants.<sup>2</sup> Top business schools like Columbia University have introduced happiness and self-mastery classes based on its teaching to help managers make meaning of their lives, become better leaders and also find inner peace in this increasingly stressful world. Business Week magazine coined the word "Karma Capitalism"—a gentler, more empathetic ethos of management—to describe this trend.<sup>3</sup>

*Bhagavad Gita* is required reading for many college freshmen around the world. For example, in Seton Hall University in the US, the Journey of Transformation class is required for everyone; it challenges students to ponder questions like

what is real? What is the truth? And *Bhagavad Gita* is required reading.<sup>4</sup>

The triumphant story of Krishna has not only influenced thinkers but other religions also. Many believe that many themes in the story of Jesus Christ—like immaculate conception, a bright star appearing in the sky, and resurrection—were borrowed from Krishna's story and Hindu ideas.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, the ISKCON movement has captured the imagination of popular culture worldwide and made the name of Sri Krishna a household name for millions. The Hare Krishna mantra appears in many famous songs sung by members of the Beatles, especially the track "Living in the Material World" (1973) with the lyrics: "I hope to get out of this place by the Lord Sri Krishna's grace. My salvation from the material world."<sup>6</sup>

Thousands and thousands of years after his birth, Lord Krishna is not only staying immensely and intimately relevant to this world, his influence in growing. People in all walks of life, with all types of personalities, from various religions and various countries, from various races, all are

attracted to Lord Krishna for his grace, for his universality, for his love, for his wisdom, and his all-encompassing personality that is an ideal for everyone to live up to. These are all the hallmarks of yet another Poornavatar, one who is amongst us now—His Holiness Paramahansa Nithyananda. For all of us who wished intensely that we lived during the times of Lord Krishna, our wish has come true—we live in the times of Bhagawan Nithyananda. A few thousand years from now someone like me will be writing an article like this on Paramahansa Nithyananda. Let us make sure that we enjoy this unique time with him, NOW. 🙏

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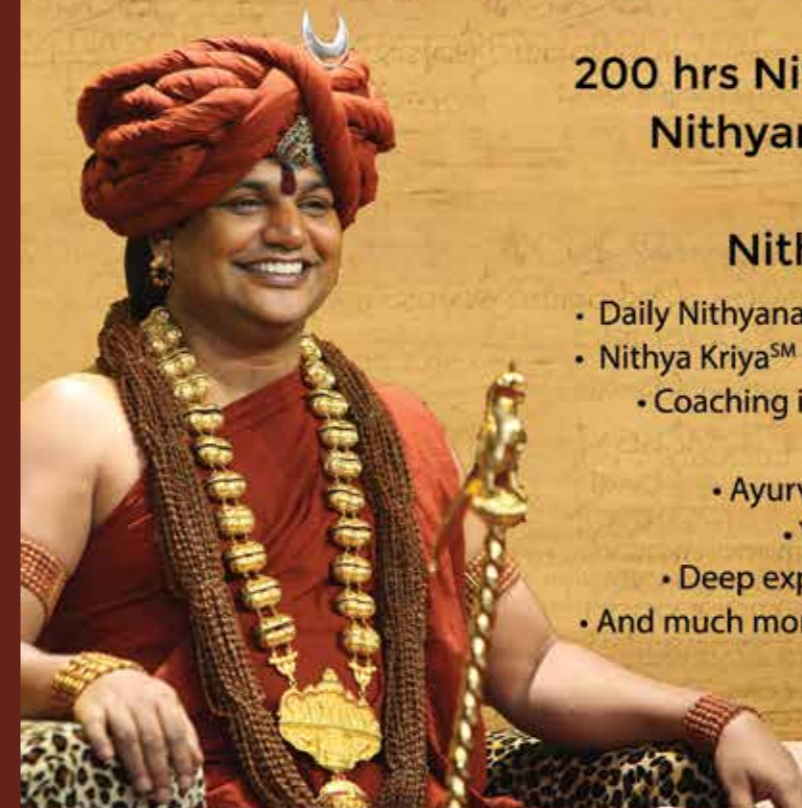
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# JANMASHTAMI CELEBRATING THE BIRTH OF A PURNAVATAR

MA NITHYA MAYATITANANDA

The celebration of Krishna's birth is one of the largest Hindu festivals in the world, celebrated by nearly 930 million people worldwide.

Popularly known as Krishna Janmashtami, the festival falls on the eighth day (Ashtami) of Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight) of the month of Bhadrapad (August–September) in the Hindu calendar. This year it falls on August 25, 2016.

## Krishna's Birth—Prophecy to End Evil

Krishna, the 8<sup>th</sup> incarnation of Vishnu, took birth 1000s of years ago, to destroy the evil forces controlling the world. It was prophesied that Krishna would be responsible for the death of his evil uncle Kamsa, the ruler of Vrishini whose capital was Mathura. He imprisoned Krishna's parents Vasudev and Devaki and killed each child born to them, in an attempt to negate the prophecy.

The night of Krishna's birth was a night steeped in magic and divine intervention. The shackles fell off his father's ankles, the prison doors swung open, and all the guards slept as if drugged. He escaped from the prison with his new-born son under the cloak of darkness and a torrential downpour. Krishna was left with Nanda of Gokul

and his wife Yashoda who raised him as their own. As a youth Krishna did indeed slay the evil Kamsa and free his parents from prison.

This was the beginning of one of the most majestic lifetimes seen on the planet Earth by an incarnation of the Divine. The celebration of Lord Krishna's birth is therefore a day of recounting the amazing events of his life (Rasa Lila), fasting, singing bhajans, preparing food offerings, and kirtan dancing.

## Janmashtami at ISKCON

ISKCON, heart of the Hare Krishna movement, begins planning for this auspicious festival months in advance. Thousands of devotees visit the ISKCON temple on the day of Janmashtami to be a part of the festivities, receive the blessings, and eat the freely offered vegetarian meals. Devotees are encouraged to use this day to: "Prepare for this spiritual festival by recalling the things in life for which you are grateful; by forgiving your enemies; by tolerating others mistakes; by expressing happiness for whatever God gives you on this day. Most of all, be respectful to devotees and other pilgrims. This is the success formula for lots of blessings on this special day," says ISKCON devotee Radhadesh, Belgium.

## Roots of the Crowd-Pulling Dahi Handi

One of the more famous stories from Krishna's childhood was his love for curd and butter. In the village of Vrindavan where he grew up, these items were stored in clay pots and hung from the ceiling in the kitchen. In order to get to it, Krishna and his friends would form a human pyramid to climb to that height and steal the butter or curd.

This has turned into a modern day gala celebration known as Dahi Handi. It involves making a human pyramid and breaking an earthen handi or pot, filled with vermillion water, money donated by several people, and such other goodies all tied high above street level. The topmost person tries to break the handi by hitting it with a blunt object. When the handi breaks, the vermillion water is spilled over the entire group.

Participating in this event is not for the faint hearted. Usually these human pyramids are pros from local yoga centers and gyms who turn out in large numbers during Janmashtami to enthrall the crowds with their skills of making human pyramids. This is a huge uproarious event that brings wild excitement to the crowd. Over time the human pyramids have gotten higher, the participants more daring, and the prize money more alluring. Most recently one group (called a mandal) known as Jai Jawan Govinda Pathak from Jogeshwari, Mumbai, made it into the Guinness World Record by forming a human pyramid 9-tiers high, totalling 43.79 feet (13.35 m) in Thane.

## Rasa Lila

In the north of India the celebrations of Janmashtami include a variation of the Rasa Lila (the divine play), as a popular form of folk theatre in the regions of Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, especially during this festival. This Rasa Lila usually depict scenes of the child prankster Krishna, miracles he displayed as a child such as in the Kalinga Mardana (taming of the 7-headed serpent Kalinga), or his endearing relationship with his adoptive mother Yashoda.

## The Festivities

The entire day is a grand celebration of life. In many houses in South India, people draw footsteps of Lord Krishna from the entrance of the house to the Puja room, which are drawn with

rice flour paste and is a sign of welcoming Lord Krishna home. These footprints represent the baby Krishna walking in with curds all over his little feet, stolen from curd pots from his own or fellow cowherd homes!

No matter where in the world you celebrate Janmashtami, the highlight is the ceremonial bathing of Krishna at the stroke of midnight. The utsava deities of Krishna are anointed with fragrant oils and are bathed with auspicious items like milk, yogurt, ghee, honey, sweet water and fresh juices. They are then smeared with turmeric paste and bathed in Ganges water. Flowers are showered until the deity virtually disappear in the petals. Alankaram is performed, decking them out in new garments and jewels before they are revealed to the rest of the family or the world.

The feast spread include a whole host of delicacies made of the boy Krishna's favorite food—milk products such as curds, butter, paneer (cottage cheese), buttermilk, ghee and the like. At many Krishna temples and religious institutes little children are dressed as Krishna in prize winning competitions to win the coveted trophy as the best imitation of the little lord! ☪

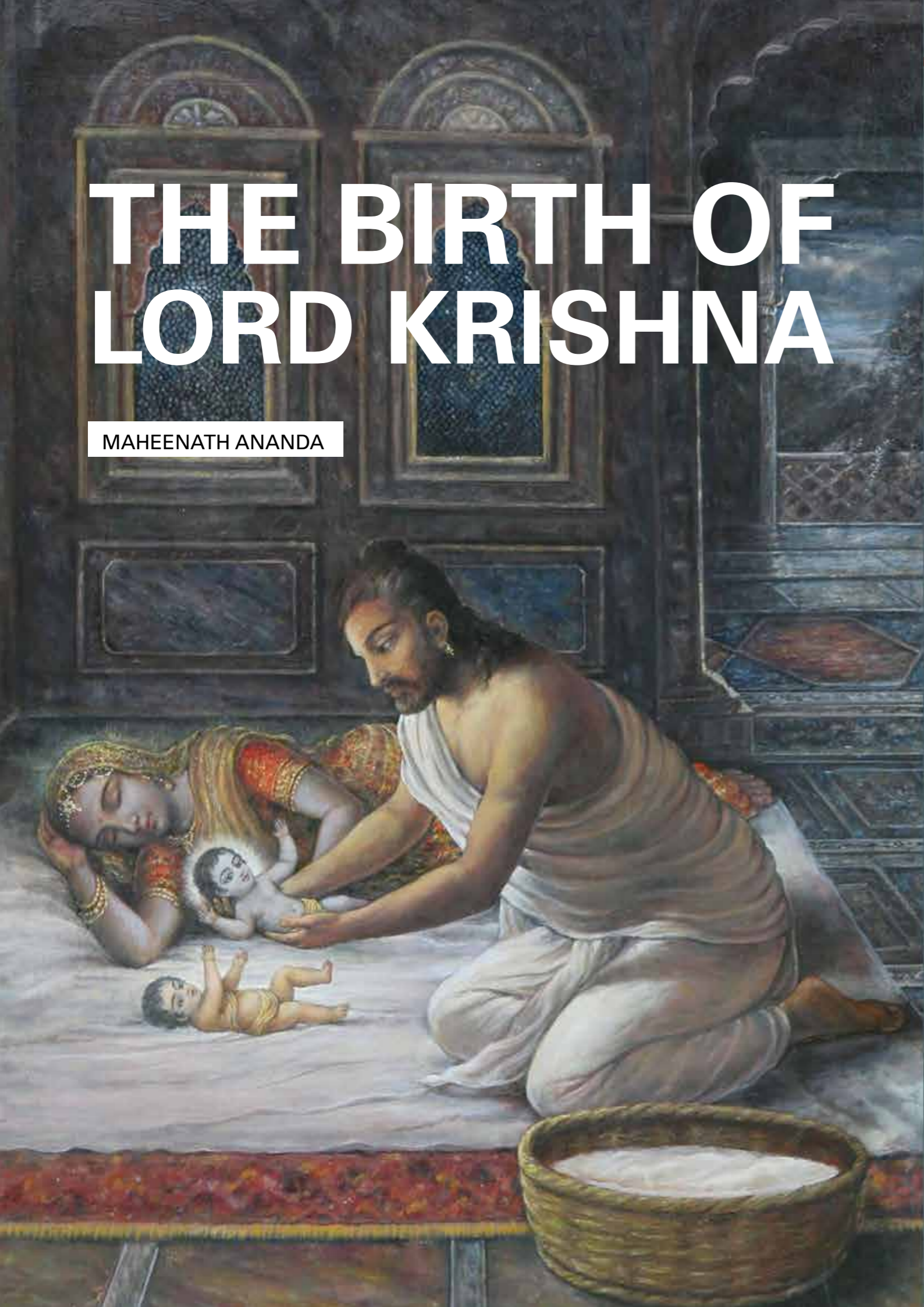
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# THE BIRTH OF LORD KRISHNA

MAHEENATH ANANDA



## Lord Krishna—The Righteous One

**K**rishna Janmashtami is the celebration of Lord Krishna, the 8<sup>th</sup> Avatar of Lord Vishnu. He was born on 27<sup>th</sup> July 3115 BCE. This date is now contentious since new evidences and dating of Krishna's Dwaraka at the bottom of the sea, have pushed back his happening by nearly 6,000 years (read Paradise Lost: Dwaraka, March 2016 issue of *Hinduism Now*)

The following sloka from Bhagavad Gita (Chapter IV-7,8) explicitly and beautifully describes the essence of Sri Krishna Avatar:

*"Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanirva Bhavathi Bharatha, Abhyurhanam Adharmasya Tadatmanan Srijami Aham." Praritranya Sadhunam Vinashaya Cha Dushkritam, Dharamasansthapnaya, Sambhavami Yuge-Yuge."*

"Whenever there is a decline in righteousness O! Bharatha, and a rise in the unrighteous, I manifest Myself! For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age."<sup>1</sup>

## Background of the Birth of Lord Krishna

Ugrasena was a prominent chief of the Yadava community who was becoming old and Kamsa, his extremely ambitious son, did not want to wait for him to die to succeed to the throne. He mercilessly imprisoned his own father and crowned himself King of Mathura. His sister, Devaki married Vasudeva, another Yadava chief. On the day Devaki married Vasudeva, an akashvani, astral voice from the sky prophesied that her 8<sup>th</sup> son would annihilate Kamsa. On hearing this, Kamsa was about to kill his sister but Vasudeva begged him to spare his wife and told him that he would hand over to him every new child born to Devaki.

Kamsa agreed subject to the condition he would imprison them both so that they would be under his constant watch. He killed seven of the children born to Devaki. After nine years of her marriage, Devaki became pregnant for the eighth time. She bemoaned the fact that her cruel brother would kill this child also and she implored God to save her child.

Kamsa got very nervous when the eighth child was due and he shackled Devaki and her husband in a heavily guarded prison. Puthana, Kamsa's most trusted aide, was entrusted with the job of midwife. She was to hand over the child on birth to Kamsa, who would kill the newborn immediately.

## Day of Birth

On the night of the birth of the child, Puthana waited for Devaki to deliver and finally went for a visit to her home for a few minutes to come back to the prison soon. However, a heavy rain flooded the streets and she was unable to go back to the prison that night. That was when Devaki, delivered her eighth child, a son. A blinding light filled the prison and Devaki fainted at the sight. An akashvani, (voice from the sky) spoke to Vasudeva thus:

"Take the child across the River Yamuna to your friend, King Nanda, the ruler of the Gokul kingdom, whose wife Queen Yashoda just gave birth to a daughter. Bring the child back in exchange for your son and return to the prison immediately."

## Miracles at Birth

Vasudeva took the child away when Devaki was asleep. He was scared to take the child out of the prison as hundred of soldiers guarded the prison. But a miracle happened. The prison doors opened automatically and he found to his surprise that all the guards were asleep.

Vasudeva reached the banks of the Yamuna which was in a state of aggravation. Then another miracle happened. The moment the feet of the baby Krishna touched the river, it became normal to make way for Him. A huge black snake, Sheshnag, arose from the ocean from behind him, positioning its hood like an umbrella to protect the newborn baby from the torrential rain. Sheshnag is the roofing canopy of Lord Vishnu.

Amazed at these miracles Vasudev crossed the river and reached Gokul. He went to the palace of King Nanda, whose doors of the palace were wide open. He entered Queen Yashoda's quarters and placed his child next to Yashoda and lifted the girl child and left for Gokul. He once again crossed the river which was still in spate, and the moment he entered the prison, the doors automatically closed





behind him. The guards who were asleep awoke, and became aware that a baby was born. They rushed to Kamsa to deliver the news to him.

#### Goddess Durga Appears

In the meanwhile, Puthana, the mid-wife, had returned. Kamsa came and saw that the child was a girl. Suspecting something was wrong, Kamsa questioned Puthana. Puthana lied that the child was born right before her eyes. Both Devaki and Vasudeva begged Kamsa to spare the child, specially because it was a girl. But Kamsa said that he would not take any chances and took the child and threw it in the air.

At that moment the child flew out of his hand and remained suspended in the air filling the prison with a blinding light. The child had changed into an eight-armed form of Goddess Durga after the light subsided. Dressed in shining garments and dazzling jewels, she looked fierce and divine at the same time. She informed Kamsa thus: "No force on heaven and earth can kill me. Your slayer is already born. He is alive and well in a safe place. He will come one day and kill you."<sup>2</sup>

She then disappeared leaving Kamsa, terror-stricken and confused. Kamsa, in haste, freed both Vasudev and Devaki from prison.

Vasudev narrated to his wife all that had happened that night. Devaki became happy to

know that her son was alive and in safe hands. Both prayed to God that her son should not fall into the hands of Kamsa.

#### The Celebration of Lord Krishna's Birth

Gokul erupted in great rejoicing. The cowherds were smiling that a new baby boy was born to their loved king Nanda! All the streets were swept clean and the houses were decorated with the whole place wearing a festive look. Everyone in his palace were in a joyous mood as he named the child Krishna. All danced with joy and flocked to Nanda's house to offer the child gifts and to see the baby boy. All people noticed that the child's skin was dark-blue colour, he never cried but had a smile for everyone and his eyes twinkled merrily. Lord Krishna was the cynosure of all eyes!

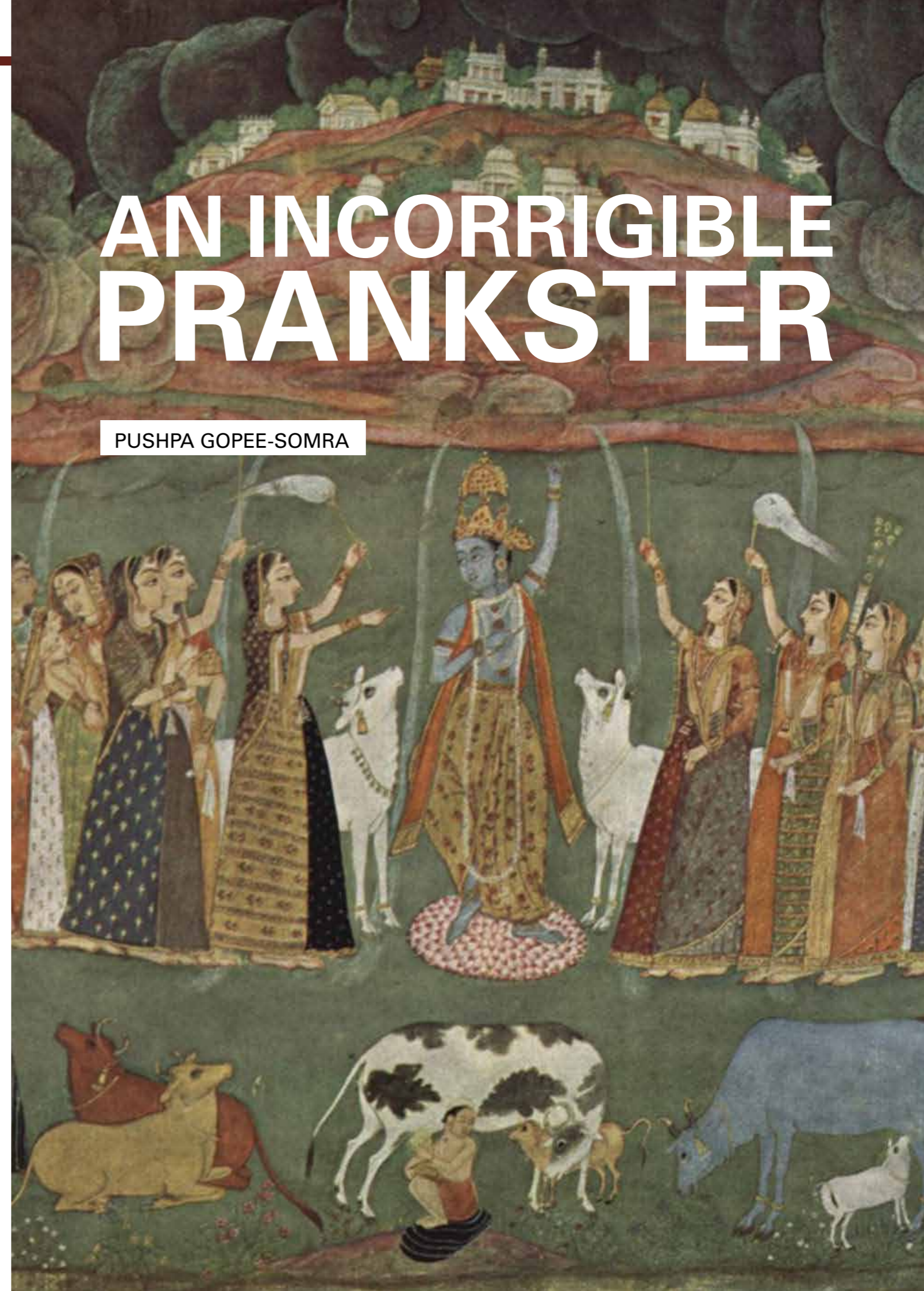
Yashoda felt overjoyed at the birth of Lord Krishna, the Supreme God, the Sustainer. Lord Krishna was born to save everyone from Kamsa, who was a terrible tyrant. Fulfilling the prophecy made before his birth, in his youth, Krishna killed Kamsa and reinstated Ugrasena, Kamsa's father, as the ruler of Mathura. ☪

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# AN INCORRIGIBLE PRANKSTER

PUSHPA GOPEE-SOMRA



**K**rishna is well known for having the most entertaining Bal Leela (childhood stories) of all times. He is the most adorable and pampered child in Indian mythology.

#### Putana's Deliverance

Kansa, ordered the demoness Putana to kill all the infants in Gokul, in the hope of killing Krishna too. Putana filled her breasts with poison and went on feeding the infants. She disguised herself as a beautiful lady to enter Krishna's house and tried to feed him. Bal Krishna sucked her life out of her fake body and she came into her true form and died of pain. Krishna liberated Putana because by offering her milk, she had performed the supreme act of maternal devotion.

#### Overturing the Cart

Another incident is when Kansa sent a demon called Sakatasur, who took the form of a large hand-cart. The aim was to crush and kill the baby Krishna, who in turn gave a hard blow on the cart and everything fell apart and killed the demon.

#### Salvation of Trnavarta

One of the servants of Kansa, known as Trnavarta, as instructed by Kansa, appeared there in the shape of a whirlwind. The Trnavarta demon took baby Krishna on his shoulder, went high in the sky, but the baby assumed such a weight that suddenly the demon could not go any further, and he had to stop his whirlwind activities. Krishna caught hold of his neck and pushed the demon to the ground and he was killed.

#### Makhan Chor—The Butter Thief

As a growing child, Krishna's mischief and pranks knew no bound. He loved his makhan (butter) a lot. While the gopis (milkmaids) would be sleeping, Krishna together with his brother Balarama and his friends would be stealing butter from all the neighbouring houses. Yashoda would receive lots of complains on Krishna being the notorious Makhan Chor of Gokul. Krishna would share the butter with his friends who did not have a cow and could not prepare their own butter. When Yashoda would be angry over Krishna's pranks, the cunning Krishna with his cute smile and innocent face would always melt her heart and she would forgive him.

#### Showing Cosmic Vision to Yashoda

As a kid, Krishna used to eat soil. One day, Yashoda caught him and asked whether he was eating soil and he said no. To believe him, his mother asked him to open his mouth. When he did so, his mother saw the whole universe within and she became unconscious. However, after knowing Sri Krishna was the Lord of the universe, mother Yashoda could never treat Him like a son and show her affection towards Him. So by His internal potency or yogamaya, Krishna made her forget His divinity.

#### Deliverance of Yamala—Arjuna Trees

One day, finding young Krishna stealing butter from the kitchen, Yashoda quietly crept up from behind to try to catch him. After tiring his mother, Krishna got caught and Yashoda tied him up. But Yashoda realised that the rope was too small. To get more rope, she secured the baby Krishna to a mortar.

Soon there was a loud noise. Everyone rushed out to see that Krishna had dragged the heavy mortar, and when he got stuck between two trees he had pulled so hard that they had fallen down. These trees were the sons of Kuber, the god of wealth. Their names were Nalakubara and Manigreeva. By making them fall Krishna freed them from the curse given to them by Narada because of their arrogant attitude in an earlier time.

#### The Fruit Seller

Once, a lady fruit seller came across to Krishna's house. Seeing such a divine child, the fruit seller heart was overwhelmed. Krishna hurriedly brought a fistful of grains in exchange of some juicy fruits. By the time he reached the fruit seller though, most of the grains had flowed out of his little hands. The lady told Krishna if He called her 'mother', she would give him all the fruits. Krishna sat on her lap called her "Ma" and got down quickly and walked away happily with his little hands full of fruits. Once back home the fruit seller was amazed to find the basket of fruits was full of countless wonderful jewels. A beautiful surprising reward for just pleasing the Lord!

#### Deliverance of People of Vrindavan

There was a huge black 7-headed serpent named Kaliya (Kalinga), who with his venom was poisoning the Yamuna River. There was a great

fight between Krishna and Kaliya, at the end of which the serpent asked for forgiveness and left the river. This is popularly represented in dance forms as 'Kalinga Mardana'.

The people of Vrindavan, used to pray to Indra, the king of the gods, for rain to have good harvest. On Krishna's suggestion they start praying at the Govardhan Hill. Lord Indra was furious and sent storms with lasted for several days. Krishna lifted the Govardhan Hill with his little finger to protect the people of Vrindavan from the raging storms. Indra realised his mistake and asked for forgiveness.

#### Murali—The Flute Player

Krishna was such a marvelous flute player that the vibrations of the basuri or bamboo flute would enchant the whole Vrindavan. The gopis or milk maidens would leave all tasks they were doing and follow him to enjoy his music. This is the example of bhakti (devotion) in its purest form.

The gopis were very fond of Krishna and would always tease him. They would request him to dance for them in exchange for Makhan or butter, which he was so fond of. Sometimes being fed up by Krishna pranks, they would also report him to Yashoda. To teach the gopis a lesson Krishna once stole their clothes while they were bathing in the river. They pleaded him to return their

clothes. This illustrates the act of surrendering to the feet of the God out of devotional love.

The play between the gopis and Krishna are hallmark of the dance form called Rasa Lila made famous by the poems of Jayadeva in the Gita Govinda.

The message that Krishna conveyed through his life and his pranks is that our life is to be lived with laughter and joy even as one pursues devotion in seeking God. ☪

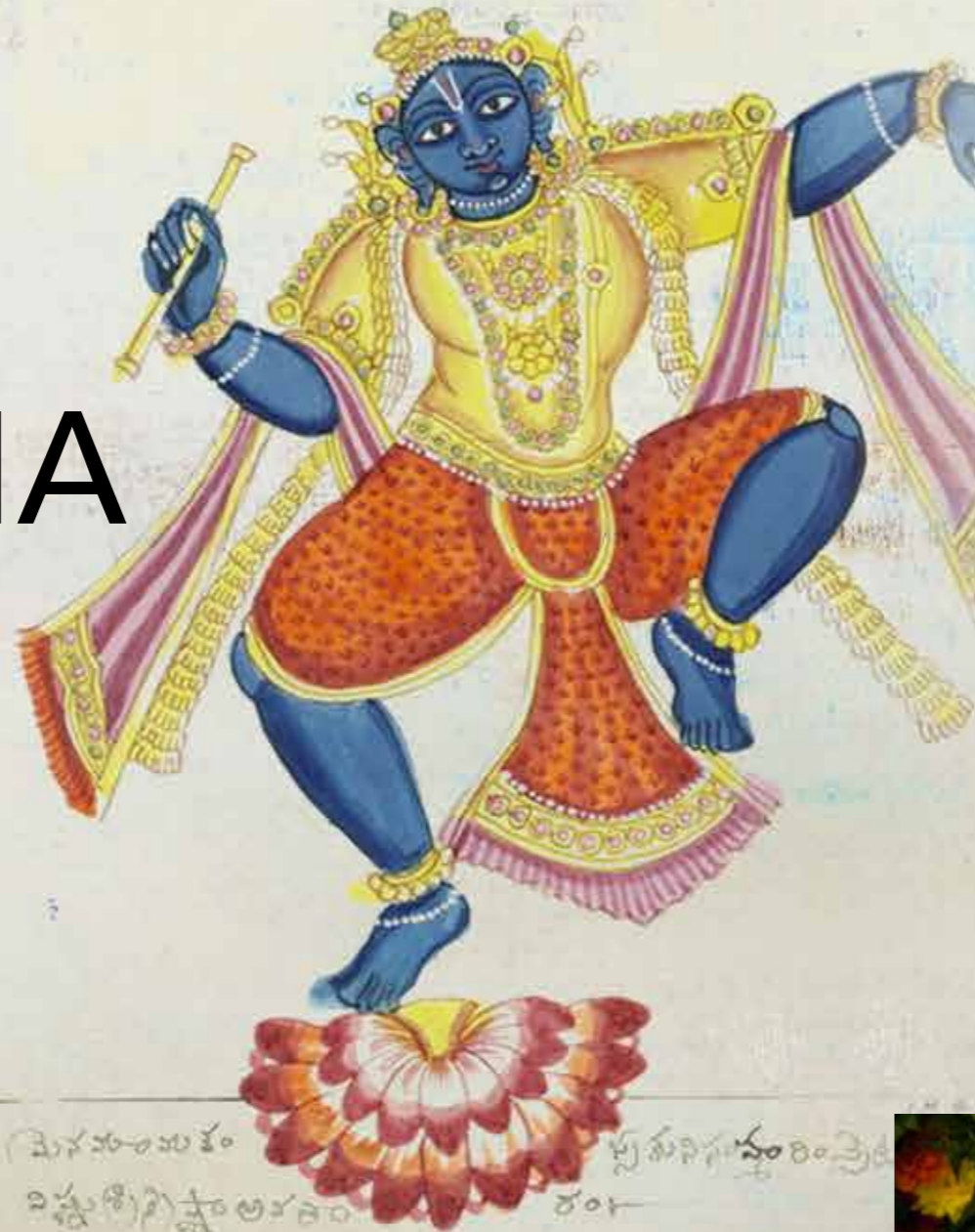
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# PURNAVATAR KRISHNA

CHARUYAN SRIKUMARAN



be able to connect effectively with a person like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Shiva would satisfy the last category of people who are centered on their beings and seek spiritual experiences.

### Who is a Purnavatar?

There are some avatars we call purnavatar. This roughly translates to a complete avatar. In reference to the earlier point of how certain avatars appeal to certain people, purnavatars can appeal to all types of people. They can connect intellectually, emotionally and through the ability of giving direct spiritual experiences. One example of a purnavatar is Sri Krishna.

### Krishna, the Purnavatar

Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, is one of the greatest incarnations and beings of all times. He is a jagathguru, a guru for the whole universe. He can relate to and help all types of people at different levels. He is a macrocosm expressing in the microcosm of his 6-foot body. Krishna has all the qualities needed to bring human beings to their divinity.

### An Embodiment of Love

One quality that is woven into the very fabric of Krishna is the concept of Love. It is no wonder he has a reputation as “the romance” or the flirt. He was able to elicit the feeling of love from his gopikas. He was able to elicit the feeling and also make them totally satisfied that their love was accepted and returned. Men of all ages loved him like a brethren, an intimate friend, and a leader. His charm was so strong that even his enemies would stop and admire his unique, and appreciable personality—when their logic was not on guard that is. Everyone loved him. Everything he did, whether it was entertaining, advising, protecting or shouting—all of it was infused with love.

Many of the Gods and Goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon receive praise, reverence and devotion. But hardly any of them are really loved—not in the way Krishna is. ☪

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In the Hindu tradition, we recognize that we have an ultimate goal of moksha (liberation) or enlightenment. But with all the distractions in life, we tend to stray off from the original essence of the shastras (spiritual scriptures). So incarnations, or avatars, descend to this planet to show people the way back to divinity and the true nature of reality. This is one clear difference between Hinduism and many of the world’s religions today. Existence itself assumes for us to realize our true nature of divinity.

“Scientist is a person that create a formula to reproduce the outer world experiences. Master is a person who creates the formula to reproduce the experience of the inner world. Incarnation is a person who can directly give (you) the experience without using the formula.”

### Avatar Defined

Avatars are beings with immense energy, power and compassion. There are many instances and examples of avatars that descended throughout history. For example, Shankara, Rama, are all examples of incarnations.

The world has many different types of people. So it stands to reason that there are many different incarnations that people have access to. For example, many people may consider themselves to be intellectuals and for them the best way to learn spirituality is through sacred texts and the teachings of an enlightened being. Since they relate to intellectual understandings easier, an intellectual avatar like Buddha would be ideal. A person seeking emotional fulfillment may not connect with Buddha well but would



# DECODING THE 16,000 WIVES OF KRISHNA

**H**ow many wives did Krishna have? A derisive comment often made of Krishna is about his '16,000 wives'. How did He manage to have so many? As a divine being, why did he need wives at all? How was his domestic life like with these many wives, and so on? Here we shall clear the air around the legends and myths of the 16,000 wives.

Krishna was known as ashtabharya, or one with eight wives. These eight wives were Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Nagnajiti, Bhadra, and Lakshmana. Another wife mentioned is Rohini, the most important among the 16,000 wives.

## How the 16,000 Wives Happened—The Arrogance of Narakasura

As per the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Harivamsa*, *Vishnu Purana*, and *Mahabharata* there was an asura named Narakasura. Narakasura was the son of the demon king Hiranyaksha and Bhudevi, conceived at a time when hapless mother earth was pushed to the far end of the universe by Hiranyaksha. Bhudevi was rescued by Vishnu, in the incarnation of a boar or Varaha avatar.

Narakasura was a smart asura. When he set out on his path to absolute power and universal destruction, he made sure no matter what he did, he was taken care of for life. For this he sought a

boon from Brahma that his death be in the hands of his own mother, which Brahma granted. With the boon, Narakasura felt invincible, and became arrogant with power, knowing full well a mother would never kill her son.

## Lording Over Three Worlds

Narakasura went on to become extraordinarily powerful, and conquered all three worlds—patala-loka, bhuloka and finally devaloka (nether world, earthly world and world of the gods) plunging all of them into darkness. Narakasura kidnapped and held captive 16,000 women from devaloka, in his capital Pragjyotisha. Things came to a head when Narakasura stole the earrings and some properties of divine mother Aditi, the mother of all the gods. A distraught Aditi approached her cousin Satyabhama for help and to intervene on behalf of the gods to release the hapless women and get back her properties. Now, Satyabhama was none other than Bhudevi reborn in Dwapara Yuga to be Krishna's wife.

## 16,000 Become Wives of Krishna

Krishna, with Satyabhama by his side, attacked the heavily guarded capital of Pragjyotisha and fought a fierce battle with the demons. Fulfilling the boon given by Vishnu, Satyabhama finally killed Narakasura and released the 16,000 captured women.

However, when Krishna asked the 16,000 women to return to their homes the women covered. They said society would question their chastity, as they had been held captive by another man, and therefore they had nowhere to go. Instead, they asked Krishna to restore their honor and dignity by marrying all of them. Being a divine being and an incarnation, Krishna assumed as many bodies as there were 16,000 women, and married all of them at the same auspicious time. For each of them he constructed a palace with huge gardens full of flowers and treated them equal to his eight principal wives.

## Interpretations of the 16,000 Wives

There are several interpretations in the Puranas and Vedic texts about the 16,000 wives.

According to one legend, each of the 16,000 women were rishis from the past who wanted to be part of Krishna's incarnation on earth, who wanted to live closer to him and witness his life. Upon their prayer to lord Vishnu he granted them the boon to be his wives in his next incarnation on earth.

Another relate Krishna, the flautist and lover of music, and his 16,000 wives to be the 16,000 ragas or musical modes in Indian classical music, and their wives—the raginis (female raga). The raginis selected one of these ragas to which to modulate her strains for affecting and securing the heart of Krishna. Krishna who was devoted to music received and enjoyed every variety of modulation, multiplied to the number of 16,000, personified in the form of the women derived from Bhauma (also the name of Narakasura), a five-stringed musical instrument.

Some symbolize the number 16,000 to represent 16 qualities (or arts or vidyas) that Krishna had, which is higher than the previous incarnations of Vishnu that is Rama who had 14 qualities.

"When a devotee realizes god, God appears to each as his own (here Krishna manifested 16,000 forms to love them individually), each devotee feels God in his heart as his own lover, he does not reject any one's love. He treats them all equally, loves them all equally."<sup>1</sup>

## Srila Prabhupada Says

A beautiful interpretation is that by ISCKON founder Srila Prabhupada who writes in his book, *Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*:

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead Krishna certainly has no business being any one's husband or son or father, because everything belongs to Him and everyone is under His control. He does not require any one's help for His satisfaction. He is atmarama, self-satisfied; He can derive all pleasure by Himself, without any one's help. When the Lord descends to play the part of a human being, He plays a role either as a husband, son, friend or enemy, in full perfection. As such, when He was playing as the perfect husband of the queens, especially of Rukminiji, He enjoyed conjugal love in complete perfection.

According to Vedic culture, although polygamy is allowed, none of the wives should be ill-treated. In other words, one may take many wives only if he is able to satisfy all of them equally as an ideal householder; otherwise it is not allowed. Lord Krishna is the world-teacher; therefore, even though He had no need for a wife, He expanded Himself into as many forms as He had wives, and He lived with them as an ideal householder, observing the regulative principles, rules and commitments in accordance with the Vedic injunctions and the social laws and customs of society. For each of His 16,000 wives, He simultaneously maintained different palaces, different establishments and different atmospheres. Thus the Lord, although one, exhibited Himself as 16,000 ideal householders."<sup>2</sup>

Each of the 16,000 wives of Krishna had golden palaces with huge gardens full of colorful flowers. This is symbolic and means that he who weds the supreme soul (one who attains self-realization) will have all the gold (siddhis, psychic powers), palace, beauty (satisfactions) that he wishes for. ☸

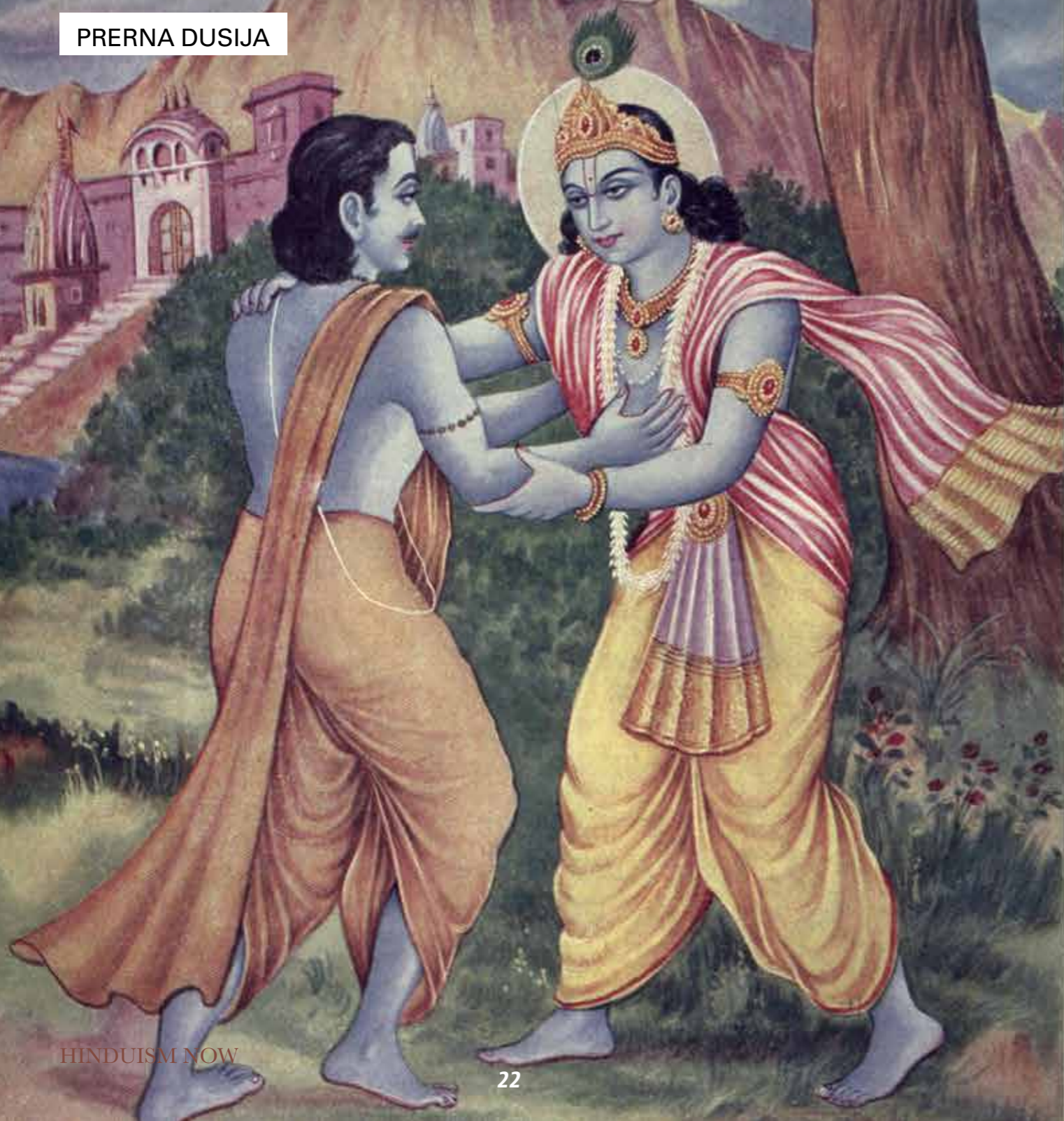
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# KRISHNA AND ARJUNA

## AN ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP

PRERNA DUSIJA



### Friends Forever

While Krishna and Arjuna shared a deep and intimate friendship in their childhood through adulthood—their relationship is truly epic. For Arjuna, Krishna was his friend, mentor, divine guide, Guru and charioteer and they are Nara (embodiment of all humanity) and Narayana (Lord Vishnu who in turn is Sri Krishna) respectively. As Paramahansa Nithyananda says in his interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna is the highest form of interaction between the human and the Divine.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Bhagavad Gita* we look at the test of Arjuna's faith in Krishna and how he overcomes the doubts he has about the Supreme Godhead. Although initially Arjuna is engulfed by doubt—it is through having doubts and working with questions that Arjuna evolves into a beautiful and confident being, who develops respect and remains in awe of Krishna's friendship towards him. It is a very tedious process for them because although Krishna reveals his true Self or incarnation-hood to Arjuna, he is still besieged with doubt and is even unable to pick up the bow and fight the battle in the Kurukshetra field of the Mahabharata war. The questions Arjuna has for Sri Krishna, however, in no way affect their closeness.

The battle within Arjuna is a reflection of the battle outside for which reason he is not able to believe his friend that he is capable of doing something great, despite being told and reassured by his dearest friend that he will be successful in pulling himself and the other Pandavas out of their plight.

At the end of the day all of us have an Arjuna and Krishna within us, Arjuna representing the Body and Krishna the Spirit which is the ultimate reality for mankind and Godhood, and is also responsible for the maintenance of relationships that last eternally. Also, God speaks to them as a friend, (the way Krishna spoke to Arjuna) who truly have faith in Him even if they are battling with themselves in the lowest way possible. Krishna's friendship towards Arjuna stands as a testimony that withstood all possible pressures Arjuna gave to himself, while Sri Krishna took all possible measures to vanquish the doubts Arjuna had in waging the external war. Sri

Krishna plays the role of a mentor when he finally succeeds in empowering his best friend in the inner world as well.

### Sri Krishna as Advisor

Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to take concrete action and attack his kinsmen and teachers (the Kauravas and those who were against the Pandavas) because "Arjuna would try to convince himself through arguments that lacked strength."<sup>2</sup> However, if he didn't do this he would not reach the stage where Sri Krishna gives Arjuna the technique of entering eternal bliss and tells him that "you are my devotee as well as my friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science."<sup>3</sup>

Krishna also dispels Arjuna's doubts by telling him that there is no happiness for those who continue to try and destroy themselves by doubts despite having knowledge and faith. He urges Arjuna to take things slowly and carefully in a state of conscious awareness, so that a cognition shift takes place, which will then lead him to do the right thing always, promptly, proactively and intensely.

A friend always shows the way, mostly by listening intently which allows him to lead him or her to the light. What Krishna tells Arjuna is that the light (doubtlessness) is within us all. All Arjuna needed to do is, never take it (the light) for granted, allow the master to work for him, so that he is able to find his true Self back, to be what he really is—righteous.

What we need to understand from Krishna and Arjuna's relationship is that ultimately God and human beings are together, in an eternal quest to direct one another to higher and higher truths. With the right questions, clarity can be achieved which frees up tremendous space in both the Supreme and human beings for greater expansion to take place. What we witness is not just Arjuna's doubtful mind and lack of action, but Krishna's test too, while he does his utmost best to be an inspiration for Arjuna. ☸

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# DRAUPADI AND KRISHNA

# FRIENDS FIRST

KAVEA PANNERASELVAM

**D**raupadi has to be introduced as the heroine of the great Hindu epic, *Mahabharata*. Her ferociousness, valor, and courage are unparalleled and she takes on a powerful feminist role in the epic tale. She had a close bond with Krishna, and immense devotion for Him, as she considered Him the Paramatma (the Ultimate).

Their friendship was so pure, and Draupadi's devotion to Krishna was such, that there were no borders that separated the two. They were simply a part of each other. They experienced a space of true friendliness, very unlike the concept of friendliness that society holds in the modern day. The relationship is best described as a *sakhi-sakha* relationship (bond of pure friendship), one that transcends societal rules and restrictions. They maintained a close bond even after their respective marriages. Beyond this, Draupadi was a great devotee of Krishna. She trusted Him as a God, and so their relationship could not be judged on human terms.

Once when Krishna hurt His finger while beheading his cousin Sishupala, Draupadi rushed to his aid with tears in her eyes, tore her sari, and bandaged His finger. Krishna, seeing her love, vowed to repay her for each thread that was present in that bandage, and said, "Whenever you need me, I will be there." And to the end, He fulfilled His words without fail.

When Draupadi stood in the middle of the royal court filled with elders, kings, and even her own husbands, ready to be disrobed, she called to Krishna for help. She trusted Him so completely and had unshakable faith in Him that she cursed everyone in the court and waited for Krishna to come to her aid. And Krishna was the only one who immediately came to her aid when even her husbands sat there watching powerless and helpless to help her. She trusted Krishna unconditionally, and He protected Draupadi whenever necessary. This shows that she truly believed Krishna to be the Lord. She knew he would protect her even though he was not physically present.

The Pandavas and Draupadi were living in the forest for fourteen years after losing a game of

dice to the Kauravas. Duryodhana purposely sends Durvasa Muni to visit his cousins in the forest after they had already finished their meal. When Durvasa Muni visits, they have nothing to feed him, and they fear that Durvasa Muni will curse their whole family. During this time, Draupadi silently prays to Krishna. He appears at the forest and asks her for food. Perplexed, she tells him that the precise reason she prayed to him was because she had no food left to give. He takes the lone grain of rice left on the plate and announces that he is fulfilled. This satiated the hunger of Durvasa Muni and the Pandavas were spared his wrath.

Many, with a narrow concept of friendship, would have seen the relationship between Draupadi and Krishna as an adulterous one. However, a deeper look shows that their relationship was one that could not be understood by a simple mind. In the modern day, many commit the grave mistake of pulling the great epics down to an ordinary level in order to understand them. However, in order to experience the truths revealed in these scriptures, it is necessary to attempt to raise oneself to their level. ☪



## JAYADEVA'S RADHA IN GITA GOVINDA

MA NITHYA KAVYAROOPINI

Jayadeva was the court poet of King Lakshmanasena a ruler of Bengal in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. His mastery of the Sanskrit language was matched by his proficiency in both music and dancing. He was a mystic and a devotee of Krishna. *Gita Govinda* is a great poetical masterpiece in twelve cantos of mellifluous verses and songs in Sanskrit, set to music and adapted to representation through different dance forms, like Rasa Lila, Kathak and Odissi.

### Grasping *Gita Govinda*

One needs to be truly discerning to understand the subtlety in the sublime text of the *Gita Govinda*, to appreciate the profound sentiments expressed by Jayadeva. The pastimes of Radha and Krishna are the transcendental loving play of Shakti and Shaktiman. This divine couple have the power to sanctify the whole world because they were completely free from even the slightest trace of lust. A study of the pastimes of Radha and Krishna is a peep into the quest of enlightenment through the path of bhakti or devotion.

### The Love Song of the Dark Lord

Krishna—the Dark Lord of Love, is shown in human form, as a young cowherd, living near Vrindavan. Jayadeva declares, who Krishna is, alluding to him being an avatar of Vishnu in these lines:

*Your beauty is fresh as rain clouds,  
You hold the mountain to churn elixir from the sea,  
Your eyes are night birds drinking from Sri's  
moon face  
Triumph, God of Triumph Hari!*

### Radha—An Embodiment of Mahabhava

The essence of prema is bhava or spiritual emotion, and the ultimate development of bhava is called mahabhava. Radha, the very embodiment of mahabhava, is likened to a mine of all precious qualities and she is the crest jewel among Krishna's beloved gopis or cowherd girls. The work is to be understood as symbolic of the human soul's straying from its true allegiance but returning at length to God, culminating in their blissful union.

Lovelorn, tormented Radha is portrayed as the frail beauty, where everything conspires to increase her love agony:

*When spring came, tender limbed Radha wandered  
Like a flowering creeper in the forest wilderness  
Seeking Krishna in his many haunts  
The God of love increased her ordeal  
Tormenting her with fevered thoughts  
And her friend sang to heighten the mood*

### Radha Feels Mocked by the Carelessness of her Lord

Radha visualises Krishna being with her with all his ardor and describes in vivid detail their meeting. The mahakavya shows the love that Krishna carries for her, and the journey of Radha's many moods that her passion leads her into, her deep yearning, desolation of not having her Beloved with her. Knowing He is with other gopikas, her resultant jealousy increases. Struggling with her love, and her jealousy, she tells her friend, to somehow bring Him to her.

Krishna feels remorseful, as he realizes, while being with other gopis, he has neglected his beloved Radha, and made her feel jealous and turn away from him in anger. Radha's friend decides to go to Krishna as a messenger, and describes Radha's sweet pain to him:

*How when you have turned your face away, even  
moonlight scorches her  
Lying dejected by your desertion, fearing love's  
arrows  
she clings to you in fantasy, Madhava.  
An exquisite garland lying on her breast  
is a burden to the frail wasted girl  
Krishna, Radhika suffers in your desertion!*

And finally Radha's friend warns Krishna in no uncertain terms, highlighting the peak of her agony thus:

*She bristles with pain, sucks in breath  
cries, shudders, gasps,  
broods deep, reels, stammers  
falls, raises herself, then faints  
When fevers of passion rage so high  
A frail girl may live by your charm  
If you feel sympathy, Krishna!  
Play Godly healer! Or Death may take her.*

The devotion of Radha is centered on Krishna. Even moonlight, cooling sandal paste, beautiful lotus pools are unable to divert her. Finally, exhaustion forces her to meditate on Him, and she feels secretly revived, for a moment.

Lotus Eyed Krishna's longing for Radha is described as:

*Appease Radha and bring her to me!!*

These words told by the gopika to Radha describe Krishna's condition:

*Your neglect affects his heart,  
inflicting pain night after night  
wild-flower garlanded Krishna  
suffers in your desertion, friend  
He plays your name on his sweet reed flute,  
he cherishes breeze blown pollen, which touched  
your fragile body  
in woods on the wind swept Yamuna bank  
Krishna waits in wild flower garlands.*

And the gopika further plays cupid and guides Radha, how she should go to Krishna:

*Leave your noisy anklets, they clang like traitors  
in love play  
hidden in the cloak of night, friend, go to the  
darkened thicket, where he awaits.  
He imagines you coming, when a bird feather  
falls or leaf stirs  
making a bed of love, he eyes your pathway, and  
anxiously awaits you.*

And at last, we see a picture of an abashed Krishna feeling sorry to have left Radha and asking her forgiveness. Radha cannot bear to see Krishna when he pleads forgiveness, and all her suffering escapes from her lips in these jealous words:

*Damn you Madhava, Keshava, leave me  
Don't plead your lies with me, Go after her  
Krishna!  
She will ease your despair  
Radha's friend admonishes her with:  
Hari comes when spring winds, bearing honey  
blow  
What greater pleasure exists in the world, friend?  
Don't turn wounded pride on Madhava  
He is proud too, sullen Radha!*

We are left to figure out, how the painfully sweet interaction between the two lovers would end. Jayadeva's Radha encompasses the whole narrative lyrics with her tender, yet passionate love for Krishna, and rises to be a tall figure. She is immortalized as the epitome of love and longing, appearing to be greater than the Lord himself.

And so it is with every soul, that feels the separation from its source. It longs for the source, covers its own journey of misconceptions, and right cognitions, till it finally finds completion and knows that the source is also waiting for it to come home. ☪

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# KRISHNA'S RASA LILA

A DEVOTIONAL HYMN  
SENT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

## PART 1

DR. NITHYA BALANANDA

The Rasa Lila is one of the most famous and mystifying of all Hindu Puranas. The term comes from the Sanskrit words *rasa* and *leela*, with *rasa* meaning "juice," "nectar," "emotion" or "sweet taste" and *leila* meaning "act." By taking this etymological breakdown of the word literally, "Rasa Lila" means the "sweet act" (of Krishna). It is often freely rendered as "the dance of love."<sup>1</sup> The word, *leila*, has been described as "the play and display of consciousness."<sup>2</sup>

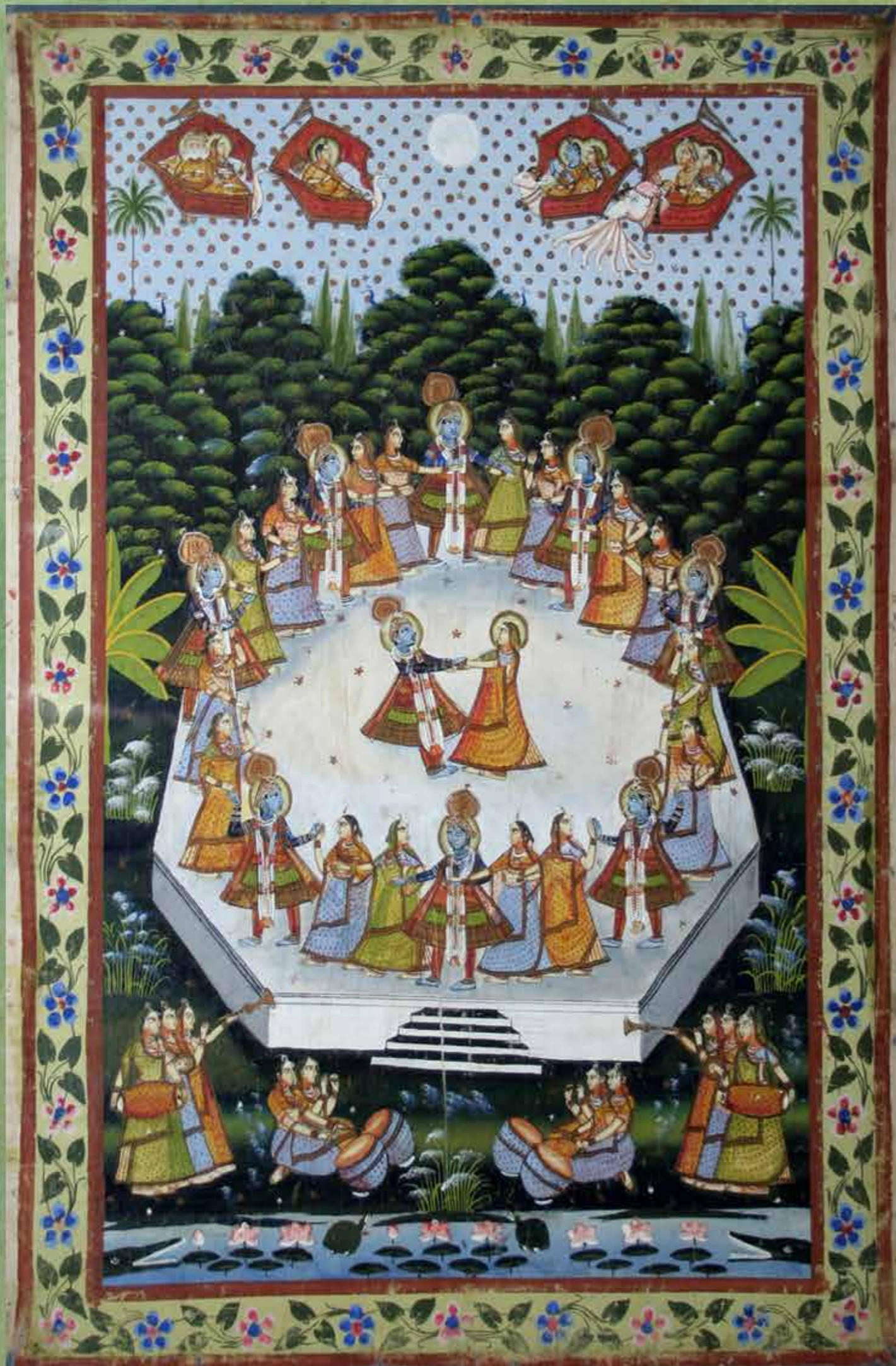
The setting in the Rasa Lila as described in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, is the beautiful pastoral town in India of Vrindavan, on a full moon night. The river Yamuna is flowing gently, fragrant breezes are blowing, and the jasmine flowers are filling the air with their nectar. The gopis, who are Krishna's dearest and most devoted followers, are called by Krishna to leave their households, husbands, and family responsibilities to experience this nighttime vigilance called the Rasa Lila. This deep spiritual experience

involves the gopis experience of a deeply tender, and amorous union with the divine incarnation of God, Lord Krishna. This union, however, ultimately leads to disillusionment and separation.

**Is this Lila of Krishna, an ancient parody, implicitly loaded with guidance for a modern world, 1,000s of years later?**

Is it an ancient account of man's continuous desire for union in a loving relationship, and the total misunderstanding that pain results in the separation and abandonment of God? Let us enter into the account of this Rasa Lila with our eyes open to the implications it has for our own journey into our quest for union with God.

In the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the gopis lament, "Oh hero, kindly distribute to us the nectar of your lips, which enhances conjugal pleasure and vanquishes grief. That nectar is thoroughly relished by your vibrating flute and makes people forget any other attachments."<sup>3</sup>





In this excerpt, the gopis are experiencing what is termed “pure desire,” which is supposedly without the tarnish of worldly attachment. Krishna also tells the gopis to “go back to the cowherd village; serve your husbands and give milk to your crying babies and calves. Krishna states night-time has a frightening appearance, Agorha Roopa, inhabiting this place are creatures that are fearsome, please return to Vrata, oh ones with beautiful waists.”<sup>4</sup>

The dichotomy of being with Krishna, and enjoying his “internal pleasure potency,” is mixed with Krishna’s advice to the gopis to serve their families. This juxtaposition forces the gopis to examine their true goal in life—was it to be with Krishna, or their worldly responsibilities?

Sukadeva Gosvami, points out that the gopis real, eternal husband is Lord Krishna. That “dharmah,” (right action) and “amamaya” (without duplicity, or illusion), are the keywords for the gopis to favor. This higher cognition of being married to God is reiterated as the gopis are referred to as “yoginis” of love, their minds and hearts ever fixed on their beloved Lord.<sup>5</sup>

A natural conclusion then is that Krishna, who resides eternally in the heart, is the true spouse of everyone. The cowherd husbands of the gopis, on the other hand, are temporary relationships in this life, and therefore illusory.

The gopis are “siddha-deva,” a spiritually perfected body. A body that the devoted soul ultimately develops during the course of pursuing the process of bhakti (devotion to God). For the Caitanya school, the dance of divine love, meditation on the Rasa Lila, enables the absorbed devotee to develop a spiritual form so that one is able to be even more fully immersed in devotion.

#### **But is the gopis’ devotion enough to produce total saturation in the Divine?**

Lord Krishna, the original Lord Narayan, “master of the goddess of fortune, took pleasure in the company of the young women of Vraja, by embracing them, caressing them and glancing lovingly at them as he smiled his broad, playful smiles. It was just as if a child were playing with his own reflection.”<sup>6</sup>

In his Lila, Krishna manifests himself dancing with each and every one of the gopis, as if each one had him only unto herself: “Among the assembled gopis, the infallible Lord Krishna appeared just like the moon surrounded by stars. He whose activities are so magnanimous made their faces blossom with his affectionate glances, and his broad smiles revealed the effulgence of his Jasmine Bud Light teeth.” The Lord Krishna did not fail to give pleasure to each and every gopi in the nocturnal assembly.<sup>7</sup>

This Rasa Lila clearly illustrates a play and display of purest intelligence, Krishna, and the gopis’ aesthetic experience of union with the divine. This sacred experience, however, metamorphosed into extreme anxiety, and separation. According to the *Bhagavatam*, the gopis became “proud” of themselves for having received such special attention from Krishna. Each of them thought herself “to be the best woman on earth.” Lord Krishna seeing the gopis were experiencing pride, “wanted to relieve them, show them mercy, so he immediately disappeared.”<sup>8</sup>

#### **Is the Rasa Lila of Krishna an ancient reflection of approach/avoid?**

Kurt Lewin, a modern psychologist, characterizes all human relationships as having features of “approach/avoid.” This psychological syndrome is characterized by the expectation that one has for another in the relationship, whether it is mother/son, father/daughter, or romantic relationships. The push/pull of expectations not being fulfilled by the “other” leads to incompleteness, many times leading to ultimate separation from the beloved.<sup>9</sup>

In earlier verses of the *Bhagavatam*, Krishna leaves the gopis, stating that in separation their devotion to the Lord will expand. The gopis were “on the highest platform of spiritual perfection, transcendental to all positive and negative religious considerations. They were eternal lovers of the absolute truth.” Yet after their experience of ecstatic union with the divine, they experienced the pain of separation. The gopis were fraught with the pain of separation, asking trees, plants, even the ground upon which Krishna walked, “Where is Krishna?”

#### **The key to any perfect relationship is “Vairagya” Sanskrit for “choicelessness.” The ultimate reciprocation that is given to us in any relationship is based in non-attachment to the expected outcome.**

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna states, “as people approach me I reciprocate with them accordingly.” Regardless of how we approach the Lord and what our expectations are, our purest desire is to have full union. This reciprocation is always given, even in apparent separation from God. The gopis’ prayer was, please help me to love you “purely”; and the result of this prayer is what God ultimately gave them—separation. The result of “pure love” is expansion, beyond the boundaries of personal “pride” and expectation. Krishna states in the *Bhagavatam*, “The reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship me is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man, who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it, that he can think of nothing else.”<sup>10</sup>

Yet we question our spiritual experiences “when the going gets rough.” We lose our “pure desire” when God does not reciprocate, or give us what we want. But the Divine gives us, ultimately what we need for our highest good. What we have always wanted and prayed for is for completion—

Union, the absolute truth, Krishna... but we want it our way.

#### **The true nature of Reality is non-attachment to the outcome in our relationships.**

When we embody the “purest love” in relationships, our income is maximized. When we exhibit “Pride” as Lord Krishna names it, we separate from God. In the Bible, Christ states, “Pride goeth before a fall!” Pride seems to have a new definition, in this ancient account of the Rasa Lila. Pride is the feeling of separation from God, the disappointment of not getting what we want. What we think is best for us and the world may not be delivered by God. Pride is thinking that we know what is best for us ... not God. ☸

(to be concluded)

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# ISKCON AFTER FIFTY YEARS

SOME OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS  
IT MADE TO THE WORLD

STEPHEN KNAPP (NANDANANDANA DASA)

This is a significant year for ISKCON, The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, otherwise known as the Hare Krishna Movement. It was incorporated 50 years ago, in 1966. Of course, when we talk about the accomplishments of ISKCON, practically every development was guided by the founder acharya, Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. So in many ways, these were his accomplishments and contributions to the world.

## Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Ventures West

It was in 1965, at seventy years of age, he ventured outside India for the first time to fulfill the order of his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Swami, who told him, on their first meeting, that Srila Prabhupada should preach this Vedic culture and Krishna consciousness to the English speaking language. He did not think much of that at first, but later began to take the spiritual message of his teacher more seriously, took initiation, and later began to meditate on how to fulfill the instructions he had received from his master.

He only came to America by getting a free ride on a cargo ship called the Jaladuta. However, that was not without risk. During his voyage at sea, he suffered two severe heart attacks, yet he was consoled by having a dream that Lord Krishna Himself was massaging his heart. He reached the shores of America with the equivalent of seven dollars to his name, and a case of his books, and lots of faith that Lord Krishna brought him here for a reason.

## ISKCON is Born

He first stayed with his sponsor in Butler, Pennsylvania, but soon went to New York City where he rented a small storefront on the lower east side and would sing the Hare Krishna mantra and offer classes in *Bhagavad Gita*. With this format he founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness with a small group of disciples, after a year of struggling alone in New York City. This marked the only time in history that a Krishna devotee successfully began training non-Indians in the strict disciplines of Vaishnavism. Amazingly, this was achieved

during the blossoming of America's hedonistic counterculture movement. But it was also the right time when many of the youth were questioning their existence.

## Sankirtan – To Spread Krishna Consciousness

In New York City, he sent his followers, chanting the names of God, known as sankirtan, into the streets and to Tompkins Square Park, which attracted others. As the movement grew with temples around the world, they also engaged in sankirtan in cities and towns everywhere, and Hare Krishna became famous in every corner of the world.

He sent a few of his disciples to London, where they recorded the single, "Hare Krsna Mantra" with George Harrison, in 1969. It became the fastest selling of all the Apple Corporation's releases, including those of the Beatles. The record reached #3 in Czechoslovakia, #9 in Britain, and made the top ten in Germany, Japan, Australia, South Africa, Yugoslavia, and many other countries.

## 108 Temples to Lord Krishna

He established 108 Krishna temples on six continents, installed the deity of Krishna in each center and trained his disciples in the process of deity worship. Thirty-two new temples (almost three a month) were opened in a single year, between 1970 and 1971. This later became known as the Hare Krishna explosion.

One significant event that he inaugurated that continues to be observed is the Rathayatra Festival of Lord Jagannatha in major cities around the globe, in effect, bringing the temple to the people.

He also gave initiation to women, something that was previously not the norm in the tradition. He also instructed his disciples in 1967 to start an incense business to provide financial support for the temples. Within four years the business, Spiritual Sky Incense, generated an annual revenue of one million dollars.

## Promoting Vegetarianism

One event that ISKCON started, that was later recognized by the magazine *Vegetarian Times* as one of the key factors in promoting vegetarianism was the "Sunday Love Feast."

The Sunday program was especially geared for guests and devotees so they could come to the temple and gather like a family, listen to class, enjoy kirtan, ask questions, and enjoy a multi-course feast based on Krishna prasadam (sanctified food offered first to Lord Krishna). This is still done at ISKCON temples throughout the world, and many regular Hindu temples that were established later throughout America also observe a similar Sunday program.

Other prasadam distribution programs that have been developed, provide millions of free meals to the public. Steve Jobs was one of those who had mentioned that he would have at least one good meal a week at the local prasada distribution program in Florida, while he was in college. They still have the free lunch program in Gainesville, Florida. Today, especially in India, various ISKCON temples have provided the facility for bringing nutritious food for school children, so that they will be attracted to going to school so they can have at least one good meal a day. Before this, many children were forced by hunger to work instead of getting educated. This program, called "Food for Life," or Akshaya Patra has helped change that. Of course, it is also prasadam, food first offered to Lord Krishna.

ISKCON also created the world's first chain of vegetarian restaurants, usually known as "Govinda's" where everyone could come to enjoy a vegetarian prasadam meal outside a temple setting.

### **Educating the West on Vedic and Bhagavata Literature**

One of the main principles of the movement was to educate people in the traditions and spiritual knowledge of the Vedic literature, focusing especially on the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bhagavata Purana*, and other texts. Many Hindu temples before this, and many to this day, focus mostly on rituals and pujas, without the emphasis on teaching the spiritual knowledge behind it. For that reason, Srila Prabhupada spoke daily on the philosophy of Krishna consciousness, delivering thousands of formal lectures. Over 2,200 were recorded and archived. Beyond that he also taught his followers on the need to be able to clearly understand and explain this knowledge to others, and to distribute books, which goes on to this day.

To push on this endeavor, he wrote approximately seventy books on spiritual science and Krishna consciousness, sleeping only a few hours per day. Dozens of prominent scholars and educators from leading universities praised his work. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* proclaimed that his voluminous translations from the original Sanskrit and his lucid commentaries "have astounded literary and academic communities worldwide." This feat is even more astonishing considering the translations and commentaries were in English, which was a second language to the author.

To assist in this matter, Srila Prabhupada founded the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT) in 1972, to produce his books. By 1976, over 55,000,000 books had been published in twenty-five languages and distributed in almost every country, making the BBT the world's largest publisher of Indian religious and philosophical texts at the time. One printing alone of *Bhagavad Gita As It Is* required seventy-six train cars to ship the paper needed to print it!

### **Chanting the Hare Krishna Mantra**

However, Srila Prabhupada laid much emphasis on the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra, and the singing of other devotional songs by the previous acharyas. He recorded more than twenty albums of devotional music.

He also started one of the first monthly spiritual magazines, known as *Back to Godhead*. At the height of its circulation in the mid seventies, over a million copies per issue were sold. This is still being published today.

He built major temples in Bombay and Vrindavana, and founded a spiritual city at Mayapur in West Bengal. All became international sites of pilgrimage. Today ISKCON is building the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium at Mayapur, the largest temple in West Bengal, with an emphasis on explaining and displaying the Vedic conception of the cosmological arrangement of the universe. This temple was a dream of Srila Prabhupada's, who had requested his disciples to develop this temple, which they are now doing, with the hope that it may be ready for opening in the next several years.

ISKCON still has the Bhaktivedanta Institute, founded by Srila Prabhupada, to advance Vedic

knowledge within the scientific community, engaging serious academics in the consideration of the science of self-realization.

### **Promoting Organic Living and Brilliant Krishna Art**

Srila Prabhupada also set up various farm communities to teach "simple living and high thinking", emphasizing the Vedic lifestyle of cow protection and dependence on God and nature. This was especially for people who wanted to live a more natural life, in the country, growing their own food, and being free from the modern complexities of life, and centering their existence on spiritual development. And for becoming free from the increasingly contaminated food being produced today.

He also commissioned his artist disciples to produce hundreds of illustrations of Krishna pastimes based on his meticulous instructions and the descriptions in his books. These have become famous as some of the most beautiful "windows into the spiritual world."

He also directed some of his followers to learn the Indian art of "doll making" to present Vedic philosophy through diorama exhibits. This had

been emphasized by his own spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Swami. Now a variety of temples have diorama displays to show various spiritual principles and the pastimes of Lord Krishna.

### **A Relentless Globetrotter**

Prabhupada circled the globe fourteen times, visiting twenty-four countries, preaching, inspiring his followers and making countless public appearances before multitudes of people. Before he left this world in 1977, he formally initiated approximately five thousand disciples. These initiates represented a sweeping diversity of nationalities, races, ethnicities, and religious backgrounds. All of this was done within the last years of Srila Prabhupada's life, in a span of only 12 years.

Since 1977, ISKCON has continued to develop, with now over 650 temples worldwide, 75,000 initiated devotees, and over 500 million books distributed. It also has distributed as many as 3 billion plates of prasadam food worldwide, and runs 110 vegetarian restaurants. It presently has 65 eco-villages and farms communities around the world, and runs 54 educational institutions for students of various ages. These are but a few of the developments that have continued through the last 50 years. 🙏





## THE CURSE AND END OF THE YADAVA CLAN

TRISHA SINGH

### Who were the Yadavas?

The Yadavas were an ancient people, who descended from a legendary king named Yadu. Sahasrajit and Kroshtu were the two sons of Yadu from whom the various Yadava clans originate. The Haihanyas descend from Sahasrajit, the elder son, while all other clans descend from Kroshtu. They were spread out over several regions, including the Aravalli region, Gujarat, Narmada Valley, Northern Deccan and the Eastern Ganges Valley. In the Mahabharata, it is mentioned that the Yadavas were the rulers of the Mathura region. This is the clan that Krishna is born into.

### Gandhari's Curse

At the end of the Mahabharata war, all the Kauravas are defeated. After this, Krishna visits Gandhari. Seeing the widows of the Kuru soldiers lament, and experiencing grief over the death of her own sons, she curses Krishna. She believed that Krishna had the power to prevent the war, and yet he did not.

She blames him for not preventing the bloodshed that occurred. In a fit of rage, she curses him that the Yadava clan will fight amongst themselves, which will lead to their destruction, in the same way that the Pandavas and Kauravas fought amongst themselves. The widows of the Yadava clan will lament over their husbands death, the same way the widows of the Pandavas and Kauravas are lamenting. Finally, she curses Krishna that he will be a silent witness to this carnage, and will himself die an undignified death.

### Krishna's Reply to Gandhari

To this, Krishna says that the war was inevitable. He reminds Gandhari that he was once a messenger of peace, but it was Duryodhana's arrogance and his refusal to share land with the Pandavas. He reminds her of Duryodhana's various schemes with Shakuni to destroy the Pandavas. It was Krishna's duty to protect dharma, and so the war was inevitable. He reiterates to her, as he did to Arjuna in the

Bhagavad Gita, that although he controls the entire cosmos, he does not interfere with it. He allows people to choose their own actions.

Under the protection of Lord Krishna, the Yadavas were a powerful clan. They could not be destroyed by any external force in any war. However, Krishna could see that if they were left unchecked, they could become a burden to the Earth. Now that Gandhari has cursed him, he had a solution as to how to dissolve the clan. He knew it would occur from within them, as they were undefeatable by external sources.

### The Curse of the Sages

The sages Vishwamitra, Durvasa, Vashista, Narada and many others visited Krishna and Balarama in Dwaraka while they were on pilgrimage. At the time, certain Yadava clans were known to have lost the culture and discipline. Of these, a group of small boys decided to play a prank on the sages to test them. They dressed Samba, the son of Krishna and Jambavati, as a pregnant woman. They approached the rishis and asked them if they could predict if the 'lady' would give birth to a boy or girl. Seeing that the boys were playing a trick, the rishis were angered. They cursed Samba, that he would give birth to a lump of iron which would bring about the destruction of the entire Yadava race. The boys laughed at this, until Samba's belly began to feel heavy and he delivered an iron block. They run to Ugrasena, the King of Mathura at the time, for his advice. He advises them to grind the lump into a powder and throw it into the sea. From the lump, a small piece of iron could not be powdered. They threw the powdered iron as well as the tiny piece into the sea. The powder got deposited on the seabed and eventually grew into stalks of bamboo that were made of the same iron. Gandhari's curse thus begins to take shape.

### The Destruction of the Yadavas

Many years passed, and the curse upon the Yadavas was forgotten. Ominous incidents began to occur in Dwaraka. The Sudarshana chakra, Panchajanya shankh, Krishna's chariot and the plough weapon of Balarama somehow disappeared from Earth. These signs started to create a panic among the Yadava men about their impending destruction. To help them, Krishna advised them to go on a pilgrimage. During this

trip, they came upon a place called Prabasha, which was where the iron from Samba was buried many years ago. After bathing in the sea, the men drank and became intoxicated. A fight erupted between Satyaki and Kritavarma, two Yadava men who had fought on the side of Pandavas and Kauravas respectively. The argument escalated, and Satyaki drew his sword and killed Kritavarma. All the other men drew their weapons and a fight began. When their weapons are exhausted, they use the club-like iron bamboo that is growing nearby to beat each other. This went on for several days, and nearly forty lakh Yadava men were killed this way. Krishna and Balarama were unable to stop the carnage, just as Gandhari had cursed them.

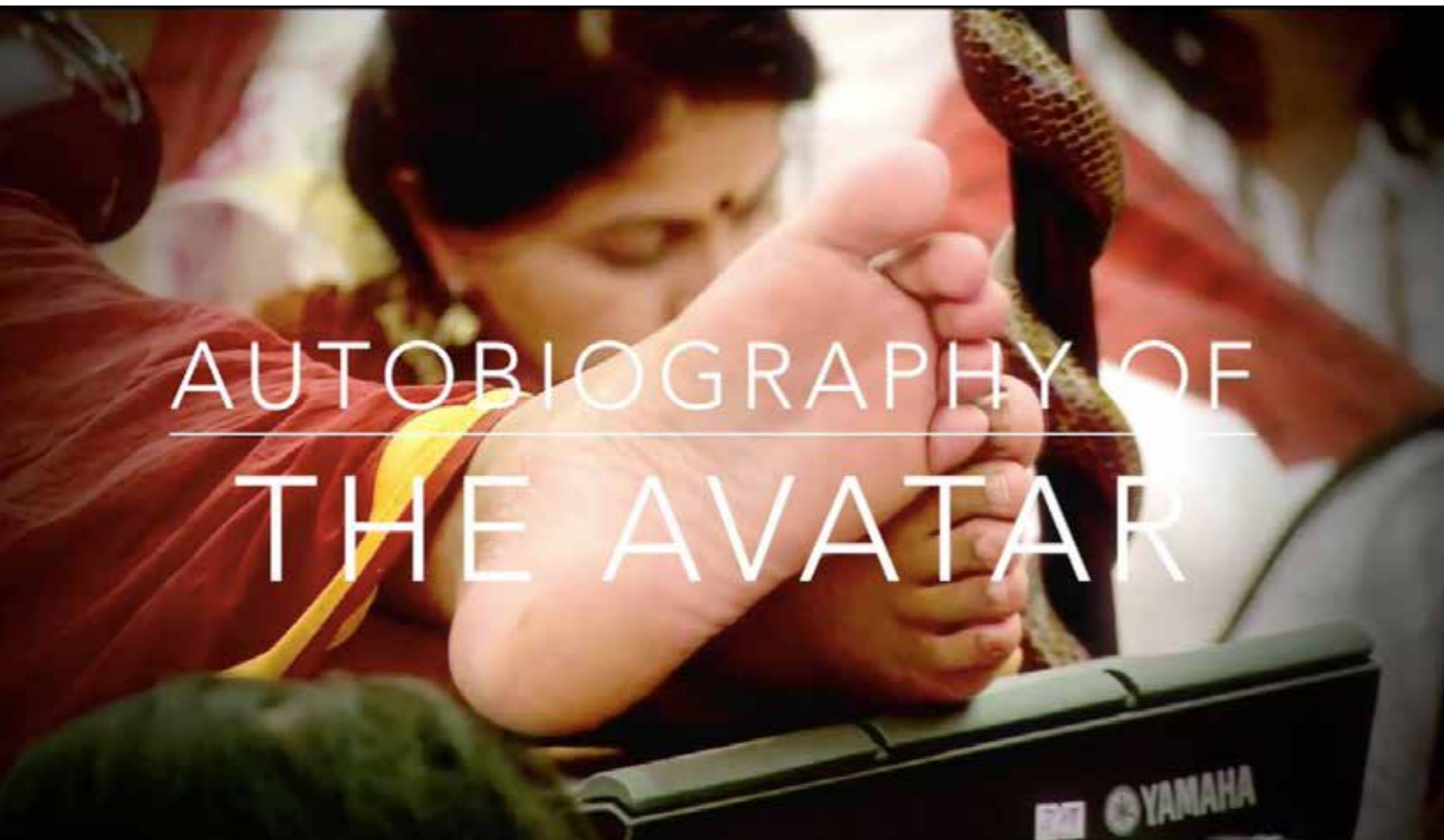
### The Incarnation Leaves His Body

Krishna then sent for Arjuna, so that the Yadava women could be escorted to Hastinapur. He retired into the forest. On his way there, he saw a serpent emerging from Balarama and going into the ocean. In this way, Balarama left his body. Krishna sat down to meditate upon all that had happened, and realised that his true purpose on Earth had been achieved, and that it was time for him to leave the body as well.

The small piece of unpowdered iron that Samba and his friends had thrown into the sea was later swallowed by a fish. A man named Jara caught the fish and found the piece of iron. He sharpened this piece, poisoned it, and added it to the end of his arrow. Jara walked into the forest and mistook Krishna's feet for a deer's. He shot arrows at it, and realised too late that it was Krishna. He begged for forgiveness, but Krishna consoled him by explaining that in a previous birth, Krishna had taken birth as Lord Rama. Rama had killed a king named Vali from behind. Jara, who was King Vali in his previous birth, was destined to do the same to Krishna in this birth. In this way, Krishna left his body, and this event marked the beginning of Kaliyuga and the end of the Yadava clan of Krishna. 🕉

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## MEMORIES OF MEENAKSHI: AN EXCERPT FROM AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE AVATAR

*[Paramahansa Nithyananda's life is extraordinary in every meaning of the word. We must study every single branch that makes up the vast banyan tree that he is. The Autobiography of the Avatar is just that. It is anticipated to be published in five volumes over the course of the next few years. As we put together what He has spoken about his life, we are inviting you to explore the work at [www.autobiographyoftheavatar.org](http://www.autobiographyoftheavatar.org)]*

Some types of fish are able to fertilize their eggs just by looking at them. Only their eyes have to fall on the ovum for life to begin. Similarly, there are people who can liberate souls with just their gaze. This is the true origin of the name of Meenakshi, the eternally celebrated queen of Madurai. She is the one who liberates with just her eyes.

The setting is 2,300 years ago in the southern portion of what is now called the subcontinent

of India. Meenakshi assumed her form from the akashic layer using a medium of fire. She had a third breast located in between and below her two biological ones. This breast was a boon to remind young Meenakshi to only marry the person who makes the breast disappear. Fatefully, it was Shiva himself who did that.

Shiva took the form of Sundareshwara and descended to Earth to live with Meenakshi in Madurai. Madurai became the center of the new

civilization. It was from there that Meenakshi conquered the world.

Her divinity is still seen today in the decision-making skills and highly competent micro-management of Paramahansa Sri Nithyananda Swami. "Capture it!" he says with a snap of his fingers and vocal precision that makes your insides shudder. "Conquer that kingdom and surrender it at my feet!" he calls, even though kingdoms are long gone and corrupt democracies have replaced them. Swamiji has selected this part of Meenakshi to express within him once again. This expression is called a bio-memory. A bio-memory is, "your decision to respond to a certain situation in a certain way." Swamiji says, "So when I was deciding to play with the body just out of joy, the bio-memory search had started for the components and the contents with which this body needed to be created." A muscle memory is all the physical activities you do during the day that gets engraved into you to the point where you don't think twice about how you should wake up in the morning, get out bed, brush your teeth and so forth. Swamiji summarizes, "Muscle memory is the pattern of your actions. The bio-memory is the pattern of your decisions"

He himself has added that he also incorporated Arunagiri Yogishwara's verbal language and Lord Venkateshwara's muscle memory, or his body structure, into himself. These stories, however, are for another. With Queen Meenakshi, we learn Swamiji's purpose to reestablish the vedic civilization that he once had on a much more colossal level.

### Meenakshi's Voice from Swamiji

I was born out of agni—fire. I did not stay in the womb of the mother but came out of Yajna. I was brought up as a princess because my adopted father did not have a son. He brought me up almost like a man, giving all the training necessary to rule a kingdom including archery, horse riding, waging a war, all the methods, techniques, methodology and everything. By birth I had a third breast. As per the boon, when I saw the right person as a life partner, the third breast was supposed to disappear. It was actually a symbol not to forget the purpose for which I

assumed the body. So in the Meenakshi body as a reminder not to get married to any ordinary fellow, as a reminder was the third breast I can say as Ananda Gandha that was there.

As a responsibility of being queen I started going around and conquered all fifty four communities. There were only fifty four settlements of human beings at that time, so all the fifty four were brought under the control of Meenakshi.

Then I went to Kailash to conquer Kailash also. I even conquered Nandi Devi, but when Shiva came face to face, the third breast disappeared. Maha Deva revealed the true identity and enlightenment happened.

Then I told him, "I want to be with you and you be with me."

Shiva said, "Alright let us rule and show how the ruling has to be done. Go back to Madurai and I will come there."

I put the condition, "You have to be very handsome and cannot be like a rishi or ascetic."

Shiva was in the higher frequency, so he assumed the human body as Sundareswara handsome being, beautiful being, and the marriage ceremony happened. All the Shiva bhootas and Shiva ganas started living in Madurai. A new humanity happened. Genetically transformed human beings were created. Those days the average height itself was nine feet. I was eight and a half feet. Along with the Kailash intelligence and Yoga, with that mixture a new kingdom the Pandya kingdom was created. The best humans who ever walked the planet Earth were Pandya beings. The intelligence of Kailash and the physical structure of the Dravidian civilization mixed and a new civilization evolved.

I lived 190 years without growing old or showing any symptoms of old age or disease or tiredness. I lived just like an 18 year old for 190 years. 🙏

To read more go to [www.autobiographyoftheavatar.org](http://www.autobiographyoftheavatar.org)

# TAJ MAHAL

## BITTER TRUTH, BLATANT LIES

### PART 1

USHA K. KENT



*"The Taj Mahal (Persian for Crown of Palaces) is an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the south bank of the Yamuna river in the Indian city of Agra. It was commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–1658), to house the tomb of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The tomb is the centre piece of a 42-acre complex, which includes a mosque and a guest house, and is set in formal gardens bounded on three sides by a crenellated wall."*

This is how Wikipedia introduces Taj Mahal, now officially declared as one of Seven Wonders of the World by The New7Wonders Foundation-Zurich, in 2014.

Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. For years the world has been lied to about the story of the Taj Mahal, even as the Indian Government has raked in the moolah by making it the most sought after tourist destination in the country.

In the 1980s it was historian Purushottam Nagesh Oak (P N Oak) who first made the murmurs about the truth of the Taj Mahal. He was threatened from making his discoveries public. Nevertheless,

with the coming of age of the internet, P N Oak did get to tell his story in *Taj Mahal: The True Story*, in 1989.

What was so alarming about P N Oak's discoveries about the Taj that he was shushed about it, to such an extent that even in 2016 Wikipedia and the world at large know it as a beautiful mausoleum and the greatest tribute of love in the world?

This is because Taj Mahal is a corruption of Tejo Mahalaya, an ancient marble Shiva temple built around 10th - 11th century CE once patronized by the Jat community of Agra.

Here we bring you some elements of the startling findings by P N Oak, summarized by the author himself.

#### **Tejo Mahalaya to Taj Mahal**

The term Taj Mahal itself never occurs in any Mughal court paper or chronicles of Shah Jahan or his successor Aurangzeb. The ending "mahal" is never Muslim because in none of the Islamic countries around the world is there a

building known as "mahal". Further, the unusual explanation of the term Taj Mahal derived from Mumtaz Mahal who is buried in it, is illogical in that her name was never Mumtaz Mahal but Mumtaz-ul-Zamani. Besides, if the Taj is believed to be a burial place, how can the term mahal or mansion apply to it?

### Inscriptional Proofs Desecrated

A Sanskrit inscription too supports the conclusion that the Taj originated as a Shiva temple. Wrongly termed as the Bateshwar inscription, it refers to the raising of a "crystal white Shiva temple so alluring that Lord Shiva once enshrined in it decided never to return to Mount Kailash, his usual abode". That inscription dated 1155 CE was removed from the Taj Mahal garden at Shah Jahan's orders.

A clue to the tampering by Shah Jahan is found on pages 216-217, volume IV, of the Archaeological Survey of India Reports (published 1874) stating that a "great square black balistic pillar which, with the base and capital of another pillar... now in the grounds of Agra, ... it is well known, once stood in the garden of Taj Mahal."

Several European visitors of Shahjahan's time allude to the building as Taj-e-Mahal, the old Sanskrit name for Tejo Mahalaya, signifying a Shiva temple. The deity consecrated in it was Agreshwar Mahadev, meaning Lord of Agra. The famous Hindu treatise on architecture titled Vishwakarma Vastushastra mentions the Tej Linga amongst the Shiva lingas. Such a Tej Linga was consecrated in the Tejo Mahalaya. Shahjahan and Aurangzeb scrupulously avoided using the Sanskrit term, instead simply calling it a holy grave.

### A Lost Limb of the Jats

Agra city, where Taj Mahal is located, is an ancient center of Shiva worship. Its orthodox residents had through ages continued the tradition of worshipping at five Shiva shrines, before taking their last meal every night, especially during the month of Shravan. However, in the last few centuries the residents of Agra had to be content with worshipping at only four prominent Shiva temples namely Balkeshwar, Prithvinath, Mankameshwar, and Rajarajeshwara. They had

lost track of the fifth Shiva deity which their forefathers worshipped. This 5th being the Agreshwar Mahadev Naganatheshwara i.e., The Lord of Agra, The Deity of the King of Cobras, consecrated in the Tejo Mahalaya.

The people who dominate the Agra region are Jats. Their name for Shiva is Tejaji and their temples are called Teja Mandir. The Taj Mahal is Tejo Mahalaya, the Great Abode of Tej.

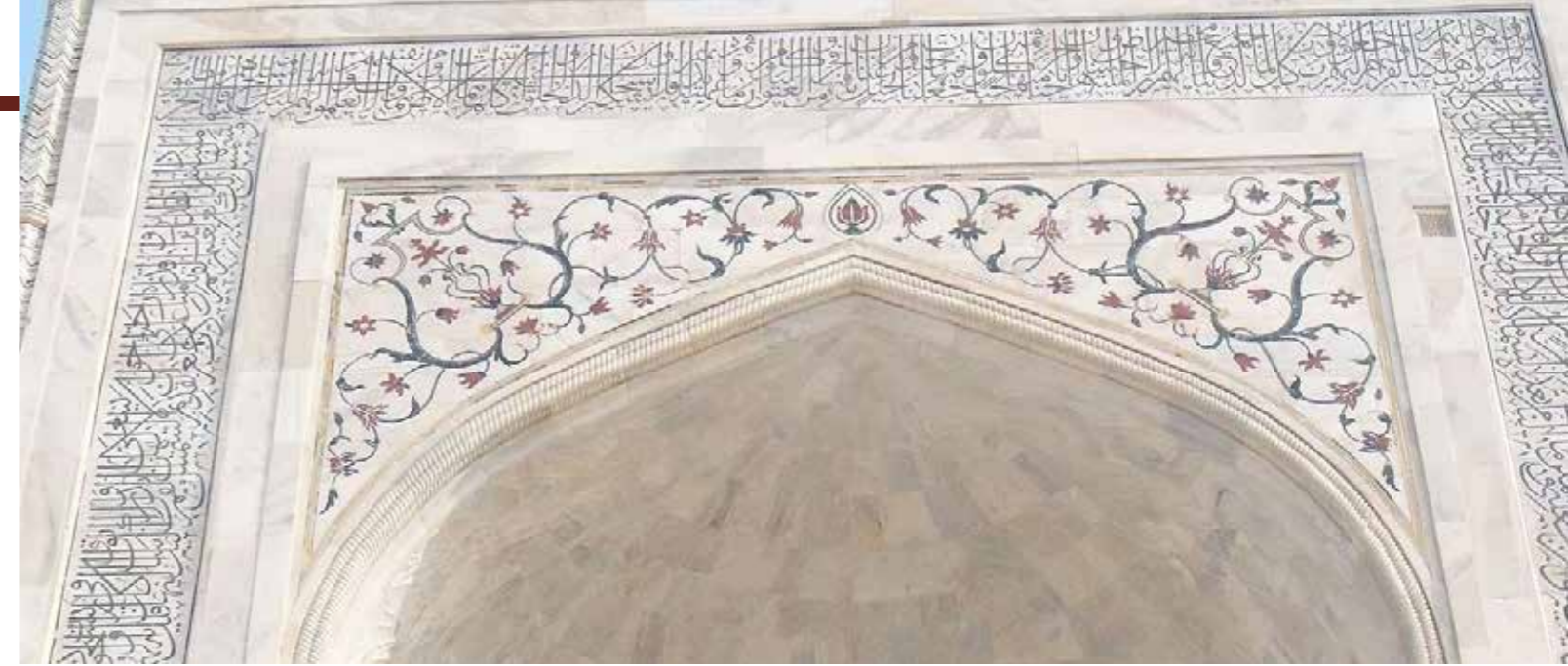
### How Shah Jahan Obtained Tejo Mahalaya

The temple was obtained by Shah Jahan by two decrees from Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur, a vassal under the Mughal ruler. The ex-Maharaja of Jaipur retains in his secret personal 'Kapad Dwara' collection two orders from Shah Jahan dated Dec 18, 1633 (bearing modern nos. R.176 and 177) requisitioning the Taj complex. This was so blatant a usurpation at the time that the then ruler of Jaipur was ashamed to make the document public.

Shah Jahan's own court chronicle the Badshah Nama, admits (page 403, volume 1) that a grand mansion of unique splendor, capped with a dome (Imaarat-a-Alishan wa Gumbaz) was taken from the Jaipur Maharaja Jai Singh for Mumtaz's burial, and the building was known as Raja Man Singh's palace. The marblework of Taj is similar to the Amber palace at Jaipur built some six hundred years earlier by Raja Man Singh I and completed by Sawai Jai Singh I.

### More Documents that Nail the Truth

Prince Aurangzeb in letters to his father Shah Jahan, has recorded in 1652 CE, at least three chronicles titled *Aadaab-e-Alamgiri*, *Yadgar Nama*, and the *Muraqqa-i-Akbarabadi* that several buildings in the fancied burial place of Mumtaz were seven storeyed and were so old that they were all leaking, while the dome had developed a crack on the northern side. Aurangzeb therefore ordered immediate repairs to the buildings at his own expense while recommending to the emperor that more elaborate repairs be carried out later. This is the proof that during Shah Jahan's reign itself the Taj complex was so old as to need immediate repairs.



The Rajasthan State archives at Bikaner preserve three other firmans (orders) addressed by Shah Jahan to Jai Singh ordering him to supply marble (for Mumtaz's grave and koranic grafts) from his Makrana quarries\*\* and stone cutters. Jai Singh was so enraged at the blatant seizure of the Tejo Mahalaya that he refused to oblige Shah Jahan, in order to prevent further desecration of the building. These firmans were sent within two years of Mumtaz's death. Had Shahjahan really built the Taj Mahal over a period of 22 years as is popularly claimed, he would have needed the marble only after 15-20 years of construction of the monument, and not within two years of Mumtaz's death.

The temple being converted into a tomb was in keeping with the trend of Shah Jahan's forefathers. Dead Muslim courtiers and royalty which included Humayun, Akbar, Mumtaz, Itmad-ud-Daula and Safdarjang, had all been buried in captured Hindu mansions and temples.

### Proofs of a Temple

Seen from the context of a temple the size, grandeur, majesty, and beauty of Taj, a complete anomaly in a tomb, all fits in beautifully. If told that you are visiting a temple palace you immediately notice the Taj's annexes, ruined defensive walls, hillocks, moats, cascades, fountains, majestic garden, hundreds of rooms arcaded verandahs, terraces, multi-storeyed towers, secret sealed chambers, guest rooms, stables, the trident (Trishul) pinnacle on the dome and the sacred letter "OM" carved on the exterior of the wall of the sanctum sanctorum

(now occupied by the cenotaphs) for what it is.

It is interesting that in entering the Taj the tradition of removing the shoes before climbing the marble platform is followed, which is a throwback to pre-Shah Jahan times when the Taj was a Shiva temple.

The pitchers carved inside the upper border of the marble lattice plus those mounted on it number 108 - a sacred number in Hindu temple tradition.

The Taj is only a typical illustration of how all historic buildings and townships from Kashmir to Kanyakumari though of Hindu origin have been ascribed to this or that Muslim ruler or courtier. It is hoped that people the world over who study Indian history will awaken to these new findings and revise their erstwhile beliefs.

We will further explore the blatant lies told about the Taj - the "greatest tribute to love" angle, where Mumtaz is actually buried, the drunk, debauch, addicted, Shah Jahan's empty coffers, and so on, in the forthcoming issues of *Hinduism Now*. ☪

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- \*\* Makarana in Rajasthan is famous the world over for its marble and granite stone supplies



## THE ASTIKA SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

SATHISH SELVAKUMAR

The way we see the world and engage with it is largely determined by the kind of ideas we carry about ourselves and the environment around us. If one is interested in understanding the reality as it is, there is no greater source than the Vedas. A person who is interested in reality as it is and trusts the Vedas to establish him/her in that state is an Astika.

### Prevalent Understanding

There are varying definitions to the word 'Astika'. It means 'orthodox' or one who is a 'theist'/'pious'. The word 'Nastika' is then being used to refer to one who is 'heterodox' and who is an 'atheist'/'not pious'.

It is better to see it as is, in the Sanskrit meaning 'one who sees reality as it is'.

### How Can One See 'Reality'?

It takes a certain faculty to see reality as it is. All of us are striving towards it. Complete fulfilment and complete completion in life eludes people

from all social and economic backgrounds. We experience the world through our senses. It is easy to see that what can be revealed by one sense cannot be substantiated or disproved by another sense. For example, if a shirt is white, it can be revealed to us only from the sense of sight. Ears or nose cannot help us to prove or disprove whether the shirt is white or not.

One way to approach the Vedas is that they are an external sense organ provided to us. That is the access to understand reality as it is and know who we really are.

### 'Shastra Pramana' Buddhi

We implicitly trust our sense organs. Irrespective of what even modern day science such as quantum physics has revealed about the nature of matter etc., we continue to relate with the world in a certain fashion.

One who implicitly trusts what has been revealed in the Vedas is said to have 'shastra pramana

buddhi'. How does one get established in the understanding that Vedas are our own extension and the way we trust our eyes and ears, we are to trust them?

This gets established by the grace of a Guru. A Guru is one who embodies all the Vedas. Guru makes the Vedas come alive for an ordinary human being. A Guru states the Vedas (shastra pramana), gives sufficient proof through his words and actions that what is revealed in the Vedas is his/her experience (apta pramana) and has the ability to transmit this experience to his disciples or followers (atma pramana).

When these three pramanas happen for a human being, he/ she gets established unshakably in 'Shastra Pramana Buddhi'.

### Purity of Vedas

Vedas are akashic records that exist by themselves. They are self-effulgent and stand on their own strength. They do not need a substratum or a separate entity to assert themselves. They are 'apourushya' (not a product of human intellect) and 'sarvaboumya' (applicable across space and time). The one who has purified and enriched his / her senses and body can listen to them at any point in time and in any place in the universe. In many cases, such a person can also see the verses in text form appear in their inner space. Such a person is called a 'Rishi'.

### Working with a Sub-set

The Vedas are a collection of ways to understand, interpret and ultimately merge with reality. When a set of people work with a sub-set of ideas presented in the Vedas, one can, for the sake of differentiating, classify them as expounding different philosophies or schools of thought.

What we need to keep in mind is that any work we do with the implicit trust in the Vedas makes one an Astika. The categorization into schools of thoughts is just the human mind's way of trying to make it into digestible parts and create unnecessary complications that can then be used to undermine the system itself.

This classification was done in the medieval period by those who were not established in

'Shastra Pramana Buddhi'. They needed a way to digest and put a frame. The only way they knew was to create categories based on the sub-set of thoughts that were being prioritized to establish one in reality.

### Astika Schools of Thought

This codification classified Vedic thought currents into six systems and even called it by an authentic sounding term 'saddarshana' (six world views / teachings / philosophies). Though we will see what these six schools of thought are, we need to keep in mind that each one of them operate from 'Shastra Pramana Buddhi', which is the sole requirement for being established in reality and achieving the purpose of assuming a human body.

The six schools of thought are Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa and Vedanta

### Samkhya

This system is one that finds pratyaksa (perception), anumna (inference) and sabda (aptavacana, word/testimony of reliable sources) sufficient to experience moksha (liberation). This system uses ideas of purusa (consciousness) and prakrti (matter) to establish a baseline that can be related to by human beings. A living being is said to be one where purusa and prakrti are intertwined. The system then expands this world view to explain the cause of the universe.

Samkhya also uses the Gunas to explain the outer and inner states of what one observes in the universe. The three Gunas are sattva (poised), rajas (restless energy) and tamas (ignorance/ lethargy). All observable phenomena have varying degrees of these Gunas and they also determine the progress of their life over lifetimes.

### Yoga

Yoga aligns largely with the Samkhya system. It incorporates the concept of ishta devata (personal god) to help one in their progress towards moksha. This system also prescribes a set of practices or techniques that need to be followed along the knowledge set of the Samkhya system to achieve moksha.

### Nyaya

Apart from pratyaksa, anumna and sabda, the





Nyaya system uses Upamna (comparison and analogy) to lead one to reality. It holds that human suffering is a function of ignorance and right knowledge is the access to moksha. This right knowledge is an outcome of Anuvyavasaya (cross-examination of cognition, reflective cognition of what one thinks one knows).

#### Vaisheshika

This system uses pratyaksa and anumna. According to this system, one gets established in reality when one completely understands the experiential world. To this end, it uses the postulation from the Vedas that objects in the physical world can be reduced to paramanu (atoms). One's experience is a function of interplay of matter and its inherited and assumed qualities.

#### Mimamsa

Mimamsa is a Sanskrit word that means "reflection" or "critical investigation". This uses dharma as expounded in the Vedas as the means to moksha. It also gives priority to Vedic rituals as a lifestyle component that hastens the progress towards moksha.

#### Vedanta

Veda stands for "knowledge" and anta means "end". This system is built on the study of classical portions of the Vedas such as the Principal Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, and Bhagavad Gita to achieve moksha. Based on the core idea followed from the Vedas, Vedanta has been further classified into Advaita Vedanta, Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and so on.

A follower of any one of the above mentioned schools of thought is an Astika. He / she would benefit from dedicated study of Vedas under the guidance of an enlightened master by accepting him / her as their Guru.

An astika is a matured soul on whom the gaze of the Guru has fallen. He / she will quickly flower into an enlightened being by the grace of the Guru.

If you read this article this far, you have all the qualifications to be established in 'Shastra Pramana Buddhi'. Seek a Guru who will establish you in the reality of the Vedas. ☯

## APARIGRAHA — FORGE YOUR IDENTITY

AVINASH NARRIKKADAN

**A**parigraha is mentioned last among the Yama (restraints) prescribed in Patanjali Yoga Sutras. The meaning of aparigraha is commonly understood as being non-possessive or non-hoarding.

*Aparigrahasthairye janmakathantasanbodhah*" Patanjali Yoga Sutras (Sadhana Pada : Verse 39) Meaning: with constancy of Aparigraha, a spiritual illumination of the how and why of motives and birth emerges.<sup>1</sup>

At the material level being non-possessive is understood as a moral guideline to leading an ascetic life by giving up one's luxuries and material possessions. The simplicity in personal life that would result from doing so will be quite fulfilling and ideal for the path of Yoga. Aparigraha is a technique that has much deeper implication, one that can independently lead to liberation.

#### Identity Crisis and Resolution

Possessiveness is born of greed to accumulate and fear of letting go things and people. As long as we equate our self-worth with our possessions, we make material accumulation the way of life. The cause of all human conflicts, if reduced to a fundamental form using concepts of vedic science, is 'Identity Crisis' — the delusion about who or what we actually are. Aparigraha is a powerful tool in the quest to end this delusion and achieve self realization. It is a path of eliminating from our identity all that we are not. When all that can be removed, is removed, what remains is the pure self aware presence or intelligence. This is the technique that has been explained in the above sutra. When the identity crisis is resolved, the how and why of the various levels of our expressions and births become apparent. The being gains a timeless vantage point from where the cycles of birth and death and its causes can be seen and understood as a whole.

Thus aparigraha addresses the cause of the identity crisis that is the root of all conflicts.

#### The Practice

Aparigraha is possible only when we start enjoying completely what we have in the present. When we

do that sincerely we will be overwhelmed with the abundance of Existence that we will not feel the need to possess anymore than what is. Through the practice of Yoga we gain the intelligence to discriminate between what is absolutely necessary and what is an excess. The dependence on external objects and people to secure our happiness and false feeling of wellbeing drops. We become more relaxed and silent within ourselves.

#### For Health

When practiced, aparigraha will eventually lead to a point where we realize that we are not the body. Through practice of spiritual techniques like Unclutching<sup>2</sup> we can be non-possessive of the body. All the diseases and physical problems are maintained because of the us possessing the body. When we are able to detach from the urge to identifying with the body, the body naturally realigns itself into its healthy state.

#### For Wealth

We can think objectively about something only if we do not possess it, or it is not a part of our identity. This is why doctors do not undertake surgical operations for their own family members. Similarly only a person who practices non-possession can think objectively and take calculated risks with his wealth. A large percentage of the Jain community run very successful businesses. Aparigraha is one of the main virtues of Jainism founded by Mahavira.

In a world where humans are made to believe that they are absolutely dependent on unnecessary drugs, pseudo nutrition theories, extravagant comforts etc. for commercial profits, Aparigraha can rid these unnecessary crutches and help rediscover our physical and mental independence. ☯

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# NITHYANANDA YOGA

THE ORIGINAL YOGA...  
FROM THE ORIGIN

## SRI NITHYA MITRANANDA

Whether it's through the modern yoga literature, as part of a simple yoga class or a full-fledged teacher training, the global yoga community generally accepts, teaches and acclaims Patanjali, as the Father of Yoga. Patanjali, author of the famous *Yoga Sutras*, was an enlightened Master who took birth in the town of Chidambaram, in the south of India, about 5,000 years ago. He organized a system known as Ashtanga Yoga, the eight limbs or parts of Yoga.

While we know Patanjali was an enlightened master from India, there is an irrational mass belief that "Yoga has no religion", Yoga is for everyone and "Yoga is secular". The world feels very comfortable separating Yoga from any religious connotation, from its roots in Hinduism. Yoga has become so diluted, anyone with a mere 200-hrs of training can brand their own style of yoga! Surely Patanjali would think: what in the world is happening with Yoga?

With the advent of Living Incarnation Paramahansa Nithyananda however, it's time to shake these myths and misbeliefs about Yoga. Yoga was diluted to make it popular. It worked. Now it's time to get back to the original source.

Speaking on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga at the holy city of Varanasi on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2016, Paramahansa Nithyananda revealed three powerful truths about Yoga, which people at large and the misguided yoga community need to know.

### Sadashiva is the Founder and Father of the Yoga System

This first truth is that Yoga did not originate from Patanjali. "Patanjali is the organizer, not originator. That's the first thing you need to know," said Paramahansa Nithyananda.

He explained, "With all my respects to Patanjali, I want to declare this truth to the world: at least 15, 000 years before Patanjali, a Being walked on the Planet Earth, assuming the physical form, Adi Guru Sadashiva, the Founder and Father of the Yoga system.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is a great book, no doubt, but not the first book. Unfortunately, many popular yoga gurus all over the world, always stop with Patanjali. Very few say yoga was before Patanjali, and even if they say, they're not able to present the scriptures and literature."

On the International Day of Yoga, Swamiji presented the ancient scriptures and the original

instructions on Yoga as revealed by Shiva Himself. These records are called The *Shiva Agamas*.

"All the revelations of Shiva are called Agamas, the complete work of Shiva, where he presents detailed, elaborate material with high quality precision."

Paramahansa Nithyananda's mission is to bring yoga back to its original form, as the authentic way to connect directly with the Divine. People are very comfortable having Patanjali as the originator of yoga because Patanjali can be secularized, but not Sadashiva. But it's time for the world to know and understand that Yoga is rooted in Sanatana Hindu Dharma.

### Yoga Cannot be DEVELOPED—It Can Only be DILUTED

The second important truth He revealed on International Day of Yoga is that yoga cannot be separated from Hinduism.

"Always ask for the original source. It is unfortunate that the original scriptures revealed by Sadashiva are not available for the masses. It is unfortunate nobody promoted that. Because it is very easy to secularize Patanjali; very difficult to secularize Sadashiva," He said.

The stylized "religion-free" yoga have become the flavour of the day. Yoga has become a mere synonym of body workout, along with Pilates, Zumba and Gymming... Such is the extent of dilution.

We need to understand that Yoga cannot be developed. It is a perfect system that was revealed by Sadashiva and further organized by living enlightened masters, disciples of Shiva over thousands of years, with a clear purpose and intention.

"You cannot develop on Sadashiva," Paramahansa Nithyananda said. "Yoga is a complete science that has taken into account all types of bodies past, present and yet to come in the future. Altering Yoga is not development but dilution."

The secular world has diluted a great science that we are yet to discover and reveal to the masses. But first understand, if you have practiced something in the name of yoga, ask your teacher

for the clear reference. Where did this technique come from? Always ask for the source. Only then you should even consider practicing these techniques safely.

### Yoga is the Science of Radiating Enlightenment

The third important truth revealed by Paramahansa Nithyananda is that Yoga is not just the science of keeping you healthy, Yoga is the science of radiating enlightenment.

"[Yoga] is not just the ability to stretch your body. It is the ability to manifest what you want. Yoga is not all about making you a better man. Yoga is all about making you Superman."

The best that can happen to you on the path of Yoga is getting rid of all self-doubt, self-hatred and self-denial, the root cause of all incompletions. Paramahansa Nithyananda actively teaches the science of completing with these, collectively called SDHD, discarding all mental patterns that limit us from living to our highest potential.

Yoga is the ultimate merging of the individual consciousness with the Cosmic Consciousness. It is designed to experience Oneness, Advaita, and express all the mystical powers outlined by Shiva. As long as we carry inadequate, immature cognitions about ourselves, about life, others, God, world, we continue to feel separate from the whole. When we complete with all our limited cognitions and discover our true Self, Yoga happens.

Paramahansa Nithyananda now offers this whole science to the world; from 2-day programs to 21-day yoga and meditation spiritual retreats like Inner Awakening, and 200-hrs Nithyananda University Certified Nithyananda Yoga Teacher Training<sup>SM</sup> for those who really want to deepen their experience and enrich the world with the authentic yoga.

Join us on the amazing discovery of the original Yoga... from the origin! ☯

#### Reference

1. Satsang on June 21, 2016 at Varanasi on International Day of Yoga
2. [www.innerawakening.org](http://www.innerawakening.org)
3. [www.nithyanandauniversity.org/courses/nytt](http://www.nithyanandauniversity.org/courses/nytt)

# NITHYA KRIYA—CURE FOR FOOD ALLERGIES

## What is Nithya Kriya?

Nithya Kriya are a series of unique yogic healing processes revealed by Paramahansa Nithyananda. While the knowledge and techniques are drawn from the most authentic and sacred yogic scriptures of India, the specific combinations are expressed from the personal experiences, research and development of Paramahansa Nithyananda, with the objective of curing various ailments.

Here we discuss the Nithya Kriya to Cure Food Allergies.

Steps to be followed:

1. Durvasa Asana
2. Sheethalee Kumbhaka
3. Seethkaaree Praanaayamaa
4. Samaana Kumbhaka
5. Bhastrika Kumbhaka



## 1. Durvasa Asana

Yogaasana Maala Sachitra, Verse 87  
*Daayee Jaangh Parikaree Jeemanau Paga  
 Daayee Paashati Aani |  
 Phanaa Dovu Dharathi Tekee Baarala Gulph Kulaa  
 Kee Baarilee Kanee Lagaavai |  
 Daavaa Haath Kee Aagulyaa Kee Beechali  
 Syandhi Syoo |  
 Jeemanaa Haathkee Aagulyaa Kaa Agra Lagaavai |  
 Ooparaa Thalee Sudhaa Haath Raashai Hathalee  
 Kee Baaralee Kor Medra Urddha Lagaavai |  
 Drishti Thrikutee Aasana Kauguna Garameee  
 Aadhidhi Roga Jaay Seethala Rahai ||87||*

### Translation

1. Sit on the floor
2. Bend your right knee and place the right leg on the left side hip
3. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on the above the right thigh so that the left foot is placed near the right side hip
4. Touch the right hand finger tips with the middle joints of left fingers
5. Place the hands above the genitals
6. Fix the gaze at the eye brow center
7. Remain in this position for 30 seconds

In Durvasasana, Next



## 2. Sheethalee Kumbhaka

Gheranda Samhita, Upadesha 5, Verse 73-74  
*Jihvayaa Vaayum Aakrushya Udare Poorayet  
 Shanaihi |  
 Kshanam Cha Kumbhakam Krutvaa Naasaabhyaam  
 Rechayet Punaha || 5.73 ||*

### Translation

The breath has to be filled in the abdomen by drawing air through the tongue. After having retained the breath for a moment, the exhalation should be done through the nostrils.

### Technique

1. Protrude your tongue as much as possible
2. Roll the sides of the tongue like a tube
3. Now inhale through the tube formed by the tongue
4. After inhaling, close your mouth
5. Retain it there for a short time
6. Exhale through both the nostrils
7. Do this for 21 minutes

In Durvasasana, Next

## 3. Seethkaaree Praanaayamaa

Hatha Pradeepikaa, Upadesha 4, Verse 43  
*Seethkaam dadyaath sadaa Vaktre Ghraanenaiva  
 Visarjayet |  
 Evam Abhyaasa-Yogena Kaamadevo Dviteeyakaha  
 ||4.43||*

### Translation

The breath needs to be sucked in through the mouth with a hissing sound and the exhalation to be done through the nostrils. By practicing this Kamadeva—the Cupid becomes the second.

### Technique

1. Continue to sit in the same posture and close your eyes
2. Press the lower teeth with the upper teeth and open the lips comfortably
3. Suck air through the gaps in between the teeth and close the mouth at the end of the inhalation and immediately exhale through the nostrils
4. Do this 21 times

In Durvasasana, Next

## 4. Samaana Kumbhaka

Kumbhaka Paddhati, Verse 62  
*Naabhaavaapoorya Vaayushcheth Dehe Vyaapya  
 Vidhaaritaha |*

*Kumbhithe Jvalanam Dhyayeth Samaanasya Thu  
 Kumbhakaha ||62||*

### Translation

After filling the navel region with the air that is spread and held all over the body, one should concentrate on fire and this is known as Samana Kumbhaka.

### Technique

1. Inhale completely till the navel is filled
2. While inhaling visualize that the prana is spread and held all over the body
3. Hold as long as you can judiciously
4. While you hold, visualize the fire element in your navel region
5. When you can not hold any more, exhale
6. Do this 21 times

In Durvasasana, Next

## 5. Bhastrika Kumbhaka

Kumbhaka Paddhati, Verses 164 & 165  
*Bhastreva Lohakaarasya Rechapoorau Shramaavadhi |  
 Vegena Sthanayoroordhvam Thathaha  
 Poororkavarthmanaa ||164||  
 Jaalandharam Dhrudam Badhvaa Kumbhitham  
 Chandra-Varthmanaa |  
 Rechayeth Bhasthrikaa Kumbhaha Shareeraagni-  
 Vivardhanaha ||165||*

### Translation

One should rapidly inhale and exhale similar to the bellows of a blacksmith till he becomes fatigued. Followed by this he should inhale through the right nostril and then having held the breath with the Jalandhara Bandha, he should exhale through the left nostril. This is Bhastrika Kumbhaka that increases bodily heat.

### Technique

1. Rapidly inhale and exhale like the bellows of the blacksmith until you become fatigued
2. Then inhale through the right nostril
3. Press the chin on the chest so that the throat is locked
4. Hold the breath as long as you can judiciously
5. Relax the chin and exhale through left nostril
6. Do this 21 times

Reference

<http://www.nithyananda.org/nithya-kriyas/cure-food-allergies#gsc.tab=0>

# SUSHRUTA

## THE ORIGINATOR OF SURGERY

DR. SHUBHAMANGALA ACHARYA

Ancient ayurveda followed two major schools of treatment: one dealt with general medicine, and was led by Acharya Charaka. The second focused on surgery though it dealt with general medicine as well. Acharya Sushruta was the pioneer of the second school.

Acharya Sushruta was a great surgeon who lived in the holy city of Varanasi. He wrote *Sushruta Samhita*, the first surgical book of humankind. His time period is not very clear but most scholars place him between 1,000 and 600 BC. But with recent studies where Vedic time dates are being pushed back by several thousand years, these dates are contentious.

### Sushruta Samhita—World's First Text on Surgery

*Sushruta Samhita* elaborates not only on surgery, including plastic surgery, but contains composite teachings on allied branches including midwifery, making it a comprehensive treatise on the entire medical discipline. Sushruta believed that knowledge of both surgery and medicine are essential to make a good doctor who otherwise "is like a bird with only one wing." In fact, Sushruta emphasized that unless one possesses

sufficient knowledge of relevant branches of learning, one cannot attain proficiency in one's own subject of study (*Sushruta Sutrastana* 1/51).

Sushruta said, "Anyone who wishes to acquire a thorough knowledge of anatomy must prepare a dead body, and carefully observe and examine all its parts." (*Sushruta Sharira* chapter 5). The method of study was to submerge the body in water and allow it to decompose. The decomposing body was examined at intervals to study structures, layer by layer, as they were exposed following decomposition. The most important point to note here is that the dissection was performed without using a knife. He used brushes made of different herbs.

### Shalya Tantra—The Science of Surgery

The ancient surgical science was called shalya tantra. This embraces removing of all factors that create pain or misery to the body and mind. To gain thorough knowledge of surgery, Sushruta wanted his disciples to conduct mock surgeries on gourds, watermelon, and dead animals. By this the surgeon will remain perpetually skilled. In *Yogyasutriya Adhyaya* he specifically explains the importance of proper surgical training.

Shalya denotes broken parts of an arrow /other sharp weapons, and tantra denotes manoeuvre. Broken parts of arrows or similar pointed weapons were regarded as the commonest and most dangerous objects requiring surgical treatment.

Cauterization using hot metal rods (agni karma) or alkalies (kshara) was well practiced in many diseases.

Pain management during surgery was mentioned. He says patient should eat before surgery to tolerate the pain. To alleviate the pain during surgery, patient was asked to drink alcohol. (*Sushruta Sutrastana* 17/11, 12)

During Sushruta's time, surgeries for the removal of kidney stones or a dead foetus required the consent of the patient's family.

### 120 Surgical Instruments and 300 Procedures!

The *Sushruta Samhita* classifies human surgery into eight categories, describes over 120 surgical instruments, and 300 surgical procedures. Fine needles and threads made of silk, barks of different plants, and ligaments were used. Special techniques for surgeries were used. For example, a perforated intestine was repaired using ants, which were made to bite together the torn parts (*Sushruta Chikitsa* 25).

Sterilization and fumigation were used. The former was done by heating the surgical instruments in a naked flame, or washing in strong alkalis. The operation theatres and wards were fumigated using ghee and other herbal drugs.

### Mastery of Plastic Surgery

Acharya Sushruta was well versed in plastic surgery. During those days cutting off the nose or ear as a punishment was common. Surgeons used to conduct reconstruction of the nose (rhinoplasty) which was called as nasa sandhana in their terminology, and reconstruction of the ear karnasandhana successfully. Hare lip was also corrected by plastic surgery (*Sushruta Sutrastana* 25).

While explaining panchakarma (detoxification of body), Sushruta mentions one of the procedures as raktamokshana or bloodletting. This is for

detoxification of the blood. Different instruments were used to discard blood in different diseases. Leeches were considered as one of the best bloodletting instruments. Even today Ayurveda vaidyas follow this procedure successfully.

### First Translations

*Sushruta Samhita* was translated into Arabic as *Kitab-Shaw Shoon-a-Hindi* and *Kitab-i-Susrud*. The translation of *Sushruta Samhita* was ordered by the Caliph Mansur (A.D.753 -774). The first European translation of *Sushruta Samhita* was published by Hessler in Latin, and into German by Muller in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first complete English translation was done by Kaviraj Kunja Lal Bhishagratna in three volumes in 1907 at Calcutta.

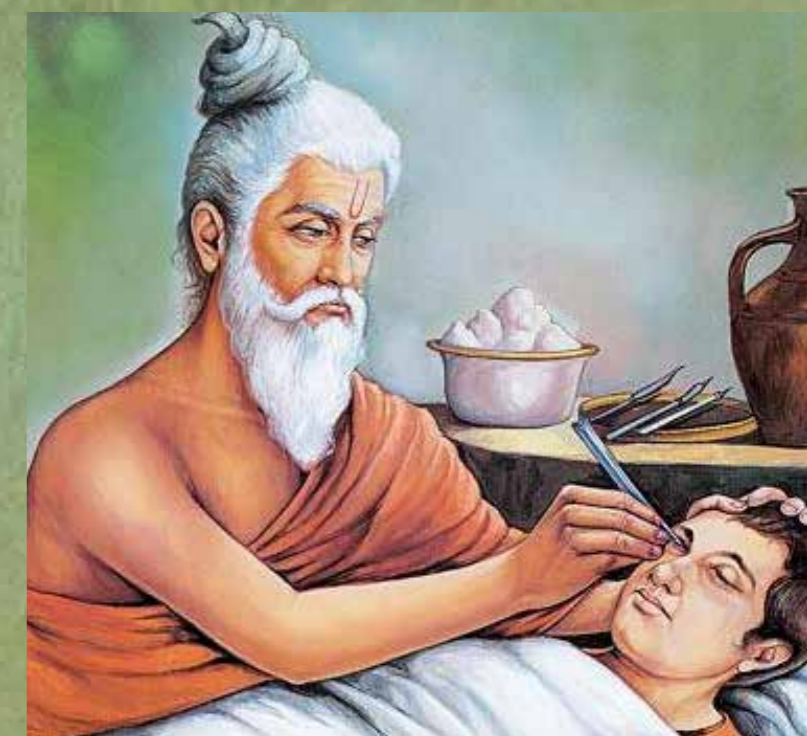
Sushruta was an accomplished surgeon and great philosopher. As this shloka affirms:

*sharire sushrutah prokta charakastu chikitsakah*

meaning, "Sushruta is the best in the study of human anatomy while Charaka is the best in general medicine." It is a heritage we all need to be proud of! ☯

Reference

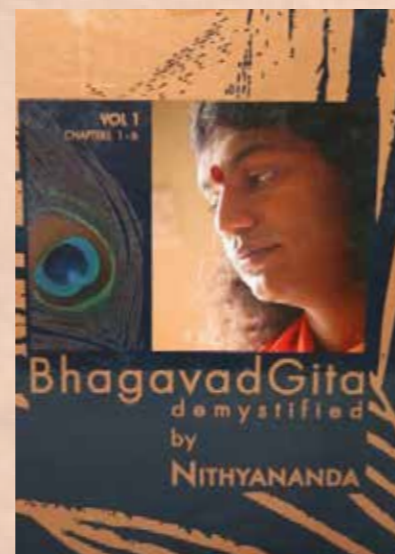
1. Sushruta Samhita
2. Sushruta the first plastic Surgeon 600 BC, Sanjay Saraf, Ravi Parthar
3. Smskruta Subhashita



# SEEK WITH THE GUIDANCE OF A MASTER

About this column—

This column shares excerpts from the commentary on Bhagavad Gita by Enlightened Master and rare living incarnation Paramahansa Nithyananda. The intention is to highlight the eternal relevance of Bhagavad Gita in addressing challenges, issues and dilemmas faced by human beings in the present day.



Verses 1.25 to 1.30 describe the scene where Arjuna after inspecting the army in front of him and those alongside him, tells Krishna that he is in no position to wage this war.

**K**rishna parked the chariot between the two armies and said to Arjuna, 'Here are the people you wish to see'. Arjuna wanted to see those who were about to fight him and die. Krishna with no mercy at all, showed him that these were Arjuna's near and dear ones.

## Arjuna's Dilemma

Assembled in front of Arjuna were grandfathers and great grandfathers such as Bhishma, his own teachers such as Drona and Kripa, uncles such as Sakuni, brothers and cousins as all the Kaurava princes were, friends and well-wishers. At one time or another, each of them had been an object of affection and respect to Arjuna. Now they were part of the enemy army.

As a Kshatriya, Arjuna was no stranger to death and violence. As long as those who faced him were his enemies, Arjuna had no difficulty in carrying out the execution. However, those in front of him now were his relatives – father, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, sons and grandsons. He could not bear to kill those whom he could relate with himself in one way or another. The bonds of family were rooted in his ego and to cut these bonds was to destroy himself. This was Arjuna's dilemma.

## Himsa

What follows now is a bunch of fantasies that Arjuna's mind weaves in an attempt to justify his dilemma. It is what the human mind conjures up time and again as its projection of the unconscious samskaras, trying to justify its actions. Sanjaya says that Arjuna was overwhelmed with pity. Some translate this as compassion. True compassion is non-discriminatory. To the truly compassionate person, the whole world is an extension of his own self. Anything that hurts any object around such a person would hurt him and he too would feel the pain.

However, Arjuna's emotion was discriminatory. He felt pity only because they were his kinsmen and he identified with them. This was pity born out of himsa, violence. True compassion arises from a state of absence of ego, where the feelings of 'I' and 'mine' have disappeared. It is a state of bliss. It happens when the individual self merges with the universal Self.

Arjuna's pity arose out of fear of losing his identity, his ego. He was mortally afraid. He claimed that his throat was parched, his hair was standing on edge and his divine bow was slipping from his sweaty hands. If one did not

know Arjuna better, one would have considered him a coward. He was not concerned that he might be injured or that he might die. But he was afraid of breaking social and ethical laws. His values and beliefs, his samskaras, told him that what he was doing was wrong and unacceptable. So powerful was this feeling, that he was reeling, quivering, dazed and unable to think or function.

Arjuna was frightened that he would be held responsible for the death of his kinsmen. Even if others did not blame him, he would regret his actions for the rest of his life. So great was his fear of potential guilt that it drove Arjuna to behaving like a coward. All he could foresee was disaster and evil. At another, far deeper level, Arjuna was terrified of his own destruction. The moment one starts identifying with kinsmen, it is a material identification. It is an identification born out of possession. Possession is born of attachment and leads to further attachment as well. There can be no feeling of possessing something unless one is attached to it.

## 'Mine' Leads to 'I'

People speak of attachment, liking and love. All these are valid only as long as a sense of possession exists. The moment the object of love turns around and displays independence and unwillingness to be possessed, the love disappears. Possession arises out of our survival need, from our muladhara chakra, an energy center located at the base of the spine. Out of the need for possession, feelings of lust, greed and anger arise. We often feel, 'What I cannot have, let no one have'. It is also a deep rooted desire for possessions, the feeling of 'mine', that gives rise to our identity 'I'. 'Mine' leads to 'I', not 'I' leads to 'mine'. This is why we cannot eliminate our identity until we transcend our attachment to or identity with all our desires and possessions. We need to dissolve the identification with the 'mine' first. Only then the 'I' disappears.

Arjuna is in this mood and frame of mind. It strikes him at the moment of waging war that he is about to destroy his own kinsmen, a part of his own identity. If he were to destroy them he would be destroying a part of his own self. It would be akin to committing suicide.

## Process of Transformation

Arjuna's dilemma was an existential one. What is the point of eliminating others if it results in one's own elimination? It is a dilemma born out of partial understanding. If Arjuna was unaware as Duryodhana, this doubt would have never entered his mind. Were he enlightened as Krishna is, the answer would have been obvious. Arjuna was in between, hence his dilemma.

'Why should I destroy myself? For what purpose?' These are the questions that naturally follow this line of reasoning, Arjuna was far wiser than many modern philosophers in posing this as a doubt, but without venturing any answers. Arjuna is undergoing a process of transformation. The problem was that Arjuna was a thinking man unlike Duryodhana, or even his own brother Bhima. This ability to think, to be aware, was what had got him into trouble now. Doubts assailed him. 'Am I really doing the right thing? Am I destroying myself and all that I stand for when I wage this war against my own people?'

## Seeker of Truth

Arjuna had become a seeker of Truth. He wished to go beyond the sastras, the stotras and the sutras. He questioned them. Arjuna Vishada Yoga is the name of the first chapter of Gita. Vishada means grief, sorrow, despondency, despair, depression, dilemma and such. Here what we see is the dilemma that Arjuna was in not knowing whether what he had been taught all his life and what he believed to be true, was really true after all.

Though we identify with incompleteness all our life, they are not a part of us. We need to find the courage to confront them and vanquish them. Only when we seek the guidance of a Master to be rid of our incompleteness, our false identity gets weakened and path to knowing our right identity opens up. Great Doubt in what we consider as ourselves, Great Belief in the words of the Master and the Sastras, and Great Work in completing all incompleteness and dropping them at the Master's feet is the way out of our limited identity and our own Vishada. ☸

Source :  
Bhagavad Gita Demystified by Paramahansa Nithyananda; p. 39 – 42  
ISBN 13: 978-1-60607-132-8



# SANT TUKOBA

MILIND TAMHANE

Sant Tukaram, also called Tukoba, is one of the greatest poet saint from Maharashtra, who is well known for his spiritual poetry known as Abhang and his devotion toward Vitthala (aka Panduranga, Vithoba—another form of Lord Krishna/Vishnu). He was born in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and also lived in the same age of the great Hindu ruler Chatrapati Shivaji and Sant Samarth Ramdas.

## The Accumulated 'Punya' Took a Form—Birth of Tukaram (aka Tukoba).

About 700 years ago, there was a devotee of Vitthala, named Vishvambharbua Ambile from the village of Dehu. He was a varkari (pilgrims—who followed the tradition of going to pilgrimage to Pandharpur every year). But due to old age, he could not follow the tradition and missed the vari. Due to his fervent devotion, Lord Vitthala appeared in his dream and told him not to come to Pandharpur anymore but He would be in Ambevan in Dehu. Next day Vishvambharbua along with some residents of Dehu, searched in Ambevan area and found beautiful deities of Vithoba-Rakhumai which Vishvambharbua took and installed in a temple close to his home. He spent the rest of his life in service and worship of Vithoba.

Tukoba was born in the seventh generation of Vishvambharbua. Therefore, from the ancestors, the accumulated punya came to fruition in the form of Tukoba. His mother was Kanakai and father was Bolhoba. Bolhoba had three sons—Savaji, Tukoba and Kanhoba. Bolhoba was very pious and had a routine of reading religious books and doing Vitthal puja daily. Those samskaras imprinted on his children and they too became pious, devoted and always followed Dharma (right conduct).

## Turmoil Before Sainthood

Tukoba was married soon after his older brother Savaji left home. Tukoba being very pious never took a break in his nem or daily routine of reading religious books and darshan of Vithoba. Since his wife developed asthma just after their marriage, a second marriage was arranged for Tukoba.

Soon afterwards, there was a severe famine in Maharashtra and it affected Tukoba's family very

badly. His business suffered huge losses, and due to lack of food, Tukoba lost both his parents, his first wife and her son and even the cows that he owned. He tried in vain in various ways to take care of his family. But to no avail. In bad times, a common man usually blames God for his karmas. But Tukoba was very devoted to Vithoba, and his faith only grew stronger in these trying circumstances. He was already shaken by the bitter experiences from the samsar (mundane life) and seeing the death of thousands of people due to famine his vairagya (detachment from mundane life) grew stronger.

## Guru in His Life and Spiritual Progress

He started spending his time in thinking of God, but did not give up his wife and kids. He left everything on God's will. His constant prayers dissolved the heart of Panduranga.

One night, Panduranga in the form of Sadguru came in Tukoba's dreams and gave him anugraha (mantra deeksha). When Tukoba woke up, he started chanting the mantra 'Ram Krishna Hari'. His wife asked him about it. It was the most important moment in his life. All his miseries ceased to exist from that moment and he felt like he had entered into a new world.

From then on Tukoba started to chant the mantra in a secluded place, on a hill called Bhandara. He experienced more and more happiness, bliss and found his mind becoming still. He would feel very distressed whenever he had to go home and leave the sadhana, or spiritual practice. Jijabai was a devoted wife but a short-tempered woman. She would constantly chide Tukoba for not providing even the essentials to run the household. Yet she would not eat unless Tukoba had eaten first. Tukoba knowing her mindset, would calmly her down with good words and try to get her mind towards God. Sometimes due to her insistence he had to come home.

## Tukoba Carries Forward Sant Namdev's Sankalpa on Abhangas

Tukoba reached the state *Dev Pahayala Gelo Tethe Devachi Houni Thelo* (Went to see God; instead I became God). The only desire remained was to enjoy the Bliss and make others enjoy it too. He started serving the public with bhajans and kirtans.



Once Sant Namdev (who lived 200 years before Tukoba) requested before Vitthala that he should complete 100 crore (1 crore is 10 million) Abhangas. Vitthala told him that this wish won't be fulfilled in (his) this birth. Namdev could finish, with the help of his household folks, 94.5 crore abhangas before his death. To fulfill his sankalpa (wish/declaration) he appeared in the dreams of Tukoba along with Vitthala, and asked him to fulfil it. To which Vitthala also consented. Tukoba started writing abhangas. He wrote 5 crore 1 lakh 34 thousand abhangas (50,134,000). Due to this, people say that Tukoba was the avatar of Namdev.

Before Guru Deeksha Tukoba used to say, "no more births for me" but later he declared in his abhangas – "I don't want the 'Mukti' (release from the birth-death cycle); give me birth without any hesitance. But let me have Your constant remembrance and let me always serve You."

**Persecuted by The Ignoramus**

With his saintly childlike, friendly and completely

open behavior, his simple preachings attracted people from all walks of life and he gathered a large following. Those who could not understand his inner state of mind, thought him a mad person. Some became jealous of his popularity among the masses while there were others who had blind and dogmatic beliefs and couldn't tolerate Tukoba's teachings. All these would persecute, insult and abuse Tukoba in many ways.

Some shastris (those well versed and knowledgeable in Vedas and shastras), buas (may or may not have spiritual knowledge but are regarded as spiritual person), and their followers came together and gave judgement against Tukoba. They drowned his notebooks of abhangas in the river Indrayani. From that moment Tukoba sat at the river bank giving up food and sleep and prayed fervently to Vitthala. On the 14<sup>th</sup> day Indrayani brought those notebooks back to Tukoba in the same condition as it was before drowning.

One of Tukoba's main opponent/enemy Rameshwar Bhat tried very hard to make him run



away from the region. Then suddenly Rameshwar Bhat started feeling immense burning sensation all over his body. He tried many remedies but did not get any relief. Finally he surrendered to Tukoba and begged his pardon. Only then did the burning sensation cease. Realizing Tukoba's greatness he became his disciple.

**Exit from This World**

One day Tukoba said to his wife, "Very soon I'll receive the invitation from Vaikuntha (abode of Vishnu/Vitthala), that day be prepared to come along with me. Till now, at every foot step you've helped me and allowed my sweet ending (to happen). That is why the Gods will felicitate you."

But she was ignorant about spiritual knowledge. So she replied, "The buffalo is yet to deliver, so how can I come? You go to Vaikuntha and return quickly, in the meantime I will cook and we both will have lunch together." He told his disciples too, "I've received the invite from my 'maaher' (my original place), and will soon have to go."

In few days Tukoba was doing kirtan at the banks of Indrayani river. Everyone was chanting 'Vitthal, Vitthal, Vitthal' and they lost the body consciousness, drinking the nectar of God's name. Taking this chance, Tukoba suddenly vanished. After sometime the folks came back to normal body consciousness, and upon opening their eyes they could not find Tukoba anywhere.

It was Monday of Phalgun Vaidya Dvitiya (Month Phalgun and 2<sup>nd</sup> day of waning moon cycle) of Saka 1571 (1650 CE). Since no body was found, it is believed that Sant Tukaram ascended to Vaikuntha in his human body. On the same day every year, lakhs (100s of thousands) of varkaris gather at the Indrayani banks and witness around noon time the Nandurki tree showing some distinct movement in its leaves. It is said that 'Garuda' (the eagle) who carried the Viman (carrier like plane or spaceship) taking Sant Tukaram to Vaikuntha had touched the tree before leaving.

In 1937 at Venice Film Festival, a film based on his life 'Sant Tukaram' (1<sup>st</sup> Indian entry to at international level) was adjudged as one of the 3 best films and is still popular on Youtube and regional Indian channels. This film has a profound spiritual effect on all ages, and sections of society across the globe. A website tukaram.com is available in many languages which has a collection of his abhangas. 🙏

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## SATYABHAMA: THE BOLD AND BEAUTIFUL

SHUBHANGI DESHPANDE

**S**atyabhama was ashtabharya Krishna's second most important wife and an avatar of Bhudevi, the goddess of earth and consort of Vishnu. Based on Vedic literature, Vishnu tatva had three energies, Sri—the goddess Lakshmi; Bhū—the goddess Earth and Nīla or Līla—the goddess of pastimes. Lakshmi was Vishnu's Sri-shakti and Vishnupriya was his Bhū-shakti, the energy that created the cosmic manifestation. Further, knowledge was of two kinds: *apara vidya* or material knowledge and *para vidya* or transcendental knowledge. Vishnupriya Devi was the personification of transcendental knowledge. Satyabhama was re-born as Vishnupriya Devi.

### The Valiant Daughter

Satyabhama was the only child of the Yadava chief Satrajit. Satrajit was the royal treasurer of Dwaraka, who was the owner of the Syamantaka jewel. Satrajit, who secured the jewel from the sun-god Surya and would not part with it even with Krishna, the king of Dwaraka.

In those days it was a practice to teach martial arts, athletic pursuits and Puranas to boys only. But Satrajit observed equality among his children, and as a result Satyabhama gained knowledge of Vedas, Puranas and armory.

Satyabhama having undergone a lot of suffering in her previous mortal life on earth, sought refuge in Vaikuntha, Vishnu's abode after her death. She did relentless service to Lord Vishnu as his caretaker. Vishnu promised to take her as his wife in her next life and assured her a happy life. So in Krishna avatara, when Satyabhama was re-born as the daughter of Satrajit, she was given in marriage to Krishna, Vishnu's avatara.

### The Engaging Marriage

Satyabhama's marriage is a fascinating story. Prasena, the brother of Satrajit went out hunting wearing the jewel but was killed by a lion. Jambavan, known for his role in the *Ramayana*, killed the lion and gave the jewel to his daughter Jambavati. When Prasena did not return, Satrajit falsely accused Krishna of killing Prasena for the sake of the jewel.

When Krishna learnt about it, he set out with his men in search of the jewel. Krishna found the jewels in Jambavan's cave. Jambavan attacked Krishna, after fierce fight of 28 days Jambavan surrendered to Krishna. He recognized the god and then gave the jewel to Krishna who in turn returned it to Satrajit.

Satrajit, realized his mistake of making false

allegations against Krishna gave his daughter in marriage to Krishna.

### The Covetous Wife

Krishna had made a pledge to Vishnu that he would keep Satyabhama happy at all times.

Indian mythology provides colorful depiction and stories of mercurial Satyabhama, the third wife of Krishna being light-heartedly having family strife with Krishna's first wife Rukmini. These stories are kept alive in Indian folklore in the form of prose and poetry. In some parts of India farmer women still sing these poems lovingly, while doing hard work such as sowing seeds or grinding grains, etc.

Some of the popular folklores include:

**The Parijat Story:** Krishna brought a beautiful tree of coral jasmine called Parijat from Heaven. Satyabhama, insisted that it should be planted in Rukhmini's garden such that she gets to water and till it, but all the flowers fell into Satyabhama's garden. Krishna noticed this mischief and told that every time the flowers bloom Krishna will spend time with Rukmini. This made Satyabhama learn her lesson and she apologized for the pettiness.

**Tulabharam and Value of Love :** (Described in following article, The Thulabharam That Tamed Bhama's Arrogance)

### The Ferocious Warrior—Satyabhama and Narakasura

Narakasura was a demon king who ruled Pragjothishyapur. He was blessed by Lord Brahma that he would be unbeatable and would die only in the hands of his mother. Narakasura used this power of immortality and became a tyrant. He became infamous for his evil ruling and for disrespecting the Devas and women. Further, Narakasura gained control over all three worlds, and defeated Lord Indra, king of gods of devaloka, and snatched sixteen thousand women and imprisoned them in his palace. He stole the earrings of Aditi, the heavenly mother goddess, and seized some of her territory.

When Satyabhama heard of Narakasura's cruelty towards women and his behaviour with Aditi,

she was infuriated. Satyabhama discussed this problem with Lord Krishna and took permission to declare a war against Narakasura. Krishna agreed and presented his Garuda as her mount and both rode to the city ruled by Narakasura.

In the war Satyabhama fought with Narakasura valiantly but he was more skillful. After a few days Narakasura got a chance to hurt Krishna. Krishna fainted (feigning it). When Satyabhama saw Narakasura attacking Krishna she got furious.

She doubled her strength and killed the demon king Narakasura. Before Narakasura's death, he requested a boon from his mother—Satyabhama (Bhudevi reborn), that everyone should celebrate his death with colourful lights. Accordingly, this day is celebrated as the first day of Diwali or Naraka Chaturdashi.

After her victory, Satyabhama and Krishna freed all the prisoners of Narakasura. Satyabhama rescued the sixteen thousand women and Lord Krishna married them for the reason of their purity which they preserved regardless of being made captives.

### Remembering Bhama

There is a beautiful Satyabhama temple at Putaparthi in Andhra Pradesh, India, commemorating her strength. In addition, Bhama's immense beauty, her courage, ferociousness, righteousness, her various hues of emotions, intelligence, haughtiness and love for Krishna is beautifully captured in a dance form called Bhama Kalapam in the Kuchipudi classical dance form of Andhra Pradesh. The Kuchipudi dancers therefore "live" her on everyday basis. ☸

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## THE THULABHARAM THAT TAMED BHAMA'S ARROGANCE

### What is Thulabharam

**T**hulabharam is a seva or divine offering made to a temple, where a devotee sits in one side of a large weighting scale or *tula*. The devotee then is weighed against a particular item of choice like paddy, sugar, bananas, jaggery, rice, gold, silver and the like. When this item exceeds his or her weight, it is donated to the temple for the worship of the god. The *thulabharam seva* is most famous in the Guruvayur temple in Kerala, although other temples such as Tirupati Devasthanam, Udupi, Dwaraka, also offer this seva. Of the various items, the Gold Thulabharam is the highest form of offering to a deity.

The thulabharam is a hoary tradition dating back to Vedic times. The earliest reference to a thulabharam comes from the *Mahabharata*, about the great and just chakravartin (emperor) Sivi, during the period of highest consciousness living, the Satya Yuga. The last witnessed and recorded gold Thulabharam was in the Dwapara Yuga, during the time of the last Purnavatara, Krishna. The Krishna story of thulabharam makes for a delightful read and is often praised as a spectacular Krishna Leela teaching people about the power of devotion and love.

### Ashtabharya Krishna

Krishna, the king of Dwaraka, was an *ashtabharya* i.e. he had eight wives. They included Rukmini, Satyabhama, Jambavati, Kalindi, Mitravinda, Nagnajiti, Bhadra and Lakshmana. Of these, Sathyabhama stood out because of her pride, arrogance, haughtiness which came from her royal lineage and good looks. She prided herself on her pure love for Krishna but was also jealous of Rukmini, the Chief Queen of Dwaraka. Rukmini, on the other hand, was a very humble lady and a pious wife. She let nothing come in the way of her devotion to Krishna and served him with whole hearted love and devotion.

### Narada Hooks Satyabhama to Sell Krishna!

One day, the trouble making heavenly sage Narada decided to teach Sathyabhama a lesson. When he met her he mooted a plan to attract Krishna towards her. Sathyabhama fell prey to his clever and cunning plan. The plan was to sell Krishna as a slave to Narada and buy him back with gold. Whoever pays more would win Krishna. Sathyabhama was confident that she would win hands down because she was the richest of all the queens. Innocent Rukmini had to accept this especially because Krishna, knowing the result of the game, himself agreed to be sold.

The scene was set with a large *tula*, and Krishna sat on one pan of the scale. And the thulabharam began. The palace courtiers and other wives of Krishna watched in horror as Satyabhama brought all her gold and diamond jewelry and placed it on the other pan of the scale. But the scale did not tip! All the jewelry and gold could not match Krishna's weight. In her arrogance, Sathyabhama virtually emptied the coffers of the palace. But to no avail. The scale would not tip. Undaunted, Sathyabhama asked the other wives to give their gold and jewelry. Out of their devotion to their lord, the wives removed every gold ornament on their body until they were wearing only the mangalsutra (the Hindu symbol of marriage a wife wears around her neck), and placed it on the pan. But the scale showed no signs of motion.

### Narada Taunts Satyabhama

Seeing Satyabhama struggling at the fear of losing Krishna as a slave, the mischievous Narada suggested that she borrow some gold

from Rukmini. By this time Satyabhama was in such a state that all her ill will towards Rukmini vanished. Rushing to Rukmini's private chambers she poured out the dire state of matters. Rukmini didn't panic and came along with Satyabhama. On the way she passed the sacred *tulasi* (sacred basil leaf) plant and plucking a single leaf of *tulasi*, she continued her way to the hall. She very quietly walked towards the balance and praying to Krishna, placed the single *tulasi* leaf on all the piled up wealth. Lo and behold! The pan containing Krishna flew up and became underbalanced. Shocked at this, Satyabhama looked to Krishna for explanation. "Try removing your riches Bhama," Krishna told her, all smiles.

### Satyabhama Humbled

A skeptical Satyabhama removed all her riches until nothing but the single *tulasi* leaf sat on the pan. And yet, it weighed more than Krishna. She was stunned and humbled. Krishna jumped down from his high hanging pan and came to her, saying:

"Bhama, you gave all your riches to me, but there was no devotion in that offering. Just the feeling of possessiveness. When you made your offerings with such a thought in your mind, they lost their value and became mundane things. On the other hand, Rukmini offered just a single *tulasi* leaf. But her intentions were noble. She made the offering with utmost love and devotion towards me. And that single leaf was sufficient to please me beyond expectations. Remember it is not the offering that matters, but the love and devotion with which you do it that does."

Then leaving Satyabhama standing stunned in the court, Krishna returned to his chambers. Turning to Narada, her eyes bright with tears, Satyabhama said, "Devarishi, thank you for teaching me this hard learnt lesson today. I will never ever underestimate the power of devotion and love towards the lord." ❀

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# HINDU MANTRAS HANUMAN CHALISA

DR. MA NITHYA DEVAROOPANANDA

**H**anuman is one of the most revered God in Hindu tradition. More temples are built for Hanuman than Rama himself to whom he served his whole life. His whole life is dedicated to Rama; he is *Rama dasa* (servant of Rama). Hanuman is an epitome of devotion and surrender!<sup>1</sup>

Chalisa literally means forty.

Hanuman Chalisa is a beautiful devotional composition of forty couplets dedicated to Lord Hanuman, in *Avadhi* language, authored by Tulsidas, a poet saint, philosopher and social reformer who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during the Bhakti Movement.<sup>2</sup>

There are two couplets in the beginning honouring Guru; humility and surrender at Guru's feet makes space for true knowledge

and intelligence and removes all blemishes. One couplet at the end reiterates a prayer to Hanuman to dwell in his heart, alongside Rama, Lakshmana and Sita; between which are forty verses of the Chalisa.

The first ten couplets describe the *Gunas* (attributes) of Lord Hanuman as one who is the ocean of wisdom and virtues, one with immeasurable strength, exceptional valour, radiance, courage, intelligence and dispeller of wicked thoughts. They also define strength of his surrender and devotion to Lord Rama, apart from his physical attributes and his origin as an incarnation of Lord Shiva and son of Kesari. Bestowed the eight siddhis (powers) and nine treasures by Sita, Hanuman manifests *Anima* and *Mahima* to accomplish his Master's mission of rescuing Sita and destroying Lanka and the demons.

Couplets 11-17 describe the acts of Hanuman in reviving an unconscious Lakshmana which was acclaimed and acknowledged by Lord Rama by embracing and declaring him a brother as dear to Rama as Bharatha!

Couplet 18 throws light on the precision of information that our Masters have had access to from times immemorial. The verse describes the act of Hanuman trying to savour the sun, assuming it to be a sweet fruit. Calculations made of distance between the earth and sun based on this verse is precisely what scientists have concluded with modern day amenities and technology.

"The Surya, sun situated {1Yug = 12,000 years, 1 Sahastra = 1000, 1 Yojan = 8 Miles, (Yug x Sahastra x Yojan) = 12,000x1,000x8 miles = 96,000,000 miles (1 mile = 1.6 km) 96,000,000 miles = 96,000,000x1.6 km = 153,600,000 km} 153,600,000 km from the earth"

Couplets 20-30 describe the benefits enjoyed by devotees by grace of Hanuman; difficult tasks rendered easy, bestowal of all happiness including the grace of Sri Rama, protection from evil spirits, freedom from disease, pain and suffering, and realisation of all desires including the highest reality.

Couplet 31 speaks of Hanuman as the bestower of the ashta siddhis and nava nidhis. He was granted this boon by Sita.

Ashta siddhis are eight powers described as:

1. Anima—ability to reduce one's body to the size of an atom
2. Mahima—expanding one's body to infinitely large size
3. Garima—becoming infinitely heavy
4. Laghima—becoming infinitely light
5. Prapti—unrestricted access to all places
6. Prakamya—realising whatever one desires
7. Ishitva—leadership consciousness
8. Vasitva—ability to have the five elements under control

Nava Nidhis are the nine treasures churned out of the milky ocean, also understood as the nine types of devotion. They are listening to stories of the Lord, singing glories of Lord's name, remembrance of Lord, service to His Lotus Feet, worship of Lord, salutation of the Lord, serving the Lord in the capacity of servant, as a friend, and ultimately offering oneself in complete surrender.<sup>3</sup>

Subsequent couplets continue to describe the grace showered by devotion to Hanuman; including freedom from worldly bondage and attainment of Lord's feet.

Keeping Shiva as witness, Tulsidas claims that whoever reads Hanuman Chalisa with devotion will become "perfect", the perfection that Hanuman exuded is guaranteed. ☸

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## CHANKAYA'S NEETI—PART 4

KRISHNAN NATARAJAN

**C**hanakya Neeti is all about understanding human nature and its weaknesses. One can use it as a reference manual in facing the realities of life. It must be understood that spirituality is not about putting a break on thinking. It is more about thinking the right things. *Chanakya Neeti* is a complete blend of science and spirituality. This will give a new dimension to the life of the readers. This is a summary of chapters 5 and 6.

### What Shapes a Person's Character?

Infatuation is the biggest disease and greed is the worst enemy of an individual. Anger is the most damaging fire and among all possessions knowledge is supreme.

The test for purity of gold is performed by rubbing, heating, pounding and cutting. Similarly, the true characteristic of a person are revealed at the time of intense trouble. His manners, voice and actions will reveal a lot about him.

Everyone is likely to face troubles in life and even wise men fear from them. Anyhow, a really wise man deals with trouble wholeheartedly and boldly upon its arrival.

Children born from same mother and also under same stars; might differ in their characteristics. Like the the *ber* (berry) tree which has sweet fruits as well as painful thorns on it.

### Some Facts of Life which Shapes our Future

Administrators are corrupt in one manner or another. The person who preens is likely to be romantic. A foolish person cannot be a polite talker and a frank person faces difficulty in telling lies.

Fools envy wise men and the poor envy the rich. In the same manner prostitutes are jealous of pious ladies.

The best way to sabotage knowledge is to remain idle. Those persons will be cursed who make fun of knowledge-full people.

Those who disrespect the rituals stated in scriptures, and who wrongfully accuse a serene person will suffer for sure.

You cannot gain a good harvest by sowing less seeds.

After execution of the commander his army becomes ineffective.

Charity puts an end to poverty, knowledge to ignorance. Good behavior eliminates most of the troubles, and devotion in God marks an end to all fears.

For a person with absolute knowledge, heaven is of least significance. A true warrior gives a little importance to his life. For a true sage woman is of no use, and for a person with control on his desires the whole world loses its significance.

Skill is like the best friend in foreign territories. A woman with good nature is truly the best friend of a man.

### The Inevitable Truth that One Needs to Accept

Rain over ocean, giving help to capable, and lighting a lamp in daylight are nothing but useless acts.

Rain water is purest of all and in same manner willpower is the mightiest of all powers.

Truth keeps the earth in its place, truth is responsible for wind to blow. Truth makes the sun shine and it's the primary force for existence of everything.

Money comes and goes, so does youth. Life goes and out goes the soul. Nothing lasts forever. Only thing that stays firm is your faith.

By listening to religious scriptures the person gains knowledge about religion. You can get rid of evil-ideas by talking to a scholar, and on following the advice of a guru you'll easily reach the door-steps of heaven.

Crow is most cunning amongst the birds; In sages, the one with short temper is the most harmful. But above all, the most harmful is the person who is jealous of you.

A ruler gets fame on visiting different parts of his kingdom, a preacher gets glory by spreading knowledge in foreign territories, and same happens with a Yogi traveling distant places.

The Kaal [time] consumes every person and everything. It can and it will destroy everything. It is in action even when you sleep. None can escape him.

A person born as blind is unable to see things and same is the case with people in love. An alcoholic cannot differentiate between good and bad. In same manner a selfish person gets blind under effect of his selfish goals.

A king pays for the sins of his countrymen and royal priest has to pay for the deed of the king. A husband has to pay for deeds of his wife and a teacher pays for the deeds of his pupils.

A father who leaves debt for children is like an enemy.

You can win a scholar by truth and only truth.

It is better not to have a kingdom than having it in a bad state. Similarly, it is better to have no friends, pupils and wife than have bad ones.

There is no happiness in a kingdom being ruled by a wicked king; there is no benefit from a deceitful friend. Similarly, there is no happiness in homes where wife quarrel. Also, there is no benefit in having bad pupils.

Acharya Chanakya says that every creature has some special qualities from which a human can gain benefit. Below, are a few:

**Lion:** teaches to perform actions wholeheartedly and not to relax until successful accomplishment of the task.

**Crane:** teaches man to focus and concentrate over the task and act instantaneously upon requirement.

**Cock:** to rise early in the morning, being ready to defend and attack, grabbing one's share and sharing with other.

**Crow:** makes love privately, does not get scared easily and collects things for use in future. It is always alert and never trusts anyone.

**Dog:** It can go without food for a while but when it finds food, it can overeat in moments. It is alert even in sleep and wakes with slightest sound. It is loyal and fights ferociously when defending his master.

**Donkey:** It works tirelessly and even in harsh weather conditions.

Chanakya says that any man acquiring these qualities cannot face failure under any circumstance. 🕉

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# DIGAMBARA SCHOOL OF JAINISM

VEENA NAGARAJ

**J**ainism is one of the most ancient religions of India. It is also one of the three major religions of early India which produced one of the greatest spiritual leaders, Mahavira. The word "Jain" is derived from the root "ji"; to conquer. It signifies the view point or status of one who has victory over the lower principles of existence (desires, including desire to hurt). A jina is also called a Tirthankara. Those who follow the path of Jinas are known as Jains.

## Tirthankaras and Their Significance in Jain Tradition

In Jain tradition the Tirthankaras are creators of Jain religion and prophets who are born to revive and spread the teachings of Jainism. They are individuals who have achieved "Moksha" or liberation. They are born as humans but through their intense practice of Ahimsa or nonviolence, equanimity and meditation attain the state of Jina. They are special siddhas or liberated souls who have attained omniscience and guide others towards liberation or enlightenment.

## Historical Evidence of Tirthankaras

The Jains owe the major features of their tradition to the teachings of Mahavira the 24<sup>th</sup> and last Tirthankaras (527 to 599 BCE). The 23<sup>rd</sup> Tirthankara was Parshwanatha (877 to 777 BCE). Parshwanatha is said to have flourished 250 years before Mahavira. The history of Jainism before Mahavira and Parshwanatha is shrouded in considerable obscurity.

The main teachings of Mahavira are captured in the Three Jewels or Triratna. They are right knowledge, right faith and right conduct. Besides this his followers had to take Five Vows of Conduct which are practice of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-acquisition, and control of sexual desires. Ahimsa is given special

prominence and is considered the eternal law for them.

## Origins of Digambara

The history of Jainism upto Mahavira has no mention of sects or subjects. According to one account, during a famine in Bihar a group of monks migrated to Karnataka. When they returned years later, they found that the monks who stayed back, no longer followed the rules laid by Mahavira. They had taken to wearing clothing, while Mahavira had been utterly possessionless. Moreover, they had adopted certain beliefs which were unacceptable by the southern group. So there was split in the Jainas and were categorised into two schools. The Shvetambaras (those who wore white clothes) and Digambaras (for whom the sky was their clothing). The central doctrine of both the sects is the same. The differences are in certain beliefs and practices.

Digambara means skyclad in Sanskrit. They are also called Digvasanas. They reject clothing as a part of their renunciation of all worldly attachments. Even a loin cloth is a compromise. They are thus no longer subject to pride and shame socially.

## The Solitary Path of the Digambara Monks

The path of a Digambara monk is a rigorous one. The great vows taught by Mahavira are more severe for monks than the house holders. Their austerities are a daily practice.

They have no possessions except a whisk of found peacock feathers for dispersing insects. A gourd for clean water. They walk from place to place barefoot. They must not stay anywhere more than a day except during rainy season. The monks accept whatever vegetarian food people offer.

They neither beg nor carry bowls for food. The monks eat only once a day. Accepting whatever is offered in cupped hands they eat without utensils. The Digambara monk says nothing but if requested may give a spiritual talk to the assembled people. If a monk cannot stand and eat any more due to old age or illness the body is discarded by fasting till death called *sallekhana*.

## Path for the Householder and Followers

Female ascetics wear white garments and they are considered as lay women who have taken advance vows. Lay persons too can make progress in a number of ways. They keep vows of undertaking fasts, practice daily meditation, and devotional practices which are regarded as formal meditation. The five lay vows are non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, and abstaining from illicit sex and attachment to possessions.

The Digambara sect is divided into sub-sects. Three most important of them are Visapanthis or Bispanthis, Terapanthis and Teranapanthis. The differences between these sub-sects are minor.

## Digambara Worship

Digambaras worship images of their Tirthankaras. They do not touch the image but have priests called *upadhye*. He carries out worship and pujas in the temple. The worship is simple with flowers. The sub-sect of Teranapanthis don't worship images but they worship scriptures by placing them at the altar.

The holiest site for Digambaras is Sravanabelagola (Karnataka) where there is the 57 foot image of Bahubali or Gommateshwara (king of Podanpur) standing in meditation. As per their tradition, Bahubali was the first person to achieve liberation.

## Jain Scriptures

Jinas pass on their knowledge orally to their chief disciples known as *ganadharas* and to successive leaders known as *acharyas*. All the teachings were eventually written down producing holy texts. These are called *Siddhanta* in Sanskrit or *Nigganta* in Prakrit.

Mahavira's closest disciples or *ganadharas* wrote group of scriptures called *Purvas*. Later texts composed by mendicants make up the second group of scriptures called *Anuyogas* or

Expositions. Kundakunda, a great Dighambara acharya and prolific writer of books on Jainism lived in Karnataka. He is venerated by both Shvetambaras and Digambaras as a *ganadhara*, chief disciple of Mahavira.

Extensive literature of commentaries and expositions grew around the scriptures but systematic presentation of the Jaina thought was done by Acharya Umasvathi. He is the most celebrated Acharya after Kundakunda. His work *Tattvartadhigamasutra* or *Tattvartasutra*, "manual for understanding all that is", is the only philosophical text both Svethambaras and Digambaras regard as authoritative. Written in Sanskrit in the sutra style, it sums up in 350 aphorisms the main points of Jaina philosophy.

## The Philosophy

The Jain philosophy in general is structured around seven *tattvas* or principles, which can be linked together in seven propositions to provide a summary of Jaina view of existence. The soul (*jiva*), is of the nature of consciousness. Lifeless substance (*ajiva*) is inert and unconscious. Souls come into contact with substance by means of influx (*asrava*) of karma, which in Jainism is a fine form of matter. As a result there is bonding of inert substance to the soul. It is possible to put a stop (*samvara*) to influx of karma. Residual karma too can fall away (*nirjara*). As a result the soul achieves liberation (*moksha*) from karmic bondage, and lives forever in bliss.

Another important contribution of Jainism is the theory of *Anekantavada*. It says universe is independent of mind and consciousness. There is no place for God as creator. By God Jainism understands liberated soul, where the Jain Tirthankaras provide highest spiritual ideals to which every soul can aspire. ☸

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# JAIN BASADIS

## THE MARVEL OF LARGER-THAN-LIFE ARCHITECTURE

KANAKA NAGARAJ SABAPATHY

### Roots of Jainism in Karnataka

Historical association of Jainism with Karnataka dates back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE when Acharya Bhadrabahu, predicting a 12-year long famine in north India, led the migration of Jain groups to the south. He was accompanied by his disciple and emperor Chandragupta Maurya. The group halted at Chandragiri Hill in Shravanabelagola. Realising that he was nearing the end of his life, Bhadrabahu instructed his disciples to spread the religion and undertook *sallekhana* (fasting to death) at Chandragiri.

Chandragupta Maurya continued to live on this hill worshipping the footprints of his teacher and later he too took *sallekhana*. There are two monuments on the hill recalling this event, a rock cut cave called Bhadrabahu cave and a structural shrine called the Chandragupta Basadi. Jainism, as a religion enjoyed patronage of major dynasties in Karnataka such as the Western Gangas, Kadambas, Chalukyas, and Hoysalas.

### Characteristics of Jain Basadis and Bettas

The word *basadi* is used to refer to Jain temples in South India and even Maharashtra. Jain architecture in Karnataka can be classified into

two categories—*basadi* and *betta*. *Basadi* is a Jain monastery or temple where an image of one of the 24 *tirthankaras* (saints) is installed and worshipped. They were built in the Dravidian style and the oldest *basadi* can be traced back to at least the first century CE. The temples are marked by three main characteristics—pillars which are the main motif; followed by intricately carved stone iconography, and larger-than-life stone deities.

*Betta* is a hill with an open courtyard containing the image of *Gommata* or *Gommateshwara*. The deity of Lord Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola is a striking example of a *betta* temple and the 57 feet statue hewn from the top of a granite hill, is the highest free standing stone structure in the world.

### Jain Kashi of the South—Moodabidri

Tucked away in a corner of Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka, is the tiny town of Moodabidri known popularly as the “Jain Kashi of the South”, which draws both devotees and visitors from around the globe to marvel at the architecture of its famous 18 Jain *basadis*.

Moodabidri witnessed an unprecedented growth as a center of Jain religion, culture, art and architecture during 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and these 18 *basadis* were constructed during this period. The most famous among them are Guru Basadi, The Tribhuvana Tilaka Chudamani Basadi and Ammanavara Basadi. **Discovery of Jain Canonical Texts**

The Guru Basadi, also called Siddhantha Basadi and Hale (old) Basadi, is believed to be the earliest of the Jain monuments in Moodabidri (714 CE). Lord Parshvanath, the 23<sup>rd</sup> *Tirthankara* of Jainism, is the presiding deity of this temple. A beautiful stone idol of Parshvanath is installed in the sanctum here. It is in this *basadi* that the rare Jain palm leaf manuscripts of 12<sup>th</sup> century CE known as ‘*Dhavala texts*’ were discovered.

These texts along with a number of palm leaf manuscripts of immense literary value are now in the possession of this Jain monastery. It is said that during the Mughal assaults, these Jain texts were shifted from Shravanabelagola in Hassan district to safer Moodabidri.

The texts were rediscovered in the 1800s, and these Moodabidri are revered as the oldest (scribed circa 1060 CE) written materials of the tradition going back to the *Arihants* (*Arihant* “conqueror”, is a soul who has conquered inner passions such as attachment, anger, pride and greed). The collection of three ancient manuscripts—*Dhavala*, *Jayadhavala* and *Mahadhavala*—are collectively called the “*Siddhanta*” in Digambara tradition and for many centuries they were the only copy of the *Siddhanta* available.

The Tribhuvana Tilaka Chudamani Basadi is the largest of its kind in coastal Karnataka and is considered to be the most ornate of the Jain temples of this region. Due to the large number and variety of pillars in this *basadi* it is known as 1,000 Pillar Temple (Savira Kambada Basadi).

### Jain Bettas

There are altogether five monolithic *bettas* or deities of Lord Bahubali in Karnataka measuring more than 20 feet in height. The one at Shravanabelagola built in 981 CE is 57 feet followed by a 42 feet statue at Karkala dating to 1432 CE; the 35 feet statue at Venur in 1604 CE; a 20 feet statue at Gommatagiri in Mysore District built in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century CE. More recently in 1973 a 39 feet statue was installed at Dharmasthala in Dakshina Kannada District.

In all of the *betta* temples, the holy festival of Mahamastakabhisheka is held once every 12 years when the statue of Bahubali is worshiped and bathed in holy water, milk, turmeric, and other natural herbs. The 1,000<sup>th</sup> year Mahamastakabhisheka of this statue was held in 1981 when flowers were strewn over it from a helicopter for the first time ever, by the then prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi. 🕉

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## TEERTHA STHALA GURUVAYUR

MA NITHYA SATYAJNANANANDA SWAMI

**G**uruvayur is also written as Guruvayoor or Gurupavanapuri, is a municipal town in Thrissur District, of Kerala State in India. It houses the Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple, the fourth largest temple in India in terms of the number of devotees visiting per day.

### Bhooloka Vaikuntam

The temple at Guruvayur is a famous Krishna temple and is one of the most important places of worship for Hindus and is often referred to as Bhooloka Vaikuntam which translates to the holy abode of Vishnu on Earth. The divine idol installed here represents the enchanting form of Sree Krishna endowed with the four lustrous arms carrying the conch Panchajanya, the discus Sudarshana Chakra, the mace Kaumodaki and the lotus. Adorned with the divine Tulasi garland the idol represents the majestic form of Maha Vishnu as revealed to Vasudeva and Devaki at the time of Krishna Avatar.

The presiding deity in the sanctum-sanctorum is Maha Vishnu. He faces east and his idol is 4 ft

tall. Even though this is not a small idol, devotees consider him as Little Krishna. He is worshipped according to the pooja routines laid down by Adi Sankaracharya and later written formally in the Tantri way by Chennas Narayanan Namboodiri (born in 1427).

The Chennas Namboodiris are the hereditary Tantris of the Guruvayur temple. The temple/pooja routines are strictly followed without any compromise. The Tantri is available full-time at the Temple to ensure this. The Melsanthi (Chief Priest) enters the Sreekovil (sanctum sanctorum) at 2:30 AM and does not drink even a glass of water up to the completion of noon poojas at 12:30 PM. The vedic traditions being followed here with absolute perfection and sincerity is the hallmark of the Guruvayur temple.

It is important to note here that, even though the shrine is considered to be one of the holiest spots for Vaishnavites, the temple is not a part of the 108 Divya Desams.

### History of Guruvayur:

According to the legends the temple idol of Guruvayur is more than 5,000 years old, although there are no historical records to establish it. It is said that Lord Krishna, asked two sages to take the idol from his temple in Dwarka while the city was being destroyed and establish it in Kerala. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century Tamil literature '*Kokasandesam*', references about a place called Kuruvayur is made. As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, many references are seen about Kuruvayur. In ancient Dravidic, Kuruvai means sea, hence the village on the coast may be called Kuruvayur. Guruvayur was a subordinate shrine of Trikkunavay Shiva temple before the latter was destroyed by the Dutch in 1755. Trikkunavay in the Guruvayur documents is the same as Thrikkani Mathilakam or Mathilakam mentioned in the Dutch and British records. And this place was in between Guruvayur and Kodungallur.

### Gajarajan Kesavan—Celebrating a Devout Elephant

Ekadasi, the eleventh day of every lunar fortnight, is very auspicious to the Hindus. Of the 24 Ekadasis in a year, the Vrishchika Ekadasi (Sukla paksha) has got special significance in Guruvayur temple.

Gajarajan Guruvayur Kesavan was the most famous and celebrated captive elephant in Kerala. Kesavan was donated to the Guruvayur temple by the royal family of Nilambur in 1916, as an offering to the deity. The Guruvayur temple has in excess of 50 elephants for its services. Kesavan was known for his devout behavior. Kesavan died on December 2, 1976 aged 72, on the auspicious Guruvayur Ekadasi day. On the day, Kesavan fasted for the entire day and dropped down facing the direction of the temple with his trunk raised as a mark of prostration. Kesavan was conferred the unique title "Gajarajan" (Elephant King), by the Guruvayoor Devaswom.

A memorial honour for Gajarajan Kesavan is conducted in Guruvayur. The Karanavar or head of the elephant family places a wreath at the statue of Kesavan and all the other elephants stand around and pay obeisance. On Ekadasi

day, the Udayasthamana Pooja (dawn to dusk pooja) is conducted by the Devaswom itself. After the morning seeveli, on Ekadasi there is a grand elephant procession to the Parthasarathi temple since it is regarded as Geethopadesam Day too. On Ekadasi after the night pooja, the famous Ekadasi Vilakku with elephant procession takes place which provides a fitting finale to the festival.

### Chembai Sangeetholsavam

Chembai Sangeetholsavam is an annual Carnatic music festival held in Guruvayur by the Guruvayur Devaswom at Thiruvaiyaru as a kind of homage to Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, one of the titans of Carnatic Classical Music. Chembai had conducted the festival in the temple town on his own for about 60 years. He used to invite all the great Carnatic Musicians to perform in the temple town and in course of time, the scale of the festival rivalled the Thiruvaiyaru Thyagaraja Aradhana, which is recognised as one of the most important festivals of homage paid to Saint Thyagaraja.

The Guruvayur Devaswom decided to take charge after his death in 1974, and renamed it as Chembai Sangeetholsavam in his memory. About 2,000-2,500 musicians participate in this festival every year, and it is held for about 12-15 days culminating on the Guruvayur Ekadasi day, when all the musicians sing five favourite songs of Chembai and also the Pancharatna Kritis. 🙏

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## POONTHANAM ATTRACTS SHIVA

THENMOZHI KALIYAPERUMAL

**P**oonthanam (1547–1640 CE) was a famous devotee of Guruvayurappan (the form of Krishna worshipped in Kerala), who lived in Keezhattoor in (Malappuram district), Kerala, India. He is remembered for his masterpiece, *Jnanappana* which means ‘the song of wisdom’ in Malayalam.

He married at 20, but for a long time, the couple had no children. He began to propitiate the Lord of Guruvayur by reciting the ‘Santhana Gopalam’ and a son was born. He called for a celebration and everybody known was invited, but the child died an hour before the Annarasana (first feeding) ceremony. Grief-stricken, Poonthanam sought refuge at Guruvayur and started praying with the puranic story of Kumaraharanam. The heartbroken Poonthanam, was consoled by

Guruvayurappan himself, who lay down on his lap, for a moment, as a child. In that moment he considered Lord Krishna as his son and achieved enlightenment. In the *Jnanappana* he wrote: “While little Krishna is dancing in our hearts, do we need little ones of our own?”

Poonthanam spent the rest of his life reading the Bhagavatam and singing the Lord’s glories in simple Malayalam. People loved him for his beautiful Bhagavatam discourses. Below is an enlightening page from his glorious life.

There is a temple in North Kerala called Kottiyoor. The significant deity here is Lord Shiva. This temple was kept open only for few days during the year. There was no human activities during the rest of the year.



Once Poonthanam reached Kottiyoor temple and had a bath in the river. He worshipped the compassionate Lord Shiva, felt very happy and stayed there for a few days. He recited Bhagavatam in front of the deity and several hundred people listened to his sweet discourse, on the wonderful pastime in the 10<sup>th</sup> canto 60<sup>th</sup> of Srimad Bhagavatam called Lord Krishna Teases Queen Rukmini.

Lord Krishna decided to play with his beloved wife Queen Rukmini and wanted to listen to her. He playfully asked her why she wanted to marry Lord Krishna when she had better choices like Shishupala, Salva, Jarasandha, and so on. Hearing this Queen Rukmini faints and Lord Krishna consoles her.

Poonthanam finished reading this part of the chapter and kept the bookmark at the end of chapter, so that he could begin reciting from the next chapter. So Poonthanam read the same part for a second time and this he repeated for some more days. Soon it was the last day to close the temple for the rest of the year.

Poonthanam finished the discourse and was returning from the temple with other devotees, but forgot to take the Bhagavatam back with him and remembered it only after having walked away from the temple for quite some distance.

He hurried back, crossed the river and reached the temple, by which time it was closed. He found himself alone there. But he could hear someone

from inside the temple reciting the same chapter from the Bhagavatam that he had read. When he peeped through the keyhole, he was surprised to see Lord Shiva Himself reading from his Bhagavatam.

Listening intently to this rendering were Devi Parvati and all of Shiva’s bootaganas. Their eyes were filled with devotion. Poonthanam stood there spellbound listening to the whole recitation.

At the end, Lord Shiva asked Devi Parvati, “Did you like the Bhagavatam recitation?” Devi Parvati replied it was nice, but not as good as Poonthanam recitation. To which Lord Shiva replied, “Yes that is true. That is why I placed the bookmark at the beginning of the same topic everyday.”

Hearing this, Poonthanam, who was standing outside, was shaken and uttered the holy name of Krishna loudly. When he peeped in again, Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati had disappeared!

From this simple story it is clear that even the gods and demigods and all living creatures loved the great literature called the Bhagavatam. It is a spotless Purana. Anyone who seriously tries to understand Srimad Bhagavatam and chants it with devotion becomes liberated. 🙏

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# PRAHLADA—THE EMBODIMENT OF INTEGRITY

MA NITHYATRIPURANANDA

**J**ust imagine—a small 6-7-year-old boy, thrown inside a dark, closed cave, all alone, with 100 varieties of poisonous snakes. Instead of getting terrorized, the boy sees the Lord even in those snakes; as he is intensely in Advaita with them, and comes out of the cave unharmed!

This is one of the incidents that the child prodigy of Hinduism, Prahlada went through almost every day with his father, the demon-king Hiranyakashipu. Prahlada wasn't any ordinary kid. He developed a deep feeling connection towards the Lord he loved; Lord Narayana. He is a living example of integrity towards his own Being and ultimately, cosmos itself.

## An Introduction

The best introduction of Prahlada lies in these words, Pure Devotion, and Surrender. He is revered as one of the many child saints of Hinduism, whose devotion and love towards God has no boundaries. As per the *Bhagavata Purana* (Stories of the divine), Prahlada experienced God in the form of Narayana even as he was a month old fetus in his mother's womb. However his devotion was not accepted by his father, Hiranyakashipu, the wicked asura ruler of the world. His father had enmity towards Narayana from the core of his being, and persecuted his son Prahlada through many bizarre ways. Hiranyakashipu wanted to insert the idea that He is god instead of Maha Vishnu.

Withstanding the mistreatment by his own father, Prahlada's life is a sweet yet an intense story for anyone to hear. Unlike many biographies, Prahlada's story begins centuries before his birth....

## An Unborn's Experience of God

Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu were powerful

but malevolent brothers. The world was never enough for them. Hiranyaksha, the eldest one, ascended the throne and did severe Tapas to Lord Brahma for power. Upon Lord Brahma's Darshan (Divine Sight) he was granted the boon that no God, human, Daitya or Asura would be able to kill him. This made Hiranyaksha hungry for more power and hence started torturing everyone; including other worlds to follow whatever Hiranyaksha commanded.

He desperately wanted to be powerful than all the gods and therefore took the entire Earth into a round ball and went to the Patala Loka (underworld) in search of Narayana, the one who he felt he needed to conquer in order to become powerful. In that immediate emergency to protect Mother Earth, Narayana took the form of Varaha (boar) and went straight to Hiranyaksha, killed him, and restored Mother Earth back in her position. This made all the people of the three worlds happy and relieved, but for Hiranyakashipu, this was dreadful news. Outraged, he left the palace to perform tapas to Lord Brahma vowing to ascend the throne after receiving potent and deadly powers. After years of tapas, Lord Brahma granted him the boon of not being killed indoors or outdoors, during day or night, on the ground nor in the sky, by any weapon, animal or human, demigod or demon.

While Hiranyakashipu was absorbed in tapas, the Devas captured the capital. Lord Devendra had an easy victory and took Hiranyakashipu's pregnant queen, Kayadhu, so that he could kill the fetus, thinking it will be twice as evil as Hiranyakashipu and dragged her along. Sensing Kayadhu's distress, Sage Narada stops Devendra telling him that the fetus has no harm and has endless possibilities of transforming as a good

being. So Narada took Kayadhu to his ashram and starts sharing his experiences and Lilas (divine plays) of Lord Narayana. Kayadhu wasn't the only one benefiting from these powerful experiences. After some time, Kayadhu gave birth to a cute boy named Prahlada, who was born with deep devotion and Advaita towards Narayana.

## Prahlada - The Embodiment of Integrity

As Prahlada grew, his devotion towards Lord Narayana intensified. The truth - 'Narayana exists everywhere' weaved itself into his every moment. Hiranyakashipu got really scared that his son would replace him with Lord Narayana as the lord of the world. Hiranyakashipu immediately allotted two teachers to force Prahlada to concede that Hiranyakashipu is the only God and no one else is more powerful than him. While they tried their best to make him shift beliefs, Prahlada's subjective experience of Advaita with Narayana remained untouched. The teachers tried doing everything possible to change the kid's mind but failed.

Upon hearing this news, Hiranyakashipu became angry and started threatening Prahlada that he would kill him if Prahlada didn't concede Hiranyakashipu's superiority. However, Prahlada continued to smile even in the face of death! Hiranyakashipu tried to threaten him physically by putting him in a closed cave of poisonous snakes. Prahlada just saw Narayana in every single snake and with that surrender, the snakes just give him the way out. After that, Hiranyakashipu pushed him off of a high mountain, but even then he just fell in the space of Advaita that Narayana is everything and as a response to that, nature didn't harm him. Hiranyakashipu even tried to feed him poisonous milk, but Prahlada saw Narayana in the poison and turned it into nectar.

## Vishnu's Narasimha Avatara to Protect Prahlada

Hiranyakashipu tried EVERYTHING to intimidate Prahlada, but it was all in vain. As a last resort, Hiranyakashipu dragged Prahlada into a hall and asks him, "You claim that Narayana is everywhere, if he is everywhere, is he in this pillar too?!" Prahlada laughs and says, "He is

even in that pillar too father!" Beside himself with rage Hiranyakashipu tore open the pillar with his mace; revealing Narasimha, a half-lion half-man- neither man nor beast. Prahlada immediately realizes that Narayana is that ferocious form and is overjoyed. After a long battle, Narasimha places Hiranyakashipu on his lap, not the ground nor sky. And at dusk, sat right on the doorstep/threshold, (neither inside or outside) and tore him apart with his long nails.

All this for a six-year year old.

Just because of Prahlada's devotion, Narayana took the ferocious form of Narasimha and circumvented the intricate boon that Hiranyakashipu received. Even after killing Hiranyakashipu, Narasimha was far from calm. His anger threatened to destroy the three worlds! All the gods from different worlds tried their level best; even his consort! Nothing and nobody could calm him down.

At long last, Prahlada came and touched Narasimha's feet with so much of love and devotion and asked him to calm down and within seconds, Narasimha became the peaceful Narayana. Narayana coronated Prahlada as the next ruler of Hiranyakashipu's kingdom and blessed him with abundance and prosperity.

## The Essence

Prahlada's implicit trust and devotion towards Narayana became his very life. He was so devoted that he literally saw Narayana everywhere. Even when Hiranyakashipu asked him if Narayana is present in the pillar, he just knew that he is there and Narayana appeared! Prahlada's integrity with his Advaita experience and devotion is the best moral to learn and imbibe from this story. Even at such a young age, having a strong feeling connection to the source is the best gift anyone can have. 🙏

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# JATAKA TALES

## THE CRANE AND THE CRAB

ALICIA MORRISSEY

*The Jataka Tales of Buddha are the legendary recordings of the Buddha's previous births in plant, animal and human form. There are 64 records of the Jataka Tales in total, which were revealed to the Buddha in a fast-forward flash before his enlightenment (Paramahansa Nithyananda morning Satsang, July 8, 2013). Each story teaches moral life lessons and beautifully depicts the different levels of evolution the Buddha took from one life to the next, until He got Enlightenment.*

In the Jataka Tale known as "The Crab and the Crane Story", the Buddha in his previous birth was living in the form of a Varana tree, near a beautiful lotus pond. Being this tree, he witnessed the mischievous behavior of one particular crane.

Living in a smaller pond nearby were many fish but the water level was very low due to the summer season. Filled with temptation the crane wanted to figure out a way to cajole and eat up all of those fish. The crane offered to take all of the fish one by one in his beak to a large beautiful pond filled with 5 types of lotuses where they would have plenty of water to swim in and food to eat. But the fish didn't believe the crane and thought that that he was just trying to eat them. Despite this, the fish agreed to send one of their biggest fish with the crane to the new pond and to have the crane bring him back to tell them what he saw there.

When the big fish returned safely to tell about the new pond, the fish agreed to have the crane take them there one by one. However, rather than putting the fish into the pond, the crane dropped them each onto the fork of the Varana tree and killed and ate up each one. After doing this to all of the fish, the crane asked the remaining crab in the pond if he wanted to be taken to the new pond as well. The crab however, doubted whether the crane had actually brought the fish to the pond as he claimed. But due to his strong

desire to go to the new pond, he thought he could hold onto the crane's neck during the flight and if the crane tried to eat him, he would then just nip the crane's head off with his claw.

Without revealing his plan, the crab convinced the crane to allow him to hold onto his neck with his claw on the way to the pond. Not surprisingly, instead of putting the crab in the pond, the crane attempted to kill the him. The crab exclaimed that he wasn't going to allow the crane to eat him and ordered the crane to bring him to the pond or else he would nip off his head with his claw. Trembling with fear, the crane brought the crab to the lotus pond and upon lowering his head to let the crab into the pond, the crane quickly nips off the head of the crane.

Moral of this Jataka Tale as witnessed by the Varana tree: you may be a fool if you believe everything you hear and think twice before using cunningness or deception to get what you want - it may lead to your own destruction. ☸

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# LIFE IS BLISS

DEEPIKA RAJA

I am from Tamil Nadu. I came to know about Paramahansa Nithyananda in 2009 through a program called ASP and it was my first experience to get trust on spirituality. From then I started meeting Him through other programs which helped me come out of problems that I was facing in life with my mother and people around me. It was only after meeting Him I was able to enjoy what is "Bliss" and awakening of Kundalini energy was my first great experience which made me completely trust Swamiji's principles and start living it.

Ever since I got my Kundalini awakened I felt increase in my energy level which kept me active and energetic. I also experienced great improvement in my immunity level. Before my Kundalini awakening, I had the problem of falling tired whenever I would go out. I also had this strange illness of having fever once a year! However, after my Kundalini got awakened I have felt tremendous increase in my energy level and I was out from travel sickness.

I would also say that these changes in me were also due to regular practice of Nithya Dhyanam everyday where I always start my day with Nithya Dhyana before going to work. I am adding

my other experience on the blessing I got from Paramahansa Nithyananda. It is that the Short distance eyesight power which I had for past 4 yrs got reduced and I am able to manage without my glasses.

Following Paramahansa Nithyananda's teachings always helped me to face challenges in life with courage and practice completion where there is no room to encourage depressed mind state for longer period in life. To share with my family experience teachings on Completion helped me to maintain good relationship with my mother where we were not in good terms most of the time before meeting Paramahansa Nithyananda.

It also helped me to build good relationship with people around me and be in completion with them. To end up in a single line, it is after getting Paramahansa Nithyananda as a Guru in my life I was able to take life very lightly with full of joy and excitement. And now I am on the journey to experience and manifest the oneness with the incarnation.

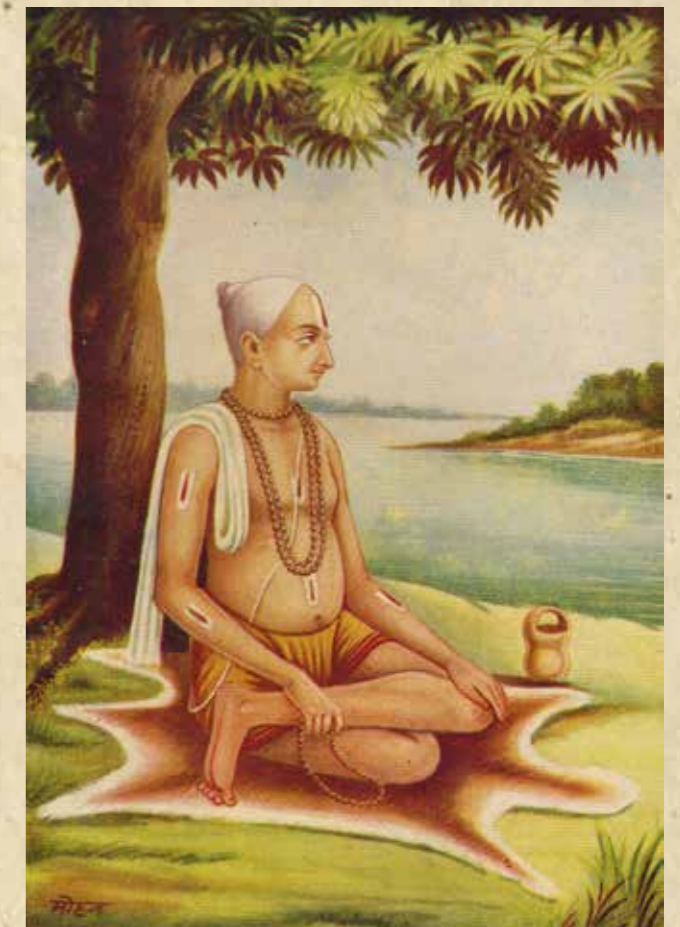
I am feeling Blessed and Thankful to be around Paramahansa Nithyananda. 🙏

## TULSIDAS JAYANTI AUGUST 10, 2016

Tulsidas Jayanti celebrates the birth anniversary of the great Hindu saint poet Goswami Tulsidas, a resident of Varanasi and a contemporary of poetess-saint Mirabai. He is the acclaimed author of the great Hindu epic Ramcharitmanas. Written in Avadhi, a dialect of Hindi, this rendering of the Ramayana made the epic popular amongst the common people of North India. August 10, 2016 marks the 519th birth anniversary of this great poet.



Balarama



Goswami Tulsidas

## BALARAMA JAYANTI AUGUST 23, 2016

Balarama Jayanti celebrates the birth anniversary of Balarama, the elder brother of Lord Krishna. Balarama is known to be the extension of Lord Krishna and is the incarnation of Sheshnag, the great 1000-headed snake on which Lord Vishnu/Lord Krishna would rest on. This day is observed by devotees with the purpose to receive a healthy life with physical strength.



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