

# **Pages From the Bhaagvad**

**DEDICATED TO MY DEAR MOTHER  
Mrs. LAJWANTI KHIANI,  
3.10.1920-21.08.2002**

**Mummy attended Bhaagvad after Bhaagvad katha, and never tired of  
hearing the sublime Scripture**

**I offer this humble effort at the Lotus feet of the Lord,  
In loving remembrance of my guide, my inspiration, my friend, my  
Mother!**

**Shakun Narain Kimatrai  
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## PAGES FROM THE BHAAGVAD

There is a difference between the Shrimad Bhagvad and the Bhagvad Geeta.

It is believed that even if one reads a very small portion of the Shrimad Bhaagvad, Mukti (Liberation from the cycles of Birth and Death) is assured.

The Shrimad Bhaagvad deals with the Creation of the Universe, narrates the lives of the different Incarnations of God And every Hindu should READ it at least once during their lifetime, because no amount of lecturing will do it justice.

I offer to you, notes and musings which I made as I read this Tremendous Scripture. A lot of us do not seem to know the difference between the Shrimad Bhagvad and the Bhagvad Geeta.

The Shrimad Bhagvad is a 'Purana' (ancient scripture)  
It is believed that even if one reads a very small portion of the Shrimad Bhaagvad, Mukti (Liberation from the cycles of Birth and Death) is assured.

You may have attended a discourse of The Shrimad Bhaagvad at the 1st year death ceremony of a relative or a friend. And chances are that you may have not followed much of the narration, except for probably, the story of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama

The Shrimad Bhaagvad is tremendous!

(I took 12 years to lecture on it at the rate of once a week, and I am not even a shade learned on the subject)

The Shrimad Bhaagvad will teach us:

How to live in the house and not to have the house live in us (Without getting attached to it)

Real Bhakti (Devotion) need not be only practiced in a place of worship, or at a particular time or in a particular way.

The real connection with devotion is through the heart.

He is required to follow rules, regulations and rituals whose heart is not totally immersed in love.

It has been promised in the Shrimad Bhaagvad that he who devotes two and a half hours everyday in thinking of the Lord, his needs will totally be taken care of by the Almighty.

The Shrimad Bhaagvad exudes Knowledge and Devotion. Its stories are pregnant with moral, symbollic and practical value.

Allow me to narrate to you one of them.

King Parikshit was given a curse whereby he was supposed to die, after 7 days of being bitten by a poisonous snake.

The anxiety that one feels at the time of death is not entirely due to the pain of separating from the body, but due to the fear of the sins that one may have committed. One will have to stand trial for ones actions, and it is the fear of that test that creates turmoil at the time of death.

Symbollically Parikshit stands for 'man'

And the poisonous snake is 'Death' and 'Time' whose clutches no one escapes.

Parikshit could have panicked, but he did not.

Instead he went about finding means by which, he could use these last 7 days of his life to his best advantage.

He wanted to achieve 'Mukti'

He was told that the best way was to listen to the Shrimad Bhaagvad .

The Shrimad Bhaagvad is considered 'Narain-Svaroop' The Lord God Himself.

Lord Krishna, at the time of renouncing His body, told Udhav, His child hood friend that He would forever reside in the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Whatever is worth pondering about in the world is contained in it.

Giant Spiritual Personalities state: "Jab poorna janmon ke punya uday hote hain, tabhi is pavitra katha ke sunneka yog milta hai"

It is only when the virtues of previous lives commence to fructify, does one get the opportunity to hear the Great Katha of the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

## BHAKTI & SONS

I received an email from a friend who claimed that she resumed the perusal of the Shrimad Bhaagvad, after she started to read my 'Dal-sabzi for the Aatman' notes on it.

She remarked 'Mukti kise nahin chaahiye?'

(Who does not wish to be liberated from the cycles of birth and death?)

That remark made me smile.

My mother would not tire of hearing katha (discourse) after katha on the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

She organized a Shreemad Bhaagvad saptaah (One week Discourse) for herself, in Vrindaavan.

She invited family and friends, sages and saints.

She felt that why should she not listen to It while alive?

Why wait until one year after her death for her Mukti.

Allow me to narrate to you another story from the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Once Sage Naradji felt dejected observing the sorry state of affairs in the world.

He could not find truth, penance or compassion in it.

He observed that man says something, feels something else and yet behaves in a different manner.

When Brahma-Putra Naradji arrived in Vrindaavan, he saw a young woman who had 2 very feeble sons, who seemed afflicted by a terrible illness.

The young lady told Naradji that she was 'Bhakti' (Devotion)

And her two old sons were 'Vairaagya' (The Spirit of renunciation) And 'Gyaan' (Wisdom)

It is not difficult to find the symbolic message here.

In Kaliyuga where unrighteousness is the order of the day, the sons of Devotion, who are Renunciation and Wisdom are not in the pink of health.

Naradji tried to cure the ill sons, by trying to wake them up from their stupor.

Naradji whispered some truths into the ears of Vairaagya and Gyaan.

They would wake up for a while to fade out again.

What happened to Gyaan and Vairaagya is an everyday occurrence in today's world.

People awaken to the Truths of life while listening to Spiritual discourses, but get into a spiritual coma, the minute they breathe in the glitzy world of desires and attachments.

A classic example which we Sindhis call 'Masaani Gyaan' is when one is faced with the death of a close and dear one.

At that time one feels how futile it is to pursue our ambitions, at any cost.

But that kind of Vairaagya and Gyaan says 'Good-bye' just as fast as the Departed soul.

When Gyaan and Vairaagya did not recuperate from their illness, Naradji asked for help from various saints and sages.

Naradji was informed that Gyaan and Vairaagya would revive and recover the minute they would hear the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Knowledge about Gyaan and Vairaagya is there, in the Vedas, But the language of the Vedas is deep and requires study.

Hence it is believed that if one reads the Shrimad Bhaagvad, and as a result, love emerges for Krishna, then Renunciation and Wisdom is granted as free gifts.

When one listens to the Shrimad Bhaagvad, Krishna enters through the ears into the heart.

So if you are reading this I can safely assume that you will pick up this Great Scripture.

Even if you don't.

You, my reader who has been with me this far with me, is a candidate for Mukti, according to the promise given by the Lord, that He who even reads a few words is liberated from sorrow. **JUST BELIEVE!**

## ATMADEV AND DHUNDHULA--SOUL MIND AND INTELLECT

I do hope that you are enjoying the stories from the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Some of you have expressed to me that they are not so easy to understand.

Please believe me when I tell you that the Scriptures have made a promise that they will unravel their wisdom to those who will persevere in reading them, even though they may not understand them initially.

I have taken pains to make it as comprehensive as possible.

Would you read them twice. Or put it it aside and read them whenever you are more receptive.

If you are a Hindu, you owe that much to the great Sages who we owe a debt, for penning these great truths.

In the case of the Shrimad Bhaagvad the author is Ved-Vyaas.

Ved-Vyaasji felt dejected despite the fact that he had composed Great works like the Mahaabhaarata.

Naaradji told Ved Vyaas that even though the Sage had pondered over great truths, he had not sung the praises of Shri Krishna. He must feel love and devotion in order to experience 'Peace of Mind'

It was then that Ved-Vyaasji wrote the Great Puraana: The Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Have I convinced you to read it?

At least, read the brief version, the way I perceive it.

Read on!

## **ATMADEV AND DHUNDHULA--SOUL MIND AND INTELLECT**

On the banks on Tungabhadra river, lived a Brahmin by the name of Atmadev with his wife Dhundhula.

Atmadev was a good man whereas his wife left a lot to be desired.

They were childless.

Atmadev was unhappy due to the above fact and decided to end his life.

A wise Sage explained to him that there was no reason for him to be so dejected.

If Atmadev had not been granted any children, he should be content, as he had no additional responsibilities to shoulder.

The Sage clarified that maybe the Lord wanted Atmadev to devote that much more time and energy Spiritual pursuits.

When Atmadev was adamant about fathering a child, the sage felt sorry for him and hence presented him with a fruit.

The sage told Atmadev to give the fruit to his wife who would then conceive.

Let me digress at this point to point out to you, that the stories in the Shrimad Bhaagvad though simple, sometimes border on the unbelievable and absurd.

However when looked at from a deeper perspective, fall into the slot of 'Deep Truths'.

To continue with the narration:

When Atmadev gave the fruit to Dhundhula, his wife, the latter gave it to a cow, because she did not want to go through the trouble of pregnancy.

Then Dhundhula proceeded to enter into a pact with her sister, who was pregnant at the time.

The sister promised to give Dhundhula the child that she was carrying, and asked her in the meantime, to feign pregnancy.

Dhundhula's sister at the appropriate time gave birth to a son, which Dhundhula claimed to be her own

The child was named Dhundhukaari and as his, and his mother's name suggests they both had dark corrupt tendencies.

Since the fruit given by the Sage was given to a cow, the cow had a child, who was human, except for his ears which betrayed his 'cow parentage'.

His name was kept 'Gokaran'

The latter grew up to be an epitome of wisdom and kindness.

### **THE SYMBOLISM SO FAR:**

Atmadev: means Pure Spirit

The Sage stands for the guru, by whose Grace we achieve a son.

The 'Son' stands for 'Vivek' or the Power to discriminate.

Dhundhula (Atmadev's wife) is the mind.

Dhundhula's sister stands for 'Intellect with no Wisdom'

When the mind listens to only the intellect, without the use of the 'power to discriminate', one learns to deceive the world.

That is what Dhundhula and her sister did.

The child that is born through deceit is Dhundhukaari.

Later in the narrative it is mentioned that Dhundhukaari fell prey to bad habits and lived with 5 prostitutes, who eventually brought him total ruin.

These 5 prostitutes stand for the 5 senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch) that Dhundhukaari was a slave to.

It is written that Dhundhukaari used to eat with the hands of a corpse.

A corpse's hand cannot provide any subsistence.

One who does not perform good deeds with his/her hands, is no better than a corpse.

Observing the misdeeds of his son, Atmadev felt that having no child would have been better, than having fathered the son that he had.

Dhundhukaari started to illtreat his parents while he frittered away their wealth.

Not surprisingly Gokaran, the humanlike son of the cow, gave solace to Atmadev.

Gokaran told Atmadev not to feel too unhappy due to the misdeeds of Dhundhukaari

as the world is dream-like, and nothing is permanent and worth fretting over.

Even the body in which one resides is not ours forever, so what to speak about our possessions?

Gokaran further advised Atmadev, to proceed to the forest and devote his life towards Spiritual progress. He urged Atmadev to chant the Lord's name, meditate and spend time pondering over the scriptures.

Dear Readers,

Please note how, words of wisdom are threaded within the story.

The Shrimad Bhaagvad, comprises of simple stories for the lucid of heart and intellect. But if one looks beyond, one not only encounters symbolic meanings, but wisdom incomparable.

Continuing the story: Atmadev proceed towards the banks of the River Ganga and spent his time in Divine contemplation.

In the meanwhile, the going-ons in the household so disturbed Gokaran, that he too proceeded towards the forest in Spiritual pursuit.

Dhundhukaari viled his time with wine and women.

In order to keep the prostitutes satisfied, Dhundhukaari stole ornaments to give them to the prostitutes.

The latter feared that were Dhundhukaari to be caught for his misdeeds, the prostitutes also would be in trouble.

Hence they strangled Dhundhukaari.

When death did not come easy, they burned him alive.

As I mentioned before, the prostitutes are symbolic of the senses.

One pampers ones senses all ones life and it is eventually ones senses that are responsible for ones own downfall.

When Dhundhukaari died, he was unceremoniously interred without any prayers or rituals.

Because of unfinished desires and evil tendencies that Dhundhukaari possessed, he found no peace after death.

He became a wandering spirit who found no place in the world of the living or the dead.

When Gokaran heard of Dhundhukaari's death he immediately performed some prayers for the salvation of his soul.

When Gokaran returned home at night, he heard someone crying.

When he asked who was weeping, Dhundhukaari replied that it was he, because he was repentant of his evil ways during his lifetime.

Gokaran wanted to do something for the salvation of Dhundhukaari's soul. He asked Suryanarayan for advice as to what he could do. Suryanarayan recommended the recital of the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

Family and friends should be invited to derive benefit as well.

During the first day of the narrative of the Shrimad Bhaagvad, Dhundhukaari sat in the lowest knot of a bamboo stick..

Everyday of the recital, the bamboo knot got untied, and Gokaran moved up to the higher one.

On the seventh day of the narration the last knot came untied.

Dhundhukaari emerged as a radiant being.

Dhundhukaari was grateful to Gokaran for having been instrumental to his liberation.

The 7 knots of the bamboo stick are symbolic of 7 desires and attachments, which man must overcome if he wants to proceed on the path of Liberation.

These 7 attachments are towards ones mate, child, home, city, society and material wealth and position.

One is bound to our attachments by passion, anger, greed, ego, jealousy, ignorance and emotions.

Next time you attend a Shrimad Bhaagvad recital in honor of a departed soul, notice the 4 bamboo sticks tied on the four corners of the Kathaakaar (The narrator).

The story of Parikshit, Bhakti, Atmadev recount the Greatness of the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

All Hindu Scriptures devote their first part to recount the 'Mahaatmya' (Greatness) of the Great Book, that one is about to study.

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## CREATION

You will never get an answer that will satisfy the question:

"Why did God create the world?"

Only God know His real reason.

Just like only you know why you are reading these words.

People can only speculate.

However each religion has tried to explain Creation, according to the way it has perceived it.

I like Guru Nanak's statement:

Tumari gat-mit tumahi jaane

Nanak das sadaa kurbaani

Which roughly translated means, that only the Lord knows His ways, And that we should surrender (with love and in awe)

Some of my Readers have shown great interest in the Shrimad Bhaagvad,

One of them actually asked for my notes, since I am putting it into prose for the first time, as I write to you.

Those of you who find it 'heavy' do please read it through, at least once and appreciate the depth of 'The Information' even if you do not understand it.

The reality is, that NO ONE can really comprehend 'Creation' because our intellect, cannot possibly grasp its magnitude.

Read on:

Allow me to narrate to you the story of Creation according to the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

First let me tell you, a very simple description of the 3 qualities that pervade all Creation.

Sat or the Satvic quality: Is that which is Good and True

Raj or the Rajasic quality: Is the energy with which a certain karma is performed.

Tam or the Tamasic quality is that which is lazy, inert, not yet been initiated into the Spritual quality.

The Lord felt the desire to become 'Anek' (Many) from 'Ek' (one).

He also wished to become an integral part of 'Anek' (Creation).

So the Lord assumed Appearance in the Form of Creation, though He has no attributes in His Pure Essence.

Since the Lord is Nirvikaar (Without any form)

He accepted the services of Sat Raj and Tam qualities.

It is under the veil of Sat Raj and Tam that the Lord hides.

The Lord now accepted the Form of :

Time (Kaal), Action(Karam) and Nature (Svabhaav).

Action or Karam gave birth to 'MahaTatva'

The Main or Primordial attribute.

The quality of Raj (Rajogun) gave it strength.

Gyaan (knowledge) and Dravya (the essence of affluence) joined in.

Thus was born 'Ahankaar' or the Ego.

The Ego or Ahankaar is of 3 kinds.

- Gyaan Shakti Ahankaar (Ego energy due to Knowledge and/or Wisdom)
- Kreeya Shakti Ahankaar (Ego due to the Energy of Karma, Action)
- Dravya Shakti Ahankaar (Ego due to the Energy of Affluence)

Kaaran (Reason for happening),and Taamas Ego gave birth to 'Aakaash' the Sky, Ether, Space.

The quality of 'Aakaash' is 'Shabd' Primordial Sound or 'Word'

(The Bible states that first was the 'Word' and the 'Word was with God..)

The Aakaash gave birth to the 'Vaayu' Wind.

Its quality is 'Sparsh' Touch.

The Wind is the cause of all senses, as it provides 'Jeevan Shakti' in the form of the 'Breath'

Kaal (Time/Death), Karma (Action) and Svabhaav (Nature) gave rise to 'Effulgence' (Tej).

Since the origin of 'Tej' is Aakaash (Ether) and Vaayu (Wind), it enjoys the attributes of 'Shabd' (Word) and 'Sparsh' (Touch).

'Tej' gave rise to 'Jal' (Water)

Water gave birth to 'Earth'

Its attributes are fragrance (Gandh), Shabd (Word), Sparsh (Touch), Roop (Form) and Ras (Beauty).

The imbalance of Ether, Wind, Water, Fire and Earth would result in the end of the world 'Pralay'

ie. The end of the world would come about by the waters crossing their boundaries, fires erupting etc.

We humans are also made of these 5 elements:

An imbalance in the 5 elements in the body, eg too much 'fire' is fever, too much water is phlegm. would result in 'Death'..

The Aatman or Soul is imperishable. but that is another story.

## AVATAARS

Dear Readers,

A reader who read about my note on Creation is concerned that my 'notes' may add confusion rather than add to the clarity to the thinking process'.

I replied that my notes are from data that I have gathered from the Original Shrimad Bhaagvad.

My idea was not to confuse but to help experience an awe over the Greatness of the Scriptures in trying to explain the inexplicable.

Guru Nanak in the Granth Sahib states that even though one has to use 'akhri' (words) to describe the Lords Creation, words cannot do the job by far!

I am about to write on the Incarnations of the Lord.

I pray that I am able to do it the best way I am inspired to do it!

There is a Mantra to be chanted before one is performing such a mammoth task.

Om Sahana Bhavatu, Sahanao Bhunaktu

Sahaveeryam Karvaa vahai

Tejaswee Naava Dheeta Mastu Ma Vidvishaa vahai

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

Loosely translated: I pray that You help me teach.

You help me learn!

May our study be brilliant and may we not misunderstand!

Om Peace, Peace, Peace!

As the name 'Shrimad Bhaagvad' suggests, its mainline is 'God and His Creation' Bhaagvad comes from the word 'Bhagwan'.

Last time in 'The Creation' we learned that God became part of the Creation and that the same elements that pervade the Universe form the body of Man.

The Soul or the Aatman is the Divine Spirit in Man.

Man is no different from God .

Man is only separated from God by the veil of ignorance.

Or the amount of dirt on the glass.

If the glass is clear the sun shines unhindered.

But if it is stained, one is not able to see through it.

God shines through man as much as 'his glass is clean'

There are many Avataars (Incarnations) described in the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

All do not enjoy the same status.

Some are called Ansh (Part)-Avtaars and some Puran(Complete) Avataars.

When gold has to be moulded into an ornament it has to take the help of an alloy.

In the case of Avtaars the same rule applies.

For God to incarnate, He has to have a mixture of 'Maya' (The illusion of Creation)

This is the reason why many who lived in close proximity to great Avtaars were not able to recognize their Divinity.

Christ called Himself the son of God and was persecuted and humiliated.

Shree Ram and Krishna were also not appreciated by all who lived in close proximity.

The list of the persecution of Sages and Saints is endless.

The Shrimad Bhaagvad was penned thousands of years ago.

The Avtaars of Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Half-Lion/Half-Man... could be likened to the Darwins Theory of Evolution...

Shree Krishna promised in the Bhaagvad Geeta that the Lord would incarnate

To protect His devotees from atrocities inflicted upon them by the amoral people from time to time 'yuge yuge'

**The following are the different Avatars recorded in the Shrimad Bhaagvad:**

- 1) The Sanat-Kumaras. The Ever-Pure young Brahmacharis.
- 2) The Lord, in the Form of a 'Boar' rescued the 'World' when it had sunk to Unreachable Depths.
- 3) Naarad. He is A Symbol of 'Devotion' (Bhakti)
- 4) Nar-Narayan (The Fusion of Man and God)
- 5) Kapil-Dev. He expounded the knowledge of 'Saankhya Shaastra' which had got lost in time.
- 6) Dattatreya. He came as the son of Atri. He gave the Wisdom of 'Brahmagyaan'.
- 7) This Avtaar came in the Form of 'Yagya' (sacrifice) to Prajapati and his wife Aakuti.
- 8) Rishabhdev. He came as the son of King Nabhi and his wife Merudevi. He taught how the people in Aashrams (Hermitages) should conduct their lives.
- 9) He came as King Pruthu due to the prayers of the Rishis. He helped in the preparation of medication which proved very beneficial to mankind.
- 10) The Lord incarnated as the Fish (Matsya Avtaar) and saved the earth from drowning.
- 11) During the churning of the Ocean, the churner was not finding stable ground to churn. The Lord incarnated as a tortoise (Kachhap), to give it support.
- 12) In the form of Dhanvantari, the Lord extracted nectar (Amrut) from the ocean.
- 13) As Mohini, the Lord gave the Amrut (Nectar) to the deserving.
- 14) Narsinmha-Avtaar was the Incarnation of God as half-man, half-lion. He came in this form to protect His great devotee: Prahlada.
- 15) As Vaaman Bhagvan, He asked for 3 steps of land, and restored the kingdom to the Devtas.
- 16) As Parashuram, he repeatedly destroyed armies of corrupt warriors.
- 17) As Ved-Vyaas, He was a Gyaan- Avtaar. He penned many works of Spiritual excellence.
- 18) Shri Rama of the Ramayan fame.
- 19) Balram, the brother of Shri Krishna.
- 20) Shri Krishna.
- 21) In Kaliyuga, Budh- Avtaar
- 22) In the future, Lord Kalki

## KAPIL DEV

Just this morning I was reading some excerpts from Simon Weil's "Waiting for God" where she states that one must continue to love, even when God is 'more absent than a dead man'

At least man must 'continue wanting to love'

Then God will 'come to show Himself'

'But if the soul stops loving, it falls even in this life, into something almost equivalent to hell'

The Shrimad Bhaagvad teaches one to love.

I believe that one must continue to have faith in the face of adversity.

At least one must pray for faith, when is surrounded by darkness.

It is said that the night is at its darkest just before dawn.

Look at suffering as 'a learning'.

I would like you to have faith in the words of Shri Krishna when He states that He resides in the Bhaagvad; and He who reads even a part of it, is saved.

I have shared with you, some stories from the Bhaagvad with their symbolic meanings.

There has been Information imparted on 'Avtaars' and 'Creation'.

This time let us imbibe some wisdom from one of the Avtaars mentioned.

Meet Kapil-Dev!

Kapil expounded the knowledge of 'Saankhya Shaastra' which had got lost in time, to his mother Devahuti.

The basic Saankhya teaching is, that the universe comes into existence through the fusion of Prakruti (Nature) and Purush (Human Consciousness).

The teachings are extensive, laden with deep Spiritual Insights.

These are some of the teachings of Kapil-Dev:

The reason for man's unhappiness is his own mind.

When his mind becomes clear he becomes free.  
He becomes 'Advait'  
Advait literally means 'Not two'

Which means that He sees God in everything and everyone.  
Another way of breaking free, is to keep company of Saintly beings.  
These persons are 'Moksha ka khula dwaar' An open door to Liberation.

Sadly only such people aspire for good Spiritual company who are not affected by 'Sansar ke tarah tarah ke taap' (Worldly influences).

Devahuti asked her wise son which kind of 'Bhakti' Devotion, she should follow.

Kapil felt a great surge of love for his mother and stated that whosoever's mind is totally immersed in the Lord, his kind of devotion is greater than 'Mukti' Liberation.

Those who discuss about the Almighty with love; they achieve 'Param pad ki praapti' - The Highest Position.

Even if they have no desires, all good things are granted to them.

Those who consider God their Supreme Soul, friend, Son, Guru, God. They will not be affected by 'Kaal Chakra' Cycle of Life and Death.

Kapil explained that Man is 'Swayam-Prakaash' Self-Effulgent.

He has accepted 'Maya' the Illusion of the world, out of his own choice. He has deluded himself into believing that he is the 'doer'.

If you become a 'Saakshi' a Pure Witness to all that is transpiring in your world, you become free (from joy and sorrow).

Kapilji went on to instruct to remain content, live truthfully, not to hurt any creature.  
He explained the intricacies of meditation. He explained the profound Truths of how the Primordial being came to exist and the erudition of the senses.

Kapil-Dev taught that just like the reflection of the sun does not affect the properties of the water, similarly the Aatman is unaffected by joy and sorrow.

Consider circumstances that give birth to joy and sorrow, a dream.  
By listening to the words of Scriptures and constant practice, one's ignorance disappears and merges into its True Nature: The 'Aatman'.

Thus Spake Kapil-Dev!

## GRAHASTHA RULES

The Shrimad Bhaagvad lays down rules on how man should conduct himself in the Grahastha Aashram

What is the Grahastha Aashram?

According to our Scriptures human life is divided into 4 sections.

The Brahmacharya Aashram is man's early period in life when he is supposed to devote his time to education.

The Grahastha Aashram is when man is meant to get married, have children and support himself, and the family, with whatever profession is best suited to him.

The Vanaprastha Aashram is the age of retirement.

The Sanyaas aashram is meant to be spent meditating and preparing for union with the Almighty.

So go ahead and get married, and enjoy keeping house, but read about the rules and rewards intended for the Grahastha Aashram:

- 1) God promises to always look after the man who bestows 3 hours each day to the Lord.
- 2) A man may live in the world, but if he acts in 'Bhaagvad-Arpan-Budhi' (offering wisely, his actions to the Lord) then that man's home will not be a 'Bandhan ka kaaran' (Will not be a cause to be bound in the cycle of birth and death)
- 3) The reason for unhappiness is ones own attitude. To help change it one must introspect and chant the Lord's name.
- 4) Renounce the parents of 'Sin'  
Its mother is 'Attachment' and its father is 'Greed'
- 5) The Conscience is the voice of God.

If one does not listen to it, it becomes dimmer and dimmer until it fades.

So, the Bhaagvad states that if one feels the pangs of repentance when performing an immoral act, then the Lord's Grace falls upon you, to a certain extent.

If ones habit of performing wrong deeds ceases completely, then one enjoys Grace unlimited.

- 6) The greatest obstacle in the Grahastha Aashram is the greed for money.

If one were to exercise a certain amount of wisdom, one would learn to restrain oneself when tempted to cross limitless barriers.

A 'Grahasthi' should introspect on the fact that:

Even if one lives in a palace, it is still a 'hotel' where one resides only temporarily.

Life is a light in which all material things are visible

Nothing is static. Only death is a certainty.

If one were to remember death all the time, (without becoming morbid), one would not sin to accumulate money.

One cannot take ones wealth along when one dies, but if one puts it to the right use, while alive, then that wealth converts into something, that accompanies one even after death.

The Shrimad Bhaagvad lays down rules on how man should conduct himself in the Grahastha Aashram

What is the Grahastha Aashram?

According to our Scriptures human life is divided into 4 sections.

The Brahmacharya Aashram is man's early period in life when he is supposed to devote his time to education.

The Grahastha Aashram is when man is meant to get married, have children and support himself and the family with whatever profession is best suited to him.

The Vanaprastha Aashram is the age of retirement.

The Sanyaas aashram is meant to be spent, meditating and preparing for union with the Almighty.

So go ahead and get married, and enjoy keeping house, but read about the rules and rewards intended for the Grahastha Aashram:

- 7) God promises to always look after the man who bestowes 3 hours each day to the Lord.
- 8) A man may live in the world, but if he acts in 'Bhaagvad-Arpan-Budhi' (offering wisely, his actions to the Lord) then that man's home will not be a 'Bandhan ka kaaran' (Will not be a cause to be bound in the cycle of birth and death)
- 9) The reason for unhappiness is ones own attitude. To help change it one must introspect and chant the Lord's name.
- 10) Renounce the parents of 'Sin'  
Its mother is 'Attachment' and its father is 'Greed'
- 11) The Conscience is the voice of God.

If one does not listen to it, it becomes dimmer and dimmer until it fades.

So, the Bhaagvad states that if one feels the pangs of repentance when performing an immoral act, then the Lord's Grace falls upon you to a certain extent.

If ones habit of performing wrong deeds ceases completely, then one enjoys Grace unlimited.

12) The greatest obstacle in the Grahastha Aashram is the greed for money.

If one were to exercise a certain amount of wisdom, one would learn to restrain oneself when tempted to cross limitless barriers.

A 'Grahasthi' should introspect on the fact that:

Even if one lives in a palace, it is still a 'hotel' where one resides only temporarily.

Life is a light in which all material things are visible

Nothing is static. Only death is a certainty.

If one were to remember death all the time, (without becoming morbid), one would not sin to accumulate money.

One cannot take ones wealth along when one dies, but if one puts it to the right use, while alive, then that wealth converts into something, that accompanies one even after death.

## DHRUV

The story of Dhruv appears in the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

It is written that he who reads or listens to the story of Dhruv, achieves devotion and his sorrows are destroyed.

Hindus have handed down, to their children, stories pregnant with wisdom.

These are not only enthralling legends but enfold deep insights.

The story of Dhruv, is a very popular tale that illustrates fundamental religious beliefs through the triumph of a 5-year old, in the spiritual field.

The father of Dhruv was a king called Uttanpad, who was married to Suruchi and Suneeti.

The father had a special liking for his wife Suruchi.

Dhruv was Suneeti's son.

Uttam was Suruchi's son.

At this point I would like to point to you the meanings of the names of the queens.

Suruchi means (the desire to enjoy) what the senses ask for.

Suneeti means that which is correct.

Now you will not be surprised why the king had a weakness for Suruchi.

Anyway, to continue with the story, once Dhruv saw Uttam sitting on the father's lap.

Little Dhruv asked his father to carry him, and give him a seat on his lap too.

This wish infuriated Suruchi who lashed out at the child, saying that he would acquire the right to sit on his father's lap, only were he to perform penance and be born from her womb.

The humiliated little child ran to Suneeti and fighting back tears of anger, recounted what had transpired, to his mother.

The mother Suneeti consoled and instructed little Dhruv

She told him:

- 1) If you have to beg for something, let that be from God!
- 2) However much you ask of a human being, it will be little.
- 3) Many a times asking brings with it, humiliation.
- 4) When God gives, he gives in plenty.
- 5) God will make you sit on his lap with love. He is the true father of Mankind.
- 6) Before you go, ask for the blessings of Suruchi.
- 7) Suruchi has spoken words of truth, even if you want the throne, pray to the Lord!
- 8) Go to the forest and perform penance.
- 9) I am not sending you alone, my blessings and God are with you.

The little child set out for the forest.

He felt confident that no harm would befall him as he had with him, God and his mother's blessings.

A person who leaves home with blessings, is bound to meet a godly person who will guide him.

Sure enough Dhruv met Naradji.

The deserving do not need to search for a guru. The latter is found at the right time, in the right spot; and a true disciple recognizes him instantly.

Naradji dissuaded Dhruv from undertaking such a difficult task. Naradji told Dhruv: “You are young, you should be spending your time playing...even great sages have not achieved the Almighty...”

But Dhruv was adamant.

Naradji taught Dhruv, the technique of prayer and asked him to chant the following mantra: ‘Om namo Bhagvade Vaasudevaaya’

### The Tapasya (Penance) of Dhruv

For the 1<sup>st</sup> month Dhruv subsisted on fruit and meditated for 3 days at a stretch.

For the second month, he meditated for 6 days at a stretch.

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, Dhruv meditated for 9 days at a stretch and subsisted on only leaves.

For the 4<sup>th</sup> month, he meditated for 12 days at a stretch and subsisted on only water from the Yamuna River.

For the 5<sup>th</sup> month Dhruv meditated for 15 days at a stretch, and renounced water as well.

By the 6<sup>th</sup> month Dhruv decided that he would stay put in the same position until the Lord appeared.

Impressed by the perseverance of Dhruv the Lord remarked that He was proceeding to where Dhruv was.

God’s journey was more to honor Dhruv rather than to be honored by him.

As the Lord stood in front of Dhruv, the latter did not open his eyes as he was already seeing the Almighty within his own heart.

The Lord made the form that Dhruv was witnessing within himself, disappear!

Dhruv became restless and opened his eyes...and Lo and behold, God was standing outside!

Dhruv recognized not only the physical aspect of the Lord but also all his hidden attributes of the Almighty! He exclaimed:

“You are also within me! You are the one that makes my senses come alive! You are responsible for inspiring my intellect! You have the power of saving man from the cycle of life and Death! You are capable of fulfilling all desires...and yet men ask of you that which will be the cause of their destruction! One can achieve You only by Your Grace! My desire is that I have the good fortune of listening to the ‘Katha’(Devotional narrative) rendered by Your true devotees! (Note that Dhruv did not express the desire of hearing the ‘Katha’ from scholars or intellectuals).

When the Lord insisted that Dhruv ask for a boon, Dhruv asked for that which the Lord wished to give him.

The Lord’s wish was that Dhruv should return to the kingdom.

God wanted to establish the fact that God also gives material wealth to his devotees.

When Dhruv expressed his fear that he might get ensnared by the grip of the power that material wealth bestows, the Lord promised to protect him always.

The Lord knew that Dhruv had started his penance because he had wanted to sit in his father’s lap.

Dhruv was transported to the highest point of heaven, where he sits on his Divine father’s lap as the Pole Star.

The moral of the story is that at one point or another of our life we all encounter situations that are unfair. Instead of focusing on our misfortunes, we should turn to our Divine Father who will give us what we deserve, and turn us into a bright star which will guide misguided spiritual pilgrims to their final divine destination.

### **PREVIOUS JANAMS OF DHRUV AND NAARAD**

In my last note we learned of how a 5 year old carried to fruition his dream of becoming an Immortal Star.

One would wonder however how an innocent 5-year old, could endure so many hardships to fulfill his aim.

You guessed right Dhruv! was in his previous life a soul of a very great order.

Then what was the reason for him taking birth as 'Dhruv'?

Dhruv in his earlier life had been a sage who had undertaken a severe penance.

Once he came face to face with a princely couple and he felt the desire to be born as a prince!

Hence his incarnation as Dhruv.

Note how the pain and humiliation he endured was essential to his further growth.

Yes, my dear Readers! I do believe that ALL our wishes come true! If not in this life, then in the next! So dream on! Or drop dreams and desires, and also the endless wheel of life and death!

Remember Naarad the helpful and loving Guru of Dhruv?

Let us learn about his previous life.

Naradji was the son of the maid-servant of a Vedic scholar.

He was not very interested in child-play, and would talk little.

Naradji would take great pleasure in serving the Sages. He was initiated into the Mantra: 'Om Namo Bhagvade Vaasudevaaya'.

Naaradji would partake of the Sages' left-overs. He believed that that food, became the reason for him becoming cleansed of his impurities!

Naradji imbibed the knowledge that the Sages imparted and understood the truth about the Creator and His Creation.

He learned about Krishna and His pranks and Wisdom, and that knowledge made Naradji achieve 'Param-pad ki Praapti' ie 'Realization of the Highest kind'.

Naradji, even though only 5 years old had an intense desire to follow the Spiritual Path but could not do so. His mother was extremely attached to him.

One day, his mother died of snake-bite and that left young Naarad free to follow his heart's desire.

Little Naarad moved towards the jungle. One day he bathed, drank some water and felt refreshed.

He sat under a tree and started his meditation just like the Sages had taught him. His devotion brought tears to his eyes and in his heart, the Lord appeared!

Naaradji drowned in a flood of bliss...but just as suddenly the Lord had appeared, so He disappeared!

As much as Naaradji tried to draw back to him, his Divine Experience, he was unable to so.

Naaradji heard a 'Voice' which told him, that the appearance of the Lord was only to awaken an intense desire in him to pursue the Divine Path! That 'Voice' further stated that Naaradji would not

be able to perceive the Lord again in this 'janam' (life). However the longing would continue and not break!

Naaradji started to roam the worlds singing the Lord's praises.

One day, as suddenly as lightning strikes, Naaradji renounced the body.

It was the time of the Dissolution of Creation, so along with Brahma, Naarad entered and reached the Lord's heart.

When the time came for the Re-Creation of the worlds, Naaradji emerged again.

Since then Naaradji has been, with God's Grace, been moving without 'Rok-Tok' (Obstacles) in Heaven, Earth, Within and Without.

## CHITRAKETU-PUNDAALIK

Once I had gone for a pilgrimage.

There I had a guide who took me around and was speaking to me about the importance of having sons.

I love my son dearly and I humored the guide, until he claimed that if one did not have a son, the scriptures claimed, one would not reach the portals of heaven as there would be no-one to perform ones last rites, one of the very important being, lighting the funeral pyre!

I could not believe that the Scriptures claimed that one would rot in hell if one failed to be a parent of a male child!

I was relieved when I came across various examples in the Shrimad Bhaagvad refuting the above theory.

We are told right in the beginning that king Parikshit listened to the Shrimad Bhaagvad and was enlightened through his own effort and devotion and not through the prayers of his off-spring!

Another instance, we have already discussed is the story of Atmadev.

The next instance that I am about to write about now, is the story of Vrutraasur.

In his last life, he was a king called Chitraketu. He was childless.

Once a Sage by the name of Angira Rishi came to his house.

Chitraketu asked of Angira, that the latter should bless him, so that he gets a son.

Angira Rishi replied: "It is fine if you do not have children. Even people with children have no peace of mind!"

If it had been important to have a son for the salvation of his soul, the great sage would have said so.

Chitraketu insisted.

Chitraketu did get a son, who was poisoned by his other jealous wives!

Chitraketu was inconsolable.

Naaradji explained to him that it was useless to cry now.

To appease the grieving father, Naaradji called the spirit of the son from the Spirit world. The son did not recognize his father Chitraketu, as the child had had thousands of lives before the present one, and therefore thousands of parents!

I have read that there are 4 types of sons

- 1) Shatruputra-One who was your enemy during your last life and has come to even a score
- 2) Rinubandhi-One who owes you a debt and so returns
- 3) Udaaseen-While unmarried does not take much from parents or does not marry. Even if he does, he leaves home.
- 4) Sevak-Putra- He owes the parents service and so looks after them selflessly and tirelessly.

I would like to believe that in today's world a daughter could belong to one of the above categories as well.

We have read about 'Shatruputra' type of son in the story of 'Atmadev'

Let us read now about a 'Sevak-putra'

The story of Pundaalik appears in the Skandh Puraana.

Pundaalik used to serve his parents with supreme devotion.  
God appeared to Pundaalik while the latter was occupied in his service.  
Pundaalik refused to leave his job half done, to attend to the Lord!  
So Pundaalik handed out a brick to the Lord, to rest on, while he completed his duties!  
The Lord, amused, put his hands on his waist and waited patiently for Pundaalik to complete the  
'seva' (service).  
'Eent' (brick) became 'Veet' through the passage of time.  
This form of the Lord is called 'Veethoba' and the place where the Lord appeared to Pundaalik is  
called 'Pandharpur'.

If you ask me, I pray for what I desire,  
but I ask the Lord to do it His way, fulfilling the Divine Plan, and protecting it forever to stay!

## KRISHNA - JANAM

Krishna can be born anytime one will allow Him, in ones heart!  
Krishna was born of Devki and Vasudev.  
Devki's brother Kamsa was afraid of a soothsayer's prediction, that the 8<sup>th</sup> son born of Devki would kill him  
So Kamsa had Devki and her husband Vaasudev, imprisoned.  
Vaasudev and Devki remained patient and 'jaagrut' (spiritually awake) while in jail.  
God comes to those who possess the above qualities.

Kamsa then proceeded to have all his sister's sons killed!  
Devki became pregnant with her 8<sup>th</sup> child.  
She prayed to the Lord Narayana to fulfill the prophecy (of being born through her womb, as an incarnation of God, to destroy evil).  
When the time arrived for the divine child to take birth, the Lord Narayana appeared in His Form with Four Arms! (Chatur-Bhuj-Svaroop)

The Divine Form of God, told Vaasudev and Devki to contemplate and meditate upon this Form for 11 years, as He promised that He would return to them, then.  
Even after God appears, contemplation and meditation is essential!

In the Bhagvad Geeta, Krishna appears in the Form of God in the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter.

The Divine 'Chatur-Bhuj-Svaroop' turned to a child form.

Baby Krishna conveyed to Vaasudev to take Him to the house of Nand-Baba.  
So Vaasudev placed the Divine child in a cane basket, and carried Him on his head.

The Gates of the jail opened miraculously! And the fetters were released!  
When one places the Lord in ones intellect, one is bound to get liberated!

As Vaasudev crossed the River Yamuna, it rose and rose until it touched the feet of the Divine Child; and then receded!  
Vaasudev arrived in Gokul with Krishna.

Krishna grew up as Yashoda's and Nand's child.  
'Yash' means one who bestows fame.  
Nand means one who bestows Bliss 'Anand'.

When the Gopis heard of the 'coming' of Krishna, they ran towards the home of Yashoda-Nand.  
They were impatient for Krishna-Darshan. (Seing Krishna)  
It is believed that the Gopis, cows, even each grain of the soil of the land of Gokul was an incarnation of a Rishi (Great Sage) who had willingly taken birth at the time of Krishna, to be blessed with being a participant of the great drama (Leela) that was about to unfold.

We could have Krishna take birth in our hearts too.

## THE RASLEELA

The 'Raasleela' is the Cosmic Dance in which featured Krishna and the Gopis. Every Gopi believed that Krishna was dancing exclusively with her and for her!

It is very clearly stated in the Scriptures that:

'Raasleela paanch bhoutik shareer ke tyaag ke baad hee hui hai'

Loosely translated, it means that the 'Enchanting Drama' was performed, (by) beyond the physical body.

Listen to a Spiritual lover's logic: The Gopis felt separate from God before the Rasleela.

Since 'to be separated' from the Lord is 'Fire'.

Therefore the physical body consisting of 5 elements was burnt out (and so there was nothing physical in the Rasleela.

Love starts with 'Dvait' ie there is the Lover and the Beloved (Two)

Later Love becomes 'Advait' (Both become One)

That is what is believed happened in the Rasleela.

The Thirsty Spirit merged with the Infinite.

This was no mundane sexual desire and its fulfillment.

Let me tell you a story before we enter 'The Rasleela'

Once Kaamdev (The God of Passionate Sexual desire) came to Krishna.

Krishna said to him: "Don't you remember that you were defeated by Shivji?"

Kaamdev said: "When I had gone to grapple with Him, He was meditating upon the Almighty and hence I was burnt".

Sri Krishna reminded Kaamdev that the latter had been defeated by Sri Ram!

Kaamdev admitted that he could not tempt the Lord when He had incarnated as Shri Ram as He was devoted to only Seeta, and was a perfect follower of principles. (Maryaada Purshottam)

Krishna asked Kaamdev: "What is your desire now?"

Kaamdev said: "This incarnation You are not bound by any conditionings, and you freely prance with the Gopis; I shall release my arrow, if you do not succumb to it, I shall consider you God. If however you are defeated, then I shall be God.

I shall release my arrow on a full moon night!

Krishna said: "If this is your desire, so be it!"

The proof that Krishna was victorious, in his encounter with Kaamdev is that the Shrimad Bhaagvad proclaims that he who wants to conquer over sexual desire/obsession should read the 'Rasleela' chapter in the Shrimad Bhaagvad!

Besides Krishna won the 'God' title!

It is said that when Krishna played the flute that magical night, only the Gopis heard it.

The Gopis left their home, duties and ran towards Krishna!

Those who were milking the cows, ran the minute they heard the first notes of the flute. Some Gopis wore their necklaces on their arms instead of on their neck!  
One Gopi ran towards Krishna with cow dung on her hands!

If this was ordinary attraction, the Gopis would have spent hours beautifying themselves before running towards their Beloved.

This is the kind of fervor that is required of an aspirant towards the Lord!

Shri Krishna asked the Gopis: “Why are you running towards me? Has any misfortune struck? You are alright? What can I do for you? It is not right for a woman to be alone in a dense jungle at this time of night. Have you come to admire the beauty? Well, then enjoy the splendor of the night and quickly return to your homes! Your husbands and children must be waiting for you!”

Maybe when you turn to the Lord, He tests you by saying: “What are you going to get from me, go back to your world!”

Maybe He is saying that for a woman, she should first perform her household duties. It is there that she will find God!

When the Gopis were told to return to their homes, they were sad!  
Krishna had told them that they belonged to their husbands. The Gopis knew that their husbands were surely the master of their physical form; but what about their Souls!  
Their Aatman, their Spirit, their Souls surely belonged to God!

The Gopis said: “How can you ask us to return to the world, when you have promised union, to the one who worships you with love and faith? We have renounced all worldly pleasures for You! Only You reside in our heart!

Krishna asked the Gopis “What is the proof of what you claim?”

The Gopis answered: “You Yourself are the proof. You alone reside in our hearts! Now we have only one desire! That of merging in You! You are the husband of our Soul! Now that we have seen You, how can we desire anything else? Shall we ask You a question? What is the reward of a faithful wife?”

Krishna answered: “The mind becomes pure.”

The Gopis asked “And what does one achieve when the mind is purified?”

Krishna answered: “One achieves the Lord!”

The Gopis said: “Then why should we go back to the world after we have come to you?”

Krishna said: “You can stay at home and achieve God! At home look upon everything as God Himself!”

The Gopis said: “Life after life we have prayed, but we did not even get a glimpse of You. Therefore we decided to become Gopis this life instead of Sages!”

We recognize ourselves to be the Soul, (not women), therefore we have to fulfill the duty of the Soul, which is to be ‘One’ with You! We do not desire to pray to your picture anymore! Do not forsake us! Make us Your own!”

Krishna said: "If you consider me your real Lord and Master, then I ask you to return to your husbands and children!"

The Gopis said: "We are tired of playing worldly games, life after life, but if You are ordering us, then we will have to go. However to operate in the world, we require our mind and intellect. They both are with you. You return our mind and intellect and we return to the world, to our husbands and children!"

Shri Krishna said: "I cannot return that to you, as once I steal your mind and intellect, it merges into me!"

The Gopis said: "Our feet are not ready to walk a step away from you"

Krishna said: "What if I sent you back to your homes by the power of my Yoga?"

The Gopis said: "You would be able to send our bodies there, but our mind would remain with You!"

Krishna was defeated by the love and perseverance of the Simple Gopis.

The Rasleela took place!

The devotees and the Lord became one, that magical moonlit night!

It is said that at times people would mistake Radha for Krishna and vice-versa!

Not something to be surprised at!

Guru Nanak claims 'Nanak leen bhayo Govind syon, jyon pani sang pani'

Which means that Guru Nanak has merged into the Lord, like water mixes with water.

Do we possess that kind of love and perseverance?

I am convinced that that is one thing worth aspiring!

## GAJENDRA MOKSHA

Dhyaan dharey man sey mera  
Karey na chit udaas  
Samjhey mujhko har samay  
Hardam apney paas  
Ghat Ghat mein sansaar key vyaapak main bharpoor  
Prem sey nitya sameep hoon  
Prem nahin to door

These lines belong to the Bhagvad Geeta in Hindi by Pandit RadheyShyam from Bareilly. This Scripture, I have been reading and teaching youngsters since the last 25 years.

The lines above are my favorite and they are spoken by Krishna to Arjuna during the latter's darkest hour.

Krishna says that man should meditate upon the Lord, not feel dejected and think of the Lord, as always being at hand.

Krishna claims that He is present in abundance in every atom of the world.

To those who have love (and faith) in their heart, God is close by, to the others He seems to be far away!

The following story that I am about to narrate is 'Gajendra Moksha' and is a part of the Shrimad Bhaagvad.

It is written, that he who reads the story of Gajendra, his mind will be purified and he will be received by the Lord God Himself at the time of his death.

Gajendra was the King of elephants.

One hot day, he proceeded to the lake with his family to cool off in its fresh waters.

But from within the lake a crocodile appeared who attacked him and would not let go of him.

When the family and relatives saw 'death' coming close to Gajendra, and everyone realised that everything was lost, they left Gajendra alone.

The symbolism so far:

Man is Gajendra

The world, is the lake where he plays the game of life with family and others.

The crocodile is 'Death and Difficulties' which attack man.

The Lesson:

Neither family nor friend can liberate one from the clutch of death.

God answers your prayers.

It is said that 'Nirbal key bal Ram'

Which means that God is the Strength of the Weak!

A lot of us make preparations for a journey from which one is meant to return; yet we make none for death!

Most of us cry out to God when caught in hopeless situation.

And that is what Gajendra did!

You will notice that in the Bhaagvad, there are stories with a moral and symbolisms.

Most stories have a beautiful prayer!

Gajendra prayed:

‘Please help me O Lord! Save me from the clutches of Death!

How can an ordinary mortal recognize You, when great sages find it hard to achieve You? You are all merciful.

Take me to a place where there is no fear and death!

I am not asking you to save me from the clutch of the crocodile, or that I should survive this

attack! I am aware that I not only have a body of an elephant but also a fat mind of an elephant!

What is the use of keeping this life? I want to be liberated from my Ignorant Mind which hides the resplendent soul! I can only be saved by Your Grace!

It is said that if one recites the Gajendra Prayer, one achieves liberation and freedom from frightening dreams!

The Lord rushed to Gajendra’s aid. The latter offered the Lord a lotus flower.

God attacked the crocodile and saved His Loved One.

Gajendra, in his previous life was a great devotee called Indradyumna who was also a great king. One day, Agastya, a great sage came to visit the king. Indradyumna did not receive the Sage with the respect that the latter expected. The enraged Agastya cursed the king to become an elephant in his next birth, as he sat heavy on his seat and did not rise to greet him.

The crocodile in its last life was a king called HuHu in the Gandharva planet. Once while enjoying himself in the waters, he pulled the leg of a sage. The enraged sage cursed the king to become a crocodile in his next life. The repentant HuHu asked for pardon. The Sage proclaimed that though he could not retrieve the curse, the crocodile would be liberated from the cycle of birth and death when Gajendra would be saved by the Lord God Himself.

Those readers who have been with me so far will wonder why I quoted the lines from the Geeta at the beginning of this note.

Well, those lines, as well as the story of Gajendra state that:

The Lord is close to those who call out to Him in full faith.

It does not matter if you have the body or intellect of an animal, all you require is a loving heart and the conviction that God is closer than we can possibly believe!

## SAMUDRA MANTHAN

Samudra Manthan literally means: The Churning of the Ocean.  
Our Consciousness represents the Ocean or the Samudra.  
And the process of churning, is the Spiritual and/or emotional process that one goes through while one experiences the difficulties/pleasures that life brings.

The story of the Samudra Manthan narrated in the Shrimad Bhaagvad is interesting!

Let us first understand the terms : Devas and Daityas.

Devas Represent 'Good'

And Daityas represent 'Evil'.

It is interesting to note that, it is mentioned in the Bhaagvad that both, Good and Evil or Devas and Daityas are born from the same father.

The King of the Devas is called Indra.

Once the Sage Durvaasa honored Indra by presenting him with a garland of flowers.

Indra, having become egoistic and insensitive, disrespectfully placed the garland on the tusk of an elephant who trampled it with his feet.

Durvaasa feeling humiliated cursed Indra that he would lose his power and position.

So, Paradise, the Land of the Devas fell into the hands of the Daityas.

The Devas prayed to the Lord for help. The Lord realized that though the Devas had committed an offence, it was more favorable for Creation, that Paradise should be in the hands of the Devas.

But for that victory to come to pass, a Samudra Manthan had to be performed.

To remind you what it means: 'The Churning of the Ocean'

The Samudra Manthan was not going to be easy, so the Devas would have to take the assistance of the Daityas.

The nectar that would come out of the Ocean after all the poison that would emerge first, would make the Devas immortal.

For the churning to take place, a big pole was inserted in the Ocean. But no matter what they did, the pole would continue to sink into the Ocean bed. So the Lord took the form of a tortoise. The pole was placed on His back.

The latter symbolizes the fact that whatever you undertake to do, its support must be God.

The rope that was used for the churning is symbolic of the string of cooperation.

One end of the rope was manipulated by the Devas and the other end by the Daityas.

When the churning commenced, at first an extremely potent poison emerged which threatened to destroy Creation.

That venomous potion had to be discarded. But where? No place was powerful enough to contain it.

The Devas and the Daityas finally decided to implore to God Shiv to help them.

Shivji did, by gulping it, yet retaining it in his throat.

This is the reason why Shivji is called 'Neel-Kanth' the 'Blue Throated One'  
Symbolically, when one is faced with troubles, take them to the Lord.  
He will help you out by swallowing your difficulties!

The churning of the Ocean continued. A lot of Divine gifts emerged from the Ocean  
These were shared by the Devas and the Daityas.

Finally, the much coveted Amrit (Nectar) appeared. The Daityas grabbed it and ran.  
The Lord incarnated as a beautiful damsel named 'Mohini'  
With His/Her help the potion was attained by the Devas, who got back their Paradise.  
But two of the Daityas managed to partake of the Amrit.  
And they both became immortal.  
There fore the strife between good and evil continues to this day.

Krishna in the ChIV, VerseVII of the Geeta claims:  
Yada Yada hi Dharmasya glaanir bhavati Bhaarata  
Abhyuthaanam adharmasya Tadaatmaanam Srujaamyaham  
Paritraanaaya Sadhunaam Vinaashaaya cha Dushkrutaam  
Dharma sthaapnaarthaaya Sambhavaami yuge yuge

Which means:

Whenever righteousness declines, and unrighteousness increases,  
Then I come in the body (Incarnate) from age to age, to establish Dharma (Righteousness) firmly.  
I protect the virtuous and destroy the evil –perpetrators.  
During these troubled times specially, let us remind Krishna of His promise to help us, yet one more time.

## THE LAW OF KARMA APPLIES TO ALL

It is mentioned in the Scriptures that our so called Avtaars and great personalities could not escape the Law of Karma.

I have read that for an incarnation of God, to don the human body, He has to acquire the alloy of 'Maya' (The world of illusion).

One of the Laws that pertains to 'Maya' is the 'Law of Karma'.

Allow me to give you a few examples.

Once King Dasharatha, was out on a hunting spree. He was so proficient in the art; that he could aim, at his target, only by hearing a sound.

On a certain trip, he mistook a young boy as a deer, and fired!

The boy died.

This young boy's name was Shravan Kumar.

This young boy was a devoted son. His aged parents were blind. He was carrying them over his shoulder on wicker baskets, to a pilgrimage center that his parents so wished to visit. The boy had gone to get drinking water for his thirsty mother and father, when he was mistaken for a deer by King Dasharatha, and fired upon and killed!

King Dasharatha repented for his hasty action, but the old parents cursed him.

They prophesied that King Dasharatha would give up his life, pining for his son, just like the two old helpless people were about to do.

Those who have read the Ramayana are aware that King Dasharatha died pining for his son Rama when the latter was banished to the forest for 14 long years through no fault of his.

Allow me to give you another example.

Sri Rama, during his sojourn in the forest killed King Bali..

Bali had unjustly banished his brother Sugreeva from the kingdom and had forcibly taken his brother's wife for himself.

Rama promised to help Sugreeva get his kingdom and wife back..

A battle ensued.

While Sugreeva and Bali fought, Rama shot an arrow from behind a tree and Bali was killed.

Some argue that Shri Ram should have allowed the 2 brothers to fight without intervention from his side. And maybe Shri Ram should not have not shot the arrow from behind the tree.

(Shooting from behind a tree is symbolic. We may think that we fight and win all the battles of life but it is actually God's unseen hand that is behind our victories).

While Bali lay wounded, he asked Rama to take care of his son.

Rama wanted to bring Bali back to life since Bali felt repentant of his previous deeds. But Bali being a good soul, who had been deluded for a while, feared that he may not have the opportunity of dying in the Lord's arms if he chose to recuperate from his wounds this time.

Bali died with a smile on his lips.

I said earlier that "While Sugreeva and Bali fought, Rama shot an arrow from behind a tree and Bali was killed"

That action had to have a reaction according to the Law of Karma.

When Sri Rama incarnated as Sri Krishna, the latter was shot at by a hunter who mistook him for a prey.

That shot proved to be fatal for Lord Krishna. When the hunter became inconsolable due to his careless act, Sri Krishna calmly said that the hunter was not to blame.

It was the rightful reaction. Sri Krishna had killed Bali during His incarnation as Shri Ram and now Shri Krishna was to leave the body because of the hunter!

To Krishna death did not matter as He believed that the Aatman (Soul) is imperishable.

You might ask that did Krishna not have the power to NOT be subjected to the Law of Karma?

And I say to you, that maybe He did, but He probably wanted to set an example, of how to take the inescapable with equanimity.

## UDDHAV GEETA--PART 1

Bhaagvad Geeta means the 'The Song of the Lord'

The Geeta, which is mostly studied and read, is the Arjun Geeta.

The latter is the one, that the Lord expounded on the battlefield, when Arjuna felt despondent about waging a war against his own kin.

The Udhav Geeta comprises of the wisdom imparted by the Guru of Gurus, Krishna to His dear friend Udhav, just before Krishna discarded His mortal robe.

Udhav asked Krishna which Spiritual process, Krishna would recommend to achieve a perfect a life.

Krishna lovingly tells Uddhav, that:

- 1) No one, not even His own Self, is as dear to Him.
- 2) Krishna says that He purifies the material worlds with the dust of His devotees' lotus feet.
- 3) Krishna then proceeds to explain to Uddhav, that sense gratifications are not the ultimate goal of man.
- 4) That the hunt of Material desires, generally land man into disquiet, as the fruits of these pursuits lead to unexpected unwanted destinations.

Therefore, the Blessed Lord urges that:

Man should fix his consciousness on the Lord.

Krishna says that:

- 1) He who does not desire anything, (Be it an Empire on Earth or Heaven, Liberation from birth or death),
- 2) controls his senses (Is equally unmoved by joy and sorrow),
- 3) shows mercy to all Creation,

finds happiness, that is impossible to achieve by those who are attached to the material world.

Krishna tells Uddhav that:

Even if a devotee is unable to conquer his senses, he will not be defeated, because;

- 1) The Blessed Lord promises that just as a blazing fire turns firewood into ashes, so devotion, burns sins committed by His loved ones.
- 2) In fact the Lord states that He is under the control of those who offer Him pure devotion.

Krishna explains to Uddhav that gold when melted , sheds its impurities, and returns to its brilliant state, similarly, the soul, when consumed by the fire of devotion, reaches Godhead!

Also when one applies ointment to a diseased eye, it recuperates and is able to perceive the world clearly, similarly when material contamination is removed from the consciousness, one is able to 'see' the Lord as 'Sat-Chit-Aanand' meaning THE ABSOLUTE TRUTH in ITS BLISSFUL CONSCIOUS FORM!

How Does one achieve that experience? By chanting the Lord's Name and by hearing the narrations of HIS Glorious Life.

How does a devotee behave? Well according to the Blessed Lord:

He cries, or laughs sometimes. He chokes (with emotion) while he speaks, His heart melts with love, He dances blissfully! He chants the Lord's name and is cleansed of material impurities.

Dear Readers,

Those who are familiar with the dialogue of Krishna with Arjuna, will realize that the teachings are the same. Well, they are bound to be. The Truth never changes! Also Udhav was as dear a friend to Krishna as Arjuna was. A difference however is that Krishna's teachings to Arjuna were aimed at Arjuna fighting the battle. Whereas to Uddhav there seems to be more of a plea that he (Uddhav) uses the gift of life in a gainful manner.

## UDDHAV GEETA--PART 2 KRISHNA TEACHES MEDITATION

I invoke the Blessings of Mother Saraswati, (The Goddess of Knowledge), before I strive to continue the Great Teachings of the Master of Masters: Shree Krishna.

Krishna continues to explain to His dear friend Udhav:

The people who constantly think of the worldly objects that attract the senses, would naturally remain entangled (in the objects of desire and attraction)

Yet those who think of the Lord, would become pure and absorbed in Him.

Udhav asked Krishna, how he could meditate to achieve liberation.

Krishna explains:

- 1) Sit on a seat which is neither too high nor too low.
  - 2) Keep the body straight.
  - 3) Place the hands on your lap.
  - 4) Focus your eyes on the tip of your nose.
  - 5) Practice Pranayaama (Breathing exercise that involves a conscious observation of breath)
  - 6) Beginning from the lowest Chakra (Mulaadhaara) situated at the base of the spine, move the breath upward, until you reach the Heart Chakra (Anaahata) where the Mantra 'Om' resides. There is a lotus flower, with eight petals situated within the heart.
  - 7) One could meditate on the sun, moon and fire in sequence, within the lotus flower.
  - 8) Within the fire, one could meditate upon the Transcendental Form of the Lord.
    - a) The Lord has 4 beautiful long, well proportioned arms.
    - b) A beautiful neck, ears and forehead.
    - c) He wears shining shark-shaped earrings.
    - d) He carries a conchshell, disc and club and wears a garland of flowers.
    - e) He wears a Glorious crown on His head, a golden belt on His hips, gorgeous bracelets on His arms and ankle bells on His feet.
    - f) This Majestic Form is the color of a dark rain cloud and wears a golden-yellow silken garment.
    - g) The Lord's countenance is gentle and His face adorned by a pure merciful smile.
  - 9) Fix your mind on the Sound of Om and/or on the Transcendental Form of the Lord.
  - 10) One should then, pull the consciousness back from the Form of the Lord and concentrate on the Cheerful and Loving Smile of the Lord.
  - 11) Perform the above practice 10 times, every sunrise, noon and sunset.
  - 12) When one is ready, one must withdraw the consciousness from the beautiful countenance of the Lord and fix it in the sky.
  - 13) Finally one must establish oneself in the Lord and give up the practice of meditation altogether.
- The reason being that, by then, the individual and the Lord are as united as the Sun Rays and the Sun.
- Thus Spake Krishna in the Uddhav Geeta.

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