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Monthly Newsletter
2022 April
Issue No: 52

Vishnu Sahasranama Part 7: Bhaav - The One who has Become Many

by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj

In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, the Lord says एकोहं बहुस्याम, *ekoham bahusyām*: "I desired to expand myself from one into many." According to Shri Baldev Vidyabhushan, this is the meaning of Bhaav (भाव), the seventh Name in the Shri Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram.



All living creatures have the desire to expand into multiple forms. As humans, we also want to expand ourselves by growing our families. Often, this means marriage, children and grandchildren. There is a feeling of contentment knowing that our family has expanded and become its own little world.

But in the case of the Lord, "becoming many" means the act of creating the Universe, and this Name reflects his desire to do so. The *Shrimad Bhagwatam* (3.10.11) says,

पुरुषः तदुपादानं आत्मानं लीलयासृजत् ।

puruṣaḥ tadupādānaṃ ātmānaṃ līlayāsrjat ।

"The Lord becomes this entire creation as a *lila* (play)."

The Lord's creation is made out of love. The Lord says in the *Ram Charit Manas*, सब मम प्रिय सब मम उपजाए, *sab mam priya sab mam upajaae*: "All living beings are dear to me, for I am the source of them all."

But the world humans create out of selfish desire gives nothing but sadness. We are always running, preoccupied with fulfilling our family's needs, ensuring everyone is fed, caring for the sick, reconciling family arguments and supervising any domestic staff we may have, all the while trying to fulfil the expectations of our relatives and society in general. Our precious human life slips away as we give everything to support the education, career, marriage and future of our offspring. And although all this is a form of suffering, we somehow manage to equate it with happiness.

Here, three questions arise, which are answered by Shri Gopal Bhatt Goswami in *Paramatma Sandarbh*:

1. **Q:** The Lord is beyond the material qualities that define this world, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These worldly qualities do not even touch him, so how can he create the Universe with all these qualities?

A: The Lord delegates the act of creation and destruction to his *maya shakti*. He does not perform these himself. In fact, *maya* never even comes before the Lord, therefore he remains completely untouched by illusion and the material qualities.

2. **Q:** The Lord is known as *purnakaam*, the one who has no unfulfilled desires, so why does he desire to perform *lila*?

A: There is no reason behind the Lord's act of creation. It is like a crazy person who starts dancing

out of pure joy. Why does the madman dance? It is his very nature to do so, and there is no thought process behind it. There was no personal need to be fulfilled by his dancing, nor does he gain or lose anything by doing so. In the very same way, the Lord is totally blissful within himself. He doesn't need to create the Universe in order to become happy. He doesn't get anything out of creation; in fact, after creating the Universe, he doesn't even interact with it. He always remains apart from creation, and he eventually destroys it as well.

3. Q: When the Lord himself lives within all beings as *antaryaami*, then why do we have to experience the five *kleshas* (ignorance, ego, desire, hatred and fear)?

A: The moon's reflection on a body of water moves with the waves, but the moon itself is not disturbed. In the very same way, the *jeev* bound by *maya* experiences the *kleshas*, while the Lord within them in the form of *antaryaami* remains untouched. The Lord is the very form of supreme bliss, beyond all

worldly happiness and sorrow.

Thus, although the Lord wishes to become many, he is never caught up in *maya*, and always remains full of bliss. In contrast, the soul is trapped in the wheel of *sansaar* and experiences suffering.

In the seventh canto of the *Shrimad Bhagwatam*, Prahlad explains to his *asur* friends how human beings create worlds made of sorrow. Then, he advises us to have mercy on all beings and to serve them with love. By doing this, we can please Shri Krishn and avoid over-investing ourselves in our own personal world. This instruction is summarised in the following *Shrimad Bhagwatam* verse (7.6.24):

तस्मात्सर्वेषु भूतेषु दयां कुरुत सौहृदम् ।
आसुरं भावमुन्मुच्य यया तुष्यत्यधोक्षजः ॥

*tasmātsarveṣu bhūteṣu dayāṃ kuruta
sauhrdam ।
āsuram bhāvamunmucya yayā
tuṣyatyadhokṣajāḥ ॥*

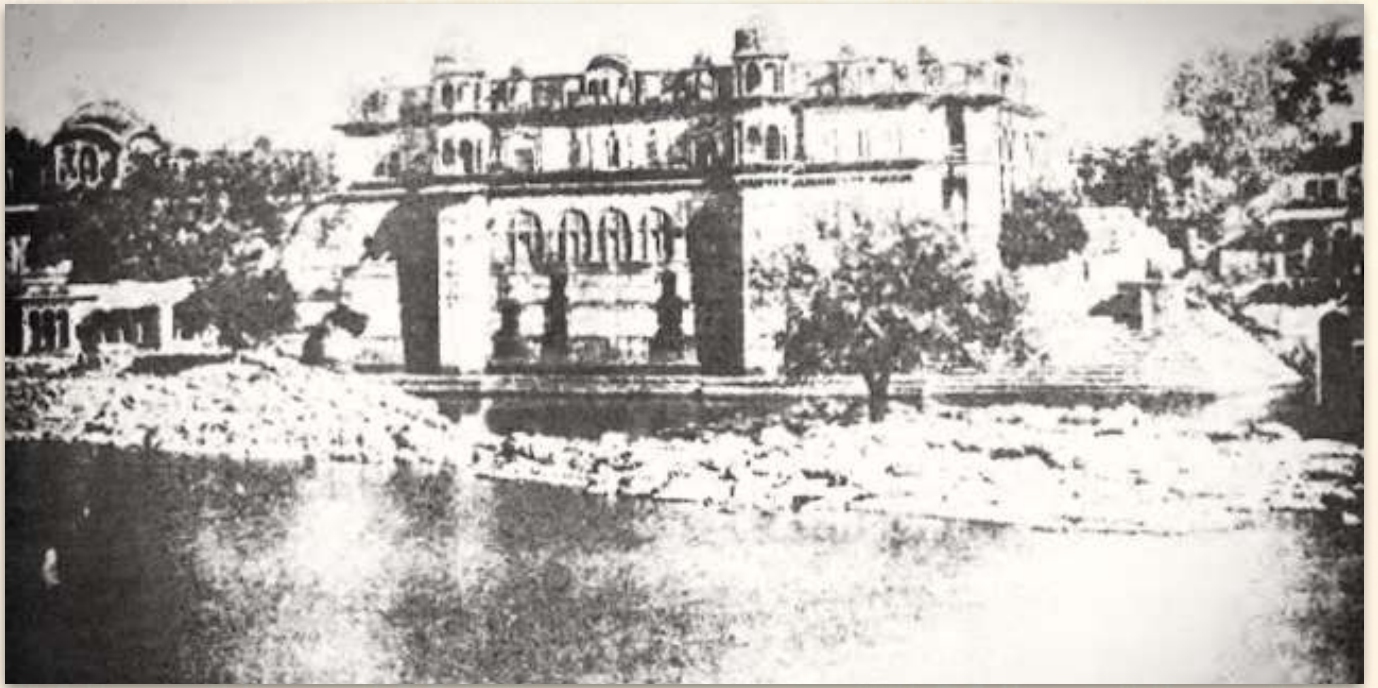


Shri Gaur Das Babaji - Part 2 A Vision of the Lila



In the previous edition, Gaur Das Babaji attained the special grace of Shri Krishn by performing his flower seva. In this edition, he shares these blessings with others through Hari Katha.

By the early 1900s C.E., Shri Gaur Das Babaji became renowned as a *siddh* (perfected) saint, and many devotees would come to have his *darshan* and hear Hari Katha from him. The Bengali book *Charit Madhuri* describes a special *katha* that Gaur Das Babaji gave on the bank of Mansi Ganga at Govardhan.



Mansi Ganga in the 1870s

That morning, Gaur Das Babaji sat down in front of a simple hut. Seated on the ground in front of him were many renounced Vaishnavs who had devoted their entire lives to meditating on the *lilas* of Shri Radha and Krishn. As they all chanted Harinaam silently, Gaur Das Babaji remained lost in a trance while another Vaishnav sitting nearby read out descriptions of Vrindavan *lila* from the scriptures. Gaur Das Babaji would also speak whenever his blissful heart allowed him to do so.

The Lila of the Lotuses

Suddenly, Gaur Das Babaji said with great joy, "Once there were many lotuses blooming in Pavan Sarovar.* Shri Priyaji (Radharani) said to her *sakhis*, "Today you must steal all the lotuses and bring them to me!"

The *sakhis* did as they were asked. Then Priyaji said with a cheeky smile, "Wouldn't it be fun if you go to Krishn and tell him privately that today I need some lotuses for a special *puja*? But make sure nobody else hears you."

The *sakhis* found Krishn walking towards the pastureland with his cows and told him, "Shri Priyaji needs lotus flowers for a special *puja* today. Do you have any?"

"Of course!" replied Krishn. "We have so many lotuses in Pavan Sarovar! I will send as many as Priyaji needs!" Krishn turned his entire herd of cows around and came to the bank of Pavan Sarovar, but he was shocked to find not a single lotus in the huge lake. Suppressing their laughter, the *sakhis* said, "Oh no! Now what? Priyaji is going to be so sad."

*Pavan Sarovar is a lake near Krishn's house in Nandgaon

Krishn humbly told the *sakhis*, "Just go and tell her not to worry; I will definitely find some lotuses for her. Please allow me some time." The *sakhis* smiled in reply. Krishn asked, "When do you need them?" The *sakhis* replied, "By noon."

Leaving his friends and cows behind, Krishn hid in the forest out of embarrassment. He then called one very close *sakha* and asked him to request Gunlata Manjari for help. Gaur Das Babaji didn't mention this at the time, but Gunlata Manjari is his own spiritual identity in *nitya lila*.

Gunlata Manjari replied, "I will help, but Krishn has to come and pick the lotuses himself. And make sure that Shri Priyaji doesn't find out, because we're going to take them from her garden!"

After hearing this news from his *sakha*, Krishn very shyly came out of the forest to meet Gunlata Manjari. Hiding a huge smile with her veil, she quickly led him to a small pond in Priyaji's garden. Krishn was overjoyed to see the pond fully blossoming with lotuses!

He eagerly climbed into the water and started collecting them, but confusion struck when he realised they had already been plucked and were merely floating on the water's surface. In reality, these were the same lotuses the *sakhis* had stolen from Pavan Sarovar the night before.

Suddenly, Shri Priyaji and her *sakhis* burst out from behind the trees giggling and shouting, "Hey! Stop that thief!" Gunlata Manjari hid behind Priyaji as the *sakhis* caught the thief, Krishn, by his arms and pulled him out of the water. They guided him to a nearby *kunj* where the *manjaris* dressed him in dry clothes, seated him next to his Beloved and served them both with all their hearts.

The Mercy of Hari Katha

Smiling the biggest smile, Shri Gaur Das Babaji fell back into his trance. Amongst the audience members was the saint Shri Ramdas Babaji, who was around seventeen years old at the time. Gaur Das Babaji's words were like rays of light that caused the lotus of his heart to blossom. It was as if his whole life had led up to this auspicious moment. That evening, Ramdas Babaji sat at Shri Sangam Ghat, the meeting point of Shri Radha Kund and Shyam Kund, performing *jap*.

There were very few people near the *kunds* at that time, but suddenly two Brajwasi girls walked by. Their beauty seemed not of this world, and Ramdas Babaji could sense a divine aura around them as they spoke to each other in Brajbhasha, a language he could barely understand. After they left, he couldn't help but wonder if perhaps they were Radharani's own *sakhis* sent by her to inspire him in his *bhajan*.



Shri Sangam Ghat in the 1970s

He continued chanting and meditating deep into the night, when surprisingly, the same two girls suddenly returned. Like before, they laughed and spoke excitedly, but now he was able to understand them. They beckoned Ramdas Babaji with their lotus hands and one of them said, "Come to the swing and feast your eyes on the beauty of love!"

Suddenly Ramdas Babaji saw Shri Radha and Krishn seated on a beautifully decorated swing, which hung from the large banyan tree on Shri Sangam Ghat.

Shri Priyaji's *sakhis* and *manjaris* surrounded them on all sides, and it seemed to Ramdas that he had become one of them. As the two girls pushed the divine couple on the swing, he drank the incomparable nectar of his Beloveds' beauty and sang:

झुलत श्याम, गोरी वाम
 आनन्द रङ्गे मातिया ।
 इषत् हसित रभसकेलि, झुलावत सब सखिनि मेलि
 गावत कोतो भातिया ॥

*jhulat shyam, gori vaam
 anand range maatiyaa ।
 ishat hasita rabhasa-keli, jhulaavata sab sakhini meli
 gaavata koto bhaatiyaa ॥*

"Overflowing with bliss because his radiant Beloved, Priyaji, sits to his left, Shyam swings joyfully to and fro. For the sake of their happiness, the *sakhis* serenade Priya-Priyatam with song after song as they push the swing with all their love."

References

Charit Madhuri published by Shri Pathbari Ashram



Braj Animal Care



Recently, Braj Animal Care had to put a temporary pause on its street animal medical services until we attain a more sustainable model through fundraising.

Simultaneously, the feeding program was expanded to two feedings per day. We hope to inaugurate our shelter and resume our medical care services within the next six months.

We also had a visit from a very special animal lover, Adidev, and his family on the occasion of his 8th birthday. He decided to celebrate his birthday with us as an extension of a school project on community services, and his family sponsored the day's feeding. Adidev brought his own cameraman and interviewed our coordinator, Vishakha, for his vlog. He was also very happy to participate in our daily feeding programme.



Distributing food and love to our local street animals

We are very proud of Adidev's dedication and for the way his parents support his interest in helping animals. For more updates on Braj Animal Care's activities, please follow us on social media:

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Maharajji's Latest Updates



Maharajji delivers Phaagotsav Katha

In February 2022, Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj gave a beautiful *katha* in Delhi on Phaagotsav or the Holi *lilas* of Shri Radha and Krishn. Maharajji explained how Krishn takes a forty-day holiday from his cow-herding duties from Vasant Panchami until the main day of Holi, so he is able to focus all his energy on playing.

The *katha* included beautiful *lilas* from *Anand Vrindavan Champu* describing the Holi competition between Shri Radha and her *sakhis* versus Shri Krishn and his *sakhas*. Maharajji explained that the *sakhis*, who are normally very shy and demure in public, leave all of that aside and do everything to ensure that Radharani wins. The *katha* was filled with the sweet exchanges between Radha and Krishn's teams.

Maharajji also offered words of advice to aspirants who wish to attain the Divine Couple's *lilas*. For example, he explained how to awaken Radha and Krishn according to the *bhaav* of *nitya lila*. First, a devotee should offer *pranaam* outside their home temple, ask their Gurudev's permission, clap three times and enter with the right foot first. The three claps represent the three animals who help awaken Shri Radha and Krishn in the morning: the mynah birds, the parrots, and the monkey Kakkhati.

The program concluded with beautiful flower Holi as everyone danced to sweet *rasiyas* (Holi songs). Enchanted by Maharajji's *katha*, the devotees left with a longing in their hearts to someday serve in Shri Radha and Krishn's *lilas* themselves.

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Vaishnav Calendar

For upcoming festivals and Ekadashi dates, please click [here](#) to view our Vaishnav calendar.

