



# MARG

A Path to Hindu Heritage

## BABY KRISHNA TAKEN TO GOKUL



**Janmashtami is on August 26, 2024**

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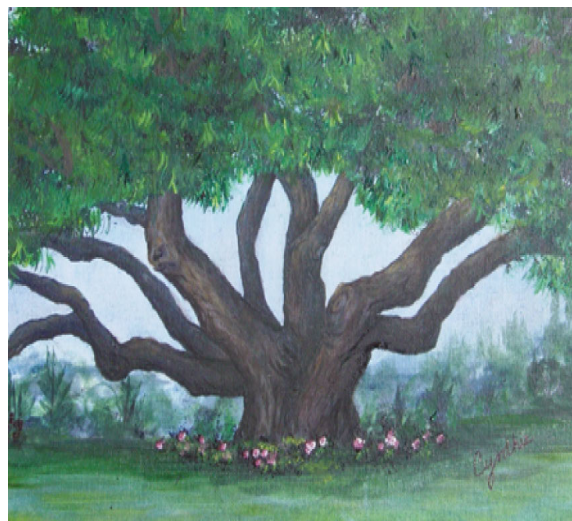
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# VEDANTA IN LIFE

(Part 2)

By Swami Jyotirmayananda

A great philosophical work of Vedanta known as “Yoga Vasishta” speaks of three interrelated methods that are geared to educate the unconscious, integrate the personality, and enlighten the intellect. These three methods are: (a) Tattva Jnana (knowledge of the self, (b) Vasana Kshaya (destruction of Vasana – subtle desires of the unconscious, and (c) Manonash (destruction of the conditioned mind)

In Part One (Refer to MARG V19N6), we discussed Tattva Jnana, now we will study Vasana Kshaya and Manonash.

## VASANA KSHAYA

The second project before an aspirant is vasana kshaya, which means educating the unconscious in order to bring about the destruction of the subtle desires that are based upon ego-consciousness.

The unconscious contains subtle impressions of positive and negative experiences that you have gathered from many lives. But all those impressions are not operative all the time. The group of those impressions that are operative at any one time are known as *vasanas*. You can consider them as subtle inclinations that you are not consciously aware of. But if you were to meditate and adopt certain advanced techniques, you

would begin to know them; or if you go to some expert psychoanalysis, to some extent, you will begin to know what is hidden within your unconscious.

But whether you know the contents of your unconscious or not, Vedanta presents a way of re-educating or reorienting the pattern of your unconscious. This is done through four practices which, according to the scripture of *Yoga Vasishta*, are called the four gatekeepers to the Palace of Liberation.

Sage Vasistha, the Guru of Sri Rama, teaches his disciple the great secret of Liberation. He teaches that in the Palace of Liberation there are four gatekeepers, and if the four gatekeepers are your friends, they will let you in. Therefore, make friends with these four. He further says that if you find it difficult to make friends with all the four, then just make friends with any three or any two of them, or even only one. If you make friends with even one, then the other three will follow.

### 1. FIRST GATEKEEPER

The first gatekeeper is *shama*, or serenity. Keep watch over your mind and make it a point to keep it serene. If things go wrong, understand that night follows day, and day follows night. The rainy season passes on and then spring comes. So, if such is the nature of things, then why should

you become so upset? Try to promote serenity of mind.

No doubt it is a hard task to keep the mind serene, but repeated effort must be maintained day by day, no matter how many times you fail. If you fail, you have nothing to lose. Someone scolds you and your mind becomes agitated. At that time remember that serenity is a greater treasure than being agitated and revenging upon a person for what he did. Further, when things go well, it is a more difficult task to be serene. When suddenly there has been success in business and a lot of money has been made, one becomes so elated that their mind becomes agitated. At this time try to be serene, because all the world can give is but so little. What your soul hungers for is eternity, so why be so excited about little things?

When you look at monkeys being so excited about little things in the forest, you laugh at them. But what about human beings? They are doing the same thing, excited over such little things. Men of tremendous power, of immense wealth, have come and gone. It is only little things that have made the mind so swollen and egotistical.

So, by guiding your thoughts along these lines, develop serenity. Befriend *shama* and the other qualities will come to you























# MEMORIES OF THE SOUL

The effects of a past life can manifest in your current life in many ways, but they should be used as a tool, not an excuse.

Inside our subconscious lies our memories from past lives. Though we seldom remember even having lived these past lives, the experiences we had living them have had a hand in shaping who we are today. The effects of a past life can manifest in a later lifetime in many ways — phobias, self-limiting beliefs, physical problems, or innate creative abilities. Violence, death, and trauma in a past life may show up as fear, uncontrollable anger, or low self-esteem in this one, while positive experiences from an earlier lifetime may cause you to feel strongly drawn to certain people, places, or objects without knowing why. You may also feel drawn to a particular period in history, a seemingly unfamiliar

locale, or a new person you've met who seems oddly familiar.

Many people turn to past life regression therapists to revisit their past lives. Past life regression allows you to recall the memories and emotions associated with a past life that continue to exert an influence over your present reality. You may not have even been aware that these experiences are still affecting you today. Past life regression therapy can offer you a unique opportunity to reconnect with these memories, so you can understand them and free yourself.

To discover more about your past lives, consider keeping a notebook where you can record anything that could be a memory from a different lifetime. Pick a time and choose a place where you can relax. Envision your body being filled with healing white light. Remember that

nothing you see or hear will harm you. Ask yourself what you hope to achieve through regression and connect with your inner vision. Observe what you see without judgment. When you are done, think about how what you experienced relates to your present life. There may be beliefs from a past life that you are still operating under but are now ready to let go of. The significance of your past life memory may not be obvious until much later. You can make the most of your past lives by learning from them. While past life regression can be an exciting journey, it is not a substitute for living in the present where we are most needed — right here and now.



Courtesy: [www.dailyOm.com](http://www.dailyOm.com)

## HINDUISM IS NOT JUST A FAITH

Hinduism is not just a faith.

It is the union of reason and intuition

that cannot be defined

but is only to be experienced.

Evil and error are not ultimate.

There is no Hell,

for that would mean there is a place

where God is not

and there are sins which exceed His love.

-- Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888-1975),  
First Vice President of India

# SPIRITUALITY INTEGRATION OF MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT FOR GOOD HEALTH

Rateebhai Patel, Arlington, VA

Most people have health problems or physical illnesses of some kind during the tortuous journey of their life.

Though good health has never been a "bed of roses" for life's long journey, very few of us are prepared, both mentally and spiritually, for coping with the illness that may visit us one day. Since modern medicine has achieved unprecedented success in treating many diseases, we all have come to rely very heavily on the "miracles" of present-day medicine to cure all our indispositions --- often ignoring the health of mind, body, and spirit. With increasing dependency on drug treatments, we completely ignore the "doses" of mental and spiritual medicine that are readily available to us, free of charge, for treating and coping with physical diseases.

As a society, we put too much emphasis on external forces to play a role in our well-being and pay little or no attention at all to the wonderful self-healing mechanism of the body at work under the direction of the mind. Since good health is our responsibility, we must understand the critical role that our mind plays in prevention, as well as cure, of disease. If properly handled with a strong mind, an illness need not be devastating. According to recent U. S. Research Studies, a strong mind accelerates healing and

recovery. Indeed, a strong mind can even retard and, in some cases, reverse, disease. The same studies further suggest that, when the mind is depressed for a lengthy period, certain types of diseases can occur, and recovery from such diseases can be diminished. On the other hand, a strong and vibrant mind can boost the body's defense mechanism (Immune System) in fighting disease. If the mind is kept strong and free from negative thoughts, the body tends to be healthy. Negative thoughts of hate, fear, jealousy, anger, and anxiety, if allowed to penetrate your mind, will work steadily to produce the loss of health.

Our mind is the "computer" that operates and controls our entire physical system, including the defense mechanism. Just as what we eat affects our overall health; similarly, what we allow to get into our mind affects our mental health and consequently our physical health too! Good, positive thinking brings healthy living together with emotional and physical well-being. Leave, therefore, no room for negative thoughts and always fill your mind with wholesome, uplifting thoughts.

There is no situation in our life that cannot be changed by reprogramming our mind with a strong will. Merely voicing positive affirmation changes the way we feel. Making the mind and

body receptive to healing is the best medicine. A cheerful state of mind is particularly restful to the body, allowing it full time to concentrate its energies on healing. A positive, optimistic frame of mind facilitates the intangible factor that accounts for the "miraculous" recovery. The undeterred "will" of mind, which means you have something strong and specific to live for, is of central importance in coping, healing, and recovery to physical well-being.

Attaining health, happiness and energy is basically a spiritual process. The spiritual life stimulates vitality, not only in the mind and soul, but also in the body. We become healthy to the degree our mind thinks healthy thoughts and our soul - our conscience, is morally clean. A clean conscience sends continuing newness of health throughout the entire system. The most effective way of holding our life together today is the "Spiritual Cement" of faith in God. Without this spiritual cement, our life disintegrates and breaks down under the pressure of stress and strain of our modern-day living. Good health and great energy are ours if we sincerely attempt to base our life on spiritual laws and principles found in the Vedic scriptures - principles that never change.

Good health requires an integration of mind, body, and







# JANMASHTAMI

## STORY OF KRISHNA BIRTH

Sri Sadhguru

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Krishna as a man, the mission that he took up in his life, the frailty of being a human being living such an active life and at the same time, the divine element – all these aspects form a complex web. It is not right to see him just as this or that. He would come out as a totally distorted figure if you were looking at just one aspect of his life. He is so multi-dimensional that unless you at least touch a little bit of all of him, it would be total injustice to him.

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### THE PLACE WHERE KRISHNA WAS BORN

Geographically, his birth took place in Mathura, in the present state of Uttar Pradesh. There was a prominent chief of the Yadava community named Ugrasena. Ugrasena was becoming old and his very ambitious son, Kamsa, who had no qualms about how to become powerful, could not wait for his father to die. He imprisoned his own father and took over leadership. He also aligned himself with an absolutely ruthless emperor from the East whose name was Jarasandha. Jarasandha's dream was to conquer the whole known world. Through absolute brutal force, his power was growing at great pace. Kamsa aligned with him because that was the only way to get powerful at that time.

### WHY KAMSA WANTED TO KILL KRISHNA

Kamsa's sister Devaki married Vasudeva, another Yadava chief. Immediately after the wedding, when Kamsa himself was

driving the newlywed couple in his chariot, an astral voice made a prophecy. A heavenly voice sounded a warning, "Oh Kamsa, very happily you are driving your sister after her wedding. The eighth child born to this sister of yours will slay you. That will be your end."

Immediately, Kamsa became violent. "Oh, her eighth child is going to come and kill me? I am going to kill her right now. Let's see how she will have her eighth child." He took out his sword and right there, wanted to behead his own sister. Vasudeva the groom, begged of Kamsa, "Please spare her life. How can you do this? She is your sister and we are just married. How can you just slaughter her right here?" "Her eighth child is going to kill me. I am not going to let anything like that happen." So, Vasudeva offered a pact, "I will give all our newborn children to you. You can kill them. But please spare my wife right now."

But Kamsa, overly concerned about his life and security, kept his sister and his brother-in-law under a kind of house imprisonment so that they were constantly watched. The first child was born, and the guards informed Kamsa. When he came, Devaki and Vasudeva wept and begged, "It is only the eighth child which is going to kill you. Spare this one." Kamsa said, "I don't want to take any



Vasudeva saw that this was a divine intervention. He picked up the child and as if by intuitive guidance, he walked to the river Yamuna. Though the whole place was flooding, he found to his surprise that the ford which crossed the river was sticking out and he could clearly walk. He walked across and went to the house of Nanda and his wife Yashodha. Yashodha had just delivered a girl child. She had had a difficult labor and was unconscious. Vasudeva replaced the girl child with Krishna, took the girl child and came back to the prison.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO YASHODA'S DAUGHTER

Vasudeva returned to prison. Then the girl child cried. The guards were woken up by the sound and went to report to Kamsa that a child had been born. By then, Puthana had returned too. Kamsa came and saw that it was a girl.

He knew something fishy had happened, so he asked Puthana, "Are you sure? Were you here when the child was born?" Puthana, fearing for her life said, "I was here. I saw it with my own eyes. This child was born to Devaki." To add authenticity, she said, "This child was born right here in front of my eyes." Devaki and Vasudeva begged, "See, it is just a girl. This girl cannot kill you. If it was a boy, he would have been your slayer. But this is a girl. Spare this girl." But Kamsa said, "No, I don't want to take any chances." So once again, he picked up the child by her legs and wanted to crush her on the floor. As he was about to do this, the child slipped





## DĀŚARĀJŅĀ YUDDHA - BATTLE OF THE TEN KINGS

Dr. Omesh Chopra

Most Indians have heard bed-time stories from two ancient Indian epics, Valmiki's Ramayana and Ved Vyāsa's, The Mahabharata. They are familiar with the war between Ayodhya king Rāma against Lanka king Ravana during the Ramayana period (~1800-1900 BCE), and between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas during the Mahabharata period (1400-1500 BCE). However, most of these people have not heard about the battle known as the Daśarājña Yuddha or Battle of the 10 kings, that took place earlier during the Vedic-period and is described in the Ṛg Veda. The battle was between a Vedic tribe of Tṛtsu-Bharatas and a confederation of ten Vedic and non-Vedic tribes.

During the Vedic period, to encourage peaceful and harmonious existence, yajñas were performed to (a) worship of deities (*deva-pujana*), (b) unity (*sangati karana*), and (c) charity (*daana*). During a yajña, oblations (*Ahuti*) were poured into a consecrated fire. Everything offered to the divine fire was believed to reach the Devas. The Ṛg Veda considers that Bhṛgu Ṛṣi Atharvan and his son Dadhīci were the founders of the ritual of yajña. F.E. Pargiter considers Dadhīci the founder of yajña. His descendant Cyavana Ṛṣi performed the first Aśvamedha yajña. The oblations offered in a yajña included purified ghee, milk, grains, cakes, meat, and Soma. The fermented juice of the Soma plant was mixed with clarified

butter and used in rituals. Ṛg Veda describes the fire ritual (*Agnihotra Yajña*) and offering of Soma\* to the gods (*Soma Yajña*). The hymns of the Ṛg-Veda were recited by the *Hotṛ*, the presiding priest. The formulas from the Yajur Veda were recited by the *Adhvaryu*, the officiating priest. The formulas contained in the Sama Veda were sung by the *Udgāṭṛ*, the priest that chants. Note that both Vedic and Zoroastrian people are fire worshippers. In their traditions, Atharvan Ṛṣis were considered as fire keepers. The role of Atharvan was taken by the Magi in Zoroastrian beliefs.

However, belief in bhakti (devotion) towards a chosen deity such as Śakti (Devī) and Śiva, was also being practiced by some non-Vedic cultures during the Pre-Vedic and Vedic periods. Dadhīci Ṛṣi was a great devotee of Śiva. He traveled through South India to preach Śaivism. Sati the daughter of Dakṣa and the wife of Lord Śiva, had heard about Śiva from Dadhīci. The abundance of bulls on Harappan seals, suggests a connection between the bull and Harappan God. Nandi, the bull, is Śiva's vahana (vehicle). Nandi signifies strength, and virility, and the bearer of truth and righteousness. A few Vedic hymns suggest some antagonism of the Vedic Āryans towards the followers of Proto-Śiva, e.g., Śivas and Visasins (horned headdress wearers), Śiśnadevas (phallus worshippers),

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\* Soma plant has been identified as Ephedra, the original species of Soma would be Ephedra sinica, the Chinese plant.





Before the 300-yr drought  $\approx 2300$  BCE, the northwest region of India was very fertile. Several rivers are mentioned in the Nadistuti hymn (X 75.5 and 6) of Rg-Veda:

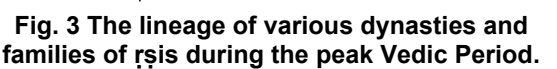
O Arjikiya, with Suṣomā hear my call. First with Trstama thou art eager to flow forth, with Rasa, and Susartu, and with Śvetyā here With Kubhā; and with these Sindhu and Mehatnu, thou seekest in thy course Krumu and Gomati.

[illegible]

Vitastā (Jhelum), Sindhu (Indus), and Kubhā and Śvetyā (Kabul/Kunar). The river names in parentheses are the present names.

**TRTSU-BHARATA**

**July-August 2024**



The proponents of above view, explain this by assuming that Helmand River in Afghanistan was the R̥g Vedic Sarasvatī, and Tṛtsu-Bharatas were the Āryans who were moving east towards the Sarasvatī-Sindhu valley. After entering India, they settle in West Punjab region ≈1700-1500 BCE, they named the Sapta-Sindhu rivers after the original Sarasvatī River and its tributaries. Furthermore, they named their newfound land "Bhārata," after the son of Duśyanta and Śakuntalā. However, Bhāgavata Purāṇa states that India's name "Bhārata," originated from Bharata, a descendent of Svāyambhuva Manu's son Priyavrata. Agni Purāṇa considers Ajamīdha, Dvimīdha, and Purumīdha the sons of Bṛhatputra, of the Niṣāda tribe. Most likely, Bṛhatputra was a descendant of Bharata the son of Ṛṣabha. Several scholars consider India was named after this Bharata. Also, the information in the R̥g Veda clearly indicates that the Bharatas are moving towards the west during the Daśarājña Yuddha and not east.

as Uttarvedi. The Tṛtsu-Bharatas evolved from Nīla, they occupied the region between Dṛṣadvatī and Gaṅgā. Bṛhadiṣu's kingdom was located east of the nation of Rkṣa. Note that before 2000 BCE, Sutlej and Yamunā Rivers were tributaries of Sarasvatī River. During Samvarna's rule, there was a severe drought. Also, Pañchāla king invaded Samvarna's kingdom. Samvarna had to flee with his family and ministers. He established a colony along the Sapta-Sindhu valley. They lived there until the people of the Uttarvedi succeeded in driving out the invaders. By then, Samvarna had passed away. They requested Samvarna's successor to return to his kingdom. Samvarna's successor had married Tapati; their son was the pious king Kuru. After returning to Uttarvedi, Kuru cleared the region between Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī to establish his new kingdom (≈2700 BCE).

Later, Uttarvedi was named Kuru-jungle. Kuru believed that Sarasvatī River personified the eight virtues of spirituality: truth (*satya*), kindness (*daya*), purity (*Śuddha*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), charity (*dāna*), ritual sacrifice (*yajña*), celibacy when unmarried (*brahmacharya*), and austerity (*tapa*). He performed *tapa* for which the region was declared as a Holy land. It was named Kurukṣetra (land of Kuru). It is also called Brahmavedi and Dharam-Kṣetra. Kuru's capital was at Āsandīvāt (Assandh) in Haryana around Karnal and Jind. Ṛg-Veda hymn VI 61.1 says that Vadhryaśva (castrated horses) worshipped Sarasvatī, and she gave him Divodāsa (canceller of debts). Indra helped Divodāsa destroy 9 and 90 forts of the Dasyu Śambara and killed him. Divodāsa also vanquished Turvaśa and Yadu.











## THE BLIND MAN CARRYING A LAMP

Rituals are a part and parcel of the Indian culture. But most of the time these rituals are followed without any understanding, and followed because someone told us to do so. The following story describes the danger of following rituals without knowing their true purpose.

A blind man stayed with his friend for a few days, and then started for his hometown in the night. His friend gave him a lit lantern, but the man protested, "Why do I need a lantern? Everything is the same for me. For someone who is blind, what is the use of carrying a lamp?"

"My dear friend, this is not for you; this is for the person who comes in front of you. If you have this lamp in your hand, the person who comes in front of you will not bump into you."

"In that case, I will take it," the blind man said.

He took the lamp and started walking in the dark. In spite of that, someone collided into him head-on down the road. The blind man lost his balance and fell down. He got angry and asked, "Why did you bump into me? I had a lamp with me - can't you watch where you're going?"

"What lamp? I don't see anything," said the man who bumped into him and looked around.

Then he found the lamp and said, "Oh yes! There is a lamp here, but the flame had gone out long ago, my dear friend.

The man held the lamp in his hands for the light it gave. Holding it high and walking even after the flame died out is just a meaningless ritual. Many things that we started in our life with a purpose have lost their original quality and are continuing as mere rituals.

There is a certain tradition in Karnataka. If non-vegetarian food is served to a guest at someone's home, they will keep a pestle next to the leaf on which food is served. Many people were asked about the reason for this, but they did not know. After asking several elderly people who were well-versed in the culture, the answer was found out.

Earlier, the tradition was to keep a small stick next to the leaf as a toothpick, in case the person got something stuck between his teeth. As time went by, they replaced the tiny toothpick with a stick and then some fool started putting a pestle instead of a stick. Later, this became the standard practice without anyone asking for an explanation. Can anyone use a pestle as a toothpick?

This is how we create certain processes to benefit our lives. But when we forget why these processes were fundamentally created and start following things simply because our grandfathers and fathers did it, it becomes a mere ritual. Because we do not understand why something was done in our tradition generation after generation, we are confused about whether it is needed for our life or not.











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