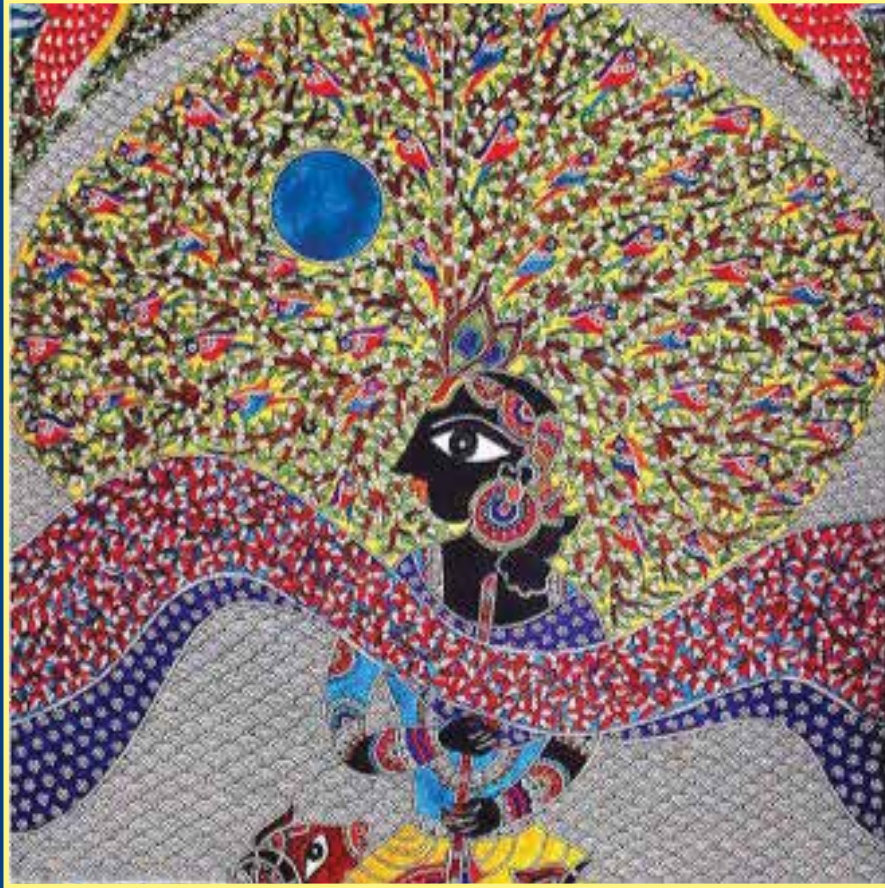


ananda

..... dharma leads to ānandā



*‘vasudevasutaṁ devaṁ kāmśacāṇūramardanam |
devakīparamānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vande jagadgurum ||’*

“I salute *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord, the world-teacher, the son of *Vasudeva*,
the destroyer of *Kaṁsa* and *Cāṇūra*, and the greatest joy of *Devakī*”



With the blessings of
Brahmaleena Pujyasri Swami Dayananda Saraswati
&
Pujyasri Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati



KALAVARDHINI

Presents



A Thematic Presentation through Dance, Depiction and Narration

PROGRAMME

ĀNANDĀ

Priyadarsini Govind, Chennai – Curtain Raiser

LĪLĀ MADHURAM

Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Delhi – Nāṭya Kathā (Kṛṣṇa)

Shobana, Chennai – Bharatanatyam (Navanītacora)

Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar – Gotipua (Govardhanagiridhāri)

Priti Patel & Anjika, Kolkata – Manipuri (Rāsālīlā)

GOVINDAMĀ PARAMĀNANDAM

Rajashree Shirke, The Lasya Academy, Mumbai – Kathā Kathā Śailī of Kathak Nṛtya (Rādhā Kṛṣṇa)

Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar – Odissi (Gīta Govindam)

KṚṢṆAMĀ VANDE JAGADGURUM

Dr. Aparna Sindhoor, USA & Pavithra Srinivasan, Chennai – Saṁvāda (Kṛṣṇa Arjuna)

Sridevi Nrithyalaya, Chennai – Pinnal Kolattam (Saṁsāra)

Ranan, Kolkata – Kathak (Māyājālam)

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chennai – Bharatanatyam (Karma Yoga)

Santosh Nair, Sadhya Group, Delhi – Mayurbhanj Chhau (Viśvarūpam)

ĀNANDANṚTYAM

Shijith Nambiar, Samradhya Group, Chennai – Bharatanatyam

KṚṢṆA GĀNAM

Kuldeep M Pai & Soorya Gayathri

VENUE : Music Academy • DATE : Monday, 11th January 2016 • TIME : 5.30 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.

Please be seated by 5.15 p.m.

Artistes



Priyadarsini Govind

Priyadarsini is one of the foremost classical dancers of India. Her style of Bharatanatyam is a unique combination of intensity and lightness, packaged with style and finesse. She has performed world over to much acclaim. She is currently Director, Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai.

An iconic cultural personality of India, Dr. Sonal Mansingh is acknowledged as master of cultural interpretations and an exemplary teacher who explains inter-linkages with philosophy, literature, sculpture and mythological parables through lectures and dance. She is a distinguished Odissi dancer-researcher, who is as proficient in Bharatanatyam and Chhau. She founded the Centre for Indian Classical Dances, Delhi, in 1977, where she trains numerous students; in addition she works with tribal girls in Dang district, Gujarat. Her explosive talent, vidwat, oratory and flair for the dramatic, finds one more avenue-the ancient art of story-telling, the Naatya-Katha. She is a Padma Vibhushan awardee.



Dr. Sonal Mansingh



Shobana

Shobana, a Padmashree awardee, is one of the most talented artists India has produced. She is a multiple award-winning actor, a naturally gifted Bharatanatyam dancer, an effortless choreographer, in short, a fount of creativity. She has also founded the Kalarpana Institute of Bharatanatyam where she trains dancers to be soloists as well as ensemble dancers.

GOTIPUA is a dance form that was performed by pre-adolescent boys as a ritual in the Lord Jagannath temple. The dance form is considered a pre-cursor to modern day Odissi. The young artists are from the Orissa Dance Academy



Gotipua



Priti Patel & Anjika

Priti Patel is a celebrated Manipuri dancer who trained in the Sankirtan and Rasleela traditions, in the ritualistic Lai Haraoba and in the Manipuri martial art Thang-ta. Priti's choreographies combine these styles into a unique dramatic idiom. She trains students at the Anjika Centre for Manipuri Dance and Movement Therapy at Imphal and Kolkata.

Pung Cholom is from the Sankirtan tradition and is a dynamic performance of Manipuri drummers, where they dance and drum at the same time. This is also a prologue to Rasleela.

Rasleela is inspired from Vaishnav texts; it depicts Krishna in love play with Radha and her friends on a full moon night of Vasanta.

Rajashree is a volcano of talent – a talented Kathak and Bharatanatyam dancer, a choreographer, a Guru, a dramatist, a littérateur and an academician. She co-pioneered the Ranga Nritya genre, which is a symbiosis of body language, speech and music. Rajashree is the Founder-Director and the Principal of the Lasya Centre For Dance Education and Research. She has been awarded twice over by the Sangeet Natak Akademi for merit in different fields.



Rajashree Shirke, The Lasya Academy



Orissa Dance Academy

Orissa Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar, founded by the illustrious Guru Gangadhar Pradhan and run under the guidance of well-known dancer-choreographer Guru Aruna Mohanty, is one of the premier cultural institutions of Orissa. Carrying on the tradition of her guru, Guru Mohanty imbues the institution with her passion; her older students learn Odissi and the younger boys learn Gotipua,.

Dr. Aparna Sindhoo, Artistic Director of Navarasa Dance Theater, Massachussetts, is a leading exponent of the Mysore style of Bharatanatyam. Having trained with the legendary palace dancer, Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma, she has graduate degrees and a doctorate in Dance, Literature and Women's studies. She teaches dance, yoga, Kalaripayattu martial arts and theatre. Dr. Aparna is known for creating and performing unique dance theatre works around the world.



Dr. Aparna Sindhoo



Pavithra Srinivasan

Pavithra Srinivasan is a disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati and with His blessings she runs a school, 'Arsha Kala Bharati' where she teaches children Bharatanatyam and the Vedic Heritage curriculum. Her twin passions, Vedanta and Bharatanatyam, find their outlet in solos dealing with spiritual themes, under the Dhananjayans' mentorship. Pavithra is also a part of the Bharata Kalanjali performing group and travels extensively with them.

Sridevi Nrithyalaya was founded in the year 1987 to promote Bharatanatyam in Villivakkam and later Virugambakkam in Chennai. Under the keen eye and guidance of Guru Sheela Unnikrishnan, the Mellattur style of Bharatanatyam is taught, along with laya, spirituality, yoga, etc. The institute boasts of more than 300 students at present.



Sridevi Nrithyalaya



Ranan

Headed by Artistic Director Vikram Iyengar, the Ranan Performance Collective, Kolkata, is a diverse group of Kathak dancers, actors, designers, facilitators and production people, committed to sharing the magic of the arts with diverse audiences. While staying rooted to Kathak, the group combine classical dance, choreography and dance theatre to create new experiences.

Meenakshi Srinivasan is a young, vibrant and exciting Bharatanatyam dancer who is known for her purity of form and depth of connection. She had her initial training under the well-known dancer Alarmel Valli in the Pandanallur style; she has over the years developed her own sense of style and aesthetics. She is also a successful architect.



Meenakshi Srinivasan



Santosh Nair, Sadhya Group

Santosh Nair has trained in Kathakali, contemporary dance and Mayurbhanj Chhau. Specialising in Chhau and in contemporary dance, Santosh has collaborated with dancers across the globe. He seeks to create drama through sheer physicality of movements. He is the Artistic Director of the dance company, Sadhya.

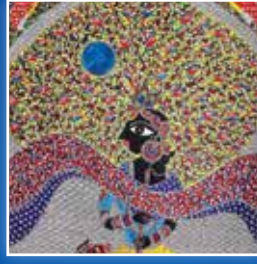
The young, dancing duo from Kalakshetra have very quickly established themselves as Bharatanatyam artists of high calibre. In addition to travelling around the world, performing and conducting workshops, Shijith and Parvathy have founded an institution, 'Samradhya' in which traditional Indian art forms, especially Bharatanatyam, is disseminated.



Shijith Nambiar, Samradhya Group



Yāsodā holding Kṛṣṇa



Introduction

*'vaṁśī vibhūṣitakarāt navanīradābhāt
pītāmbarād aruṇabimbā-phalādharoṣṭhāt |
pūrṇendu sundara mukhād aravinda netrāt
kṛṣṇāt param kim api tattvam ahaṁ na jāne ||'*

(Swami Madhusudana Saraswati)

“*Kṛṣṇa's* hand is decorated with the flute, whose complexion is like the fully laden rain cloud, who is draped in *pītāmbara* (yellow colour dress), whose lips are red like *bimba* fruit, whose face is as radiant as full moon, whose eyes are beautiful like lotus petals, I do not know any other *tattvam*/Reality other than this *Kṛṣṇa*.”

The name '*Kṛṣṇa*' by itself is charming and it means *ākarṣaṇam*, a compelling attraction. At once it evokes the memories of the Divine, mischievous child of *Gokula - Bālamukunda*; the cowherd of *Vṛndāvan - Nandakiṣora*; the blue boy clothed in yellow, crowned with peacock feathers, with a flute in hand - *Veṅṅopāla*; beloved of the *Gopīs - Madana Mohana*; stealer of hearts - *Citta Cora*; loyal friend and protector of devotees – *Bhakta Vatsala*; the charioteer of *Arjuna – Pārthasārathi* and the one who taught humanity the way of life – *Jagadguru*.

Every aspect of *Kṛṣṇa* and His deeds have deep symbolism, indicating the absolute truth. The word *Kṛṣṇa* means 'dark' indicating the Supreme Consciousness. The ever smiling lotus-eyed *Kṛṣṇa* is described as being blue in colour and wearing *pītāmbara*, yellow coloured clothes. Blue is the colour of the infinite and whatever is immeasurable will appear to the mortal eye only as blue, like the sky and the ocean. Yellow represents the earth. Hence, the finite blue form of *Kṛṣṇa* clothed in yellow, appropriately suggests the pure infinite Consciousness. The one infinite Reality *Kṛṣṇa* has become the world of endless forms.

The incarnation of *Kṛṣṇa* represents the descent of the infinite *Brahman* to the material world. *Kṛṣṇa* has demonstrated Divine glories, *vibhūti*, at all levels right from birth, childhood, teenage years, youth, in middle

age, in fact at all times. Each day of His life upon earth, He lived a spectacular, daring and gracious life of joyous ease. We always associate *Kṛṣṇa* as a bundle of joy, butter eating, plump prankster, surrounded by the *Gopīs* and a happy person with no problems. *Kṛṣṇa's* life in fact was packed with challenging incidents and happenings that would cause intense sorrow to a lesser mortal.

He was born in the darkness of a stormy night in the jail. His parents, *Vasudeva* and *Devakī* had to suffer imprisonment because his birth was predicted as the killer of his uncle *Kaiṁsa*. His father had to cross the flooded river *Yamunā* to reach the new born baby to *Gokula* for safety. Life in *Gokula* was a threat with many dangers and then *Kṛṣṇa* had to move to *Vṛndāvan* to safeguard the lives of the *Gopas*. While he was seven years, *Kṛṣṇa* had to face the wrath of his uncle *Kaiṁsa* at *Mathurā* and He never returned to *Vṛndāvan*. Again he moved all his people to establish the *Yadu* kingdom at *Dvārakā*.

His travels were not at an end and He then went to *Hastināpura* to help the *Pāṇḍavas* fight the *Kuruksetra* war in the *Mahābhārata* to establish *dharma*. *Kṛṣṇa* returned to *Dvārakā* only to find His *Yādava* clan destroying each other. He then went away to the forest in search of peace. While resting under a tree, His heels covered with flowers was mistaken to be a bird and he was shot by a poisonous

arrow that ended his earthly existence. So, His life was not easy but one that was a challenge at every juncture.

Kṛṣṇa's tribaṅga (three bended) posture conveys the ease with which He dealt any situation. He escaped no problems, avoided no pains, never shied away from any situation however inconvenient or unpleasant it might have been. He lived life like the lotus, always rising above the muddy waters yet not getting wet and blooming with great beauty. He was always happy and spontaneously performed His duties. He rose above the joys and sorrows of life, never complaining, never dissatisfied and always being established in higher Reality, *svarūpa ānandā*.

The purpose of *Kṛṣṇa's* life on earth was to establish *dharma*. Whenever good people are not allowed to remain good or live a life of *dharma* due to threat from the *adhārmic*, *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa* says –

*'yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata |
abhyuttānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham ||
(Bhagavad Gitā 4.7)*

“Whenever there is a decline in right living (everywhere), and increase in wrong living I bring Myself into being (assume a physical body).”

Kṛṣṇa's life, His pranks, His acts of mischief, the diplomacy, the tact that He displayed and even the lies that He spoke were only to save and protect humanity from a dire situation when *dharma* was on a decline.

Kṛṣṇa showed mankind that if one always stays connected with the higher Reality, which is *ānandā*, limitlessness, one can overcome all the problems that one faces in life, go through both pleasant and unpleasant situations without getting affected by them and perform one's duties spontaneously.



Līlā Madhuram



Yaśodā feeding Kṛṣṇa

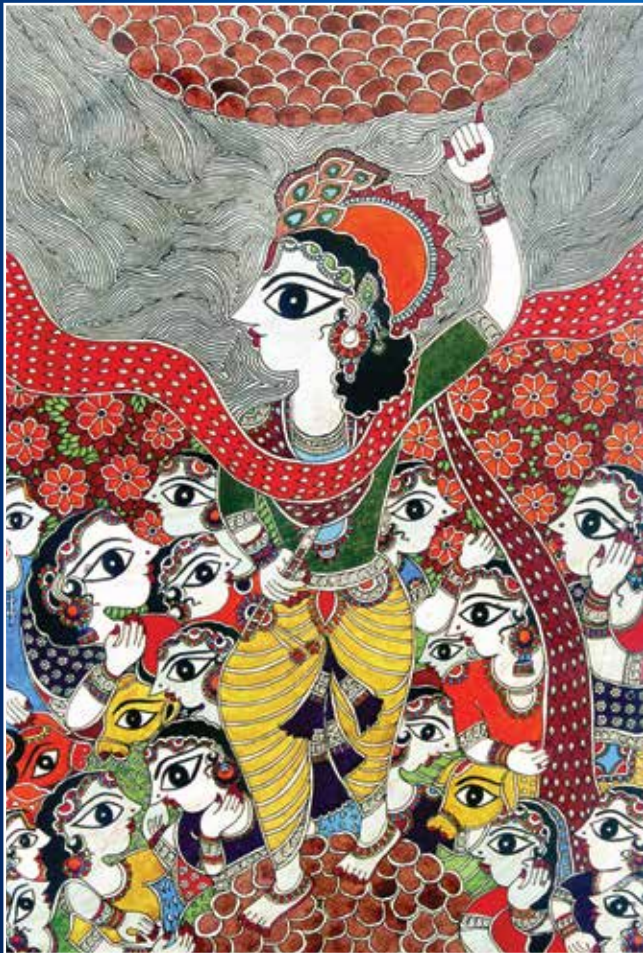
The divine child *Kṛṣṇa* was born in the prison in the darkness of a stormy night to *Vasudeva* and *Devakī* in *Mathurā*. Neither the iron bars nor the prison guards could confine Him. His father *Vasudeva* safely carried Him out of the prison to *Nanda Mahārājā* and *Yaśodā* in *Gokula*. *Vasudeva* had to face many dangers while crossing the flooded *Yamunā* River.

Nanda Mahārājā celebrated the birth ceremony of *Kṛṣṇa* very joyfully. He invited all his people to a feast and sought the blessings of elders. He gave many gifts in charity as thanksgiving for the birth of baby *Kṛṣṇa*.

As Mother *Yaśodā* was firmly convinced of the *Vedic* injunctions about the importance of cows and the holy names of *Bhagavān*, she chanted all the names of *Viṣṇu* to protect her beloved child *Kṛṣṇa* from dangers. She did not know that *Kṛṣṇa* needed no protection for he was himself the incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu*.

Many of the *bāla līlās* can be enjoyed from the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which details the enthralling stories of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Some of the *līlās* of *Kṛṣṇa* include the killing of the *rākṣasī Pūtānā*, the demon *Tr̥ṇāvarta*, subduing the poisonous snake *Kālīa*, lifting the *Govardhana* hill to protect the *Gopas* and *Gopīs* from violent storms and rains and many more. Although *Pūtānā* was an evil spirit, she gained an elevation in stature as a mother because she breast fed Him, even though it was with the evil intent of killing Him with her poisonous milk.

As *Kṛṣṇa* and His brother *Balarāma* began to crawl, bells were tied to their waist and ankles. The music from these bells fascinated and pleased their mothers. Sometimes like ordinary children, they would be frightened by something or the other and would run back to the safety of their mothers' arms for protection. Sometimes the naughty babies would crawl into the cowshed and catch the tail of a calf and stand up. To see this enjoyable sight, *Yaśodā* and *Rohiṇī* would call all their friends in the neighbourhood, the *Gopīs*. The *Gopīs* were mesmerised when they saw these childhood pastimes of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Balarāma*.



Kṛṣṇa lifting Govardhana hill

The *Gopīs* while enjoying the naughty tricks of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Balarāma* would complain to *Yaśodā* saying, “Dear *Yaśodā*, why don’t you restrict your naughty *Kṛṣṇa*? He comes to our houses along with *Balarāma* every day to steal yoghurt and butter. If they are caught stealing and we warn them, they simply smile so charmingly that we do not have the heart to punish them.”

When mother *Yaśodā* would chastise her boy after hearing all the complaints, she would see His pitiable face and not punish Him and would instead rush to *Kṛṣṇa*’s defence.

Everyone accused *Kṛṣṇa* of stealing butter. Yet *Kṛṣṇa* always maintained that He never stole the butter. He denied this even though He was caught red handed with butter smeared on his hands, mouth and face. He explained to *Yaśodā* saying, “You say *Kṛṣṇa*... *Kṛṣṇa* with every breath. When you milk the cows, you say *Kṛṣṇa*... *Kṛṣṇa*! When you boil the milk, you say *Kṛṣṇa*... *Kṛṣṇa*! When you churn the yoghurt for butter you say *Kṛṣṇa*... *Kṛṣṇa*! When you place the churned butter in the pot hanging from up so high, you say *Kṛṣṇa*.. *Kṛṣṇa*! Now tell me mother, to whom does all this butter belong? I do not steal butter from homes where they do not remember me at every breath. You are all so dear to me that I feel you and yours are mine. I am only taking what is mine!”

Kṛṣṇa demonstrates the idea that he loots the material possessiveness and the vanity of possession from the heart of devotees. Churned butter is like the *vāsanās* that one acquires due to accumulated *karma*. The Lord removes the *mamakāra* from the devotees’ minds in this way.

The *Gopīs* performed their obligatory duties throughout the day in constant remembrance of *Kṛṣṇa*. This, in short is the essence of *karmayoga* - for this is the dedication of one’s action to *Kṛṣṇa*. Such activities exhaust one’s *vāsanās* (inherent tendencies, habitual notions) and also prevent

the formation of any new *vāsanās*, that may be formed without one’s knowledge.

Kṛṣṇa is described as the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient Reality. Yet His mother *Yaśodā* saw only her child in Him. On one occasion, the little boy *Kṛṣṇa* was suspected by His mother of having eaten mud, something many children do! *Yaśodā* chided Him and *Kṛṣṇa* replied, “My dear mother! *Balarāma* and others are speaking lies. I have not eaten any mud. You can look into my mouth to see if I have eaten mud or not.” When He opened His mouth wide like an ordinary boy, *Yaśodā* saw the complete glory of creation in all its multiplicity inside *Kṛṣṇa*’s mouth. She also saw herself taking *Kṛṣṇa* onto her lap and feeding Him. Upon seeing this vision she was awe-struck and began to wonder if she was dreaming and fainted. By denying that he had not eaten mud, *Kṛṣṇa* was only telling the truth here, for the earth is included in His universal form. When He is the whole, how can He eat parts of the whole?

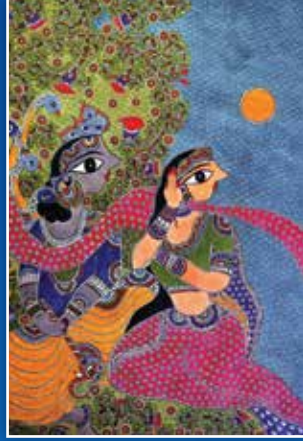
That *Kṛṣṇa* was a divine child was evident from the various incidents in *Gokula*. *Kṛṣṇa* protects the *Vraja* people - the *Gopas* and *Gopīs* at every stage from every threat and danger. It was that simple genuine love and selfless devotion of the *Vrajavāsīs* that gave them the *yoga kṣema*, the special care and protection of *Kṛṣṇa* who performed baffling miracles. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Kṛṣṇa* says, ‘*Yoga kṣemam vahnīyaham*’, “I shall take care of their acquisition and preservation of their needs.”

We look at this protection given to devotees as a teaching or a promise from *Bhagavān* in the *Gītā*. Every action and miracle associated with *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa* that begins from his birth demonstrates this protection and love.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa*’s *līlās* were not merely endearing pranks of a child but had a Divine purpose and deeper meaning.



Govindam Paramānandam



Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa, the beloved lad of *Vṛndāvan*, is popularly pictured amidst dancing *Gopīs*. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* is the Consciousness that vitalises the thoughts and remains the unaffected witness of the *Gopīs* ecstasy.

The *Gopīs* said, "... our liberation, our bliss is just being with our *Kṛṣṇa*, expressing our love and dancing the

dance of eternal bliss with Him! For us He is everywhere, He is with us, He is in us..." Their minds were totally attuned to *Kṛṣṇa*.

The *Gopīs* knew instinctively that *Kṛṣṇa* was not *Nanda* and *Yaśodā's* child but was a Divine incarnation. They willingly suspend their disbelief; enjoy dancing with *Kṛṣṇa* to the divine music flowing from His flute. In the *Gopikā Gītam*, the *Gopīs* sing:

*'na khalu gopikā nandano bhavān,
akhila dehinām antarātma-druk |*

*vikhana sārthito visva guptaye,
sakha udeyivān sātvatām kule ||'*

"You are not the son of *Gopīs*, you are the soul of all beings. By the request of Lord *Brahma*, you have appeared in our *Sātvatām kulam* to protect the world, O Lord who is our friend."

The *Gopīs* pray to be relieved of their pangs of separation, "Being the *antaryāmin* of the entire universe, You know better how we feel your absence. Please come soon and give us the boon of Thy glance and the grandeur of Your presence."

Sometimes *Kṛṣṇa* disappears and the *Gopīs* are bereft of him. This is to make them feel and love Him more intensely. Like, if someone has experienced joy before and they are deprived of that joy at a given moment, then they miss it even more and think about it all the time. They have a longing for it. Similarly *Kṛṣṇa's* absence makes the *Gopīs* long for Him.



Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with Gopīs

Rādhā is the most beautiful and the most beloved of all *Gopīs*. *Rādhā's* love for *Kṛṣṇa* is symbolic of eternal love between the devoted mortal and the Divine. In relation to *Bhagavān* it is said that all of us are the feminine principle. *Rādhā's* yearning for union with her beloved *Kṛṣṇa* is the *Jiva's* longing for spiritual awakening for uniting with its source of peace and bliss from which it has apparently become separated due to ignorance. *Rādhā* represents this state of devotion and consequent union with *Kṛṣṇa*.

Rādhā's love was pure and her devotion to *Kṛṣṇa* was unparalleled. No one can be compared to or be equal to *Rādhā* and the *Gopīs* in their devotion to *Kṛṣṇa*. Therefore *Rādhā* and *Gopī* enjoy true bliss in His company. The more they enjoyed *Kṛṣṇa's* company, the more they became

enlightened with His glories. Whereas *Kṛṣṇa* being the Supreme Consciousness does not need anyone's love, yet at the same time He will bless His true devotees.

The *Gopīs* teach us *Prema bhakti* and through it the way to experiencing bliss.

Though the *Gīta Govindam* is a *śṛṅgāra rasa varṇanam*, it is filled with *bhagavat rahasya garbhītam* - the union of the *Jivātmā* with *Paramātmā*. It is an allegory portraying the longing for *Bhagavān*. It is not a sensual portion of a love story but a symbolic portrayal of sublime devotion at its highest level.

Gopīs represent the *Jivātmā* and *Kṛṣṇa* the *Paramātmā*. The longing of *Rādhā* for *Kṛṣṇa* is the *Jiva's* longing to realise its higher nature of *Paramātmā*!

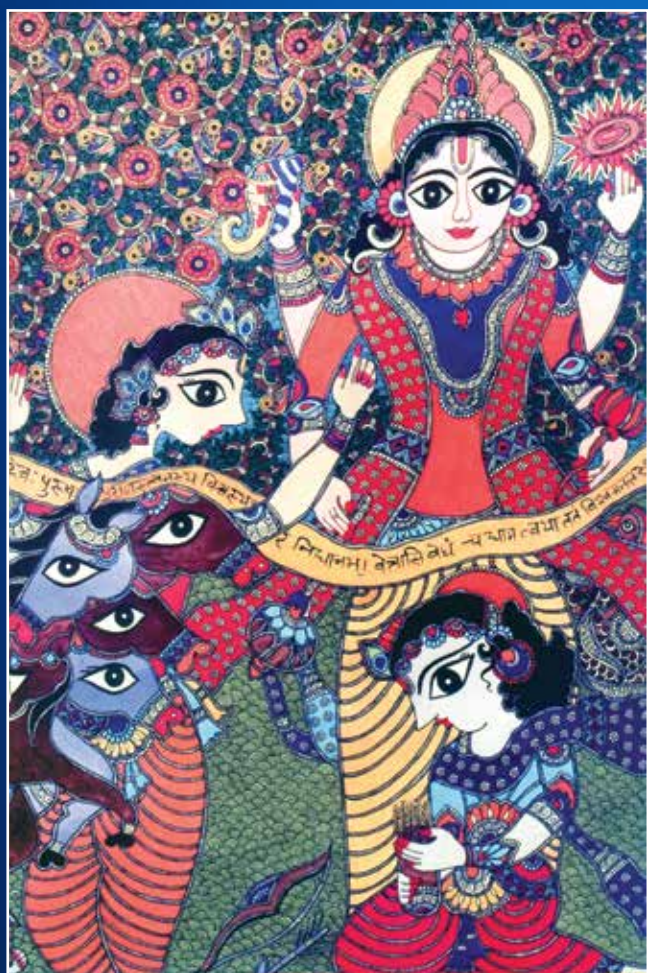


Kṛṣṇam Vande Jagadgurum



Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna

Bhagavān is the one who has *bhaga*, the six-fold virtues in absolute measure. These virtues are: *jñāna* – all knowledge; *vairāgya* – complete dispassion; *vīrya* – the capacity to create, sustain and resolve; *yaśas* – absolute fame; *śrī* – all wealth; and *aiśvarya* – overlordship.



Viśvarūpam

Bhagavad Gītā is the song of *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa* who has all the six-fold *bhagas*. We can also look at it another way – as a song that has *Bhagavān* as the subject matter. It presents *yoga śāstra* which talks about *karma yoga* and *Brahma vidyā* which is the knowledge of *Brahman*. As both *karma yoga* and *Brahma vidyā* are dealt with, the *Gītā* is considered complete and referred to as *Gītā Śāstra*. It is the essence of all the *Upaniṣads* and *dharma śāstras*.

Brahma vidyā means the knowledge of ‘what is’. What is *Brahman*? What is *Īśvara*, the Lord? What is the reality of this world, the *Jagat*? What is the nature of oneself, the *Jīva*? What is the relationship between *Jīva*, the *Jagat* and *Īśvara*? What is the reality of each of them? Are they all one or are they separate entities? *Brahma vidyā* or knowledge of *Brahman* reveals all this.

To gain this *Brahma vidyā*, there are certain qualifications mentioned. This can be provided by *karma yoga* alone. To help one gain these qualifications, *karma yoga* is discussed in the *Gītā*. *Īśvara arpaṇa buddhi* and *Īśvara prasāda buddhi* are the two attitudes with reference to actions you perform and the results you get. Both the attitudes are born of an understanding of *Īśvara*, the Lord, without which you cannot have the attitude of *karma yoga*. A person gains *antaḥkaraṇa śuddhi*, a mind completely free from the hold of *rāga-dveṣas*/likes and dislikes through *karma yoga*. That mind is refined and prepared to understand the higher Reality and truth of the self.

For a book to enjoy the status of scripture, it must have a message which never becomes obsolete, outdated or irrelevant to any person, at any time and in any place. *Bhagavad Gītā* was taught by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* to *Arjuna*. The

message of course was delivered at a given time and place to a given person. However, if that message had only been relevant to *Arjuna*, then it cannot be called as scripture and we cannot become beneficiaries by reading that book. *Arjuna* wanted *śreyas* (happiness) to get rid of sorrow once and for all from his heart. In fact, not only *Arjuna*, but each one of us want only that. *Arjuna's* problem was a fundamental problem and it required a fundamental solution.

Any self-conscious person has a self-judgement. In that self-judgement, there is a sense of incompleteness and self-inadequacy. He cannot accept himself and therefore has to transform himself to be somebody different from what he is. Such a person is a born seeker. This is the fundamental problem of all human beings. The seeker ceases to seek only when he understands he is the whole and is no more incomplete. In the vision of the *Gītā*, you are the whole. For this reason, the *Gītā* is always relevant to all people. So the message of *Gītā* is universal.

A universal message is relevant to everyone, everywhere, even though not everyone will be interested in it. The message of the *Gītā* is extremely valuable to everyone. Without it, one's life is a search that never comes to an end. The message which *Kṛṣṇa* gives in the *Gītā*, is what makes Him the *Jagadguru*.

As the *Gītā* is the essence of the *śāstras*, one has to naturally know the entire *śāstras* to fully appreciate what the *Gītā* is saying. Even though *Arjuna* had a certain background, it was not easy for him to understand. He had to ask questions. The *Gītā* will be difficult to understand as any other text of *Vedānta*. The knowledge of the self is in the form of words and the subject matter is very unique. Therefore, the seeker requires not only the teaching of *Vedānta* as the *pramāṇa* (means) but also requires a teacher, a *Guru*.

A *guru* is one who removes darkness of ignorance by teaching the *śāstra*. A *guru* is able to unfold the meaning

of the words of the *śāstras* for the student's comprehension and to make them meaningful. The proof of a teacher's knowledge is in the teaching methodology, in the communicative ability and the depth of the content of what he/she communicates. This knowledge is handed down from *Īśvara* through a *guru-śiṣya parampara* or teacher-student lineage. The entire *parampara* is praised in the following verse:

*'sadāśiva-samāraṅbhāṁ śaṅkarācārya-madhyamām |
asmadācārya-paryantāṁ vande guruparamparām ||'*

"I salute the lineage of teachers, beginning with Śiva, the Lord, (linked by) Śaṅkarācārya in the middle, and extending down to my own teacher."

Gītā is in the form of a dialogue, a *saṁvāda* or discussion between a teacher and a student, the *guru-śiṣya-saṁvāda*. Although there is a dialogue, the attitude is entirely different. The discussion is based on the student's acceptance that, "I am a student and this person is my teacher." This is *śraddhā*, faith pending understanding. It is an implicit trust in the words of the *śāstra* and trust in the words of the *guru*.

In the *Vedic* vision of Reality, everything that is known and unknown is *Brahman*, and 'that *Brahman* you are'. Gaining this vision, the seeker finds himself free from all the limitations imposed upon him due to ignorance and error. This is the essence of the *Upaniṣads* presented in the *Bhagavad Gītā* in the form of a dialogue between *Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa*, the *Guru* and *Arjuna*, the *śiṣya*.

*'sarvopaniṣado gāvo dogdhā gopālanandanaḥ |
pārtho vatsaḥ sudhīrboktā dugdhāṁ gītāmṛtam mahat ||'*

"The *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads* are likened to the cows; the one who milks is *Kṛṣṇa*, the joy of the cowherds; the calf is *Arjuna*; the partaker of the milk is the one whose mind is clear; and the invaluable, timeless *Gītā*, is the milk. Unto *Kṛṣṇa* the one who gives out the nectar that is the *Gītā*, our salutations."

Om śrī kṛṣṇa paramātane namaḥ





Kṛṣṇa dancing on Kālia

Contents sourced by
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