

DASHAAVATARAS OF LORD VISHNU - CHILDREN'S EDITION



Avatars of Lord Vishnu

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CHENNAI**

FOREWORD

Om EkadantayaVidmahiVakratundayaDhimahi, TannoDantiPrachodayaa

Om NarayanayaVidmahiVaasudevaayaDhimahiTanno Vishnu Prachodayaa

This book contains the story of all forms of Lord Vishnu respectively known as Dashaavataras, who came to save the universe from destruction.

This book of Dashaavataras is written in basic English for children to understand easily.

We are the students of Sri Sankara High School Adyar Branch of Chennai as the Children of Shri Vemuri Harihar Kumar and Smt. Shalini Vemuri.

May we have the privilege to dedicate to His Highness of Kanchi Mutt.

Ashtadapati 1-Dasha AvataaraKiirtiDhavalam

This is the first part of the famous JayadevaAshtapadi which describes the dashaavataras of Vishnu in a poetic format.

*pralayapayodhijaledhrtavānasivedamivihitavahitracaritramakhedam||
keśavādhr̥tamīnaśarīrajayajagadīśahare||a pa 1-1*

O Kesava (name of Vishnu) who donned the body of a fish to save the Vedas (and the world) from the deluge of the ocean (pralaya) just like a ship that saves (its passengers) from (the dangers of) the ocean. Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*kṣītirativipulataretavatiṣṭhatipṛṣṭheidharanīdharanākiṇācakraḡariṣṭhe
keśavadhr̥takacchaparūpajayajagadīśahare||a pa 1-2*

O Kesava, again you took the body of a tortoise to bear the weight of the mountain (Mount Mandara) on your back to save from destruction (so that ocean could be churned to get the wonders to Gods and Demons). Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*vasatidaśanaśikharedharanītavalagnāśaśinikalāṅkakalevanimagnā||
keśavadhr̥tasūkararūpajayajagadīśahare||a pa 1-3*

O Kesava, You took the form of a boar (Varaha) to lift the earth from the ocean by placing the earth on your mighty tusks which showed like a moon with a blemish. (but redeeming it from the demon Hiranyaksha). Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*tavakarakamalavarenakhamadbhutaśṛṅgamīdalitahiranyakaśiputanubhr̥ṅgam||
keśavadhr̥tanarahrirūpajayajagadīśahare||a pa 1-4*

O Kesava, You took the form of a man-lion and with your (wonderful) hands with wonderful nails tore apart Hiranyakasipu (demon) body like honeybee. Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*chalayasi vikramaṇebalimadbhutavāmanāipadanakhanīrajanitajanapāvanā||
keśavadhr̥tavāmanarūpajayajagadīśahare||a pa 1-5*

O Kesava, you took the form a brahmachari, outwitted Bali Chakravarthi (Grandson of Prahalad) by taking three steps (covering the three worlds), the feet from which great river emerged (to reduce the sins of human beings). Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*kṣatriyarudhīramaye jagadapagatapāpamīsnapayasipayasīsamītabhavatāpamī
keśavadhṛtabhrghupatirūpajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-6*

O Kesava, you took the form in the lineage of Maharishi Bhrigu (Parasurama, Son of Jamadagni), to remove the sins in the world, you filled the pools with the blood of kshatriya kings (unjust rulers) to make the world to bath in it (redeem the world from its sins). Hail to you, O lord of the Universe.

*vitaraśidīkṣuraṇedīkpatīkamanīyamīdaśamukhamaulībalīmraṇīyamī
keśavadhṛtarāmaśarīrajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-7*

O Kesava, you took the body of Rama, you offered the ten headed demon (Ravana) pleasing the lords of ten directions. Hail to you, O lord of Universe.

*vahasivapuṣivīśadevasanamjaladābhamīhalahatībhītilīyamunābhamī
keśavadhṛtahaladhararūpajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-8*

O Kesava, You took the form of wielder of plough (Balarama), clothes that you wear on your fair body is like how River Yamuna will shine with fear from your plough. Hail to you, O Lord of Universe.

*nīdatīyajñavidherahahaśrutījātāmīśadayahṛdayadarśītapāśughātāmī
keśavadhṛtabuddhaśarīrajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-9*

O Kesava, You took the form of Buddha, kind hearted and showing the fault of animal sacrifice in Vedic rituals. Hail to you, O Lord of Universe.

*mlecchanīvahanīdhanekalayasīkaravālamīdhūmakētumīvakīmāpīkarālamī
keśavadhṛtakalkīśarīrajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-10*

O Kesava, You took the form of Kalki, like a dreadful comet will eliminate the unjust races of human beings with his mighty sword. Hail to you, O Lord of Universe.

*śrījayadevakaverīdamudītamudāramīśṛṇusukhadāmīsubhadāmbhavasāramī
keśavadhṛtadaśavidharūpajayajagadīśahareṇa pa 1-11*

O Kesava, you took ten forms (to save the world), hear these beautiful words from Sri Jayadeva(The poet), whoever listens will get happiness, well being and release from worldly life. Hail to you, O Lord of Universe.

Introduction

The dashaavataras of Lord Vishnu are: Matsya Avatar, Kurma Avatar, Varaha Avatar, Narasimha Avatar, Vamana Avatar, Parashuram Avatar, Ram Avatar, Krishna Avatar, Buddha Avatar, Kalki Avatar. When there was seven days left for *pralaya*, Vaivasvata Manu (The son of Lord Surya) was bathing in a lake. Matsya Avatar saved the knowledge of saptarishis as it saved them and Vaivasvata Manu also, with few of their belongings. Kurma Avatar helped in holding Mount Mandara which was falling in the water as no one was holding it and helped in churning of the ocean. Varaha Avatar saved *Bhumi Devi* who drowned in the water, killed *Hiranyaksha* who was challenging him. Narasimha Avatar killed *Hiranyakashyapa* and saved the world from destruction. Vaamana Avatar enlightened *Bali Chakravarthi* and gave him the boon to bear the powers of Lord Indra. Parasurama had killed the progeny of Kartaveerya, and also hunted and shattered the totality of the Kshatriya clan by waging some twenty-one wars to avenge the killings of his father and followers. Rama Avatar had established dharma and the Scriptures of the Yore and reached peaks of human existence of Justice and Nobility. Krishna Avatar had proved that human existence gets disturbed by evil forces, he would appear as an earthly figure and rectify imbalances of the Universe. Buddha Avatar had preached the eight-fold path, viz. the right view, the right intention, the right speech, the right thought, the right livelihood, the right action, the right mindfulness and the right concentration. Another significant preaching of Buddha was to follow the principles of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) and 'Samyam' (Restraint). Kalki Avatar would ride a flying white divine horse, brandishing a sword, destroying the Evil and reviving the Virtue, thus heralding a completely New World Order following the Great Destruction and evolving a Fresh Cycle of Creation.

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Matsya Avatar



As the Universe time drew near to Final Destruction including the 'Bhulok' (Earth), 'Swarglok' (Heaven) and 'Bhuvanlok' (intermediate Region), it was flooded with water. As 'Vaivaswata Manu' (son of Surya) was in prayers in River 'Kirtimala'; he found a tiny fish in the water on his palms which begged him not to throw it as big fish might swallow it. Manu kept it in a pot, but soon the fish grew big to occupy the ocean and asked him to build a mammoth Ship and transfer 'Sapta Rishis' (Seven Sages) and a sample each of flora and fauna. Vishnu in the form Matsya declared that the Universe would be flooded soon, that the ship would be saved along with Manu and others, that He would destroy demon 'Hayagriva' and re-create the Universe.

Kurma Avatara



As 'Asuras' (Demons) and 'Suras' (Devas) were on fierce battle for long time, Lord 'Brahma' (The Creator) and Lord 'Vishnu' (The Preserver) arrived a truce between the two parties who churned 'Kshira Sagar' (the Ocean of Milk) to attain 'Amrita' (Elixir). The mountain 'Mandara' was commissioned as a rod for the churning and 'Vasuki', the Great Serpent as the rope. Demons grabbed the face of 'Vasuki' out of pride and many perished due to the poisonous flames from its several mouths, whereas Devas preferred to opt for the tail of the Serpent out of veneration for Vasuki. Since the Mountain could not be balanced in the Ocean, Lord Vishnu took the form of a Turtle (Kurma) and withstood the weight and speed of the churning. In the course of churning, came out a colossal poisonous fire, named 'Kalakuta', which engulfed the whole Universe. Lord 'Eswara' swallowed the Great Fire and kept it in His Throat and thus came to be known as 'Neelagriva' (The Blue Throated). Eventually, a number of Objects emerged as a result of the churning but the Demons rejected them all as they were only bent on 'Amritha' and none else. Among the Objects were: 'Sura'

(The Divine Drink), 'Parijata' the Tree bringing heavenly fragrance by its flowers since opted by Indra for his Garden; 'Koustubha' the Holy Jewel adorning Lord Vishnu's chest, the Celestial Animals viz. 'Kapila' the Sacred Cow, 'Uttchaiswarya' the Divine Horse and 'Iravata' the Elephant used by Indra; 'Apsaras', the Heavenly Dancers; Lakshmi the Goddess of Wealth, who preferred to be the Consort of Lord Vishnu and finally emerged 'Dhanvantari'- the God of Medicine, along with the most awaited 'Amritha', which was sought to be grabbed by Demons and Gods alike. To sort out the confusion, there appeared a dazzling damsel 'Mohini' (The Unique Enchantress)-who was Lord Vishnu Himself-and both Suras and Asuras accepted her as an arbitrator and 'just' distributor of Amritha. Mohini made both the parties wait for their turn and served Devas first and declared that the stock of Amritha was all consumed and disappointed the Demons. One of the Demons, Rahu-pretended to be the Moon God and consumed Amrita; on conceding the protests of Sun and Moon, Mohini cut his head. But since he managed to take sips of the Life-giving Drink, Rahu survived and in fact managed to secure a boon that he could devour both Sun and Moon and hence the Solar and Lunar Eclipses. As a result of the drama Demons were defeated and Devas retained power in Heaven thus vindicating the Divine Position of Devas.

Varaha Avatar



Sage Kashyapa and his wife Diti gave birth to 'Hiranyaksha', who in turn pleased Lord Brahma, and managed a boon that no force on Earth could destroy him in battles. He conquered all the three worlds, viz. the Earth, Heaven and the Under-World. In fact, he dragged Earth into the depths of the Ocean and there was complete chaos in the Universe. Lord Vishnu had to take the form of a boar, which after a prolonged battle destroyed the demon and restored Earth by lifting it by His tusks. The Balance of the Universe would have been completely upset if Earth were not saved along with the virtues of Mankind, the Holy Scriptures and the very concept of Righteousness and Godliness.

Narasimha Avatar



As his elder brother Hiranyaksha was killed by Lord Vishnu, 'Hiranyakashipu' desired to avenge the death. But he realized that unless he pleased Brahma (Lord of Creation) with rigorous meditation and sacrifice, he would not receive the boons that he wanted. Finally, Brahma acceded to all of his wishes that he could not be killed by any human being or beast, by night or day, in the sky or on the Earth or in water. Having secured the boons, the Demon became all powerful and tormented one and all, especially those who prayed to Lord Vishnu. In fact, he insisted that he alone should be prayed to. He attacked Sages, destroyed 'Yagnyas' (Sacrifices) and temples and sought to terminate the Good and the righteous. But his own son, named 'Prahlada', was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu from his childhood. Hiranyakashipu tried all means of cajoling, threatening and finally used various methods of killing him. Yet, each time that he sought to destroy the son, he was saved and Prahlada's devotion became more intense than ever. Finally, in a fit of desperation, the father asked the son: 'Many a time, I tried to murder you, you are saved! Where is your Vishnu? You say that he is everywhere! Can you show him to me in this pillar?' The son replied coolly that He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent! Enraged by this reply, the Demon struck the pillar and there emerged Lord Vishnu in the form of Narasimha (Half-Man and Half-Lion), kept the Demon on His lap and tore him into pieces. As per the prescription of the boon received by the demon from Lord Brahma, the annihilation happened neither by a human being nor a beast, not at a time when it was night or day (viz. dusk time) and neither on earth, sky or water! In this Incarnation, Lord Vishnu had thus not only saved Prahlada, as also established a firm victory of Goodness over Evil, Virtue over Sin, and Permanent over Ephemeral!

Vamana Avatar



'Bali', the grandson of Prahlada, was a Demon King in the lineage of Hiranyakashipa, who became all powerful and was most dreaded by 'Devas'. He drove Devas away from Heaven, who fled away to Lord Vishnu for refuge. Vishnu assured Devas that Bali, who was in fact a benevolent King although dominant, would be humbled and that they would be restored to Heaven soon. Eventually, the Lord was born to Kashyapa and Diti and grew as a midget ('Vamana'). As King Bali was performing a Ritualistic Yagna (Sacrifice), he declared that on the occasion nobody would be turned out without fulfilling their wishes. Vamana arrived and asked for a 'small boon', viz. a three-feet of land to be given as a 'dakshina' (a fee) to his Guru (Teacher). The Guru of Demons, Sage 'Shukracharya' suspected that the dwarf was a fake and might perhaps be Lord Vishnu Himself. King Bali said that if the dwarf were the Lord Himself, then the posterity would remember the King as a donor to the Lord. Thus saying the King asked Sage Sukracharya to sprinkle the holy water from a vessel to commence the ritualistic proceedings. Guru Sukracharya still tried to prevent the act of donation and entered the vessel in a miniature form so that the holy water could not be sprinkled. Vamana was clever enough to pierce a piece of grass into the curved mouth of the vessel and thus pricked into one of the eyes of Sukracharya by doing permanent damage to the eye. As the action of donating the three feet of land was complete, Vamana assumed a huge body and occupied one foot with Bhuloka, (Earth), another with Bhuvarloka and still demanded a third step for Swarloka. Thus King Bali had no other recourse to shift himself to 'Patala' (Under World). Lord Vishnu was immensely pleased with Bali's altruism and gave him the boon to bear the title and powers of Lord Indra, the King of Heaven.

Parashurama Avatar



As per the 'Varna Dharma' of Hinduism there are four categories of castes of which the first category is of 'Brahmins' practising ritualistic prayers, Sacrifices, religious preaching, temple-running etc. Next category comprises 'Kshatriyas' or the Warriors and Kings, whose duty is to protect all other classes of people, especially the Brahmins. In this background, Kshatriyas had over a few generations neglected the interests of the three 'Varnas' and became despotic and cruel. It was at this time, that Lord Vishnu came to mortal life as the son of Sage 'Jamadagni' and 'Renuka' and assumed the name of 'Parasu Rama' or the one with an axe to punish the evil. 'Kartaveerya' was the contemporary King who was an ill-famed and cruel tyrant, with thousand hands. He not only subjected his own people with oppression and brutality but became a terror among his neighbouring Kingdoms too. He had a few boons from Lord Dattatreya which were misused and tormented one and all. On one occasion, the King visited the Ashram (the Hermitage) of Jamadagni and was impressed with the Holy Cow, 'Kamadhenu', as the cow could fulfill all desires of human beings. The King had forcibly taken away the Cow, despite Jamadagni's protests. Parasurama waged a war with the King and cut off his thousand hands. His sons retaliated by killing Jamadagni and destroyed the Hermitage, when Parasurama was away. As a sequel, Parasurama had not only killed the progeny of Kartaveerya, but also hunted and shattered the totality of the Kshatriya clan by waging some twenty-one wars to avenge the killings of his father and followers. Eventually, Parasurama retired and lived at Mount Mahendra. He returned again to Earth only in the subsequent 'Yuga' (the second in the Time-series of human existence, viz. Threta Yuga).

Rama Avatar



Lord Vishnu's next incarnation was that of Rama. He was born into 'Surya Vamsa' (the ancestry of Sun God) to 'Dasaratha' and 'Kousalya', while his brothers were born to his step mothers as 'Laxmana' to 'Sumithra', 'Bharata' and 'Shatrughna' to 'Kaikeyi'. As the boys grew up, Sage 'Viswamitra' asked for the help of Rama to protect the Yagna (Sacred Ritual) from Demons, as they tended to spoil the Ritual by pouring blood into the 'Agni Kunda' (the Fire Pit). Dasaratha was most reluctant to depute Rama for the purpose as he was still in teens and said that he was prepared to defend the Yagna himself. Viswamitra insisted only on Rama and Dasaratha had to agree; Rama was accompanied by Laxmana too, as he was not only the closest among his brothers, but also devoted to Rama. The Yagna was performed successfully and Rama killed a dreadful 'Rakshasi' (demoness) named 'Tataka' and demon by name 'Subahu'; Rama also threw away thousands of miles off the high Sea another demon named 'Maricha' by the power of his arrows. As a symbol of his appreciation to Rama, Viswamitra taught how to use valuable 'astras' (Divine Arrows) to destroy enemies, in addition to those which were already taught to him by his own Guru 'Vasishtha', another Great Sage in the court of King Dasaratha. On way back to Ayodhya, the Capital of his Kingdom, Viswamithra took Rama to the Capital City ('Mithila') of another King namely 'Janaka'. The latter announced a 'Swayam Vara' (Self-choice of a husband by a daughter; in this case Lady Sita), the criterion of eligibility for a suitable suitor being that 'Shiva Dhanush'-a Divine Set of Bow and Arrow, belonging originally by Lord Shiva Himself- to be fixed and broken. Rama succeeded in breaking the 'Shiva Dhanush' and married Sita, who was basically Goddess Lakshmi, the spouse of Lord Vishnu Himself. Alongside, Janaka performed the weddings of his other daughters to Rama's other brothers, viz. Lakshmana to 'Urmila', Bharata to 'Mandavi', and Shatrughna to 'Shrutakirti'. On way back to Ayodhya after the joyous weddings, Rama had an encounter with Parasurama, another incarnation of

Lord Vishnu Himself, as Parasurama was annoyed that Rama broke the Shiva Dhanush. But Rama sought to convince Parasurama and more significantly the entire world that he was indeed the Avatar of Lord Vishnu. As there was a seeming threat posed by Parasurama, Rama broke another powerful Set of Bow and Arrows, viz. 'Narayana Dhanush' as given by Parasurama. On return to Ayodhya, Dasaratha declared Rama to be the 'Yuvraj' (heir apparent). The entire Kingdom and all the citizens felt highly overjoyed and ecstatic at the great news, as even by then, Rama was considered as a role model for humanity and a 'Maryada Purush' (an exceptionally noble and lovable person). But, the youngest wife of Dasaratha, Kaikeyi, opposed the proposal and as instigated by her maidservant 'Manthara', reminded the King of two of his boons to her that were due to her when she nursed him after a battle with a demon in the past. She asked for fulfilling her boons that Bharata, her elder son, be made the heir apparent and that Rama be consigned to forests for 14 years. Dasaratha had no choice but to concede her requests. Rama obeyed the paternal wishes, as conveyed to him by Kaikeyi, since Dasaratha had already swooned after hearing the undue demands. Rama was accompanied by Sita and Lakshmana. Subsequently, Dasaratha died of heart attack. Bharata was away from Ayodhya to Mithila, as pre-planned by Kaikeyi, and on return, felt hurt by the terrible turnover of events, reprimanded his mother, refused to become the King, kept the throne unoccupied as he was only a caretaker, that too when asked by Rama whom he met in the forests, and carried back Rama's 'Padukas' (wooden footwear) to Ayodhya to be cherished on the Royal Throne. Meanwhile, Rama and Sita, accompanied by Lakshmana moved on to 'Dandakaranya' (Thick interior of Forests) and lived in a hermitage, named 'Panchavati' on the quiet banks of River 'Godavari'. In course of time, a Rakshasa woman, by name 'Surpanakha' approached Rama and desired to marry her. Rama said that his wife was already with him but perhaps another male viz. Lakshmana might agree to do so. Lakshmana got Rama's coded message and slit Surpanakha's ears and nose. The latter desired to avenge the insult and prevailed on her brother 'Khara' to attack Rama and Lakshmana with his full army. The demon and his men were all killed in the battle and Surpanakha approached the mighty King of Lanka, viz. the ten headed and most dreaded 'Ravana' to retaliate. Enraged by the series of the deadly events, Ravana ordered Maricha to take the form of a Golden Deer to entice Lady Sita, so that Rama would chase it and thus abduct Sita. Rama killed the deer but shouted Rama's name aloud as a ploy and Lakshmana left Sita alone and went in search of Rama. Meanwhile 'Ravana' succeeded in abducting Sita and took her away to Lanka. The Great Kite 'Jatayu' intercepted Ravana to rescue Sita but Ravana killed Jatayu. While dying, Jatayu informed Rama and Lakshmana, who were searching for Sita, that Ravana abducted Sita. Wandering in the forests, Rama made friends with 'Sugriva', the illustrious Monkey Chieftain, along his supporters, especially the illustrious 'Hanuman', who had become Rama's instant devotee and unfailing follower. Sugriva was being harassed by his elder brother 'Vali', who was a powerful and tyrannical King of 'Kishkintha'. Rama helped Sugriva to kill Vali and made him the King of Kishkintha. Sugriva sent his Monkey soldiers far and wide to locate Sita. Finally, Hanuman crossed the Sea and met Sita in a garden of Ravana under an Ashoka Tree. He identified himself as a devotee of Rama with the help of his golden ring that was given by Rama himself as an identity. Hanuman created havoc in the Ashoka garden and killed many Rakshasa soldiers. Ravana's son, 'Meghanadh' had to utilize his prize 'Brahmastra' (the Divine Weapon of Brahma) to control Hanuman and present him in the royal court of Ravana. King Ravana ordered that Hanuman should be taught a lesson by scorching Hanuman's tail. In turn, Hanuman destroyed palaces, public places and a large part

of Lanka's Capital and finally returned to Kishkintha to report the presence of Sita, who was being pressurized to marry Ravana as also the happenings of his visit to Lanka. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, the giant Bear Jambavanta, and the massive Monkey-Brigade reached the shores of the Sea and built a gigantic 'Ram Sethu' (Bridge) across the Sea, inscribing the name of Rama on each rock and let it float! Having crossed the Sea, the 'Rama Sena' (Rama's Army) was composed and formulated to surround the entire Island of Lanka. One of Ravana's brothers, 'Vibhishana', who was a man of principles and morals tried to reason out with Ravana not to combat with Rama on the flimsy grounds of obsession with Sita, but he left the party of Ravana to join Rama, where there was 'Dharma' (Justice and Truth). In the fierce and long drawn battle that ensued, Rama killed Ravana's monstrous brother 'Kumbhakarna' and his outrageous son Meghanadha, alias Indrajit. The all-powerful Ravana himself had to be wrecked by Rama by utilizing the massive Brahmastra while the entire Rakshasa community was destroyed by Rama's followers. After a long lapse of fourteen years, Rama, Sita and Lakshmana returned to Ayodhya, accompanied by the memorable Hanuman, Sugriva, Vibhishana and innumerable fellow warriors of the Rama Vijay (Rama's Victory) to witness Lord Rama's Coronation. The popular 'Rama Rajya' (Rama's Administration) was a bench-mark as per Hindu Mythology, witnessing the practice of Dharma in full force. The ideals that were followed were as per Scriptures of the Yore and reached peaks of human existence of Justice and Nobility.

Krishna Avatar



The eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu was of Krishna, belonging to the 'Yadava' Community which was traced back to the ancestry of Lord Brahma. The lineage of Brahma commenced from his son 'Atri' onward to- Soma-Pururuva-Ayu-Nahusha-Yayati-and Yadu. Thus Krishna was born into 'Yadava Vamsa' to 'Vasudeva' and 'Devaki' in Mathura. Devaki's wicked brother 'Kamsa' was the tyrant King, who heard a Divine Voice from the Skies that Devaki's eighth son would kill him. Thus he imprisoned his sister and husband and killed each of the babies born to them. Kamsa took extra precautions to ensure that the eighth child ought not to vanish from the prison. Somehow Vasudeva managed to sneak out the child to safety on a stormy midnight into the cradle of a child just born to 'Nanda' and 'Yashoda' at 'Gokul' across the river 'Yamuna' and the couple brought up the child as their own. The baby since exchanged and brought back to the prison flew away from Kamsa's hands trying to kill that baby too, who flew away from Kamsa's hands and thundered from the sky that the real child, Krishna was safe in Gokul. Having spotted the house where Krishna was safe, Kamsa deputed several demons to somehow kill the child; the demons that turned up thus included 'Pothana', 'Arishta', 'Vrushabha', 'Keshi', 'Dhenuka', 'Gardabha' and so on and Krishna killed them all. Krishna also overpowered a poisonous snake, 'Kaliya', in a poisonous pond as he entered the pond chasing a play ball with his friends. Krishna humbled Lord Indra, who rained incessantly at Gokula since the inhabitants of that place did

not offer prayers to the Rain God, 'Varuna', by lifting a huge mountain, 'Govardhana' by his little finger. As Krishna and his elder brother 'Balarama' grew up, Kamsa invited them to Mathura on a so-called friendly visit, with the malicious intention of killing them. On their entry into the city, Kamsa let loose a mad elephant, which was killed. Kamsa also arranged a duel with two renowned wrestlers, but Krishna and Balarama killed them too. Finally Krishna destroyed Kamsa and got rid of a terrible King bringing great relief to all concerned. Close to the end of Kamsa, another mighty devil named 'Jarasandha' challenged Krishna and sought revenge for Kamsa's (his brother in law) death. Jarasandha too was killed by Krishna. Yet another enemy of Krishna, named 'Sisupala' met his extermination later. There was another momentous occasion, when Krishna and his spouse, 'Satyabhama' fought a deadly demon, 'Narakasura'. It was destined that Satyabhama would terminate the Rakshasa, since Krishna pretended unconsciousness on the battle field to enable her to take the lead-role of killing the 'Asura'. The Victory Day was celebrated as 'Deepavali', the Memorable Festival of Lights. This occasion also led to Krishna's presenting a boon to Satyabhama and her request to Krishna to fetch the celestial flower, Parijata, from the Garden of Lord Indra in Swarga). The Story goes on that unfortunately the Parijata Tree brought from Swarga was planted in the Garden of Rukmini, the senior consort of Krishna and led to jealousies and quarrels in Krishna's intimate family affairs! Moreover, Narakasura imprisoned sixteen thousand daughters of various Devas, Gandharvas, and Yakshas-all from celestial families and Krishna married them, besides his own eight Royal Queens! Besides, Radha the beloved of Krishna led to the concept of 'Ras-Leela' or Group Dances and singing by Gopikas (the girls infatuated with Krishna.) The Chapter on Harivamsa makes references to Krishna's many sons. But, the Stories of 'Pradyumna' and 'Aniruddha' became popular. Through Rukmini, the Principal Consort of Krishna, Pradyumna was born, but as soon as he was born, a Rakshasa named 'Shambhara' abducted the child and threw him in a Sea. A fish swallowed the child but a fisherman caught the fish and out of its stomach emerged Pradyumna. Eventually, Pradyumna killed Shambhara and married 'Mayavati'. Aniruddha was born to the couple and Krishna felt happy. Aniruddha and 'Usha' were in love, but 'Baana'; an evil-minded King did not approve the wedding and fought with Aniruddha. Finally, Krishna vanquished Baana and made Aniruddha and Usha happy. Closely linked with the Avatar of Krishna is the Story of 'Maha Bharata', the Great Indian Epic of Ancient India. In fact, the Mahabharata Epic is but an excuse to enact the drama of 'Pandavas' and 'Kauravas', of which the Central Role is of Krishna himself. Pandavas represented nobility, justice, valour and idealism, where-as Kauravas stood for evil, jealousy, meanness and injustice. Krishna sought to depict the good and bad qualities distinctly and reveal that Truth triumphed finally and decidedly. In the lineage that originated from Brahma to Atri down to Yayati, the latter had two wives viz. Devayani, who had two sons named Yadu and Turvusu, while Sharmishtha had three sons named Druhya, Anu and Puru. Krishna was born into Yadu Vamsa, whereas Kuru into Puru Vamsa. King Shantanu was in Kuru Vamsa and he had two wives, Ganga and Satyawati. Bhishma was born to Ganga, whereas Chitrangada and Vichitraveerya to Satyawati. Chitrangada died early and Vichitraveerya was sickly. Meanwhile, Bhishma conquered the King of Kasi and brought three of his daughters, Amba, Ambika and Ambalika with the intention of having them wedded to Vichitraveerya, his younger brother. The three daughters demanded that Bhishma should marry them since they were conquered by Bhishma, but Bhishma took a vow that he would be a bachelor always as he promised his father to facilitate Kingship to the progeny of Satyawati. The eldest daughter,

Amba became furious and killed herself in 'Yoga Agni' as she was not married to Bhishma (In her subsequent birth, Amba was reborn as Sikhandi, a transgender who killed Bhishma subsequently). Since there was a crisis of family lineage to be perpetuated, Bhishma requested Vedavyasa to bless Ambika and Ambalika into bed. The girls did not initially agree and sent their 'Dasi', a servant maid and thus was born 'Vidura'. On the persuasion of Bhishma the sisters followed into the bed later; Ambika closed her eyes in the union and thus begot a blind son named 'Dhritarashtra', while Ambalika paled away in the union with the fright of Vyasa and thus had 'Pandu' as her son with congenital skin disease. Dhritarashtra was married to 'Gandhari', who also preferred to close her eyes with cloth as a respect to her husband. They got hundred sons, most important of them being 'Duryodhana' and 'Dussasana'. Pandu married Kunti and Madri. Even before her wedding, Kunti was blessed with a son, Karna, by the grace of Sun God, and after marriage she begot Yudhishtara through God Dharma (God of Justice), Bhima by 'Vayu' (God of Wind) and Arjun by God Indra. By the grace of Aswini Gods were born to Madri and they were named Nakula and Sahadeva. As a result of a curse by a Sage, Pandu died untimely and ever since then, Pandavas became fatherless and grew under the care of their paternal uncle Dhritarashtra the blind King. (Vidura, the son of a servant maid born to Vedavyasa was disqualified to become the King and thus became the Chief Adviser to the King.) The hundred strong progeny of Dhritarashtra headed by Duryodhana grew up as the spoilt and much pampered children and developed hatred towards their Pandava cousins, day by day. Karna was disowned by Kunti since she was an unwed mother but tried out an experiment to test a boon given by a Sage and invoked Sun God resulting in her pregnancy and birth of a boy; she packed off the child in a box floating in a river and a chariot driver, 'Suta' and his wife Radha brought up the child as their son. Karna had joined Duryodhana. The Kauravas and Pandavas had a common Guru (Teacher), Drona Acharya, to train them in the art of archery and military skills. Invariably, Pandavas excelled Kauravas in the training sessions and that was an added angle of jealousy to Kauravas, which eventually turned out as hatred. As Bhima was an expert in physical duels and the art of using mace in duel-fight, Duryodhana got envious. Similarly, Arjun was an expert in archery and used to draw praise from Drona. Duryodhana sought to pit Karna in the art of archery, but Guru Drona did not allow Karna in the classes, as Karna was not a Prince, as all others were. At once, Duryodhana being the heir apparent to the Throne declared Karna as the Prince of a subordinate State of the Hastinapura Kingdom and made Karna eligible to join the elite of Princes. In course of time, Kauravas tried several means of terminating Pandavas. The evil minded uncle of Kaurava sons, 'Shakuni' had been an active party in all such wicked actions. In fact, there was a group of four villains- 'DushtaChatushtaya', comprising Duryodhana, Dussasana, Shakuni and Karna- who were responsible to somehow destroy Pandavas. They arranged a mansion made of shellac to inhabit Pandavas and tried to put it on fire overnight. Lord Krishna, who had all along been on the side of Dharma (Justice) and of Pandavas, had forewarned them of the evil plans of Kauravas to burn the mansion and got them transferred safe through a tunnel leading to a village nearby. Pandavas were disguised as a Brahmin family and rented a small house. Kauravas, including the King and the citizens, believed that Pandavas were ablaze in the mansion. Even in disguise as Brahmins, the five Pandava sons and mother Kunti lived on and rescued the entire village by Bhima from the menace of a Rakshasa, named 'Bakasura', who demanded a villager a day as his food. In course of time, they attended a 'Swayamvara' (Bride seeking to secure a suitable bridegroom) of Draupadi, the daughter of King

Drupada and among all the aspirant-suitors only Arjuna was able to smash up a fish revolving fast in a circle placed above the head level and seeing down of its reflection in a water flowing down under. Kaurava sons and Bhishma also attended the function and recognized Pandavas. Kaurava sons were dismayed, but gave great relief to Bhishma and all the well-wishers of Pandava. But, Arjun's victory of winning Draupadi's hand posed a problem since Arjun could not marry ahead of his elder brothers. The puzzle was sorted by Bhishma in consultation with the Sages, Draupadi and elders concerned that she should marry all the Pandava brothers in a lot. Following the Wedding, Bhishma advised King Dhritarashtra to give half of the Kingdom to Pandavas. Thus Yudhishtara became the King and gradually annexed many Kingdoms and became powerful and wealthy. Pandavas celebrated 'Rajasuya Yagna' (Royal Sacrifice) and elected Krishna as the Chief Guest of the Grand Function. Sisupala, another King and cousin of Krishna objected that the honour to Krishna, whom he defeated in successive wars. But the reality was that his mother requested Krishna to spare Sisupala for one hundred mistakes, before he was destined to die in Krishna's hands finally and thus Krishna hid himself from the wars with Sisupala and suffered him thus far. On reaching the hundred mistakes, Krishna terminated Sisupala. As Pandavas were at their climatic position, Kauravas felt highly jealous and as advised by the wily Shakuni, invited Dharmaraja for a Game of Chess, in which Shakuni played foul. Dharmaraja lost not only the Kingdom, but also Draupadi, who was forcibly brought into the Royal Court by Dussasana in the presence of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona and all the gentry; she was insulted and sought to be disrobed. Further, Dharmaraja was made to agree that Pandavas would spend in the forests for twelve years and an additional year in 'Ajnatavas' (in disguise and not to be noticed or identified by Kauravas or anyone else), failing which, another twelve years of forest life would be re-imposed! After completing the Forest life for twelve years, Pandavas (with the exception of Kunti who stayed with Vidura) took refuge in the Kingdom of 'Virata' in disguised forms viz. Dharmaraja as King Virat's Brahmana- Adviser and companion to play chess, Bhima as the Royal cook, Arjuna as the trans-gender dance teacher of the King's daughter, Uttara; Nakula and Sahadeva as trainers in the Royal stable of the King's horses and Draupadi as the Queen's Principal Maid. During the disguised stay of Pandavas, Bhima weeded out Keechaka one night without trace, even as the King himself was not unhappy about his brother-in-law's villainy and over-control. In the meantime, Kauravas attacked Virat's Kingdom and forcibly took away thousands of cows of King Virat's. Arjun had then decided to take away the disguise of Pandavas, as the period of one year of 'Ajnatavas' was just concluded. In fact, all the Pandavas revealed their own identities. Arjun had defended Virat's Kingdom single handed and frightened away Kauravas by his powerful arrows and finally utilizing just one 'Sammohan Astra', the Divine Arrow putting the entire Kaurava Army unconscious. Not realizing the real identity of Pandavas, King Virat and family as also the subjects of the Kingdom extended apologies to Pandavas. The Princess Uttara was married to Abhimanyu, the son of Arjun. Back to normalcy after suffering the Forest life for twelve years and the disguised existence for one year, Pandavas demanded their share of Kingdom again. In fact, Bhima, Arjun and Draupadi refused to pardon the innumerable misdeeds of Kauravas and wished to take revenge on the battle field, but for the restraint imposed on them by Dharmaraja. Lord Krishna was deputed for peace talks. Kauravas on the other hand refused to part with even a pin worth of land, let alone five villages for Pandavas. Thus the epoch-making Great Battle of Maha Bharata became inevitable. Kurukshetra was the historic war- field, where the battle lines were drawn and the composition of both the

fighting parties were identified. As per options offered by Krishna, Duryadhana secured large number of soldiers and Arjuna agreed to be Krishna's charioteer, without fighting himself. Elders like Bhishma and Drona had to fight on the side of Kauravas, though reluctantly, since they had been loyal to King Dhritarashtra. As several grandfathers and uncle figures, close relatives and cousins were faced on the opposite side for a bloody war, Arjuna got bewildered and made a scene of his inability to fight and jumped out of his chariot. Krishna had then delivered his immortal 'Gita Pravachan' (The Discourse of Gita) which constituted the Quintessence of Holy Hindu Scriptures. He explained in detail that the death of stalwarts like Bhishma and Drona or close relatives of Pandavas or of anybody else, would merely mean the destruction of their physical existence but their Atma (Inner Soul) is indestructible as 'It' would don another body in the never-ending cycle of life, according to the Register of their previous lives viz. 'Sanchita' or the Stored Results of their actions in earlier births and of 'Prarabdha' or their own destinies which would shape their future. Arjuna was just an instrument in the drama of Life. The real quest of life is to attain the Union of individual Atma or the Inner Soul with 'Paramatma', the Super Soul. This is what 'Gyana' (Knowledge or Awareness) is all about and what Yogis (Sages) have all along endeavored to achieve through the ages. Arjuna was thus pacified and was asked to do his Dharma (Duty). In the fierce battle that followed for eighteen days, there was destruction all around from both the sides of warriors. Bhishma, the war-veteran and Commander-in-Chief withdrew from the battle as he was faced with a trans-gender, named Sikhandi, whom Bhishma refused to fight with and thus fell a victim but did not die; he had the boon to live as per his choice-day and preferred to live through the entire duration of the battle and waited for 'Uttarayan', i.e. the first day of Solar journey upwards the northern direction. Drona, the next Commander stopped fighting at the false news confirmed by Dharmaraja, (ever known for his utterances of Truth only) in hushed tone that his son Aswatthama (meant actually named after an elephant) died. Drona was thus killed by Dhristadyumna without resistance. Karna who was the next Commander of Kauravas was arrowed to death by Arjuna, as the former could not remember the secret 'Mantras' (stanzas) while releasing arrows favoring specific Gods to invoke special powers; Karna's amnesia was the resultant curse by a Sage which let him down to Arjun's arrows. The Final chapter of the Great Battle of Mahabharata, the Legendary Epic was scripted by a powerful and climactic duel of maces between Duryodhana and Bhima. As Duryodhana defended his position for long, Krishna gave a gesture to Bhima to hit the opponent on his thighs as the former's body was made sturdy all over excepting the thighs; Gandhari, mother of Duryodhana had the power of fortifying any part of a body by opening her ever closed sight just once but Duryodhana hid the loins and thighs and hence were vulnerable. Thus ended the sordid tale of Duryodhana, who was the Prime Villain of the Epic. Dharmaraja was made the King again to Hastinapur Kingdom and after him, the Dynasty carried on the Kingship by Parikshit, the son of Uttara. Lord Krishna who had firmly re-established Dharma on Earth, not only by his own fascinating deeds to vindicate 'Nyaya' (justice) and Nobility, but also by using Pandavas as instruments to bring success to His efforts. Once, again He proved through His Avatar (Incarnation) of Lord Vishnu that each time human existence gets disturbed by evil forces, He would appear as an earthly figure and rectify imbalances of the Universe.

Buddha Avatar



As there was an ongoing battle of Devas and Asuras for long time, Devas approached Lord Vishnu to revive 'Dharma' and 'Nyaya' and beseeched Him to take human form once again. The Lord said that 'Mayamoha' would soon take birth as Buddha to one Sudhodana. But the illusions that would be created in the name of Buddha would be such that many evil persons would call themselves as Buddhists and undo all the Golden Traditions established in Vedas and other Scriptures. The misleading ways would advocate materialism in detestable manner and finally end up in the last phase of 'Kali Yuga'. [Note: While Agni Purana had thus prophesied the sinful and irrecoverable era ahead, Buddha himself was stated to have provided a silver-line in the quest of Truth and Dharma. He preached the concept of Self - Realisation and recommended the right path to this Goal. He found that the basis of evil was unhappiness and desire, while the means of overcoming the evil is the attitude to secure freedom from material happiness. He preached the eight-fold path, viz. the right view, the right intention, the right speech, the right thought, the right livelihood, the right action, the right mindfulness and the right concentration. Another significant preaching of Buddha was to follow the principles of 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) and 'Samyam' (Restraint). But in the

post-Buddha period, varied interpretations of Buddhism were adopted to suit some of the following generations, including the practice of low and misleading Tantras]

Kalki Avatar



Agni Purana also prophesied the Final Avatar of Lord Vishnu as Kalki, to be born to 'Vishnuyasha'. He would be fully armed to destroy the disbelievers of God and perpetrate sins and criminal acts and re-establish Dharma (Virtue) and Nyaya (Justice) and revive the concepts of four 'varnas' (castes,) viz. Brahmana (the nobility), Vaisya (the business class), Kshatriya (the Warriors and Defenders) and Sudra (the Others). The revival of the four 'Ashrams' (Stages of Life) too would happen viz. Balya (Childhood), Grihastha (the family person), Vanaprastha (the senior and religious class) and Sanyasa (Seekers of Truth and death-awaiting). [Note: The popular belief is that by the close of the fourth phase of Kalki Yuga (era) as against the first phase now, Lord Vishnu would take the 'Avatar' (Incarnation) riding a flying white divine horse, brandishing a sword, destroying the Evil and reviving the Virtue, thus heralding a completely New World Order following the Great Destruction and evolving a Fresh Cycle of Creation