

Significance of Supernatural Creatures in Hindu Mythology

Dr. Sreekala P. S. and Dr. V. N. Chandrika

Department of English

Sree Sankara Vidyapeetom College, Valayanchirangara, Irapuram, Kerala, India

Supernaturalism is perhaps the broadest classification of religious practices encompassing any belief system dealing with supernatural forces. Supernaturalism asserts the existence of forces beyond human comprehension that frequently interfere for better or worse in human affairs.

Some supernatural creatures have good aspect which is related to Divine Beings usually called Gods and Goddesses. There are also Demigods. Some others have evil aspect. They are ghosts, demons and vampires. All these supernatural creatures never fade from popular awareness. Even though their form may vary, they seem to be embedded in our consciousness. They appear repeatedly in literature around the world, in movies, advertisements, video games and modern books.

Sreemad Bhagavatham is considered to be one of the Mahapuranic texts of Hindu literature. It consists of many stories renowned in Hindu tradition. It focuses on the incarnations of Lord Vishnu particularly human form. ie Sreekrishna, who established the rule of dharma and moral order through his several supernatural incarnations. Supernatural deeds of Lord Krishna in Sreemad Bhagavatham teach us to live in harmony with nature to keep ecological balance.

Ancient Hindu battles depict great heroes, demons, celestial weapons and beings, magic and the supernatural. Wars are waged with the purpose of upholding *Dharma* over *Adharma*. The major Hindu Gods often engage in war either in the form of Avatars or in their form. They and many Hindu heroes use *astra*, celestial weapons, with fearsome supernatural power, to aid them in battle.

Sreemad Bhagavatham is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge covering everything from the nature of the self to the origin of the universe. It is the literary incarnation of God. It is meant for the ultimate good of all people. The purpose of this fifth Vedam is to encourage one to understand that one is not an independent entity but a part of a universal body that depends on many supernatural forces.

Lord Krishna is the greatest hero of all times. In the long history of the world there has been no equivalent to such a great hero like Sree Krishna in India or even elsewhere on this Earth. Sreemad Bhagavatham delineates His supernatural power. Before the birth of Sree Krishna His parents were kept in jail by the king Kamsa. But the moment Krishna was born, the doors of the jail suddenly opened and was safely shifted to *Gokulam*.

Lord Krishna performed innumerable supernatural things during His incarnation. Lord Vishnu enters this world in different *yugam* in different form to restore balance whenever his presence is needed.

Mother Earth once burdened as she was too many sinners, could bear the pain no more. She assumed the form of a cow and approached Lord Vishnu and told him how much she was suffering on account of the *adharmam* which was rampant. The sinful kings were polluting her. Vishnu consoled her and has decided to take a human form and name. He has decided to live on the face of the earth till her troubles are over. Lord Vishnu incarnated as Sree Krishna in the form of human being to destroy the callousness in wicked men and transform them into pure men without asking any weapon.

At the very beginning of His life on the earth, Sree Krishna left the city of Madhura in order to live in the forest with the cowherds. Krishna spent His childhood among the twelve forests of Vrindavan. The trees were His friends. Sree Krishna brought forward the cows and played on His flute through the forest of Vrindavan which was full of flowers, vegetables and pasturing grass. There were chirping birds, clear water and lakes with water that could relieve one of all fatigues, sweet flavoured breeze always refreshing the mind and body.

One day in summer season Krishna along with the cowherd boys, cows, and calves went to the bank of the river Yamuna as usual to graze the cattle. Since summer was very severe all boys, cows and calves became very thirsty. All began to drink the water of the river Yamuna. But all of them fell down unconsciously because the river was polluted with the poison of

the great snake Kaliya. Krishna glanced mercifully at them. At time all regained their consciousness. Thus they were rescued by Krishna.

16th chapter of 10th scandham brings into light that Krishna purified the water of Yamuna by driving away the great serpent Kaliya, which was very poisonous, to the island Ramanakam. The water of Yamuna became vain on account of this poison. Even if a bird happened to pass over the river, it would fall down and die as a result of this severe poison emanated from the mouth of Kaliya. Most of the trees and creepers around the lake dried up on account of the poisonous atmosphere. Immediately Krishna climbed up a big kadamba tree grown on the bank of Yamuna and jumped in to the lake. Kaliya actually wanted to bite Krishna. But Krishna jumped, moved and danced around all the hoods. He performed *Kaliyamardhanam*. Thereby the serpent became very tired and lost its strength. Heavy blood oozed from the mouth. Krishna ordered kaliya to leave this lake and go to the island *Ramanakam*.

Tenth *scandham* chapter 18 depicts the protection of cowherd boys and cows from the forest fire by Krishna. Once the cowherd boys were engaged in playing in the forest vrindavan. Some boys along with cows entered the forest known as Isikatavi. Then they saw fire engulfing the forest. They were enveloped by forest fire which was very ferocious and all of them could not escape from this situation. Krishna with His mystic power swallowed up all the blazing fire and protected them from this threatening danger.

Sree Krishna inspires Vasudevar, His father, to exchange Him with the daughter of maharaja Nandagopar at gokul. By his influence the door keepers fall asleep and the doors are opened automatically. Vasudevar carries the child Krishna across the river Yamuna. It was raining with mild thunder. River Yamuna gave way for Vasudevar to cross and Ananthanaga followed him with hoods opened to shelter them from rains. Vasudeva reaches gokulam and replaces Krishna with the daughter of Nandagopa. Thereafter come back and bound his legs with iron shackles as before.

When SreeKrishna turns three months old, mother Yasotha perform uthana ceremony. She was busy with the uthana ceremony and put his child Krishna to a bed under a handcart, which contained vessels full of milk and curd, in the courtyard at gokul. After sometimes Krishna woke up and demanded mother's milk. Yasotha didn't hear His cry. when no one notices, He angrily kicked the cart with His little legs and overturned the handcart scattering the various utensils here and there. The gopis and gopas were struck with wonder. They could not believe this wonderful phenomenon.

SreeKrishna had supernatural powers right from the day He was born. He was born with full powers and all these powers were used to set things right. During His child hood, one day, mother Yasotha saw in His mouth the whole Universe including the sky, higher planetary system, earth, sun, moon, fire, air, seas, mountains, rivers, forests and all kinds of living entities. Yasotha became astonished and afraid. Another incident was that the playmates of Krishna complained Yasotha that Krishna has eaten mud. Yasoyha came and asked Him to open His mouth wide. Krishna opened His mouth and showed the entire Universe in His mouth.

During His childhood while SreeKrishna was playing with cowherd boys, a demon called Bakasura assumed the form of a gigantic duck and swallowed Krishna. SreeKrishna became hot like fire inside the mouth of the demon and made the demon throw Him out. There after holding the two ends of the beak of the duck, Krishna stretched the mouth of the duck, split it and killed the demon.

In the 10th scandham chapter 25 SreeKrishna told villagers that they were farmers and should do their duty and concentrate on farming and protection of their cattle. They were suggested not to conduct sacrifice for natural phenomenon. They therefore did not proceed with the special pooja. Indra became angry when offering of sacrifice for him was stopped. He poured the rain incessantly for seven days. They could not tolerate the worst situation of incessant rain. The inhabitants approached Krishna to rescue them from the wretched atmosphere. Abruptly Krishna lifted the Govardhana Hill easily on the little finger of his left hand as picking up a mushroom by a child to protect all the inhabitants under this umbrella. Thereby He has got the name *Govardhanadhari*.

Once after observing the *dwadashi vrata* king Ambreesh was about to break his fast. Just then sage Durvasav reached there. The king requested his distinguished guest to have food with him. Durvasav accepted the invitation and went off to the river for morning ablutions. Only twenty minutes were left for breaking it. The king wetted his lips with a few drops of water purified with tulsi leaves. Durvasav became angry and created a demon to kill him. SreeKrishna killed Kritiya using His supernatural weapon *Sudarshanachakram*.

Lord Vishnu is willing to assume any form or shape for the welfare and well-being of His dear devotees. When His people become the victims of distress, tyranny and torture, Lord Vishnu descends to the Earth in diverse manifestations and incarnations in order to destroy sin, ignorance and devilish forces from the face of Mother Earth.

An asura named Hayagreeva was causing great sufferings to the whole world. Vishnu has decided to free the world of his menace. He intended to destroy all such perverse people by a deluge. The whole world was covered with water. As man would be very weak in water and unable to do much in order to do good, He had taken the manifestations of fish to fulfil his purposes.

The world had lost many precious things in the great flood. To get precious things Lord Vishnu resolved to churn the Ocean of Milk. During the churning Vasuki lost its grip on the mountain. The mountain Mandhara began to sink. Mahavishnu incarnated in the form of *Koorma* and reached there to lift it up and held it in that position.

The demon Hiranyaksha hid the world in the bottom of the sea. Hiranyaksha was proud of his strength. Hiranyaksha started searching for lord Narayana to fight with him. Lord took the form of Varaha with terrible curved tusks thousands of miles long came out of Brahma's nostril. The Varaham grew very fast and became a gigantic figure. *Varaham* plunged in to the ocean looked for and found Mother Earth. He then lifted earth on His tusks and began swimming upwards. *Varaham* killed the asura and placed Mother Earth in her original place. He killed the evil force and saved the mankind and the earth from its tyranny.

Hiranyakashipu prevented people from doing good deeds on the earth. He has decided to annihilate good people. He began torturing and killing the pious and saintly. Nobody can tolerate his atrocities. He became arrogant and forgot the Supreme Power pervades the Universe. He was a man of *adharmam*. To annihilate this callous man from this Universe in order to maintain ecological balance Lord Vishnu incarnated in the form of Narasimham. The end of *Narasimhavatharam* is to destroy wicked thoughts of man and to lit the good thoughts in man's mind to make the man the owner of good thoughts. Mahabali was the mightiest of emperors. He was Lord of earth and heaven. Nobody dared to oppose his will. He ruled his subjects kindly and well, but made them rely on themselves and not on dharma or karma. The Vedas were neglected, religious rites were not performed and men cared only for their pleasures. Everyone had some food and material comforts. People led a gay and carefree life. If it goes on, the world will sink in to materialism. It is necessary to save the world from Mahabali. So Lord Vishnu descended down in to the world as Vamana to maintain dharma and reinstate order.

The world was once overburdened with kings and warriors who were fighting with each other and creating disturbance. The Prithvi was overburdened by *adharmam*, corruption and the Brahmin and the Vedas began to disappear. The duty of the rulers of society is to protect religious principles. When they failed to do it they became burden on the land. There had no happiness in the society ruled by such men. Lord Vishnu incarnated as Parasurama as the son of Jamadgni to annihilate these fighting men.

Lord Vishnu took the opportunity to be born as SreeRama in the world to achieve His three-fold ends namely to ride men of fear, mostly of fear of the rakshasas, to show men by His own rule how a land should be ruled and to show men a unique and unforgettable ideal of monogamy by the love of Rama and Sita for each other.

If the number of callous persons is increased on the earth, it will increase burden on the earth. Mother Earth could not tolerate the burden and atrocities committed by these callous persons. Balarama supported SreeKrishna to alleviate the burden on the earth by annihilating these wicked men. Balarama subdued a wicked man by name Pralamba and killed him. Lord Balarama dragged and brought the Yamuna river in hundred streams with the tip of his plough to fertilize the land and for irrigation.

The incarnation of SreeKrishna is said to be Poornavatharam. Aim of His incarnation was to complete all the things which cannot be completed by human beings. At the end of *Kali yugam*, when *adharmam* is predominant and vice has the upper hand and virtue has disappeared and men have become demons, sunk in every form of debauchery, vice and wickedness are eagerly destroying one another, Lord Vishnu will incarnate again as *Kalki*, the son of Brahmin chief in order to reinstate *dharma*. He will travel everywhere on the earth with a sword in hand riding on his horse Devadatha and kill all the bad. Good people will be purified by the dust rising from horse's hooves.

His astonishing, supernatural and miraculous activities were for the establishment of permanent peace for the turmoil world. '*Loka samastha sughino bhavandhu*'. Thus *Avatharam* is a descent of God for the ascent of man. Lord Vishnu descends on the earth with supernatural powers to keep up the harmony of the universe. The works done by the avatars and their teachings produce a benign spiritual influence on human beings. It comes to reveal the divine nature in man and

makes him rise above the petty materialistic life of passion and egoism. Many avatars have discharged one function, but SreeKrishna has carried out many supernatural activities. That is why SreeKrishna is called *Poorna Avatharam*.

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