

08 - Vatsāsura

I. Past life

- ॐ In prev life was Pramila, son of Muru
- ॐ After conquering the demigods, Pramila entered entered Vasiṣṭha Muni's āsrama
- ॐ Saw Kamadhenu cow Nandinī
- ॐ Pram desired Nandinī
- ॐ Transformed self into brahmana
- ॐ Approached VM and begged for cow
- ॐ VM had divine vision and stood silent
- ॐ Nan spoke: You are a demon, Muru's son
- ॐ You have assumed this brahmana's form to steal VM's cow
- ॐ Therefore you now become a calf
- ॐ Pram immed becomes a calf
- ॐ Circum VM
- ॐ Bows down
- ॐ "Save me! Save me!"
- ॐ Nan: o great demon, at the end of Dvarpara yuga when among calves you will attain liberation

II. The pastime

A. K & B begin to heard the calves

- ॐ *(Lilas now begin to focus on sakhya rasa, previously was vatsalya)*
- ॐ At this time Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were given charge of the calves.
- ॐ The first responsibility of the cowherd boys was to take care of the little calves.
- ॐ The boys are trained in this from the very beginning of their childhood.
- ॐ *Nanda Mahārāja liked this idea, but Mother Yasoda did not like it. Kṛṣṇa was now 3 years old. Mother Yasoda objected that Kṛṣṇa was too young, as she was still breast-feeding Him. But Kṛṣṇa insisted, and so Mother Yasoda had to agree. He said: "Please don't stop Me. I find great pleasure in herding the calves."*
- ॐ *It is described in Gopal Campu that Nanda Mahārāja personally selected a small group of calves for the occasion of Kṛṣṇa's first herding.*
- ॐ *There was a big festival for the event. Kṛṣṇa was given a small reddish stick, a rope, buffalo horn and flute.*
- ॐ *Before They went out Mother Yasoda brought some nice shoes and an umbrella for Kṛṣṇa, and she told Balarāma to take care of His younger brother, and make sure He is wearing His shoes and using His umbrella. But Kṛṣṇa protested that He didn't want to use those things, because the calves were not. He refused to wear His shoes, unless all the calves were provided with four shoes each, and each had an umbrella and a man to carry the umbrella.*

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- ॐ *Kṛṣṇa told His mother "Dharmo raksati raksitah" if one is engaged in dharma then that dharma will protect one. So He said: "Taking care of the calves and cows is our dharma. Let us take special care of them, and they will take care of us."*
- ॐ *On the first day Nanda Mahārāja and Mother Yasoda came along to assist Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The two boys quickly mastered the art of herding calves. Then Kṛṣṇa requested Nanda Maharāja and Mother Yasoda to go back, and Nanda Maharāja asked Them not to enter too deep into the forest, and to come home early and safely.*
- ॐ Along with other little cowherd boys, Kṛṣṇa and Balarama went into the pasturing ground and took charge of the calves and played with Their playmates.
- ॐ While taking charge of the calves, sometimes the two brothers played on Their flutes.
- ॐ Sometimes They played with amalaki fruits and bael fruits, just like small children play with balls.
- ॐ Sometimes They danced and made tinkling sounds with Their ankle bells.
- ॐ Sometimes They made Themselves into bulls and cows by covering Themselves with blankets.
- ॐ The two brothers also used to imitate the sounds of bulls and cows and play at bullfighting.
- ॐ Throwing things
- ॐ Playing flutes
- ॐ Making array of noises with mouths
- ॐ Chasing birds' shadows
- ॐ Decorating each other with leaves and flowers
- ॐ Sometimes They used to imitate the sounds of various animals and birds. In this way, They enjoyed Their childhood pastimes apparently like ordinary, mundane children.

B. Vatsasura lila

- ॐ *Kamsa drew meeting of cohorts*
- ॐ *Kamsa: what animal is dear to K?*
- ॐ *Has anyone noticed he seems to have affinity for one type of animal*
- ॐ *Demons: Cows!*
- ॐ *Vats volunteers*
- ॐ *Vatsasura wasn't confident could kill Kṛṣṇa, therefore took the form of a calf, thinking that if he were defeated at least Kṛṣṇa wouldn't kill him because he was a cow after all.*
- ॐ Once, when Kṛṣṇa and Balarama were playing on the bank of the Yamuna, a demon of the name Vatsasura assumed the shape of a calf and came there intending to kill the brothers.

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- ॐ By taking the shape of a calf, the demon could mingle with other calves.
- ॐ Moves tail as runs among gopas and cows
- ॐ *Vats hardly fits in*
- ॐ Krsna, however, specifically noticed this, and He immediately told Balarama about the entrance of the demon.
- ॐ *K to Bal: to you recognize this calf*
- ॐ *Bal: No, I think it's a demon*
- ॐ *K: OK, I'll kill it*
- ॐ *B: that could be a problem.*
- ॐ *We're cowherders, how can we kill*
- ॐ *It will look bad*
- ॐ *"He's a demon"*
- ॐ *"Yes, but he's also a calf, and people will be very upset if we kill a calf"*
- ॐ *"No, he'll reveal his original form at death"*
- ॐ Both brothers then followed him and sneaked up upon him.
- ॐ Vats kicks K with hind legs on shoulder
- ॐ Boys flee
- ॐ Krsna caught hold of the demon-calf by the two hind legs and tail,
- ॐ Whipped him around
- ॐ Threw to ground very forcibly
- ॐ Picks up
- ॐ Throws up into a kapittha tree.
- ॐ The demon lost his life and fell down from the top of the tree to the ground.
- ॐ Made other Kapittah trees fall like dominos
- ॐ When the demon lay dead on the ground, all the playmates of Krsna congratulated Him, "Well done, well done,"
- ॐ Demigods in the sky began to shower flowers with great satisfaction and chant Jaya!x2
- ॐ From body comes great light that enters K (wasn't qualified to enter the spir world so achieves sayujya mukti).

III. Mānasī Gangā's appearance

"Because Kṛṣṇa had killed a demon in the shape of a calf, the cowherd boys asked him to take His bath in the river Ganges in order to purify Himself. Not wanting to leave Vraja, Kṛṣṇa informed the cowherd boys that He would call the river Ganges to appear in Vraja. Kṛṣṇa then meditated, and from within His mind the river Ganges manifested before Him in the form of Mānasī-gangā. *Mānasa* means mind. In other words, the Gangā manifested from the mind of Kṛṣṇa.

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- ॐ After K kills Vatsasura He was advised by the gopas (boys) that He should bath in the Ganges to purify from sin of killing cow/calf
- ॐ Not wanting to leave Vraja K informed the cowherd boys he would call the Ganges to appear in Vrindavan
- ॐ K then meditated, and from within His mind the river Ganges manifested before Him in the form of Manasi Ganga. Manasi means mind. In other words, the Ganges manifested from the mind of K.

- ॐ One day Nanda and Yasoda heard a story about the glories of the Ganges:
- ॐ Garuda, the giant bird carrier of V had been searching for food and came across a snake.
- ॐ G picks up and starts to fly away. When pass over Ganges tail of snake touches. Transforms into 4-armed form like V.
- ॐ G sees this and places on back and takes to Vaikuntha
- ॐ When N et al heard this they wanted to go the Ganga themselves.
- ॐ Decided to go and began packing immediately.
- ॐ K sees and asks where they are planning to go.
- ॐ Informs K
- ॐ K declares that it is unnecessary to visit any other holy place, all the tirthas are actually present in Vraja
- ॐ Nanda et al persist
- ॐ K leads to center of GH & immed in front of them Ganga personified appeared
- ॐ Residents of V. offer ob. To G-devi
- ॐ All took bath

IV. General notes

- ॐ Took place on Gopāṣṭami one year after Dāmodāra līlā.
- ॐ Relates to raising kids in Kṛṣṇa consciousness
- ॐ Also relates to training devotees.
- ॐ Those who are indifferent to the spiritual master fall victim to the frailties and inconsistencies of children. — Varsana Swami
- ॐ This may be more applicable in developing the mood of *sakhya rasa* whereas previous anarthas may have focused on *vatsalya rasa*
- ॐ K is 3
- ॐ Just moved to Vṛndāvana

V. The Anārtha

A. Kṛṣṇa Samhita

- ॐ Trying to enjoy body & senses (perhaps in guise of Krishna consciousness)
The living entities are sober by nature, but when they are disturbed due to possessing a body made of blood and flesh it is called bāla-doṣa, or juvenile offenses. This is the fourth obstacle, in the form of Vatsāsura.

B. Caitanya Sikṣamṛta

- ॐ Immaturity, greed, bad association
Vatsāsura, the demon who assumed the form of a calf, represents performing sinful activities out of an immature mind under the control of greed and the bad influence of evil company. By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, this fault is vanquished.

C. Professor Sanyal

- ॐ Offending the spiritual master (the parent)
The fourth obstacle "on the path" is termed juvenile offense. Persons who are indifferent to the spiritual guide are thereby rendered subject to the inconsistencies and frailties that beset naughty children. This enemy of the infant Krishna is known as Vatsāsura. The novice must beware of the guiles of this malicious demon and try to get rid of him at an early stage.

D. Notes from Srīla Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thākura

1. Occurs at a young stage in devotional life

- ॐ New devotees are particularly susceptible
He represents evils that are peculiar to boyhood. The neophyte is extremely susceptible to such evils. They can only be eliminated by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ By engaging in devotional service, Krishna eradicates this anartha
If one engages in Kṛṣṇa's service they will be completely eradicated at an early stage

2. Children are by nature playful and this should not be stifled.

- ॐ There is nothing inherently wrong with young persons trying to enjoy and be playful; in fact there is positive value in these activities. (Playfulness shouldn't be discouraged. Kids should be kids and as they mature they will naturally act more like adults. On the other had; adults shouldn't play like children.)
There is an English proverb that sowing of wild oats is inevitable at a young age. The term Puritanism was originally coined to express the protest of boys and young men against any undue curtailment of the scope of enjoyment that should be regarded as permissible to them. Boys and young men claim the right to be merry and frolicsome. There is nothing objectionable and much that is of positive value in the display of these juvenile qualities.

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ॐ Attempts to curtail this behavior (due to its sensuous – and thus harmful – nature) result in discouragement – but similar activities by adults are not appropriate
If the attempt be made to stifle this innocent play of the boyish nature under the impression that it is an exhibition of sensuousness and for that reason is as harmful as similar conduct on the part of grown-up persons, the result is not assurance but discouragement of juvenile innocence.

ॐ There are, however, black sheep who must be guarded against
There are indeed black sheep and these should not be allowed to taint the whole flock, and for this purpose caretakers with full sense of their delicate responsibility are required to keep watch over them for ensuring the innocence of boyhood and youth without killing their joys.

ॐ This double purpose is difficult to execute.
But with every precaution it has been found impossible to attain this double purpose.

3. The only effective way to protect children from becoming contaminated by sensuality is to engage them in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, not just restrict them.

ॐ Sastra says devotional service is the only protection.
The scriptures say that it is not in the power of man to ensure the immunity of boys and girls from the blight of sensuousness except by means of the service of Kṛṣṇa. This is declared to be the only effective and natural method. Let the boys be exposed to the attraction of the Cowherd Boy of Vraja.

ॐ By engaging in service they will gain attraction to Kṛṣṇa.
They will soon learn to pick up His company. They will easily realize that Kṛṣṇa can alone save them from every form of danger to which they are exposed by the 'right' of their juvenile nature.

ॐ This because Krishna consciousness is for everyone, not just the elderly
Why should this be so? There is a very simple reason. Kṛṣṇa does not limit His service only to the middle-aged and old people.

4. The object of the Puritanic idea is to stop children engaging in sinful activities so they can enjoy those same activities more when they are adults.

ॐ Puritan ideas have a good origin
The Puritanic idea of Godhead is a conception which owes its origin to persons who are elderly although honestly enough anxious to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth.

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- ॐ But they preach a veiled form of sense gratification
But if you scratch the thin coating on the surface of their sage and sober scheme as befitting their age you only detect the rotten arrangement for securing the maximum of sensuous enjoyment for those very children who are to be brought up in this virtuous way. If the child is allowed to spoil his health in boyhood, think these righteous people, he will not be in a position later to enjoy the legitimate pleasures of the grown-up man. Unless the young man husbands his resources of sense gratification he will also be a victim of premature old age. It is a policy of expediency of postponing a small present measure of enjoyment for reaping a much larger measure of it through the long tracts of the years to come.
- ॐ Spurious (inauthentic, false) brahmacarya teaches sense gratification; real brahmacarya is to serve God
The spurious brahmacarya ideal as misconceived by its worldly supporters embodies this Puritanic outlook. The scriptures indeed, enjoin that everyone should serve Godhead from the womb. This is the real meaning of brahmacarya. The ascetic practices that have come to attach themselves to the conception were interpolated into the scriptures in order to ensure worldly values by this form of the empiric method. The scheme requires that the laws of the growth of the physical and mental bodies should be observed and followed.
- ॐ A familiar Christian concept (God created this world for our enjoyment; nature/God thus becomes subservient)
Nature is regarded as the kind mother who favours only those of her children who cultivate the filial habit of prying into her secrets. Nature is supposed to be unable to avoid divulging her secrets to her inquisitive children although she is well aware that her children will exploit this knowledge for troubling her by harnessing her to their service. In other words it is also assumed to be the duty of the kind mother to consent to put herself in chains in order to minister to the sensuous appetites of her worthier children. Nature is assumed to be able to do good to her children only by submitting to be the victim of their lust.
- ॐ Godless asceticism is really a means to enjoy mastery and hence greater enjoyment
The practices of asceticism are really conceived in the epicurian spirit. The ascetic dreams of obtaining the mastery over nature by the method of controlling the senses. If the senses grow callous to the temptations of the world the ascetic thinks that he will have less chance of falling into the power of nature. He has an idea that when he will have perfected these defensive arrangements he will have become the real master of the situation. The brahmacary, according to the ascetic point of view, is to pass through a period of training in severe abstinence with his guru in order to be fitted to discharge the duties of citizenship, which will make a great demand on his nerves and muscles with greater thoroughness. There is no reference to the service of God or to any spiritual issue.

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5. Real spiritual training is completely transcendental

- ॐ When the soul is properly trained spiritually, self control comes as a by-product
We have had many occasions to explain that the spiritual is transcendental. No mundane consideration can form any part of spiritual training or conduct. It is not a spiritual affair to be even able to control one's carnal desires. Such self-control is indeed automatically produced by the awakening of the soul. But self-control is not therefore a function of the soul. The soul has nothing to do with the senses. The soul desires neither sensuality or sexual purity. The soul is not a mere mortal being.
- ॐ Brahmacharya without Krishna is mundane
If brahmacharya means a method of gaining moral power it is wholly a mundane affair and is as such not only of no concern to the soul but is positively obstructive to spiritual well-being.
- ॐ The position of the soul
This is bound to be so because the point of view of the soul is all-embracing. The soul rejects nothing. He regards nothing as redundant or useless. The soul has a use for everything. But the soul sees everything as it is really related to himself and to other entities. Everything is absolutely good on the platform of the soul. The scriptural brahmacharya institution accordingly means service of the Brahman i.e., the Reality Who is always the Great and always the Help. The servant of the Absolute is always free from delusion.

6. Real virtue is found only on the spiritual plane

- ॐ Morality is only necessary in the mundane world.
Morality is a valued commodity only on the plane of delusion. But it has no locus standi on the plane where the conditions of existence are perfect.
- ॐ Without Krishna consciousness it is not possible to be perfectly virtuous.
Till the service of Godhead is realized it is impossible to be really moral in the sense of being needlessly and perfectly virtuous.
- ॐ And those who are virtuous (and not Krishna conscious) are subject to exploitation.
If a person is causelessly virtuous in the worldly sense he or she will be a subject of easy exploitation for all the cunning rascals of this world. This is so because morality as conceived by the empiricist has reference to the physical body and the changeable mind and is, therefore, liable to change so long as the conditions are not radically altered.
- ॐ Materialists strive to create conditions that foster these artificial morals
The empiric contriver of juvenile welfare strives to produce conditions that will favour the growth and continuance of the empiric moral aptitude. These artificial conditions are confidently enough expected to be likely to prove of permanent benefit to those young persons who are brought up under these improvised conditions. But the brand of morality that has to be produced by the artificial

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manipulation of the natural environment is likely to prove of little value when the props are withdrawn. The analogy of needed protection for the growth of delicate plants does not apply as such plants are always exoterics. Hot-house morality is thus a misnomer and a delusion in relation to the soul.

7. Real Brahmacharya

- ॐ Mundane ethics are a perverted reflection of brahmacharya. *Brahmacharya fully embodies the substantive ideal of spiritual purity distortedly reflected in the empirical ethical conception.*
- ॐ Real brahmacharya means service to the Absolute. *Brahmacharya means service of the absolute.*
- ॐ Juvenile qualities (good and bad) have their place in spiritual life. *Juvenile innocence is not the monopoly of juvenile persons, any more than juvenile naughtiness. They are both animal entities, corresponding to analagous spiritual qualities. The spiritual activities are perfectly wholesome. They include all value and harmonize all disruptive conflict both of which are so utterly wanting in their mundane perverted reflections to be found in this world.*
- ॐ Some things are under our control to change and others depend on Krishna *It is not to be supposed that everything is done by Kṛṣṇa and there is nothing to be done by ourselves in any matter. As a matter of fact there is a division of parts to be played in functions that relate even to ourselves as between us and Kṛṣṇa. Certain duties are allotted to us. Certain other functions are reserved to Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ Killing Vatsasura is one of those. *Vatsāsura cannot be killed by us. He is too strong for us. This is in keeping with the experience of most educationists.*
- ॐ Juvenile innocence is has a role in life *Juvenile innocence is a necessity for both young and old. One cannot acquire it by any artificial process. No person can also ordinarily retain it after boyhood and youth. This is the real tragedy of human life.*

8. Parents must hand their sons over to properly qualified spiritual teachers. This is also a type of training for the parents.

- ॐ Juvenile innocence is desirable but it must be properly employed *Juvenile innocence is desired on account of its enjoyability. But it should properly be desired only for the service of Kṛṣṇa.*
- ॐ It the parents' responsibility to see that their children are trained spiritually by a pure devotee

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The parent can have no higher duty than to employ his boy in the service of Kṛṣṇa by putting him under the proper teacher, the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

- ॐ The parents' aren't fit for this training
No parent is entitled to undertake the charge of spiritual training of his own boy. He is unfitted for the task by his mundane relationship. Once such relationship is grasped to be an obstacle in the way of juvenile training the necessity of sending the boy at the earliest opportunity to the proper teacher becomes self-evident.
- ॐ If a parent doesn't see this, it can be an obstacle to the child's spiritual growth
If the parent continues to retain his parental interest in the boy after he has been put into school for the above purpose he will only be standing in the way of the boy's progress.
- ॐ This is also training for the parents
The training is not for the boy only, but it is a training for his parents as well.
- ॐ Training is for the soul
Boyish naughtiness is apt to be overlooked, nay encouraged, under the impression that it is nature to be naughty. This opinion overlooks the all-important factor that the training is intended for the welfare of the soul of the boy and not for the juvenile body or mind. The soul does not require to be treated with indulgence. He is neither young nor old in the worldly sense. The body and mind of the boy have to be employed in the interest of the soul.
- ॐ Mundane considerations are unnecessary for the soul
Boyish naughtiness and boyish virtue are alike unnecessary for the soul. It is necessary for the soul to be freed from either form of worldliness.
- ॐ This is true for youth as well as adults
The mundane nature of the boy is no less a clog to the wheel of spiritual progress than the adult nature of the grown-up worldling. The process of training is identical in the two cases as the soul is neither young nor old.

Much irrational pity is wasted on boys who are employed from early infancy in the full-time service of Kṛṣṇa, on exactly the same terms as grown up persons. Persons who affect much kindness of disposition towards juvenile frailties profess to be unable to understand why juvenile offenses are taken as seriously in spiritual training as those of adult persons

9. The teacher must be qualified

- ॐ The teacher must engage the child in Krishna's service
But the teacher in charge of the spiritual training of boys can perform his duty by them only as the special agent of Kṛṣṇa. If such a teacher chooses to confide in his own devices he is bound to be undeceived at every step. What he has really to do is to use the boy constantly in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

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- ॐ The teacher should also be completely absorbed in devotional service
For this purpose it is necessary for the teacher himself to be a full-time servant of Kṛṣṇa. It is only by abstaining from anything that is not distinctively commanded by Kṛṣṇa or His real agent, the guru, that the spiritual teacher of the boys can hope to be of any help to his pupils.
- ॐ The current educational system needs to be overhauled; Krishna needs to be included
The so-called science of pedagogies requires to be thoroughly overhauled in order to afford a free hand to the bonafide devotee of Kṛṣṇa in managing young persons. The present arrangements based on the experience of this world and on the hypotheses of an absolute causal relationship connecting each phenomenon with the rest, by leaving out the reference to Kṛṣṇa can only realize the tragic part of a quack lightly administering all the wrong drugs to a parent smitten with a mortal illness
- ॐ But Kamsa will do his best to send Vatsāsura to destroy the young
The King of atheists, Kamsa, is always setting the demon Vatsāsura to corrupt and destroy the boys. The teacher of the young employed by the atheistic society is verily the agent of Kamsa. The atheist is afraid lest the boys are employed in the service of Kṛṣṇa. He is naturally anxious to prevent any acquaintance of the boys with Kṛṣṇa.
- ॐ But one who has met the proper teacher can't be so corrupted
But if a boy has really found Kṛṣṇa the nefarious activities of the empiric teacher are powerless to destroy his innocence.
- ॐ In fact if such a teacher tries, the teacher will be destroyed
If such a teacher perseveres in the fruitless attempt he will thereby quickly bring about his own utter moral degradation and his sorry trick will also be fully exposed. Because in this case it is Kṛṣṇa Himself who opposes his wicked activities on behalf of his protigī.
- ॐ The current system only encourages Vatsāsuras
As a matter of fact the concern of empiric educationists for ensuring immunity of boys from the blighting effects of precocity is altogether hypocritical. The empiric pedant only wants the boy to grow a body and mind that will ensure greater and longer scope for their worldly use. He does not want that the worldly use of his body and mind should be curtailed in any way. In other words he is on principle opposed to the employment of the healthy body and sound mind for any spiritual purpose. But why does he want a healthy body for his nasty purpose? Is it only in order to be able to have the pleasure of a more prolonged wastage and the rake's progress in downright earnest? A sickly body is not really harmful to a person who has no higher object in view than undiluted sense gratification.

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VI. Lessons from the pastime & how it all fits together

- ॐ After pride and vanity are banished in the Dāmodara līlā, the devotee can now deal with objects directly opposing maturity in devotional service. Once pride, vanity, etc. are tamed, the devotee can be properly trained.
- ॐ Greed or lust seems to be dealt with some here as Vatsāsura received his present body due to being greedy or lusty.
- ॐ Demon appears as a young, immature representative of religion (calf being a small bull/cow).
- ॐ Krishna and Balarama were concerned about peer opinion
- ॐ And had to atone for afterwards (Manasi Ganga)
- ॐ Also has moved into a different stage of life (from vatsalya rasa to sakhya rasa) and has more independence. Or at least is being trained to gain more independence.
- ॐ Re moving to Vrn: be willing to change (esp internal) in order to follow K
- ॐ Society is very able to move (mobile phones, cheap gas...), but this is not necessarily helpful
- ॐ