

[India Awaits Vishnu's Return](#)

Category : [March 1992](#)

Published by Anonymous on Mar. 02, 1992

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Is Low Ebb of Dharma Harbinger of Incarnation?

A unique phenomenon is being witnessed in India today - many more people are visiting temples daily to worship God than ever did in the past. Also, some claim more temples have been built in the last 40 years than in the past 4,000 years. What are the reasons? There are many, but the most important is that a majority of people have begun to hope that the re-establishment of dharma [way of righteousness] is the only way out of the deepening moral crisis which not only India but the whole world is facing today.

There are also an increasingly large number of people who have begun to believe that the time has come for another birth in India of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna said in the scripture Bhagavad Gita that whenever dharma declined and it became beyond the capacity of human beings to put it back on the high pedestal it ought to occupy. He would re-incarnate Himself for accomplishing this task for humanity.

The failure of the successive governments in Delhi to check the rapidly deteriorating life of the common people and increasing criminalization of both social and political spheres have led many people to believe that their redemption is now possible only through a direct, divine intervention.

Some Hindu sects hold that Lord Siva Himself helped mankind about 7,000 years ago, because such an intervention had become necessary in view of an anarchic condition developing at that time. Revealing scripture to of ancient rishis, He

brought about social harmony and peace among various communities by creating institutions like marriage and founding unique Hindu systems of tantra, yoga, music, dance and ayurveda (an indigenous medical science).

When the harmony established by Lord Siva broke down about 3,500 years later because of increasing social and political conflicts and dissensions, Lord Vishnu took birth as Lord Krishna. By causing the great battle recounted in the Mahabharata he restored the harmony. His Gita went a long way towards creating a spiritual awareness among the people which helped them work and live together as members of one human family.

It is being felt even by several eminent persons today that once again the country is witnessing the breakdown of the social harmony Lord Krishna had restored. What is worth noting is that this is happening again after about 3,500 years. The fact about the breakdown is being proved by the growing conflicts between different groups and communities and divisive tendencies finding greater opportunities of expression through secessionist activities in major states like Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. Bloody controversies over places like Ayodhya are being cited as examples.

The assurance of His rebirth for the re-establishment of dharma that Lord Krishna had given is being increasingly quoted in private and public places. India's famous poet Tulsidas, who wrote the popular 16th century work. Ramacharitmanas (the story of Lord Rama), drew attention of his readers to this assurance. Written in common man's language, his monumental book is read today by millions of people in remote villages and towns. They also feel inspired by the assurance beautifully mentioned in the work.

Interestingly, it is the common people who have a greater faith in the assurance of Lord Krishna coming true. But those who have acquired some eminence in public life avoid showing such a faith. As one of them confided, if they begin publicly admitting that the time has come now for another advent of the Divine Being, it would amount to their admitting that they have no role to play. And this is what they loathe to confess. They do not want to write themselves off. But when asked to go on record saying that Lord Krishna's assurance was false or there is no hope of its ever coming true, they evade making a categorical statement.

Swami Chinmayanand, a renowned saint and member of India's Parliament today, is, however, one of those who do not hesitate at admitting that the time has really come for God's incarnation. It is necessary for saving the humanity not only in India but all over the world. Says he, "The deteriorating situation - both social and political - calls for a total change. And this can happen only through an avatar [incarnation of God] as has happened several times in the past. This can be done even by an institution which has direct blessing of God." He regrets that most of those who are looked upon by the people as their "protector" have become "destroyers." They can be reformed only by divine power.

The swami clarifies that to him reincarnation of God doesn't mean that He should Himself arrive on the earth. In the Vaishnavite philosophy - which stresses God's incarnations into physical form - Lord Vishnu has had ten incarnations, some as animals, others as humans such as Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. But Swami Chinmayanand believes He may even work through some realized souls or through a section of society endowed with His blessing. "When a society is faced with disintegrating elements, only a divine force or person can restore order."

Dr. Karan Singh, a well-known Hindu scholar and political leader, would not go as far as saying that the people are waiting for another descent of the Divine Being in a human form to help reestablish the rule of dharma. But he admits that "there is undoubtedly a great search for dharma." Dr. Singh, however, does not rule out the possibility of a divine intervention in the critical situation facing India as much as several other parts of the world. He says this will happen through the "divine will working through human consciousness."

Dr. Singh finds this divine will already working in the increasing number of devotees of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna visiting the places of worship all over the country. He cites the example of Vaishnava Devi (a popular goddess named Devi) temple near Jammu (a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state). According to him, about two-and-a-half-million Hindu devotees had visited this temple in 1990-1991, a four-fold increase in number compared to the figure a year ago.

Swami Yogananda, another member of Parliament, also believes that God incarnates Himself at a time when the people have lost faith in their ability to tackle a crisis. "God may even depute someone like [Sikh guru] Nanak to do the job." He admits that the situation in India is critical today but refuses to believe that it has gone beyond the capacity of human beings to deal with. According to

him, the situation which requires the presence of God Himself in a human form to handle is still far away. Swami Sureshanand, a parliamentarian, holds views similar to those of Swami Yogananda. The situation is certainly critical in his eyes, but he is confident that it can be taken care of by leaders like himself. He blames the present situation on the faulty political system which he thinks can be set right if the proper people are there in politics. Swami Vishwanath Das Shastri, a colleague of Swami Sureshanand in Parliament, would like to believe that the Divine Being prefers to work through great personalities he creates like Vivekananda, Dayananda Saraswati and Mahatma Gandhi. He admits that a change is needed today in social and political systems but not such a big change as was carried out by Lord Shiva or Lord Krishna.

A clear indication of the fact that the perception of the people is far different from that of their leaders was available when India's television recently ran two serials based on India's great epics. Mahabharata and Ramayana. These series instantly became popular with the common people and millions of them sat glued to the television sets watching them Sunday after Sunday for about two years. They began adoring, loving and even worshipping those who played the roles of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. Many of them believed that the Divine Being was preparing through the serials the necessary psychological ground for His arrival again to help mankind.

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