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Vishnu Sahasranama Part 53: Sthavishtah – The One Who is Vast Without Limitation by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj

The Name Sthavishtah reveals the nature of Bhagwan, who is not limited by form, space, or size. Rather, all existence is understood to rest within him.

While explaining this divine Name, Adi Shankaracharya says: अतिशयेन स्थूलः स्थविष्ठः *atīśayena sthūlah sthaviṣṭhaḥ*, meaning that Bhagwan is immensely expansive.

His form is so vast that the entire cosmos can be understood as existing within him. The Name *Sthavishtah*, therefore, points to his unlimited and all-pervading nature.

Shri Baldev Vidyabhushan explains this more clearly. He states that Bhagwan, by his own power, creates countless universes. His being is not confined by space or dimension; it is boundless and present everywhere. For this reason, he is known as *Sthavishtah*.

विस्तारः सर्वभूतस्य विष्णोर्विश्वमिदं जगत्

vistārah sarvabhūtasya viṣṇor viśvam idaṃ jagat

"The entire universe is an expansion of Vishnu, who resides within all beings. Therefore, the wise see everything as one, without any sense of separation." (*Vishnu Puran*, 1.17.84)

The *Vishnu Puran* clearly states that the whole universe is nothing but the expansion of Bhagwan Vishnu. This means that nothing, whether seen or unseen, exists independently of him. Everything exists within him and because of him.

Krishn revealed this same truth through his divine play. He showed Yashoda Maiyya that innumerable universes exist within him. In the *Shrimad Bhagwatam* (10.14.16), Brahma remembers this pastime during his prayers. He recalls how Krishn once opened his mouth, and Yashoda Maiyya saw the entire universe within it. At that very moment, the same universe was also clearly present outside, visible and complete, just as it was inside his mouth.

अत्रैव मायाधमनावतारे
ह्यस्य प्रपञ्चस्य बहिः स्फुटस्य ।
कृत्स्नस्य चान्तर्जठरे जनन्या
मायात्वमेव प्रकटीकृतं ते ॥

*atraiva māyā-dhamanāvataṛe
hy asya prapañcasya bahiḥ sphuṭasya ।
kṛtsnasya cāntar jaṭhare jananyā
māyātvam eva prakṛṭi-kṛtaṃ te ॥*

"My Lord, you have shown that you control *maya*. Although you appear within this universe, the entire creation exists within you, as you revealed to Yashoda Maiyya when she saw the universe within your body."

Through this pastime, we understand Bhagwan's unique nature. Even when he appears small or close, his vast and all-pervading nature remains unchanged. This is why he is called *Sthavishtah*, the one who is vast without limitation.



Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Shikshashtakam

Part 10, Ego is Fuel for the Fire

by Shri Chandan Goswami Maharaj



Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu never personally wrote any scripture. Even though there are stories mentioning that he once wrote a commentary on *nyaya* (logic) for a friend, he later threw that commentary into the Shri Ganga River. So technically, we do not have anything written by him.

The very first time Roop Goswami recorded Mahaprabhu's instructions was in his scripture *Padyavali*, and this text is our first source for the eight verses of the Shikshashtakam. They form the core teachings of our Gaudiya Sampradaya.

In our previous articles on the Shikshashtakam, we primarily focused upon a particular line from the first verse: *bhava mahadavagni nirvapanam*, "extinguishing the raging forest fire of material existence". This is one of the functions of *sankirtan*. Now we will elaborate on all the ways *sankirtan* affects our lives.

According to this first instruction of Mahaprabhu, there are eight truths to understand about *sankirtan*:

1. It cleanses the mirror of the heart (*chitt*).
2. It extinguishes the raging forest fire of material existence.
3. It spreads moonlight that causes the white lotus of good fortune to bloom.

4. It gives life to spiritual knowledge.
5. It expands the ocean of divine bliss.
6. It enables one to taste full nectar at every step.
7. It bathes and purifies the entire self.
8. It is supremely victorious.

Therefore, Shri Krishn *sankirtan* is declared completely triumphant.

Some devotees have asked about the distinction between *kirtan* and *sankirtan*. In the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, Shri Gopal Bhatt Goswami explains that *kirtan* performed by many together in an assembly (*bahu militva*) is known as *sankirtan*. Such *sankirtan* is considered superior even to *kirtan*, because it nourishes a special kind of power.

We are not speaking about *kirtan*, where someone can sit alone and chant. The very first verse spoken by Mahaprabhu is about *sankirtan*: *param vijayate shri krishn sankirtanam*.

Now, why is this *sankirtan* so special? To understand this, we must carefully decode the first verse of Shikshashtakam. This verse describes both the primary and secondary goals for devotees. There are actually many different goals one may attain by chanting, and Mahaprabhu lists the top eight.

First, Mahaprabhu describes the secondary goals that naturally arise from strictly following Naam Sankirtan. These include cleansing the mirror of the heart (*chitt*) and so forth, as listed above. However, none of these is our actual goal. We are not doing *bhakti* only to clean our *chitt*. We are not doing *bhakti* to calm the fire of the material world. We are also not doing *bhakti* to gain good fortune, acquire knowledge, nor even to experience bliss, taste eternal nectar, or bathe our soul in spiritual joy.

Rather, we are doing *bhakti* to attain sacred love (*prem*). That is our primary and ultimate goal.

Even though *bhakti* removes worldly problems and may grant our *swaroop* – a spiritual form as a *manjari* (a *gopi* maidservant of Shri Radharani), these are still secondary goals, according to Gaudiya philosophy. They are not the primary goal. The primary goal is *prem* alone.

Therefore, we must understand what is lacking in us and how we can attain that sacred love. This is the main goal for any devotee.

In the previous articles, we spoke at length about *ahankar* or ego. We are all burning in this world, which is ablaze with *maya*'s fire. I was reading a commentary by Shri Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur, and I concluded that no one can escape this fire except Shukdev Maharaj. Everyone is burning in it. I also

explained previously that *ahankar* resides at the base of the spine, in the *muladhar chakra*. That is the seat of the ego.

The *Shrimad Bhagwatam* explains that *ahankar* is the foundation, and the eleven faculties reside upon it in the *muladhar chakra*. These are the five senses of knowledge (*gyaanendriya*) – the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose – and the five senses of action (*karmendriya*) – speech, hands, feet, anus, and genitals – along with the mind (*mana*).

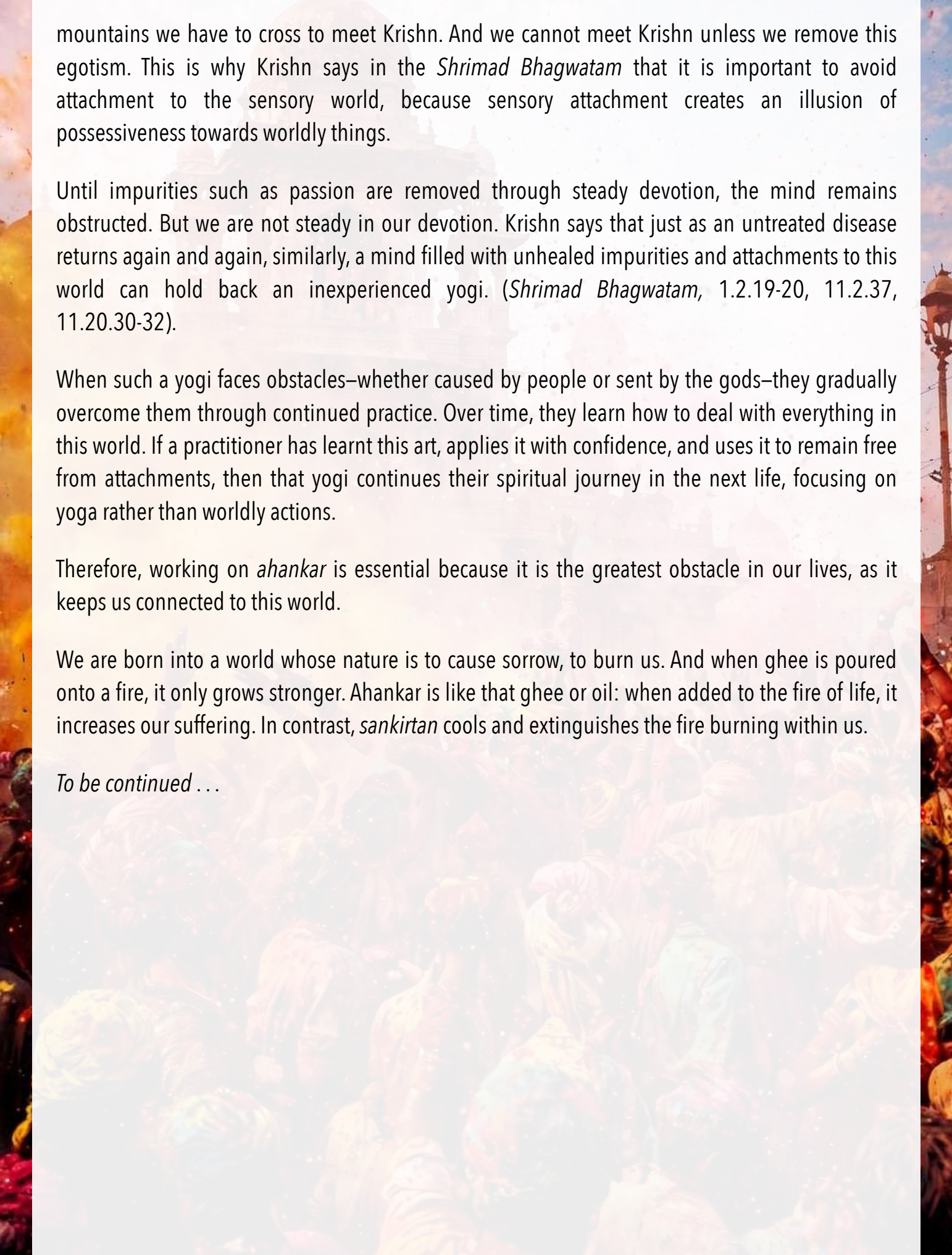
Now, *ahankar* has two main functions: "I" and "mine." This is the biggest hurdle in our lives. Shri Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur explains this beautifully in his *Madhurya Kadambini*. When we connect ourselves with this physical body, two impulses, "I-ness" and "my-ness", drive everything in our lives.

The *Bhakti Sandarbha* (*Anuccheda*, 173) says:

अहंकारविमुक्तानां
केशवो न हि दूरकः ।
अहंकारयुतानां हि
पर्वता राशयः अन्तराः ॥

*ahaṅkāra-vimuktānām
keśavo na hi dūrakah |
ahaṅkāra-yutānām hi
parvatā rāsayaḥ antarāḥ ||*

"Krishn is not far from those who are free from *ahankar*, but for those possessed by ego, there are mountain ranges between him and them." Not just one mountain, but entire ranges, because *ahankar* is accompanied by the ten senses and the *mana*. This is the range of



mountains we have to cross to meet Krishn. And we cannot meet Krishn unless we remove this egotism. This is why Krishn says in the *Shrimad Bhagwatam* that it is important to avoid attachment to the sensory world, because sensory attachment creates an illusion of possessiveness towards worldly things.

Until impurities such as passion are removed through steady devotion, the mind remains obstructed. But we are not steady in our devotion. Krishn says that just as an untreated disease returns again and again, similarly, a mind filled with unhealed impurities and attachments to this world can hold back an inexperienced yogi. (*Shrimad Bhagwatam*, 1.2.19-20, 11.2.37, 11.20.30-32).

When such a yogi faces obstacles—whether caused by people or sent by the gods—they gradually overcome them through continued practice. Over time, they learn how to deal with everything in this world. If a practitioner has learnt this art, applies it with confidence, and uses it to remain free from attachments, then that yogi continues their spiritual journey in the next life, focusing on yoga rather than worldly actions.

Therefore, working on *ahankar* is essential because it is the greatest obstacle in our lives, as it keeps us connected to this world.

We are born into a world whose nature is to cause sorrow, to burn us. And when ghee is poured onto a fire, it only grows stronger. Ahankar is like that ghee or oil: when added to the fire of life, it increases our suffering. In contrast, *sankirtan* cools and extinguishes the fire burning within us.

To be continued . . .



Braj Animal Care



Neerja's Story - When Compassion Arrived in Time

We received a call from Shyamsundar Dhanuka School in Vrindavan about Neerja, a dog we had known since she was a puppy. Now, a year later, we were informed that she was in severe distress during labour. After locating her, our team examined her and found she was suffering from dystocia, a prolonged and obstructed delivery.

Neerja had partially delivered her first puppy, which we had to remove gently. Sadly, it did not survive. It was clear that more puppies were still inside. Neerja stopped eating, grew weaker by the day, and her condition became critical. Injections and antibiotics brought temporary relief, but this was no longer a case that could be resolved naturally.



NEERJA

We could not turn our backs on her.

By the third day, Braj Animal Care rushed her to the Mathura Veterinary Hospital. Though exhausted and in pain, she remained calm and trusting throughout the journey. At the hospital, tests and an ultrasound confirmed that four more dead puppies were still inside her uterus, and urgent surgery was required. As Neerja was extremely weak, she was first stabilised with IV fluids, antibiotics, and pain relief.

After the first veterinary visit, another puppy had to be pulled out, followed by a third through careful manipulation. None survived.

We then faced a difficult reality. The surgery itself was possible, but post-operative care would determine whether she lived or died. Neerja needed a warm, safe place, constant supervision, timely medication, restricted movement, and daily veterinary visits for 10-15 days. Her main carer was unable to provide this, and sending her to a shelter was not an option given our past experiences.

Time was running out.

After reaching out urgently, we found a safe temporary home—but it required funding. Her daily care would cost ₹1,200, excluding medicines, vet visits, and surgery. The alternative was palliative care.

We chose life.

With the support of Braj Animal Care well-wishers, the funds were raised in time. Neerja underwent surgery in Mathura, where the remaining puppies were removed and, due to severe complications, her uterus had to be removed to save her life. By evening, she was stable and shifted to her recovery space.

We received daily updates and videos, which were shared with donors who had made this possible. Today, Neerja is healing well and has returned to Shyamsundar Dhanuka School after her stitches were removed.

We share her story to remind you that **your support truly matters**. What once looked like a painful and certain end became a story of survival—because compassion arrived in time.

You can support the ongoing seva of Braj Animal Care by contributing towards daily feeding programmes, emergency medical care, or by offering your time as a volunteer. Every small act of kindness helps sustain the lives of Braj's most vulnerable residents and keeps the spirit of compassion alive in Vrindavan.

If you would like to contribute, please scan the QR code. Scanning the QR code will not take you directly to a payment page. You'll first be guided to a secure form to fill out, and then you'll proceed to the payment step. Here's how it works:

- Scan the QR code using your smartphone camera
- Tap the link that appears
- Complete a short form with your details
- Follow the guided steps to review and make your payment



Please keep in touch with us via the following channels:

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Maharajji's Latest Updates



When does Holi start in Braj?

Vasant Panchami Friday 23 January 2026

On the auspicious day of Vasant Panchami, Shriji adorns a *vasanti* (greenish-yellow) attire. From this day until the final observance of Holi, *gulal* is offered daily to Shri Radharamanji after Rajbhog Aarti, accompanied by the singing of Holi *pad* with *dhap vadan* (a bell-less tambourine). In the evening, Shri Radharamanji is seated upon a golden throne. A special *bhog* of saffron-infused *barfi* and clay-pot sweets (*kuliya*) is offered. From this auspicious day, Holi commences in Braj. In the evening, a special Utsav Aarti is performed.

Holikotsav (from Phalgun Shukla Ashtami)
Tuesday 24 February 2026

From Phalgun Shukla Ashtami onwards, Shri Radharamanji daily adorns *kesariya* (golden-yellow) attire. In the evening, he is seated upon a silver throne and, in divine play, bestows the joy of Holi upon all. A special *bhog* of sweet fried flatbreads (*pua*) is offered.

Gaur Purnima and Dolotsav 3 March 2026

On the day of the full moon, Gaur Purnima, the *abhishek* of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is performed in remembrance of his sacred

appearance (*avirbhav*). On Dolotsav, Shriji adorns pink attire and sits on the swing (*dol*). A special *bhog* of *jalebi*, *pua*, and other offerings is presented. On this day, Shriji bestows the joy of Holi upon all.

Holi Pastime at Gulal Kund

Gulal Kund is a sacred place where the joyful Holi pastime of Shri Radha and Krishn was revealed. During springtime, the waters of this *kund* are said to have turned crimson from the abundance of *gulal*, and from this divine play it received the name Gulal Kund.

Shri Narhari Chakravarty Thakur describes this place in *Bhakti Ratnakar*, *Pancham Pravah*, noting that in the season of Phaag, devotees behold the Holi pastimes at Gulal Kund in Gantholi village, Govardhan:

ए हेतु गन्धोली, ए गुलाल कुंड जले
एबे फाग देखे लोक वसन्तेर काले

*e hetu gantholi, e gulāl kund jale
ebe phāg dekhe lok vasanter kāle*

"This is the water of Gulal Kund in Gantholi village. In the season of Phaag, devotees behold the Holi pastimes here."

Shri Raghav Pandit later narrated to Shri Srinivas the origin of the village name Gantholi. During spring, Priya-Priyatam were

seated together upon a throne at this very spot. In a playful mood, the *sakhis* quietly tied knots, *ganth*, in their garments. When the Divine Couple rose to move, the knots caused them to stumble, and they embraced. Witnessing this loving moment, the *sakhis* burst into joyful laughter.

To soften the laughter and continue the play, the *sakhis* untied the knots and showered the Divine Couple with *gula*. So great was the outpouring of colour that it seemed to fill the sky itself. The waters of the *kund* turned red, and from that time it became known as Gulal Kund.

Shri Raghavdas Ji, son of the great Ashtachhap poet Shri Chaturbhujdas Ji, experienced this Holi pastime at Gulal Kund.



GULAL KUND

ए जाय जहाँ हरि खेले गोपिन-संग

E jāya jahān Hari khele gopin-saṅga

"Let us go to where Hari plays with the *gopis*."

Raghavdas. Vaishnav *pad* (Bengali devotional song). Preserved in the Bengali Vaishnav *pad* tradition; found in later *pada-sangraha* compilations (18th–19th century).

Even today, in the spring season, the *kund* is remembered as the place where this Holi pastime unfolded.



MAHARAJI AT THE HOLI UTSAV ODEV SANKIRTAN, DELHI

Spiritual Questions and Answers with Maharajji

Q: On the occasion of Janmashtami, what is the *sampoorn vidhi*, along with the mantras, for performing the *abhishek* of Shri Radharaman as per the Radharaman Parivaar?

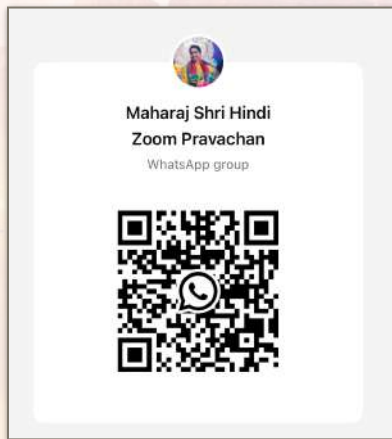
A: Imagine a child asking their parents to explain the knowledge of the *grihastha ashram*. The parents would say that this understanding can only be given once the child grows older, as they are not yet old enough to comprehend it. In the same way, there is always a right time and circumstance for asking any question. Another important aspect is whether one is an *adhikari* capable of receiving such knowledge.

We do not know whether you are a suitable *adhikari* to receive this information. You should come and meet us, so that we may understand your eligibility. Based on that, we will provide appropriate guidance. These are Vedic mantras, and it is not a simple matter to merely ask for them and use them for Thakurji's *abhishek* or any other *sadhana*. Therefore, one must proceed with great care.

Maharajji's Online Hindi Classes

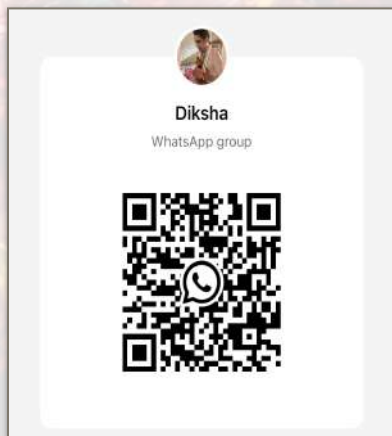
Shri Shikshashtakam every Saturday at 9 pm IST and Shri Roop Shiksha every Wednesday at 9 pm IST.

For class updates and Zoom links, please join his [WhatsApp group](#):



Initiation (Diksha)

Maharajji will be giving *diksha* in Vrindavan daily from 16th to 28th June, 2026. If you aspire to take initiation, please read the information provided [online](#) and join the [WhatsApp group](#):



For more information about Maharajji's upcoming programmes, please contact us via the following channels:

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Vaishnav Calendar

For upcoming festivals and Ekadashi dates, please [click here](#) to view our Vaishnav calendar.

