

# DASHAVATAR - VAMANA AVATAR



We will learn about the fifth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, called Vamana Avatar in today's class. The focus of Vamana Avatar falls on the story of King Bali, also popularly known as Bali Chakravarthi and Maha Bali. He was a Demon (Asura) king in the lineage of Bhaktha Prahlada. Do you remember who Prahlada is? We learned about him during Narasimha Avatar lessons. Bali was the grand son of Prahlada, and son of Virochana. Sage Sukracharya (the Demon Guru) was his preceptor, who is helping King Bali in all his endeavors.

Bali chakravarthi was one of the greatest kings. Though he was a demon by birth, he never deviated from the path of Truth and Dharma (religious ethics). He dedicated himself to the welfare of the people in his kingdom. He was also famous and known for his charitable qualities. King Bali obtained all the Vedic knowledge under the guidance and supervision of his illustrious grand father Prahlada. During his reign the country and the people were very prosperous. He was also a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, and was praised by everyone. His power and strength kept on increasing as he has been following dharma. With the help and advice of his preceptor, King Bali had conquered all the three worlds, and dethroned Indra from Heaven and occupied Amaravathi, the capital of Indralok.

Bali Chakravarthi wanted the seat of Indra permanently. As per his Guru's advice he started performing Ashwamedha Yaga (Yagna). He completed 99 of such Ashwamedha Yaagas. If he completes 100 of those Yaagas, he will be eligible for the post of Indra. Indra got scared, and went to Brihaspati (the Guru of Devas) and asked him for guidance to restore his kingdom back. Brihaspati asks Indra to wait for the right time, and approach Lord Vishnu for things to happen.

Aditi is the mother of all the Devas and Sage Kashyapa is the father. Aditi was unable to see the plight of the Indra and other Devas, and requested Kashyapa to help their children out. Kashyapa tells Aditi to appease Lord Vishnu since he too was helpless. Aditi performed severe penance to get back power to their son. Lord Vishnu was pleased with Aditi's penance and assures her, "Do not worry, the demons will not stay in the Swargalok for long. I shall soon be born as your son and will put an end to Bali." Soon Aditi is blessed with a son. He was dwarf and was named Vamana.

A few years later King Bali decides to perform the 100<sup>th</sup> Ashwamedha Yaaga to be crowned the supreme king of Swargalok forever. Vamana hears of this and comes to the venue of the Yagna. King Bali welcomes his little guest whole-heartedly. Bali says "You have come while I am performing a Yagna, ask what you want and it shall be granted to you." Vamana was tight lipped, but Bali kept insisting that he asks for something. Bali asked Vamana whether he wants some kingdom, beautiful elephants, horse, jewels, any bride, etc. For everything Vamana said NO. Finally Vamana asked Bali just three steps of land in the steps of Vamana. Bali was surprised "You are asking only three steps, that too in your steps. What you will get." He asked Vamana to demand some better items instead of these steps, thinking that the three steps are very meager for donation. Vamana said that he will be satisfied with the three steps of land only.

On hearing this, Demon Guru Sukracharya doubts the incident to be the brainwork of Lord Vishnu. He immediately approaches Bali and warns him, "Oh! Great King, the little Brahmana is Lord Vishnu himself take back your words. Bali refused to hear his advice, and in fact he said "Aaha! What a great opportunity that the hand of Lord Vishnu will be below and my hand will be above. I will not lose this chance of giving this donation even if I lose my entire kingdom. Also what is there to think, as if this body will be forever?" When Bali fails to listen to him, Sukracharya enters Bali's water container (Kamandala) in a microscopic form and blocked the water from flowing from the vessel's sprout (when a king donates anything to his subjects, it was a custom to do so by pouring water onto the subject's palms. This was when the donation was considered complete). Lord Vamana who was aware of this trick, put a straw in the vessel's sprout and this entered the eye of Sukracharya and thus blinding him. Unable to bear the pain, Sukracharya moved out of the vessel's sprout. Bali donates the three feet land as requested by the Vamana.

Almost immediately at once dwarf Vamana grew large in size astonishing all the demons present there. Vamana covered all of the Earth with his first step. His second step covered all of the sky. There was no place for the third step. When the demons realized that they were being cheated, they prepare for a war only to be stopped by king Bali. Then Vamana questions

Bali where He could place his third foot? King Bali realized that he is short of fulfilling his promise given to Vamana. He surrenders completely before the Lord, and bends his head where the third foot could be placed to fulfill his promise. Prahlad comes and intervenes and pleads with Lord Vishnu to let go off his grandson. Then Lord Vishnu says, "Though he is a demon, Bali has all the qualities required to seat him with the Devatas. For the time being, he shall rule over the Patala and later ascend to the Swargalok as the future Indra." Having said so, the Lord disappears.

Morals in the story:

- Fame for a person is important but it must never be overdone. One must always be satisfied with what he has.
- Bali was prepared to loose anything for keeping up his word. God always likes such people only.
- Importance of Atithi (Guest) seva was well illustrated by Bali. He welcomed the dwarf Brahmin and offered to give whatever he asks.

Questions:

- Who is Bali?
- Is Bali a good person? Why?
- Why Bali did perform Ashwamedha Yaaga?
- What is devata?
- What is demon?
- Why Lord Vishnu did take Vamana incarnation?
- Who is Sukracharya?
- Why did Aditi perform penance?
- Who is Devatas' Guru?
- Is Bali a greedy person?
- Does Bali want fame?

**Asthalakshmi Stotram - *Gaja Lakshmi*:** Goddess Lakshmi came out of the ocean during the churning of the ocean (Samudra Manthan). So she is known as a daughter of the ocean. She came out of the ocean sitting on a full-bloomed lotus and also having lotus flowers in both hands with two elephants by her sides, holding a beautiful vessels filled with milk and

pouring it over Sri Lakshmi. Many a times we see Sri Lakshmi standing in the lotus and elephants are pouring nectar over her. During the festival of the lamps or the Deepavali along with Sri Lakshmi the Ganapati or the Elephant God also gets worshipped; that signifies the protection from evils as well as abundant grace and blessings for additional prosperities!

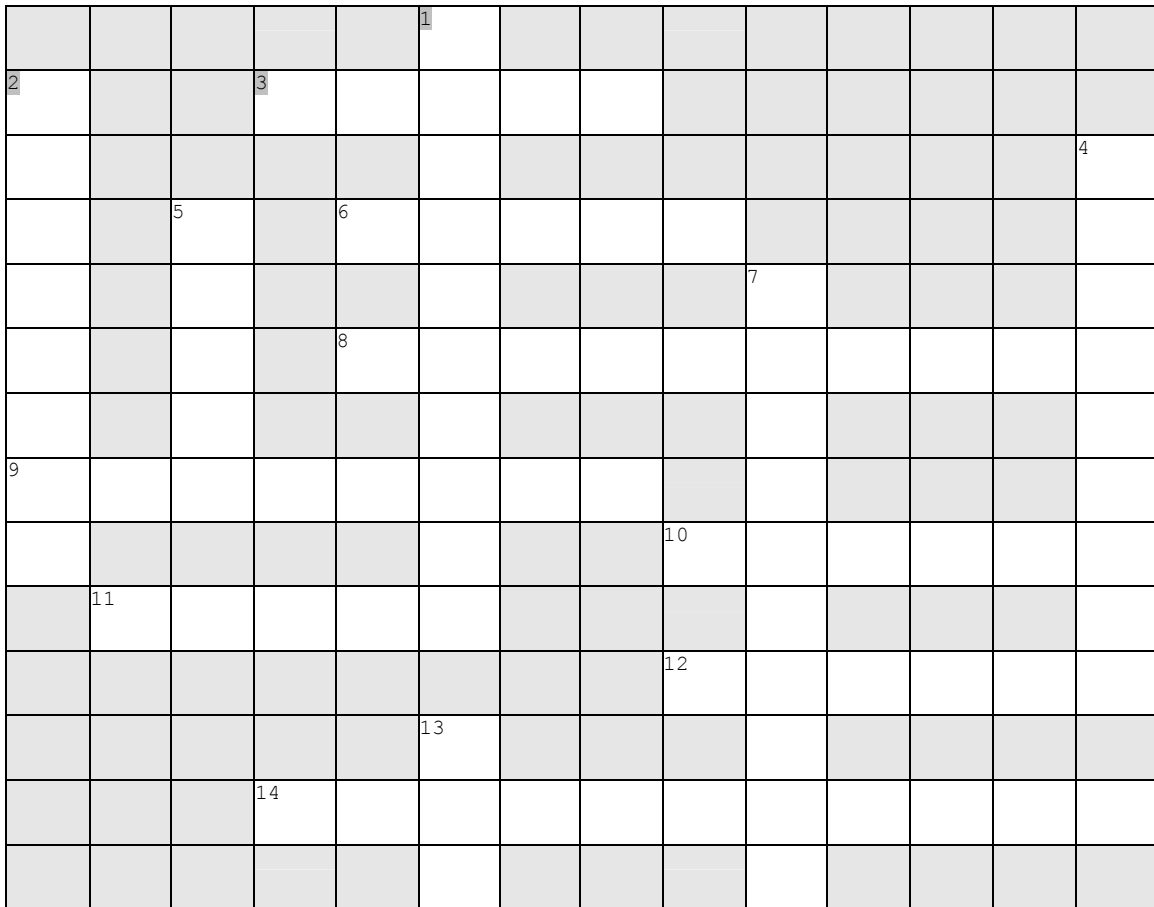
Jaya Jaya Durgathi Nasini Kamini,  
Sarva Phala Pradha Sastra Maye,  
Rathha Gaja Thuraga Padathi Samavrutha,  
Parijana Manditha Lokanuthe,  
Harihara Brahma Supoojitha Sevitha ,  
Thapa Nivarini Pada Yuthe,  
Jaya Jaya He Madhusoodhana Kamini  
Gajalakshmi Sada Palaya Maam.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXyKQPw2WmU>

***Meaning:***

*Victory and victory to Gajalakshmi  
Oh darling of the killer of Madhu,  
Victory and victory to you,  
Who removes bad fate,  
Who is desirable God,  
Who is the personification of shastras,  
Which bless one with all that is asked,  
Who is surrounded by an army of elephants,  
Chariots, horses and cavalry,  
Who is worshipped and served by,  
Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma,  
And whose feet provides relief from suffering,  
Please protect me always*

## CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 3 Vamana covered with the first step
- 6 Number of steps of land Vamana demanded Bali
- 8 The Yagna Bali performed
- 9 Bali's grand father
- 10 Vishnu's fifth incarnation
- 11 Devatas mother
- 12 The place Vamana asked Bali to rule
- 14 Demon Guru

### DOWN

- 1 Devatas' Guru
- 2 Devatas father
- 4 Name of water container
- 5 King of Swargalok
- 7 Capital of Indralok
- 13 Vamana covered with the second step

## Coloring Exercise

