

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vamana Avatar

The Fifth Incarnation of Lord Krishna

Once there was a great king named Bali Maharaj. He was Prahlāda Maharaj's grandson and was the king of the demons. He was very powerful and even had defeated Indra and conquered the heavenly planets. This worried Aditi and Kasyapa Muni, who were the parents of the demigods.

Aditi and Kasyapa worshipped the Lord so that their sons, the demigods, would be protected from the demons. Due to their prayers, the Supreme Personality of Godhead agreed to become their son. He appeared to them in His original form with conch, disc, lotus, and club. Then, in front of His father and mother He assumed the form of a brāhmana dwarf named Vamana.

Vamana heard that Bali Maharaj was performing a great sacrifice and went there to give Bali his Mercy. When He entered the sacrificial arena, Bali received Vamana and worshipped Him by washing His feet. Bali Maharaj asked Vamanadeva, "What is it that you wish, dear Brahman. I shall give you anything you ask for."

Vamana was pleased with Bali's attitude and said, "You are a worthy grandson of Prahalad. I see you are very generous and righteous. I only ask from you three steps of land. A wise man never asks for more than what he needs."

Bali Maharaj thought that Vamanadeva was not too intelligent because He only asked for three paces of land when He could have had much more. Bali agreed, "Ok, take whatever you like."

Sukracharya, Bali's Guru, tried to talk him out of it by saying, "No, this dwarf bramachari is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Vishnu! He has come to help demigods! He has only asked you for three steps of land, but He will take everything!"

But Bali Maharaj replied, "I have already given my promise. How can I be a cheater and a liar?" To Vamanadeva, he said, "You may have your three paces of land."

Vamana readied Himself to take the first step. As Bali looked on in amazement, Vamana grew bigger and bigger. With His first step He covered the entire earth, sky and all directions. With His second step He covered the heavenly planets and the rest of the universe.

The demons were furious seeing that Bali had lost everything. They rushed forward to kill Vamana. Lord Vishnu's associates conquered them quickly.

Looking around, Vamana saw that there was no spot left for the third step. He asked Bali Maharaj where He should place His third step. Bali bowed his head and said, "Lord, if it is Your pleasure, place Your foot on my head for Your third pace. I am Yours eternally. I had become proud of my power. But now I have lost my kingdom and have gained You instead."

Lord Vamanadeva lovingly placed His foot on Bali's head and spoke. "My son, I take away everything from those that I love. Riches and power make a man proud, disregarding Me. When you see a human who is not proud of wealth, youth, beauty, wisdom, and power, then you know that I am pleased by him." In this way, Bali Maharaj surrendered his life to Vishnu.

