

## One Kumara to Another: Towards Divine A likeness

The relief of Shiva-Parvati's marriage is being developed on the façade of the Annapurna Temple's sanctum sanctorum. As usual I got interested in a bit of what this mythological legend is about. While reading about Lord Shiva and Devi Parvati's marriage I came across an interesting story related to Brahmarshi Sanat Kumara, the primordial form of our revered Mahavatar



Lord Kartikeya

Babaji Maharaj. I related it to Sree Sree Maa as follows, "Maa, you must be knowing that sage Sanat Kumara was the priest of the Punyaka Yagna that Mata Parvati performed for the birth of Lord Ganesha and after the yagna, the sage asked

for Lord Shiva as his dakshina. That must have put you in a big dilemma?"

"Yes indeed," she replied, "Finally, Sri Krishna himself had to intervene to solve the impasse. But there is a deeper reason behind this unique request of Sanat Kumara. Eventually, he did become part of Shiva-Parvati's household when he descended as Kumara Kartikeya. The greatest of souls, the ayoni sambhavas - those born by an eternal decree through a divinological super-science that supersedes the normal process of biological birth - through their superlative sadhana and grace of the supreme divine, develop three forms within creation, namely rishi-avatar forms in Brahmaloaka, manava-avatar forms on earth and deva-avatar forms

spanning across the seven lokas. By this, they remain inextricably associated with all the divine works by which the supreme lord manifests his inconceivable will through creation. These great souls are his true representatives, the Krishna-sarupya beings in this universe. Like Vashishta took the avatar of Lord Shiva, so did Sanat Kumara - whom we know as our beloved Mahavatar Mahamuni Kailash Bihari Babaji Maharaj today - take birth as an avatar in Kartikeya, son of Shiva and Shakti, who is also known and worshipped as Lords Kumara, Skanda, Murugan, Subramanya and the like. It is worthwhile to know this aspect of culmination of the illuminated soul's spiritual endeavour." "Please tell us a little more on this as I have not read any special interpretation of the birth of Lord Kartikeya, except for how Madan-deva aroused Lord Shiva at the behest of the terrorized Devas enabling the birth of the valorous Kumara for the slaying of Tarakasura", I requested. Sree Sree Maa then elucidated further as follows.

"The principal aim of Ishwar-koti sages is attainment of equal-union with the supreme divine, that is, realization, fulfillment and establishment in 'bhagwat-swarupa'. Here 'bhagwat swarupa' typically refers to the transcendental divine truth, personified in Purushottama Sri Krishna - the lord of the eternal world of Goloka (who is the absolute reality, source of every source and the cause of all cause), or his alter-ego, the four-armed Lord Narayana Sri Hari of Vaikuntha.

An important milestone for Ishwar-koti rishis who embark on this path leading to Purna-Yoga is Param-Shivahood. This is the ninth stage towards attainment of Param-Brahman-swarupa wherein one becomes eligible to be alight on the Navamundi asana, the seat of cosmic consciousness or

universal kutastha. Here the Param-Shiva satta exists in steadfast union with his Parameshwari Shakti satta. Perfectly connected co-existence enables the Shiva-Shakti sattas to mingle across the highest echelons of the Mahapranic universe with consummate ease. Constantly delving into the realms of this Mahakarana consciousness, they develop Mahakarana forms or 'Golden Embodiments' (Hiranyatanu) which constitute the elements of the pure Mahapranic world. Such golden-bodied souls become capable of entering Vaikuntha-loka, the realm of the Supreme Lord Narayana, at their will.

In the august presence of Lord Sri Hari - the divine form of saguna Brahman sanatana - initially as a devotee and then through the Lord's grace and power of divine love, these Brahmarshi-Maharshi sages, in accordance with their purified swabhava and gunas, first attain sayujya or akin-ness (in terms of his equal qualities) through constant mingling and then sarupya or likeness, an equivalent of his pristine form with all embedded qualifications of divinity. By this, they become vessels of his eternally infinite aishwarya and madhurya.

On attaining Param-Shivahood, at first, the sages become 'Brahma-vetta' or acquire the complete knowledge of Brahman. By the blessings of the Lord, Brahma-vetta rishis easily achieve sayujya. Through this they are empowered with all the glory of his divine yogic wealth. However, the fullness of madhurya (divine love) still remains to be received. Only by the highest grace of the eternal supreme, when sarupya is attained, does one become a divine vessel for the pouring of madhurya within. With blissful love flowing to its brim, one is vested with the right to have darshan of raas leela, the ultimate of all bliss. Through constant engagement in the expansive darshan of this eternal divine play, the supramental

consciousness of the rishi-satta advances towards sayujya with Sri Krishna. Such an Ishwar-koti's nature becomes akin to Sri Bhagwan. Such Bhagwan-like beings or vessels of Purna-Brahman are known as 'Bhagwat-vetta' or those who have knowledge of the absolute divine (Param Brahman). Through the will of Sri Krishna, such Bhagwat-vettas, in constant mingled association with the supreme divine, eventually attain sarupya or likeness with Sri Krishna and themselves become true images of Param Brahman. There are, however, some intricate issues here which I feel is beyond the scope of the current discussion.

These Brahma-vetta and Bhagwat-vettas are capable of participating in and playing key avatar-like roles for Bhagwat Leelas that take place within creation. A Param-Shivahood attained Brahma-vetta's transformation into a Bhagwat-vetta that culminates in sarupya with the supreme Lord sometimes results in his unique descent as a divine avatar of Sri Bhagwan in a God-willed leela. Such avatars become universal Gods, who not only portray the glorious qualities of the Supreme Being in a special manner, but also become a permanent constituent of the universal divine consciousness, both in its eternal as well as evolutionary expressions. For example, we see Brahmarshi Sanat Kumara take birth as Kartikeya, the Narayana-like son of Shiva and Parvati, whose valour and glory are unique. Interestingly most avatars are born out of some 'curse' in the heavens. In this case the story goes as follows: Lord Narayana, seeing Sanat Kumara not paying him his due respect had cursed the sage to take up a new birth (as Kartikeya), something realized rishis are usually reluctant about. In return the Lord was cursed back by the rishi to also suffer a human-like life (as Rama) where he would

initially forget his original form as the supreme lord. This resulted in two great Narayana-avatar leelas with the primary roles played by two great sages, Sanat Kumara for Deva-sanapati Kartikeya and Sanaka for Maryada Purushottam Sri Rama. Interestingly both are depicted holding the bow and arrow, giving a yogic indication of an aspect of their leela. Peculiar are the ways of the divine and the mysteries that are hidden within.

Such avatar leelas not only enable descent of the divine but also portray a deeper yogic truth that expresses a realization of the leela-maker and its principal protagonist. The birth of Kartikeya has immense significance in the understanding of yogic transformation and provides a special understanding of the nature of divine evolution. Each major participant in this leela conveys a specific meaning in yogic terms. First let us quickly recapitulate the story of his birth and highlight some specific linkages.

Bhagwan Kartikeya is said to have been born of the effulgent tejas emanating out of Lord Shiva's third eye for the purpose of slaying of the demon Tarakasura. On becoming powerful through the boons of Brahma, Tarakasura began creating havoc by persecuting the Devas to the extreme. On the advice of Brahma, the Devas sought the help of Madan-Deva. Struck by the 'arrows' of Madan-deva amidst his period of fully absorbed companionship with Devi Parvati, a distracted Lord Shiva's tejas emanated from his third eye and descended on prithivi (earth). Incapable of bearing its power, prithivi plunged it into agni (fire) who in turn passed it on to Ganga. Unable to carrying this tejas for long, Ganga deposited it on its banks near Mount Sumeru. Then Devi Parvati took the form of the water body (lake) where the effulgence rested as only she is capable of holding the tejas of Lord

Shiva. Devi Arundhati, wife of sage Vashishta (an alter-ego of Parvati) and six other wives of the Saptarshi sages, were knowns as Krittikas or the Pleiades, (depicting among other aspects, the seven levels of para-prakriti residing between the muladhara to sahasrara). The six other Krittikas, who came to take their morning bath, picked up this fiery consciousness and became pregnant with its germinated power and subsequently six beautiful children were born. The Krittikas nourished them with their own milk. They then left their offsprings in a reed forest at the foot of the mountain. On hearing of this birth and the history behind the same, Devi Parvati went and picked them up. In her arms, the six recombined into a single dazzling form and she brought the child to Lord Shiva's abode as her own son. This divine child was called 'Kumara' or the ever youthful one and because he was born (surrogated) out of the Krittikas, he was also called 'Kartikeya'.

There is a yogic angle to the story of Lord Kartikeya's birth which we may briefly touch upon. Mahayogishwar Mahadeva (Shiva, the liberated consciousness) is deeply immersed in Nirvikalpa Samadhi along with his Shakti, and remains inactive, oblivious of everything else around. In his absence, the uplifting and unifying forces of active consciousness (Devas) are being overpowered by the mighty demoniac and divisive forces depicted by Tarakasura. It is then when Madan-deva, the direct representative of Sri Krishna, who is also called Kama-deva and is responsible for the sustenance of creative evolution, is approached for help to awaken Lord Shiva. By the power of his strike, Madan-deva awakens Mahadeva and spawns in him an urge to enable the evolution of divine transformation within creation. Thereby Shiva released from within him a mighty brahma-tejas-jyoti through his third eye,

which encapsulated a Krishna-sarupya soul to descend with the great qualities, valour and power of an avatar that vanquished the bondage-creating Tarakasura, thereby liberating and rejuvenating the divine creation-sustaining forces.

The details of Lord Kartikeya's birth reveal a unique yogic process of supramental descent into universal creation and depict how the sadhana of the great sarupya-attained soul remains permeated within the complete universal hierarchy, enabling thereby all souls to touch and generate within them the divine 'Kartikeya Force' through sadhana. Struck and seeded by the Will of Krishna-shakti (Madan-deva), the embryonic divine soul encapsulated by the all-powerful tejas emanating from the conjoined Shiva-Shakti in complete union, enters cosmic creation (prithvi) through the fire (agni) of the solar system (hiranya-mandala) and is carried by the Ganga (shushumna path) who deposits it on the banks of the Himalayas in a divine lake (Sahasrara). Each of the six Krittikas (depicting the six levels of purified nature including the five elements and mind in the six chakras), in their regular process of bath (purification in the Sahasrara) receives this tejas, internalizes and surrogates it within them. Each gives birth to a divine atomic form. This is combined together by Parvati, the Parama Prakriti, producing a unified divine molecule of Param Brahman that now resides in every level of consciousness and is capable of controlling, subjugating and transforming the demoniac power (of the unruly sense-forces) that is entrenched within.

There are several other intricate issues in this yogic process. It is to be understood that Kartikeya (or Kumara-Shakti) depicts a form of Narayana-shakti that is aroused within the heart. It is an ensemble of the Ichchha-Gyana-Kriya power of the Supreme Being

(Narayana) that emanates in creation from within the bosom of the liberated soul in dvaita-advaita-harmony (Shiva-Parvati), reared by the milk of the six Golakas (Krittikas), carrying a divine form that covers elements of all the seven heavens and the cosmic path. He personifies the valour of Sri Krishna and is a direct embodiment of Balarama or Sadguru-Shakti in the universe. He is one capable of arousing the atma-shakti to overpower and transform the perceivable all-powerful disruptive forces (of Tarakasura) and take the soul towards its eternal goal.

This great avatar is the divine outcome of the sadhana of the great Sanat Kumara, whom we know as Mahavatar Babaji Maharaj. He remains permeated within and without, as the great liberator, the Skanda – one who has crossed beyond and who carries others on his shoulders. This is yet another glimpse of his great contribution that encompasses a rishi avatar, a daiva avatar and a manava avatar. Let us all bow in reverence to one who, through the ages has devoted all that is in his power for the Eternal's cause."

Sree Sree Maa stopped and silence ensued. In quiet, we prayed for the grace of this great avatar, knowing very well that his grace remains causeless. For us, becoming like him is impossible, but being near him, with him and part of his work is not. May he bless us all that we may never be separated from his glorious presence.

**-by Partha Pratim Chakrabarti,**  
*Her Blessed Child*

