

SHARAD PURNIMA---THE DIVINE NIGHT OF MAHA RAAS



MAHARAAS: The Dance of Spirituality, Nidhivan in Vrindavan

Sharad Purnima is one of the thirteen Purnima *tithis* or auspicious full moon nights in a year, which most Hindu devotees in India observe. Each Purnima is dedicated to a different god and has distinct rituals. According to scriptures Sharad Purnima is the only day in the year when the moon is resplendent in all its sixteen kalas or phases.

Maha Raas is the epitome of all the Raas!

Maha Raas' is all about Bhakti Rasa without the embodiment of any types of desire.

On the night of Sharad Purnima, the Gopis came out of their homes after hearing the sound of Krishna's flute known as Raas Lila. The Gopis of Vrindavan along with Lord Krishna danced throughout the night. The term, *rasa* meaning "aesthetics" and *lila* meaning "act," "play" or "dance" is a concept from Hinduism, which translates to "play (lila) of aesthetics (rasa)," or more broadly as *Dance of Divine Love / The Dance of Spirituality*.

Transcendental love for Me arises by the devotional processes of hearing about Me, seeing My Deity form, meditating on Me and faithfully chanting My glories.” Bhagavata Purana

On Sharad Purnima all gopi's and gopiya's gathered at bank of Yamuna and started play and fun with river water, after some moments the play converted to Dance. Lord Krishna is sitting in a branch of Tree and he saw that and took his flute and started play, the sound of flute was very entrancing that all gopiya's and gopi's are gathered around him and once again start dancing. It's the start of Lord Krishna "Raas Leela" where he connected all gopiya's and gopi's to himself just with a flute. In Raasleela, lord Krishna is only look like a Man, and all others who participate with Maha Raas look like women. Lord Shiva who is the God of Dance, listened about Sri Krishna– who is just a little boy yet – Maha Raas, He came from Himalaya's to Vrindavan and reached to bank of Yamuna and asked to a boatman "I want to see Raasleela that is playing by little boy Krishna", the boatman replied him, "You cannot see raas in this getup, need to change your getup as a woman and you must need to wear woman's clothing after that you can see Lord Krishna Maha Raas". Shiva became a gopi and then participated in Maharaas.

Raas Leela, the most enchanting of all Sri Krishna's leelas, when Gopis all linked their arms together and thought they were encircling Him. But actually between each pair of Gopis there was a Krishna. Each Gopi felt the left hand of Krishna on her right shoulder and the right hand of Krishna on her left shoulder. She was thinking therefore that Krishna was dancing in front of her, facing her with His hands on her shoulders. But what was happening was that she had one Krishna on her left and another Krishna on her right! The Yogeshvara that Krishna is, he had enveloped the entire assembly of Gopis in His maya and their minds were not their own now. They thought whatever He wanted them to think! But the all enjoyed an eternal bliss in the play of Raas Leela!

Sri Krishna is believed to come every night and dance around with Radha and other gopis at Nidhivan in Vrindavan even today! (Compiled by Chaman Lal Gadoo)