

Who Is Balarama?

Lord *Balarama* was the son of *Vasudeva* and *Devaki* and is therefore the brother of *Lord Krishna*. He is also an incarnation of *Adi-shesha* the multi headed serpent on whom *Vishnu* rests. *Kamsa* was the ruling king terrified that *Lord Krishna* would be born from the womb of His sister *Devaki* so he imprisoned her and killed her first six sons shortly after they were born. However, the seventh child was transferred miraculously from *Devaki's* womb to the womb of *Vasudeva's* other wife *Rohini*, who desired a child of her own. That child was known as *Samkarshan* the one who was transferred between wombs. He was later called *Rama* (Great), but because of his great strength he was called *BalaRama* (*bala*/strength, *rama*/great) He traditionally wears blue garments and a

Bala = Underlying strength or Force
Rama = Enjoyment of Spiritual Potency)

Also Known As: **Baladeva**, (The Strong Demigod), **Balabhadra** (The Strong and Beautiful), **Halayudha** (One who wields the Plow Weapon) **Samkarshan** (One transferred from the womb as a child)



Both *Lord Balarama* and *Lord Krsna* are incarnations of *Vishnu* that appeared with human characteristics including some apparent foibles specifically intended to veil their true nature. Yet *Lord Balaram* was quite different from *Lord Krishna*.

For example even though *Lord Balarama* was vigilant about prohibiting alcoholic beverages anywhere in the holy city of *Dvaraka*, He himself was fond of drinking them! *Lord Kishna* is well known for His sporting antics with the *Gopies* which are often misunderstood as mundane lascivious behavior. Sheer masculinity emanated from the person *Lord Balarama* while *Lord Krishna's* most charming characteristic was His extraordinary beauty. *Lord Balarama* had a very light complexion while *Lord Krishna's* was like that of a dark rain cloud. In this way the characteristics of these two divine brothers manifested as two different expressions of veiled divinity.



“This child, the son of Rohinî, will give all happiness to His relatives and friends by His transcendental qualities. Therefore He will be known as Râma. And because He will manifest extraordinary bodily strength, He will also be known as Bala. Moreover, because He unites two families Vasudeva's family and the family of Nanda Mahârâja He will be known as Sankarsana.”

- Srimad Bhagavat Purana Canto 10, “The Summon Bonam”, Chapter 8, “Lord Krishna Shows the Universal form Within His Mouth”, Text 13.



Lord Krishna is the Creator, and **Lord Balarama** is his creative potency, but they are both worshiped as the Supreme Primeval Lord. Of the four transcendental elements described in Sanskrit as *sat, cit, ananda vigraha* (*eternity, knowledge, bliss and form*), Balarama is in charge of eternity and knowledge. Hence he is worshiped as the supreme teacher or *Adiguru*. (The first Teacher) **Lord Baladeva** sometime appears as Krishna's older brother and sometimes as his younger brother. In *Rama-lila*, **Lord Balarama** serves **Lord Ramachandra** as his younger Brother, **Lakshmana** and in the current age (Kali-yuga), **Lord Balarama** spreads the '*Sankirtan movement*' of **Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** as his close friend **Nityananda**.

Lord Balarama was an expert in the use of military weapons/*âyudhas* particularly the *hala* (plough) and the *gadâ* (mace) Prior to the Battle of *Kuruksetra* he taught both the demoniac *Kaurava* despot **Duryodhana** and the pious *Pandava* prince **Bhima** the art of fighting with the mace. Consequently, when war broke out between the two clans **Lord Balaram** felt equally affectionate toward both parties and therefore refused to

Prior to when **Lord Krishna** established His 1600 palaces on the island of *Dwarka* it was known as *Kusasthali* and ruled by the great **King Revata** who bore 100 sons and one daughter by the name of **Revati**. When it was time for her marriage **King Revata** became very anxious and approached **Lord Brahma** in his own abode to help determine who would be a fitting husband for his daughter. **Lord Brahma** informed the King that only **Lord Balaram** would be an appropriate match. Although **Revata's** visit to the Celestine world was brief, years had expired on earth while he was gone. So when he returned to what was now the *City of Dwarka* he gave his daughter in marriage to **Lord Balarama**.



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