

Soul mate, Leader and Warrior: Masculinity and Charismatic Power of Krishna

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ABSTRACT

Krishna is revered as the Supreme Personality of Godhead in Hinduism, particularly within Vaisnavite tradition. While he is considered the eighth avatar of Lord Vishnu, he is also worshipped as “*Krishnastu bhagavan swayam*”, meaning that Krishna is regarded as the Supreme God himself by many devotees. He played a central figure and significance roles in the Mahabharata, Bhagavata Purana, Harivamsa and other texts demonstrate how he embodies a sacred balance between divine masculinity with feminine energies, gracefully weaving strength, compassion, and unwavering devotion into a powerful and harmonious presence. Krishna’s role as a protector, advisor, leader and divine lover reveals a masculinity defined by balance between intellect and strength, duty and compassion. This paper, therefore aims to find out and describe the many sides of Lord Krishna’s masculinity and charisma, focusing on his roles as a lover, leader, and warrior. His intellectual depth, strategic acumen, and deep moral integrity establish him not only as an exemplary figure in leadership and warfare but also as a profound symbol of spiritual wisdom and transcendence. His wisdom, strong values, and clever thinking make him an ideal guide in both battle and life. Through his deep and meaningful relationships with Radha and the other gopis; Krishna shows a balance between masculine and feminine energies.



This harmony helps us understand divine love, duty, and the path to self-realization. This paper also looks at how the legacy and multifaceted dimensions that shape the portrayal of Krishna's character. Krishna exemplifies charismatic leadership across time, representing the perfect blend of humanity and divinity in an ideal man.

Introduction

Krishna is seen as a unique figure that combines the roles of soul mate, leader and warrior. As a soul mate, he reflects the deepest form of love-tender, selfless and eternal whether in his divine bond with Radha or his compassion and playful affection for the Gopis. His loves the soul beyond worldly attachments, inspiring devotion and guiding them towards spiritual fulfilment. As a leader, he shows wisdom diplomacy and the ability to unite diverse groups as seen in his role in the Mahabharata where he guided the Pandavas with moral and strategic counsel. As a warrior, Krishna is fearless and strategic, defending justice. Through often choosing peace he stands for courage, skill and the defender of dharma. Together, these qualities make Krishna not only a divine figure in Vaishnava tradition but also an ideal of love, guidance and strength.

Krishna's journey during the story of Mahabharata offer a fascinating lens through which we can examine the concept of charismatic power as described by Max Weber, alongside the qualities of an intellectual and ideal human being. Weber's theory of charismatic authority emphasizes the exceptional qualities of a leader who is often seen as extraordinary, divine, or heroic that inspires followers' devotion and obedience (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2018). Weber borrows the religious term of charisma and extends its use to a secular meaning. Followers believe that charismatic leaders have a close connection to a divine power, have exceptional skills or are exemplary in some way. Charisma referred to the spiritual gifts given to individuals and enabled them to heal, foretell and act on their attributes (Weber, 1978). This early Christian understanding focused on charisma as a divine quality rather than providing exemplary followers of Jesus as a quality of leadership. The modern sociological interpretation of charisma was significantly shaped by Weber. Weber redefines charisma as a form of authority that stems from a person's personal qualities, which inspire devotion and obedience among followers. He contrasted attractive authority with traditional and legal-rational authority, highlighted its role in initiating social change and challenged established norms. The Weber framework allowed for interesting leadership analysis in a wide range of areas, including politics, religion and culture (Joosse and Lu, 2023). Weber's



charisma isn't inherently patriarchal. Charisma can be reclaimed and performed in ways that challenge traditional gender roles. The article "Gender and Charismatic Power," by Paul Joosse and Robin Willey offers a compelling critique and reinterpretation of Max Weber's concept of charisma through the lens of gender theory. The authors argue that Weber's idea of charisma, while traditionally seen as male-dominated. The paper critiques the popular and academic belief that charismatic leadership is inherently masculine or off-limits to women (Joosse & Willey, 2020). Moreover, Krishna's strategic decision-making, which was seen during the conflict situation under his leadership, demonstrates his intelligence and wisdom. His ability to navigate complex political and military situations with foresight and minimal bloodshed highlights his skill as a politician and strategist and further underscoring his ideal character. His charisma was not only a result of his divine nature but also his intellectual prowess and practical wisdom, aligning with Weber's ideal of a leader who inspires not just through extraordinary abilities but through an ongoing process of development and learning.

In the context of masculinity, Krishna stands out as a unique and profound personality, not just physical strength or heroic feats, but an ideal that transcends conventional notions of manhood. His masculinity is not determined by dominance or aggression, but is defined by an unwavering morale and inner ability. Krishna, as the Supreme Being, demonstrates a form of masculinity that is gentle yet powerful, compassionate yet authoritative, and steadfast in righteousness. His acts, whether in playful mischief or in the dire moments of battle, reveal a masculinity that is deeply rooted in wisdom, balance, and grace. He is the ideal of a man who remains unaffected by the dualities of life; success and failure, joy and sorrow, love and loss remaining in perfect harmony with the divine essence within him. As the figure of a God, Krishna represents the divine image of the incorporeal, eternal reality (*Brahman*) in an embodied, human form, showing that the masculinity is not a product of ego or physical prowess, but of self-realization and divine purpose (Brodbeck, 2019).

Although he is not bound by the limitations of the material world, he enters to show mankind divine way and promises guidance, grace and everlasting joy to all who seek him. Krishna's incarnation is of perfection, a complete manifestation of divinity in human form. As the Bhagavata Purana beautifully declares, "*Krishnastu bhagavan swayam*"—Krishna himself is the Supreme Lord, fully manifest in his divine essence (Coleman, 2002). His life and work reveal the totality of the divine within the human form and taught us about it that the struggle for life can be overcome by being rooted in eternal truth by being aligned with devotion, spiritual realization and the divine's will (Ghosh, 2023). Krishna's life offers a profound lesson in how the masculine and feminine energies, though seemingly different, are two sides of the same divine coin. His playful interactions with the gopis, his acts of strength and protection, and



his deep, spiritual love for Radha all demonstrate how these energies are inseparable in the pursuit of divine truth. The masculine is not superior to the feminine, nor is the feminine subordinate to the masculine; rather, they exist in a sacred dance of balance and unity. Krishna, as both the divine masculine and the beloved of the feminine, teaches that true divinity is not gendered, it is an eternal, dynamic force that transcends form, yet is made manifest in the harmonious interplay between the energies of creation, love, protection and surrender.

The exploration of Lord Krishna's multifaceted masculinity and charismatic power builds upon and significantly contributes to an evolving body of literature at the intersection of gender studies, religious texts, and masculine theory. In recent scholarship, Krishna has emerged not merely as a mythological figure but as a richly symbolic embodiment of divine masculinity that challenges, reconfigures, and transcends normative gender paradigms.

Simon Brodbeck's (2017) work, *Mapping Masculinities in the Sanskrit Mahabharata and Ramayana*, offers a foundational lens for understanding Krishna's hybrid masculinity. Brodbeck conceptualizes Krishna's character in the *Bhagavadgītā* as a radical stereological model that blends the detachment of the renounce (associated with Brahmin ideals) with the action-oriented ethos of the warrior (Kshatriya masculinity). This "yogic" masculinity, as Brodbeck terms it, privileges internal spiritual disposition over external markers of masculine performance, destabilizing traditional gender binaries and presenting a divine model grounded in self-mastery and ethical action.

Tracy Coleman's (2011) *Lord Krishna Loves Women: Masculinity, Misogyny, and Radical Theology* provides a complementary yet distinct theological interpretation. Coleman emphasizes Krishna's unique position as a divine figure that not only commands love and devotion but reciprocates it with emotional vulnerability and respect for feminine agency. Her feminist reading reclaims Krishna's relationships with Radha and the gopis as affirmations of mutual affection, erotic reciprocity, and ethical relatedness. Coleman's work is especially relevant to the present article's portrayal of Krishna as a soul mate, highlighting how his masculinity incorporates tenderness, humility, and emotional expressiveness—traits rarely valorised in traditional masculine models.

Additionally, sociological critiques of charisma and leadership offer useful conceptual scaffolding for understanding Krishna's divine authority. Paul Joosse (2014) reinterprets Max Weber's concept of charisma as a socially constructed and relational phenomenon, emphasizing its dependence on recognition by followers rather than on inherent traits. Building on this, Joosse and Willey (2020) introduce a gender-sensitive critique of charismatic authority, arguing for the inclusion of non-



masculinist forms of leadership that allow space for emotionality and relational ethics—qualities Krishna exemplifies in both his warrior diplomacy and romantic engagements. Similarly, Hansen, Ropo, and Sauer's (2007) concept of "aesthetic leadership" situates charisma within sensory and emotional experiences, suggesting that Krishna's narrative charisma emerges not only from strategic brilliance but from the way he moves, speaks, and evokes devotion through affective presence. Roslyn Wallach Bologh's (1990) *Love or Greatness* provides a critical feminist framework to interrogate the masculine-coded valorisation of rationality and heroism. Her critique of Max Weber's preference for dispassionate, heroic individualism resonates with the current article's aim to depict Krishna as a figure who harmonizes love with greatness—emotion with rationality. Bologh's advocacy for a feminist sociability grounded in receptivity and aesthetic rationality directly parallels Krishna's multifaceted roles, where his divine masculinity is expressed not through domination, but through harmonization of power with love. Together, these scholarly works create a nuanced discursive space in which Krishna's character can be understood as both a theological and sociological archetype.

To portray Krishna as a historical hero or an ideal figure in Neo-Vaishnavite culture of Bhakti tradition, a researcher must thoughtfully examine the various texts and traditions that describe him (Holdrege, 2015). Texts like the *Bhagavata Purana* and *Harivansha* show Krishna as a strong and divine hero. The *Mahabharata*, however, provides a more restrained view, focusing on his role as a wise friend and guide to the Pandavas. Since the *Mahabharata* centers on the Pandavas' story, it does not explore Krishna's childhood or personal relationships in depth, which are central in other texts. Krishna first appears in the epic during Draupadi's swayamvara, a moment many scholars consider original to the text, as it marks the beginning of his close connection with the Pandavas as a friend, guide, and leader throughout their journey. This distinction is important for the researcher to highlight because it shows the many sides of Krishna's character in different stories (Krishna, 2015, Brodbeck, 2019 & Gangopadhyay, 2020).

For the Neo-Vaishnavite culture, which seeks to emphasize devotion to Krishna as the supreme deity, focusing on the *Bhagavata* and the *Harivansha* provides rich material that presents Krishna as an ideal man and a historical hero. In these texts, Krishna is not only a divine figure but also an exemplar of virtues such as wisdom, leadership, compassion, and righteousness (Holdrege, 2015). His actions, from his playful childhood to his role in the *Mahabharata*, are interpreted as teaching the principles of dharma, devotion, and moral values.. In the *Mahabharata*, where his guidance is pivotal to the Pandavas' success, and his teachings, such as those in the *Bhagavad Gita*, are key to Neo-Vaishnavite beliefs and serve as philosophical foundations for Neo-Vaishnavite culture (Bhandarkar, 2015). Even his playful acts and complex actions are seen as lessons. In this way, Krishna is viewed as both divine and human, showing



the path of devotion and righteousness. Additionally, the researcher can focus on how Krishna's life story transcends the typical human flaws he is sometimes associated with, such as his youthful escapades with women or his complex interactions with figures like Dronacharya . In the Neo-Vaishnavite framework, these aspects can be reinterpreted to emphasize his role as a divine teacher who engages with the world to show the path *bhakti* as the ultimate form of dharma (Hawley,2019). This view helps present him as a heroic figure that blends both divine power and human qualities, making him a central figure in the Neo-Vaishnavite movement that values both his divine and earthly aspects (Goswami, 2012).

Krishna as a Soul mate: The Union of Masculine and Feminine Energies

Another story highlighting Krishna's masculinity is his interactions with the Gopis (milkmaids) also add another layer to his masculinity that goes beyond physical strength and courage. These moments reflect a more nuanced and charismatic dimension of manhood, rooted in charm, intelligence, and emotional connection. His playful antics, like stealing butter and cleverly responding to the Gopis' complaints, showcase his confidence and ability to win hearts through his personality rather than dominance. Though sometimes viewed with skepticism, these stories emphasize Krishna's magnetic personality and the deep bond he shares with his devotees. But the relationship between Krishna and the Gopis, though often controversial, symbolizes divine love and devotion. The Gopis' love for Krishna represents the soul's yearning for the divine, and their selfless affection is seen as a model of devotion in the Vaishnavite tradition (Goswami, 2012). The relationship between Krishna and Radha, which became central to many devotional traditions, further evolved to emphasize spiritual love and union with the divine, with Radha embodying the divine feminine, complementing Krishna's masculine divinity. Together, they embody spiritual union, where love and devotion form the core of the connection between the human soul and the divine.

Krishna's childhood and youth are best understood not as historical events but as spiritual stories filled with deeper meaning. While these stories highlight Krishna's divine qualities such as his power, wisdom, and charisma, they are framed within mythological and symbolic contexts. In early texts like the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna is shown as a powerful and wise protector who deeply loves his devotees, rather than focusing on romantic or physical conquests. His playful acts with the Gopis, especially in the Raas Leela, are not about romance but show a deep spiritual bond (Lipner, 2017 & Goswami, 2012). Krishna represents the divine masculine force that awakens this deep love, and Radha symbolizes the highest form of the divine feminine; completely devoted, unwavering, and spiritually united with him even in his absence. Krishna's as a soul mate is evident in how the gopis, especially Radha, experience



his presence in their hearts and minds despite his physical separation. Through his divine *lila*, He continues to captivate their souls, making them the epitome of spiritual perfection. Their longing for Krishna, combined with their unwavering devotion, highlights Krishna's role as the ultimate soulmate, whose love and presence transcend all time and space, offering them the highest form of spiritual fulfillment and union with the divine.

This divine feminine energy is not passive but active, constantly striving to connect with the Supreme, and it is through their devotion that the gopis become the epitome of spiritual perfection. Their pure love for Krishna, free from all worldly concerns, their affection was genuine and not driven by personal gain, making them symbols of sincere and selfless love. The Rasa Dance shows Krishna's unique and charismatic divinity divine nature, bringing together both masculine and feminine energies in harmony. The Rasa Dance represents the idea of emotional balance, where different aspects of personality like strength and sensitivity come together in harmony. When Krishna played his flute, the Gopis left everything behind because of the strong emotional pull they felt, showing how true connection can drive people to prioritize relationships over routine responsibilities. Some left everything behind household chores, children, and husbands; responding to Kṛiṣṇa's divine invitation without hesitation. Even those who couldn't physically be there stayed connected in their thoughts and feelings (Chattopdhyaya, 2011).

Kṛiṣṇa, as a character, represents a complete and balanced personality that includes both traditionally masculine and feminine traits and characteristic. His masculinity is shown through his strength, intelligence, confidence, and leadership. He is the fearless protector of his community, the embodiment of courage and resolve, as demonstrated by his lifting of the Govardhana Hill and his playful, mischievous actions with the gopis. The sound of his flute is more than music—it is a divine call, a magnetic force that draws the gopis to him, transcending all worldly attachments. At the same time, Kṛiṣṇa also reflects qualities often associated with feminine qualities: nurturing, giving, and uniting people through love and empathy. The gopis, in this context, symbolize the human qualities of devotion, emotional openness, and the desire for meaningful connection. Their love is not passive; it is an active response to the divine presence of Kṛiṣṇa. The Rāsa Dance is the sacred expression of this union between masculine and feminine energies. Kṛiṣṇa, at the center, radiates a magnetic pull, His masculine essence calling forth the feminine energies of the gopis. However, this is not a one-sided attraction; the dance is reciprocal. The gopis, with their deep love and devotion, represent the feminine power of receptivity, of surrender, of responding to divine love. In this exchange, Kṛiṣṇa does not simply lead. The gopis follow, but their presence and devotion shape the entire experience. It is a mutual, dynamic relationship—where giving and receiving, leading and following, strength and softness, all coexist. He



becomes the beloved, the object of the gopis' highest devotion. The dance between them is an eternal union of masculine and feminine energies. They symbolize embraces decisiveness and compassion, confidence and sensitivity—creating harmony within themselves and in their relationships with others.

The feminine energy in this context is not passive but an active force of devotion. The gopis' surrender to Kṛiṣṇa is not out of weakness but out of an intense and powerful desire to be in union with Him. Their intense emotional connection and love for him give meaning and power to his charisma. Through their devotion, he doesn't just remain a distant figure—he becomes a central part of their inner world, the very source of their energy and purpose.

The Masculine Energy of leadership insights: Krishna as Protector, Leader, and Advisor

Krishna's childhood stories are filled with remarkable examples of his strength, courage, and divine qualities, demonstrating his extraordinary masculinity even from a young age. Despite being a child, Krishna possessed an inherent charisma and power that set him apart, displaying traits traditionally associated with masculinity—fearlessness, strength, intelligence, and leadership. He led the Yadava and Vrishni clans with wisdom and power but he never wanted to be king. His might and wisdom led him to overthrow many tyrant rulers, transforming the Yadavas into a dominant and respected force of his era. He established Dwaraka, a busy city on India's west coast that became a center of political and cultural influence during his time (Pande, 2016).

Krishna represents a unique form of masculinity that aligns with understanding of charismatic power, combining strength, spiritual power, and divine presence that inspires deep devotion. Krishna's masculinity and charismatic power are shown through his heroic acts, such as vanquishing demons and lifting the Govardhana Hill, portraying a model of masculinity that is both powerful and protective. However, Krishna's masculinity also transcends mere physicality, as he demonstrates wisdom, compassion, and leadership. These qualities expand the idea of hegemonic masculinity beyond aggression and dominance. Krishna's actions, such as creating identical forms of the cowherd boys and calves, and defeating Kamsa, reflect his divine power and extraordinary abilities. His ability to control both the physical and metaphysical worlds, coupled with his moral and spiritual leadership, makes him a figure who commands reverence and loyalty from his followers, akin to Weber's idea of a charismatic leader who inspires through his divine power.

Krishna challenges Connell's notions of hegemonic masculinity by redefining strength, power, and leadership. His confrontation with Indra, for example, shifts the focus from external authority and power



to spiritual devotion and the understanding that true strength comes from aligning with the divine will, not from imposing control over others. Krishna's defiance of Brahminical masculinity further highlights this shift. He shows that true devotion isn't about ritualistic practices or social status, but about sincere love and surrender to the divine. The devotion of the Brahmin wives, who put their love for Krishna above societal norms, illustrates that spirituality transcends external rituals and material concerns. Krishna's strength is also evident in his heroic battles with demons like Vatsasura, Bakasura, and Aghasura. Each time, he steps forward with courage and determination, ensuring the well-being of the villagers and defeating the forces of evil with ease. In the fight with the serpent Kalia, Krishna defeats him but chooses to spare his life after hearing his wives' pleas. His sense of justice is also seen in the Kuru court, where he protects Draupadi from humiliation. Krishna's actions reflect a strong sense of fairness and the ability to make wise decisions in difficult situations (Ramaiah, 1918).

Krishna's leadership and wisdom in the Mahabharata are exemplified through his role as an advisor and mediator. His wise counsel diffused the potential conflict, demonstrating that true leadership is not about force, but about the ability to bring people back to their principles. Krishna's leadership in the Mahabharata is a blend of wisdom, strategy, and emotional intelligence. He guides the Pandavas through advice, not combat, and influences events without seeking personal gain. As Arjuna's charioteer, he uses insight to overcome doubt and carefully plans for the Pandavas' victory (Brodbeck, 2017). Krishna's emotional intelligence shines when he helps Arjuna overcome his hesitation in battle, using psychological insight rather than force.

Krishna's stature and moral authority made his words influential, and his wisdom earned him the respect of even the most powerful rulers. During his visit to Hastinapura, he demonstrated a balance of humility and strength. Despite his divine status, he refused material offerings and focused on guiding the royal family toward peace and justice. He sought to resolve the conflict between the Pandavas and Kauravas through dialogue and diplomacy rather than force. When Duryodhana rejected peace, Krishna remained calm and committed to Dharma, prioritizing the greater good (Narayan, 1992). Krishna guided the Pandavas through doubt, reminding them of their duties in both war and peace. He also showed compassion to Karna, trying to persuade him to join the Pandavas by revealing his true lineage (Brodbeck, 2017). When Karna refused, Krishna respected his decision, showcasing his understanding of human emotions and the complexity of personal choice.

As a leader, Krishna embodies a protector who leads with wisdom, compassion, and strength, not through domination. He is a guide, a warrior, and a guardian, embodying the ideal balance of power and empathy



in every aspect of his divine role. Krishna's leadership reflects the balance between intellect, strength, emotional understanding, and restraint. He empowers those around him, guiding them toward righteousness and ensuring that justice prevails, even if it requires difficult or unconventional methods.

Krishna as a Warrior: Balancing Power and Morality in Every Battle

Krishna, as a warrior, embodied the perfect balance of strength, wisdom, and righteousness. Guided by Dharma, his actions were never driven by personal ambition but by a deep commitment to justice and the greater good. When Krishna and Balarama arrived in Mathura, they did not seek glory but fulfilled their duty by defeating the tyrant Kansa, restoring rightful rule to Ugrasena and peace to the people. Similarly, in dealing with Jarasandha, Krishna chose strategy over needless bloodshed. By defeating him, Krishna freed imprisoned kings and upheld justice (Brodbeck, 2019). His role as a warrior was always that of a protector, guided by purpose, strategy, and moral responsibility.

Krishna, as a warrior, exemplifies the perfect balance of strength, wisdom, and righteousness. Guided by Dharma, his actions were never driven by personal ambition but by a deep commitment to justice and the greater good. His strength was never reckless; it was always tempered by his commitment to Dharma—the moral and righteous path. When Krishna and Balarama arrived in Mathura, they did not seek glory but fulfilled their duty by defeating the tyrant Kansa, restoring rightful rule to Ugrasena and peace to the people. This act highlighted Krishna's role not just as a warrior, but as a protector and a strategist, using his power for the well-being of his community. Krishna's commitment to Dharma is also illustrated in his actions against the tyrant Jarasandha. Krishna chose strategy over needless bloodshed. By defeating him, Krishna freed imprisoned kings and upheld justice. His role as a warrior was always that of a protector, guided by purpose, strategy, and moral responsibility. Krishna's strategic brilliance is also evident in his dealings with Jarasandha, the powerful emperor of Magadha. When the Yadavas faced the threat of Jarasandha's overwhelming forces, Krishna chose not to engage in a futile battle but decided to relocate the Yadavas to the fortified island of Dwaraka (Chattopadhyaya, 2011). This decision demonstrates his intelligence and foresight—Krishna knew that true strength lies not in fighting every battle, but in choosing the right course of action to protect his people with minimal loss. Krishna's sense of duty extends beyond physical battles. His encounter with Shishupala during the Rajasuya Yajna is a prime example of his wisdom as a warrior. Although Shishupala insulted him repeatedly, Krishna showed restraint and patience. It was only when the insults threatened the sanctity of the event that Krishna acted decisively, using his Sudarshan Chakra to eliminate the threat. His decision was not motivated by anger, but by the necessity to restore order and uphold justice, showing that sometimes a warrior must make



difficult choices to preserve peace and righteousness (Narayan, 1992). The Sudarshan Chakra, the weapon he wields, serves as the perfect symbol of this ideal balance. In a world where brute force and aggression are often mistaken for true strength, Krishna's mastery of the Sudarshan Chakra redefines what it means to be a powerful warrior. The Chakra, spinning with divine energy, is not just a tool of destruction but a representation of Krishna's supreme authority over the forces of nature, His ability to uphold dharma, and His unwavering commitment to justice (Aryal, 2019). Thus, Krishna exemplifies the ideal warrior—not only through his physical strength and courage but through his strategic thinking, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to Dharma. He used his power not for personal gain but to protect the world and maintain balance, making him a timeless symbol of the perfect warrior.

As the Kurukshetra war looms, Krishna's understanding of Dharma extends to his efforts for peace. He offers himself as a peace emissary to the Kauravas, fully aware that they are likely to reject his proposal. His willingness to risk his own safety for the sake of peace exemplifies the highest form of selflessness and his deep commitment to Dharma. His actions throughout the Mahabharata reinforce that Dharma is not a rigid set of rules, but a flexible, context-dependent principle. Krishna instructs Arjuna that while non-violence is the highest virtue, violence may be necessary when defending life or upholding justice. This adaptable approach to Dharma is key to understanding Krishna's actions—whether intervening to prevent further injustice, supporting the Pandavas, or engaging with the Kauravas (Basham, 1989). Krishna makes it clear that Dharma is not passive, but requires active defence of what is right, sometimes through tough and decisive action.

His leadership is a perfect balance of wisdom, courage, and moral integrity. He teaches that righteousness may require difficult decisions, but the true warrior is one who acts for the greater good, upholding justice and protecting life, regardless of personal cost or the challenges faced. Krishna's approach to Dharma, shaped by his wisdom and foresight, makes him the ideal protector and a timeless symbol of righteousness.

Conclusion

Krishna, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the source of all creation and the ultimate maintainer of the universe. In the context of the divine role of masculinity, Krishna highlights the idea that the ultimate expression of strength, power, and authority is embodied in Krishna. Krishna's masculinity is not about domination or control, and his femininity is not about passivity or submission. Rather, both energies are embodied in their most sublime forms, creating a space for divine love to flow freely and



transcendently. Krishna's life and divine play in Gokula offer a profound expression of the interplay between masculine and feminine energies, symbolizing the balance of these forces within the larger cosmic order. While Krishna is often depicted as the archetype of divine masculinity—embodying strength, wisdom, leadership, and protection—his relationships with the feminine energies around him reveal a deeper, more nuanced understanding of divinity that transcends gender. In his early life, Krishna's masculine energy is evident through his feats of strength, intellect, and his role as the protector of Gokula.

Through the gopis, Krishna reveals the power of the feminine as a force of longing, receptivity, and unconditional love. While the masculine energy of Krishna holds the world together, the feminine energy in the form of the *gopis'* devotion pulls the divine into the hearts of those who love him. The dynamic between Krishna and Radha is often considered the pinnacle of the divine masculine and feminine union. Radha's unwavering devotion to Krishna represents the ideal of the feminine energy in its highest form—an energy that does not seek control but instead submits to the divine with love and reverence (Hawley, 2015). Krishna, in his role as the masculine, responds not with dominance but with complete love and affection, creating a harmonious balance between the two energies. This relationship symbolizes the cosmic dance of creation, where the masculine energy is not separate or superior to the feminine but rather exists in a constant state of interplay and mutual fulfilment.

Krishna's masculinity is therefore defined by balance—between strength and compassion, wisdom and responsibility, divine purpose and human connection. He exemplifies that his masculinity lies in the ability to navigate both the material and spiritual worlds with integrity, intellect, and a commitment to the greater good. Krishna's life and teachings continue to serve as a timeless guide for those seeking to embody the virtues of an ideal man—one who is not only powerful but also wise, compassionate, and deeply attuned to the complexities of both the human heart and the cosmos. In the context of the Rajasuya Yajna, Krishna emerges as an honorable hero, not through display of power or status, but by exemplifying the qualities of an ideal human being — humility, wisdom, and duty (Chattopadhyaya, 2011). The moment when Krishna, despite his high status, humbly washes the feet of the Brahmins may seem perplexing, but it reflects his dedication to uphold righteousness and demonstrate true humility. However, it is Krishna's intellectual prowess that truly defines him as an exceptional hero. As a leader and warrior, Krishna demonstrates the ideal of *Svadharmā*, fulfilling his duty to protect the righteous and fight for justice. His leadership in battle, whether on the battlefield of Kurukshetra or in strategic advice to the Pandavas, showcases not only physical strength but an astute mind capable of guiding others through complex moral dilemmas (Bryant, 2007).



Krishna exemplifies the ideal man, embodying a perfect blend of wisdom, virtue, and strength. He stands as an unconquered and unconquerable figure, yet one who intelligence, charismatic leader, and compassionate. His character reflects purity, heroic duty, and a deep commitment to Dharma. Krishna is also portrayed as a character who embodies both the divine and the human. While he may possess god-like qualities, his actions are often dictated by the very human emotions and desires that drive the characters around him. This duality of Krishna—his blend of divine wisdom and human foibles—reflects the tensions and contradictions of the era that the Mahabharata represents. Krishna's role as a divine lover further enriches his character, as he embodies the balance between worldly attachment and spiritual transcendence. His relationships are characterized by deep love, respect, and commitment, illustrating that true masculinity is not about domination but about connection and devotion.

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