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**A Divine and Deep relation of Kathak Dance with Lord Krishna  
(With special reference to Srimad Bhagwat Purana)**

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**Abstract**

*“Srimad Bhagwat Purana” is an essence of all stories of lord Krishna. It is a best example of Divine and deep relation of Kathak with Lord Krishna. These three interlinked words are narrating a long legacy of Classical Dance “Kathak” (Krishna-Katha-Kathak). This miraculous dance style has a blended fold of theory (stories) and practical (dance), embedded with rhythmic patterns, movements, emotions, lively expressions and art of living. Indian arts have always showed the power of positivity in life. This Paper is an effort to depict the deep relation between lord Krishna and Kathak dance with special reference to Srimad Bhagwat Purana.*

**Key Words:** Lord Krishna, Kathak, Shrimad Bhagwat Purana, storytelling, Classical Dance

**Introduction:**

All classical dances have their own path, as we see all forms they are all reconstructed and rebuilt by Guru’s and reformers Like Madam Menaka, Achchan Maharaj, Mohanrao Kalyanpurkar, Rohini Bhate, Birju Maharaj, Kumudini Lakhia etc. (Nagar:144).

In every form of dance Lord ‘Krishna’ is the main inspiration and performer. Every story of a storyteller is somewhere or the other influenced by Lord Krishna (Saxena:13). There is a proverb “Katha kahe so Kathak Kahave”, this proverb is the signature title of Kathak for centuries now which we have heard from all our Guru’s while getting trained in the art.

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All these stories are linked to the temple culture of our society and the source of these stories emerged from the ancient mythology mentioned in our Purana's, the main of which is Bhagwat Purana's (Geherwa:70).

Our entire society experiences and feels the outpour of divine blessings while listening to the mythological stories of Bhagwat Purana. These stories inculcate deep social values in human beings and also set examples for society as a whole.

All these arts are known as "Gurumukhi", taught by the Guru's, governed with the functional structure as, 'Dekhya' (Watch), 'Sekhya' (Learn), 'Parekhya' (Practice or Observe).

But when we talk about Kathak dance in particular then, there are basically two aspects of Kathak dance, viz., theoretical and practical.

Kathak dance is all about the living traditions and beliefs of society. When these arts and dance forms are been recognized and rewarded by society the dancers of this art express their happiness and their gratitude through more and more performances. The very essence, techniques, and principles behind these dance forms and performances are derived from our ancient books, Purana's, and other mythological ancient scripts. One such Ancient book is "Bhagwat Purana".

**Shrimad Bhagwat Purana:**

Shrimad Bhagwat Purana is one of the 18 Ancient scripts or books written in the Sanskrit language in the Hindu Dharma. Is been considered as the main source of Krishna Bhakti or preaching and was written by the saint 'Maharshi Ved Vyas'. Bhagwat Purana is an assembly of 18,000 shloka's or verses. This is the record of details which Bhagwan 'Shukdev' told to 'Maharaj Parikshit' about the path of preaching, 'Bhakti Marga' for Lord Krishna. It has records of many techniques to attain the 'Bhakti' consisting of. 'Sadhan-Gyan', 'Sidha-Gyan', 'Sadhan-Bhakti', 'Siddha-Bhakti', 'Maryada-Marga', 'Anugrah-Margs', and many more amalgamations. It's been said in Bhagwat,

*Sarv vedantsaaram hi shri Bhagwat mishyate  
Tadsaamrittriptasya naanyatra syadratihkwachit*

(Srimadbhagwat Mahapuran:18)

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Shrimad Bhagwat is considered as the ultimate source of all Veda's. It is deeply believed that the one who tastes the elixir of Bhagwat Purana attains all the happiness and purposes of this human birth. It consists of 12 'Skandhas', 335 'Adhyay' (Chapters) and 18 thousand 'shloka's' or verses.

This is also of immense importance to mention that Poets of Brij bhasha like Surdas, Nanddaas, Kumbhan Das, Nimbarki (shri Bhatt and Harivyas), Radha Vallabhiya (Hitharivansh and Haridas Swami), Mithila's Vidyapati, Bengal's Chandidas, Gyandas and Govinddas, Assam's Shankar Dev and Madhav Dev, Orissa's Upendra Bhanj and DeenKrishna Das, Naamdev and Madhav Pandit from Maharashtra, Narsi Mehta of Gujarat and Meera Bai of Rajasthan, these all were influenced with the writings of Bhagwat and their writings and poetry depicting and describing the love and passion for Krishna bhakti are mirrors of the script in itself. Tamil, Andhra, Kannad and Malyalam poetry also reveals the influence of Bhagwat Purana.

**Some Primeval stories of Bhagwat Purana are:**

Kathak dance which is majorly influenced by the tradition of storytelling has one main 'Nayaka' actor and that is 'Krishna'. These stories from Bhagwat Purana are told by the people who belong to a tradition which we call 'kathik'. Some of the stories are Dasha Avatara, Daksh Yajana, Bhakt Prahlad, Gajendra Moksha, Samudra Manthan, Mohini Avatara, Devasur Sangram, Krishna Janma, Kans Wadha, Vatsasur, Bakasur, Adhasur ka Wadha, Kaliya Nag, Cheer Haran, Gowardhan Dharan, Raas Leela, Maharaas, Uddhav ji ki Brij Yatra, Gopi Virah, Rukmani Haran, Okha Haran, Sudama Prasang etc.

**Use of these primeval stories by Kathak dancers:**

"Storytelling" is totally different from "Kathak Nritya". In storytelling a Mahant or the storyteller recites and tells the story accompanied with the artist on harmonium, tabla, and Manjira. In between the story, there are some 'Kirtan' prayers also done to avoid a monotony environment and also to heighten the spirits of the listeners. (Dadhich: 52). After the story, we can see the live impact of Bhagwat Leela in the 'Raas Leela'. Songs are sung and Krishna and Radha

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appear in front of the people along with the girls dancing and narrating a story of Lord Krishna to give them a live feeling and making the environment more radiant. This all is accompanied by group dancing, pada Chari, Primalu, Kavitta, pada gaan, and holy prasad distribution in the last. In Krishna Leela one can see and feel the presence of Kathak in many places such as:

1. Kavita, Gat, Gat-Bhav, Primalu, Permelu, Chand
2. Vandana, Pada, Bhajan, Raas, Hori etc.

We can notice certain influential factors of the sequence of Kathak dance like Gat Bhav, Kavitta like Daksh Yajana, Hori, Bakasur Wadh, Kaliya Daman, Cheer Haran, Makhan Chori, etc. are been clearly been adopted from the Bhagwat Purana.

**Conclusion:**

Surely Kathak sequence also has Tukda, Thaat, Tatkaar, etc. The main reason behind this is the fact that art keeps evolving as per the time and prevailing circumstances of the place and changes keep happening to it. In the same way Kathak also has evolved with time. So today the form of Kathak dance which we witness is the result of years of evolution and improvements and also, we can see some amalgamation of other arts like Gaan Parampara, Lok Natya, Lok Nritya, and even some foreign dances.

As evidences, you can still find many storytellers in the temples of Vrindavan and Ayodhya who primarily recite the stories of Bhagwat Purana, they dance on those stories and are capable of making the listeners emotional and get them close to God by their acts. By making such acts from the stories they take belief and preaching of the lord to a different level of attainment. Such arts are the flag bearers for society spreading the message of victory of light of truth over the evil darkness.

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