



NEW

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## Glory of Bharath » Bharath Darshan

Dear Sai brothers and sisters,

Char Dham (literally: 'the four abodes/seats') are the four abodes of God in the four directions of India - Puri in the east, Rameshwaram in the south, Dwarka in the west, and Badrinath in the north. They were collated by the 8th century reformer and philosopher Adi Shankaracharya, into the archetypal all-India pilgrimage circuit to the four cardinal points of the Indian subcontinent in a bid to unify people across the region. Our sojourn this month is to the holy Dwarka.

### Dwaraka



Lord Krishna as Dwarakadhish

Dwaraka, is a city and a municipality of Jamnagar district in the Gujarat state in India. Dwarka also known as Dwarawati in Sanskrit literature is rated as one of the seven most ancient cities in the country. The legendary city of Dwaraka was the dwelling place of Lord Krishna. It is believed that due to damage and destruction by the sea, Dwaraka has submerged six times and modern day Dwarka is therefore the seventh such city to be built in the area.

The Dwarakadheesh temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Krishna, who is worshipped here by the name Dwarkadhish, or 'King of Dwarka'. It is situated at Dwarka, Gujarat, which is believed to have been built after the historic Dvarka city, the Kingdom of Krishna himself which submerged in to the ocean after the Mahabharata war. The main shrine of the 5-storied building, supported by 72 pillars, is known as Jagat Mandir or Nija Mandir, and is believed to be 2500 years old. The Dwarkadhish Temple is Pushti Marg Temple hence it follows the guidelines and rituals created by Shree Vallabacharya and Shree Vitheshnathji.



The present temple was built in 16th century CE, while the original temple was believed to have been built by Krishna's grandson, Vajranabha, over the hari-griha (Lord Krishna's residential place) and became part of the Char Dham pilgrimages considered most sacred by Hindus in India, after Adi Shankaracharya, the 8th century reformer and philosopher, visited the shrine and even today a memorial within the temple is dedicated to his visit.

The town of Dwarka in Gujarat has a history that dates back centuries, and is mentioned in the Mahabharat as the Dwaraka Kingdom. Situated on the banks of river Gomti, the city's legend for being the capital of Lord Krishna. The ancient city was submerged by raging sea waters 8 times the remains are still exist.

### Architecture



A temple was built at the site around 400 BC by Vajranabhji, the great grandson of Lord Krishna, however the present structure was built during the 16th century in a typical Chalukyan style of architecture. The beautiful temple rises up to a height of 51.8 mts. Also known as the Jagat Mandir, the temple has two Sikhara. The Nij shikhar (The longer sikhhar) is where the deity of Lord Dwarkadhish is placed. The huge temple consists of 60 exquisitely carved pillars and a number of sculptures that depict the influence of

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Jagat Mandir

various dynasties such as the Guptas, Pallavas and Chavdas (referring to Chavda Kingdom) that ruled Dwarka over the years.

The entrance to the temple is from the north, also known as the Moksha Dwaar while towards the south is the Swarg Dwaar, from where a series of steps leads down to the banks of river Gomti. According to legend, the temple was constructed in a single day by Vishwakarma, the lord of construction. The deity of Lord Dwarkadhish is made of shiny black stone and is about 2.25 ft in height. The four hands of the Lord carries a conch, wheel, a metallic weapon and a lotus each and is popularly known as 'Shankh Chakra Gada Padma Chaturbhuj'. It is said that the deity was hidden for years to protect it from invaders while another deity brought from the Rukmini temple was installed in its absence. The original deity was reinstalled during the 16th century after the construction of the new temple.

### Salient features

- The temple is a five-storey structure built on seventy-two pillars.
- The temple spire is 78.3m high.
- The temple is constructed of limestone which is still in pristine condition.
- The temple shows intricate sculptural detailing done by successions of dynasties that ruled the region. The structure was not expanded much by these works.
- Lord Krishna's grandson, Vajranabha, is said to have built the original temple of Dwarkadhish over the hari-griha (Lord Krishna's residential place).
- The sanctum of the temple is formed by the Jagat Mandir, or Nija Mandir, dating back at least 2500 years.
- The Jagat Mandir has a tall tower and a hall of audience.
- There are two entrances to the temple. The main entrance (north entrance) is called "Moksha Dwara" (Door to Salvation). This entrance takes one to the main market. The south entrance is called "Swarga Dwara" (Gate to Heaven).
- Outside this doorway are 56 steps that leads to the Gomati River.

The present temple was built in 16th century CE, while the original temple was believed to have been built by Krishna's grandson, Vajranabha. The 5-storied temple is made of limestone and sand. A flag hoisted in the temple tower five times each day. There are two gateways - Swarga Dwar, where pilgrims enter, and Moksha Dwar, where pilgrims exit. From the temple one can view the Sangam (confluence) of River Gomati flowing towards the sea. In Dwaraka, there are also shrines for Vasudeva, Devaki, Balarama and Revati, Subhadra, Rukmini Devi, Jambavati Devi and Satyabhama Devi. There is a special temple for Rukmini Devi on the way to Bet Dwarka temple, which can be reached by boat. A similar deity of Lord Dwarakanath is also kept in Bet Dwaraka. The temple has many Shrines for Lakshmi Narayana, Trivikrama, Jambavati Devi, Satyabhama Devi and Rukmini Devi.



Swarg Dwar

### Holy City

The city derives its name from word dvar meaning door or gate in the Sanskrit language. Dwarka is considered to be one of the holiest cities in Hinduism and one of the 4 main "dhams" along with Badrinath, Puri, Rameswaram. The city is especially respected by Vaishnavas. The Jagatmandir temple which houses the **Dwarkadhish**, a form of Krishna is also located in Dwaraka. Nageshwar Jyotirling, one of the 12 holy shrines of Lord Shiva, is located near Dwaraka.

Dwarka is also the site of Dwaraka Pitha (also known as **Sharada Pitha**), one of the four cardinal mathas established by Sri Adi Shankaracharya, the others being those at Sringeri, Puri and Jyotirmath.

[edit] Sri Dwaraknath Mahatyam

Adi Sankara had visited Dwarkadhish Shrine and had established the Dwarka peeth. The Lord here is dressed in Kalyana Kolam where he appears to be a Royal Wedding costume. The place is so sacred as Lord Shri Krishna himself had resided and his successors had built the temple. It is one of the 108 Divya desam

### Dwarka Kingdom

Dwarka is mentioned in the Mahabharata, the Harivansha, the Bhagavata Purana, the Skanda Purana, and the Vishnu Purana. It is said that this Dwarka was located near the site of the current city of Dwarka, but was eventually deserted and submerged into the sea. Sri Krishna renounced war in Mathura for the greater good of the people living in the region (and was hence known by the name Ranchodrai') and founded the city of Dwarka. Sri Krishna had previously killed Kansa (an oppressive king who ruled the city, and his maternal uncle) and made Ugrasen (Kansa's father and his maternal grandfather) the king of Mathura. Enraged, the father-in-law of Kansa, Jarasandha (king of Magadha) with his friend Kalayavan attacked Mathura 17 times. For the safety of the people, Krishna and the Yadavas decided to move the capital from Mathura to Dwaraka.

### Characteristics of the City

The city was built by Vishwakarma on the order of Lord Krishna. Land was reclaimed from the sea near the western shores of Saurashtra. A city was planned and built here. Dwarka was a planned city, on the banks of Gomati River. This city was also known as Dvaramati, Dvaravati and Kushsthal. It had six well-organized sectors, residential and commercial zones, wide roads, plazas, palaces and many public utilities. A hall called "Sudharma Sabha" was built to hold public meetings. The city also boasted having the possession of a good sea harbour. The city had 700,000 palaces made of gold, silver and other precious stones. Besides this, the city had beautiful gardens filled with flowers of all seasons and beautiful lakes.

### Submersion into the Sea

After Krishna left the earth for Vaikunta, about 36 years after the Mahabharat War (3138 BC), and the major Yadava leaders were killed in disputes among themselves, Arjuna went to Dwarka to bring Krishna's grandsons and the Yadava wives to Hastinapur, to safety. After Arjuna left Dwarka, it was submerged into the sea. Following is the account given by Arjuna, found in the Mahabharata:

..."imposed on it by nature. The sea rushed into the city. It coursed through the streets of the beautiful city. The sea covered up everything in the city. I saw the beautiful buildings becoming submerged one by one. In a matter of a few moments it was all over. The sea had now become as placid as a lake. There was no trace of the city. Dwaraka was just a name; just a memory.

The Vishnu Purana also mentions the submersion of Dwarka, stating On the same day that Krishna departed from the earth the powerful dark-bodied Kali Age descended. The oceans rose and submerged the whole of Dwarka.

### **Bet Dwarka**

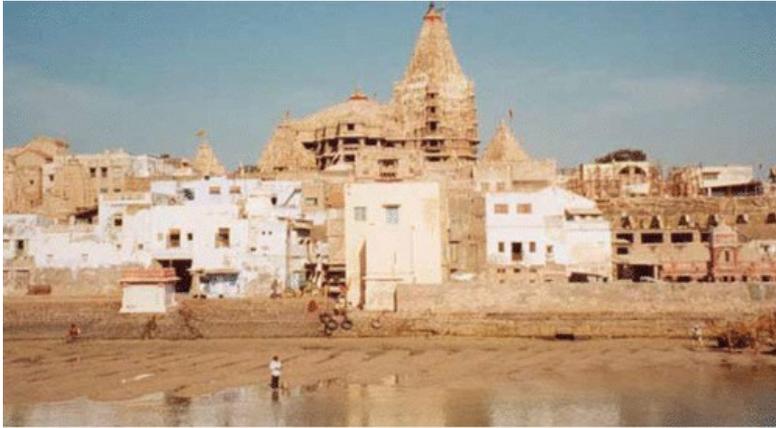
Bet Dwarka is famous for its temples dedicated to Lord Krishna and is of great importance in the ancient Hindu tradition. It and other coastal sites have ample antiquities, mainly potsherds, suggesting maritime trade and commerce with the Mediterranean countries around the Christian era. This flourishing harbor and religious capital is believed to have submerged under the sea after the Krishna left Dwarka for Vaikunth.

### **Brahma kunda pilgrimage**

is the destroyer of all sins. When Lord Krishna destroyed all the sinners and brought the virtuous people to the path of virtuosity, he came to Dwarka. At Dwarka Indra, Varun, Yama, Kubera, Sun and Moon came to meet him for the accomplishment of their respective works. After that Lord Brahma created a pilgrimage site in his own name which became famous as 'Brahma teertha'.

### **Bhalka Teerth**

is a sacred spot between Somnath and the Veraval Port. It is believed that this is the place where Lord Krishna was mistaken for a deer and hit by an arrow while sleeping on a deerskin. It is said that Lord Krishna was cremated at Dehotsarga in Triveni Ghat Gomati Ghat Temples



The Samudra Narayana Temple (Sangam Narayana) is an imposing temple at the confluence of the Gomati and the sea. The descended Ganges, Gomati, meets the sea at Chakra-tirtha Ghat. To take bath where the Gomati meets the ocean is said to offer liberation. On the back entrance of the Dwarkadish Temple, one can see the Gomati River. The temple is located almost at the spot where the Gomati meets the ocean. Nageshwara Temple

An admired place that draws tourists in huge numbers is the Nageshwar Mandir devoted to Lord Shiva and remains abuzz with tourists and pilgrims round the year. A few interesting legends attached to Nageshwar Mandir.

### **Rukmini Devi Temple**

An architectural masterpiece is the Rukmini Devi Temple in Dwarka and the temple is said to date back to the 12th century. Beautiful paintings depicting on the temple walls are decorated with her pastimes with Krishna. 'Rukmini Hrid' is a name given to the seven ponds collectively and considered to be the destroyer of all the sins of a man and the bestower of salvation. It is also known as 'Bhrigu-teertha' due to the sage Bhrigu's long association with this place. A bath at Rukmini Hrid makes a man powerful and also frees him from the cycle of birth and death.



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