

कथा

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BY ASHI

*This book explores the rich and often overlooked presence of queer identities within mythology. Through the lens of storytelling, art, and cultural interpretation, Queer Deities in Hinduism seeks to reclaim and celebrate the fluid, diverse expressions of gender and sexuality embedded in ancient narratives. By bringing together mythology, history, and contemporary queer perspectives, this project offers a thoughtful reflection on how tradition and identity intersect — challenging binaries and embracing the sacred multiplicity of the divine.*

ABOUT THE  
BOOK



*Ila*  
DIVINE PATH  
BETWEEN  
GENDERS

*King Manu, the first man, yearned for a child to continue his family's tradition long ago, in the time of gods and sages. Ila's birth was unique since their future was braided with transformation rather than certainty through holy rites and divine blessings.*

*Ila unintentionally passed the divine threshold one day while exploring a Shiva-devoted woodland, which was off-limits to men. They were immediately changed from men to women as a penalty for going into the prohibited area.*

*Ila, now living as a woman, was confused and baffled. She attracted the attention of Budha, the son of the moon and the god of the planet Mercury, at this period. Budha fell in love with Ila, and the two became parents to Pururavas, a son who would grow up to be a great king.*

*However, Ila's adventure didn't stop there. They started to transition between genders as a result of their special destiny, spending one month as men and the next as women. Ila, torn between two self, wanted to escape this recurring metamorphosis.*

*In the end, Ila's shape was fixed with the aid of sages and supernatural intervention, some claiming that Shiva himself did it. Ila continued to be masculine in some versions and feminine in others. Ila, however, was always a creature who had been both.*





# *Aruna* SUNS CHARIOT

*Vinata, the mother of birds in ancient times, hoped for strong sons. Out of impatience, she cracked open one of the two eggs she had deposited before its time. Half-formed, glowing with a gentle crimson glow, the color of the sky just before morning, Aruna emerged from it.*

*Despite having an unfinished body, Aruna had a lot of spiritual strength. Given his prowess, the gods selected him for a special mission: to serve as the charioteer for the powerful Sun deity Surya.*

*Aruna rises before the sun every morning, guiding Surya's golden chariot across the sky while being drawn by seven gleaming horses, which stand in for the seven colors of sunlight or the seven days of the week. His presence ensures that his light nourishes rather than burns the Earth by calming Surya's raging blaze.*





# *Mohini* VISHNU JI'S AVATAR

*Amrit, the nectar of immortality, was sought after by both gods (Devas) and demons (Asuras) during the epic Samudra Manthan, which was the churning of the cosmic ocean. The two sides engaged in a bloody struggle to seize the amrit when it eventually appeared.*

*Lord Vishnu had a strategy to safeguard the universe's equilibrium. He changed into Mohini, a stunningly gorgeous woman who was so captivating that even the strongest creatures were mesmerized.*

*Distracting the asuras with elegance and seduction, Mohini persuaded them to allow her to share the nectar. They were enthralled. In order to maintain the strength of the forces of good, Mohini then deftly served the amrit only to the devas.*





# *Ayyappa* SON OF SHIVA AND VISHNU

*Ayyappa is a special Hindu god who is thought to be the son of Lord Shiva and Vishnu. He was created when Shiva joined forces with Mohini, Vishnu's feminine form. He is hence known as Hariharaputra, which means "son of Hari [Vishnu] and Hara [Shiva]".*

*The monster Mahishi could only be vanquished by a child born of Shiva and Vishnu, hence Ayyappa was born with a divine mission. Ayyappa was raised in the Pandalam forest kingdom by a childless royal couple and developed into a clever, courageous, and kind person.*

*Ayyappa fulfilled his heavenly destiny by facing and defeating Mahishi when she threatened the world.*

*He therefore decided to live a life of celibacy and meditation in the wooded hills of Sabarimala rather than claiming a kingdom.*





*story of*  
**MITRA  
VARUNA**

*The god of the night sky, the seas, the invisible, and moral justice is Varuna. He is linked to profound truths and universal order and is enigmatic and vigilant. He is associated with water and the subconscious and punishes wrongdoers.*

*Mitra is the deity of social contracts, friendship, daylight, and peace. He stands for compassion, clarity, and the relationships that bind individuals and communities together.*

*They create a divine balance when combined:*

*The mystical, spiritual, and inner worlds are ruled by Varuna.*

*The social, relational, and external worlds are ruled by Mitra.*

*They demonstrate their inseparable and complimentary nature by sharing responsibilities, riding the same chariot, and accepting offerings together.*





# *Transformation* of **SHIKHANDI**

*A pivotal character in the Mahabharata, Shikhandi is well-known for their part in Bhishma's demise and gender shift.*

*Shikhandi was formerly Amba, a princess who had been insulted by Bhishma. Raised as a boy by King Drupada, she vowed to exact retribution and was reborn as Shikhandini.*

*Shikhandini altered her gender with a yaksha in order to totally live as a man.*

*Bhishma refused to combat anyone who had previously been a woman during the Kurukshetra war. Arjuna took advantage of this by using Shikhandi as a shield, and Bhishma dropped his weapons, letting Arjuna hit him.*

*Shikhandi therefore carried on Amba's promise and is a representation of change.*





# *Brihannala* ARJUNA TURNS INTO A WOMAN

*The Pandavas had to live in disguise throughout their thirteenth year of exile in order to stay hidden. They would be exiled for another 13 years if discovered.*

*Arjuna made the decision to assume the identity of Brihannala, an elegant music and dance instructor.*

*Arjuna had already been cursed by the apsara Urvashi for turning down her advances while he was traveling in paradise.*

*The curse? For a year, he would lose his manhood and become a eunuch (napumsaka). His father, Indra, claimed that the curse would benefit him in the future, and it did.*

*Thus, in the thirteenth year, Arjuna disguised himself as Brihannala and served in King Virata's court, teaching Uttara music and dance to his daughter.*

*When conflict broke out, Arjuna stepped out as himself, picked up weapons once more, and assisted the Pandavas in regaining their dominance.*





*Love and sacrifice of*  
**KRISHNA AND  
ARAVAN**

*Arjuna and Ulupi, a Naga princess, were the parents of Aravan. Aravan offered himself as a sacrifice when the Pandavas discovered that a massive human sacrifice was required for victory prior to the Kurukshetra war in the Mahabharata.*

*Aravan, however, had one final request before he passed away: to get married so he wouldn't pass away single.*

*Since no woman wanted to wed a guy who would die the next day, Krishna assumed the shape of the lovely Mohini and wed Aravan.*

*Following Aravan's valiant sacrifice the following day, Mohini (Krishna) sobbed in grief as a widow.*





*Shiva and shakti's union*  
**ARDHANARISHWARA**

*The ideal balance of masculine and feminine energy is symbolized by Ardhanarishwara, a manifestation of the divine that is half Shiva (male) and half Parvati/Shakti (female), divided down the middle.*

*According to legend, Parvati desired to be fully one with Shiva—not just in spirit, but also in flesh. Shiva concurred, moved by her devotion, and the two became Ardhanarishwara, the "Lord who is half woman."*







TEAM  
BEHIND

कथा

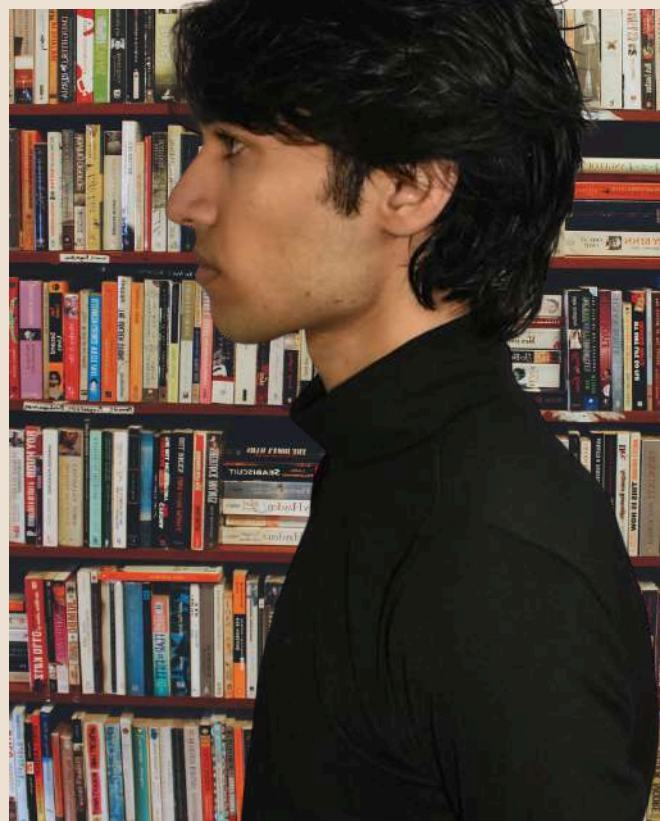
THANK YOU TEAM

LAKSHAY  
SAKSHI  
KESHU  
SANJANA  
MEENAKSHI  
NIMISH  
AMAN  
ISHITA  
ARUN  
SAMMIDHI

DEEPANSHI  
ANJALI  
ANYA

WHEN DID U  
FIND OUT YOU  
ARE QUEER?

WHEN I WAS IN  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOL!



**NIMISH  
BISEXUAL  
ECONOMICS AND ENGLISH STUDENT**

IF YOUR SPIRIT  
HAD A COLOR,  
WHAT WOULD IT  
BE?

INDIGO—CALM ON  
THE SURFACE,  
STORM  
UNDERNEATH.



LAKSHAY  
BIROMANTIC  
MODEL/GRAPHIC DESIGNER



HOW DO YOU  
PRACTICE  
DEVOTION—IF NOT  
THROUGH  
PRAYER?

THROUGH ART. EVERY  
BRUSHSTROKE IS A  
KIND OF WORSHIP.



SAKSHI  
BICURIOUS  
ANIMATOR

WHAT'S THE MOST MISUNDERSTOOD PART OF YOUR TRUTH?

THAT I HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN BEING SPIRITUAL AND BEING QUEER.



ISHITA  
QUESTIONING  
ANNOTATION ANALYST

WHAT'S YOUR SACRED ARMOR IN THIS LIFE?

MY VOICE. IT PROTECTS, EXPRESSES, AND DISRUPTS.



SANNIDHI  
BISEXUAL  
JOURNALISM STUDENT

WHAT PART OF  
YOUR IDENTITY  
FEELS MOST  
DIVINE?

THE WAY I  
CHOOSE  
LOVE OVER  
FEAR—  
EVERY TIME



KESHU  
NON BINARY QUEER  
HR

HAVE YOU EVER  
FELT SACRED IN  
YOUR OWN BODY?  
WHEN?

WHEN I DANCED  
WITHOUT FEAR  
FOR THE FIRST  
TIME.



ARUN  
GAY  
PROFFESIONAL DANCER

WHAT DO YOU  
THINK BEING  
QUEER FEELS  
LIKE?



LIKE COLOR IN A  
WORLD THAT  
TAUGHT YOU  
GRAYSCALE.



**AMAN**  
**STRAIGHT**  
**ENGINEER**

IF YOU COULD SEND  
ONE MESSAGE BACK  
IN TIME TO YOUR  
YOUNGER SELF,  
WHAT WOULD IT BE?

"YOU'RE NOT  
BROKEN. YOU'RE  
JUST BLOOMING  
EARLY."



**MEENAKSHI**  
**BISEXUAL**  
**FASHION STUDENT**

WHAT IS  
SACRED  
ABOUT  
BEING  
QUEER?



IT'S TRUTH  
LIVED OUT  
LOUD. THAT'S  
ALWAYS BEEN  
SACRED.



**SANJANA  
UNLABELED  
LAW STUDENT**





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