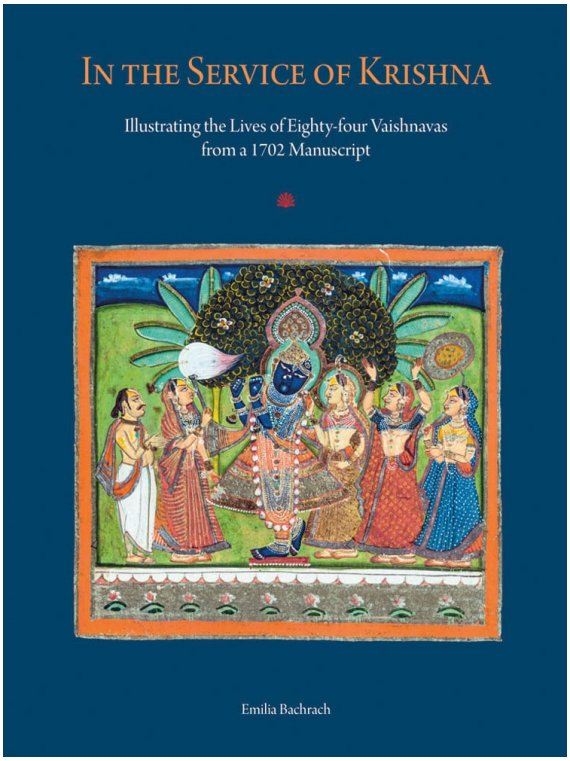
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In the Service of Krishna

Illustrating the Lives of Eighty-four Vaishnavas from a 1702 Manuscript

Emilia Bachrach

Foreword by Amit Ambalal

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- The first scholarly book of its kind to shed light on the 'Narratives of 84 Vaishnavas' text
- Featuring many illustrations from the original manuscript, the only one now extant

The Pushtimarg, or the Path of Grace, is a Hindu tradition whose ritual worship of the deity Krishna has developed in close relationship to a distinct genre of early-modern Hindi prose hagiography. This volume introduces readers to the most popular hagiographic text of the Pushtimarg – the Chaurasi Vaishnavan ki Varta, or 'Narratives of Eighty-Four Vaishnavas', which tells the sacred life stories of the community's first preceptor Vallabhacharya (1497-1531) and his most beloved disciples.

At the core of these narratives are descriptions of how Vallabhacharya's disciples cultivated intimate relationships with Lord Krishna through ritual performances known as seva, or loving service. Despite the widespread practice of illustrating seva through painting, these narratives, which showcase everyday men and women, have rarely been visually depicted. This book focuses on the only extant Chaurasi Vaishnavan ki Varta manuscript dated to the beginning of the 18th century, now in artist Amit Ambalal's collection.

The volume will appeal to scholars and students of Indian art and literature, to those who have grown up in the Pushtimarg tradition, and more broadly to those with an appreciation for the distinct ways in which pictures can tell stories that unite the everyday with intimate experiences of the Divine.

Contents:
Foreword by Amit Ambalal; Introduction; The Pushtimarg and its Devotional Aesthetics; The Chaurasi Vaishnavan ki Varta; The Illustrated Manuscript from the Amit Ambalal Collection; Pictures that Tell Stories; Select Varta Prasangs and Illustrations; Illustrated Index of the 1702 Manuscript.

Emilia Bachrach is an Assistant Professor at Oberlin College in Ohio, where she teaches classes in South Asian religions and gender studies. Her research and publications have focused on the contemporary reception of Braj Bhasha bhakti literature in Vaishnava communities (particularly the Pushtimarg) of north and northwest India. She has also written about the pichhvai painting traditions of the Pushtimarg in the book *Gates of the Lord* (Mapin, 2015).

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