

Threads of Kaliyuga

"Balance is not belief. It is structure." A novel by **Aditya**

Author's Note

This story was not written to challenge faith—but to listen for the silence beneath it.

Threads of Kaliyuga is a meditation on memory, hierarchy, and the quiet power of doubt. It follows no rebellion, no grand uprising—only the erosion of belief in a world where karma is not faith, but administration.

In Vaikuntha, justice is recorded, not felt. Doctrine lives longer than the souls it governs. And within that immovable system, one voice begins to vanish—not in fire, but in fading ink.

Arvind's journey is not toward defiance, but toward presence. The kind of presence the world forgets when it's inconvenient to remember.

This is his ledger. Unwritten. And still unfolding.

— Aditya

Chapter 1: The Faithful Son

Arvind had never once questioned faith. From the moment he was old enough to understand the teachings of Vaikuntha, he had accepted them without hesitation. The world moved through cycles. Karma was absolute. Every action carried consequence. Every soul bore its debts.

His father, **Krishnamurthy Devakurthi**, stood as proof—his unwavering devotion had elevated their family, ensuring that the past sins of their ancestors did not weigh them down.

To question karma was to question balance itself. And balance had never been wrong before.

But as Arvind knelt within the sanctum's red circle, surrounded by stone, incense, and stillness, something inside him paused.

This was his initiation: the moment doctrine would enter his ledger, irrevocably binding his soul to truth. The sacred ink was already on the priest's palm.

Arvind offered his prayer.

He closed his eyes.

He spoke the words.

But something lingered.

Not doubt. Not disbelief. Just... distance.

The ritual completed. The ink dried on parchment.

From that moment forward, Arvind was no longer a child.

He was faithful. He was observed. He was recorded.

And he never forgot the quiet that followed.

Chapter 2: The Fractured Dawn

The elder's execution was swift, unquestioned, absolute. And life continued.

The temple bells did not toll again. No mourning. No discourse. Only acceptance.

But Arvind could not deny a single, lingering thought—what if karma was not merely correction, but convenience?

I. The Pillars of Vaikuntha – The Threefold Doctrine

Vaikuntha operates through three fundamental laws, shaping every aspect of life:

1. **Karma is Absolute** – Every action is recorded, shaping not only the individual's future but the world itself.
2. **Balance Requires Judgment** – Souls must be assessed, corrected, and guided toward harmony. Faith is not just belief—it is maintenance.
3. **History is Curated** – The faction decides what is remembered, forgotten, and rewritten, ensuring karma remains unquestioned.

II. The Historians – Keepers of Undisputed Truth

The Historians do not rule. They do not govern. They confirm what is already true—maintaining the integrity of Vaikuntha's karmic system.

- A Historian does not argue. They state what is already known.
- A Historian does not correct. Because truth does not need correction.
- A Historian does not doubt. Because karma has already decided.

III. Arvind's Reflection – A Thought That Won't Leave

That night, the temple corridors were quieter than usual. Not in peace. In finality.

Arvind lay in bed, tracing the wooden beams above him. He had seen executions before. He had witnessed punishment, decrees of karmic restitution handed down without hesitation. He had believed in them—because that was how faith worked.

Yet tonight—it did not feel the same.

"Karma never feels wrong. Only our minds do."

Sudeep had said it without flinching. Without thinking.

But something lingered in Arvind's mind—a thought that refused to fade.

What if karma does lie?

Chapter 3: The Layers of Vaikuntha

I. Society Under Doctrine – The Fabric of Daily Life

Despite doctrine's weight, life in Vaikuntha was active, thriving, shaped by effort and ambition.

- **Professions Are Assigned by Karma** – A soul burdened with debts may find themselves in labor, while a soul blessed with virtue may be elevated to guidance.
- **Cities Are Built Around Temples** – Faith is woven into infrastructure—purification halls, truth chambers, places of karmic assessment.
- **Families Carry Generational Weight** – Blood matters less than karmic lineage. A person born into virtue may be uplifted, while one with debts may carry a burden for generations.

II. The Historians – The Silent Enforcers of Truth

The Historians ensure that karma remains undisputed. Their records are absolute. To deny a karmic ledger is to deny reality itself.

People do not seek the Ledger of Fate. They await it.

III. The Rhythm of Daily Life – Faith Woven into Routine

Vaikuntha operates through structured cycles—faith is maintained through the ordinary.

- **The Morning Invocation** – Families reaffirm faith before beginning their day.
- **The Bloodless Offering** – Small transgressions confessed before they deepen into karmic debt.
- **The Evening Reflection** – A final assessment of one's standing within balance.

Faith is not stagnant. It is reinforced through every action.

Chapter 4: The Burden of Balance

I. The Reality of Striving – When Fate Is Not Enough

Not all efforts succeed. Some families work endlessly, yet never rise. Some souls carry burdens too deep to repay.

And yet, people still try, because to stop moving is to surrender to fate completely.

II. The Interplay Between Hierarchy and Ambition

Vaikuntha thrives on movement, shaped by ambition and tradition in equal measure.

People push against their limits, seeking better lives, yet karma ensures progress remains gradual, controlled, earned over lifetimes.

- **Paths Must Remain Clear** – Rapid ascension disrupts balance.
- **Hard Work Must Be Acknowledged** – A scholar must confirm merit—wealth alone is insufficient.
- **Faith Guides Growth, But Does Not Bend for Desire** – Doctrine cannot be circumvented.

III. Arvind's Realization – The Hidden Pathways

For years, Arvind had believed karma dictated everything. To rise, one had to earn it. To fall, one had to deserve it.

But tonight, something shifted.

Vaikuntha was structured. But it was not stagnant.

People adapted. They found ways where none were written.

The Historians recorded only what needed to be remembered.

And suddenly, Arvind understood: faith was not just balance—it was survival.

Chapter 5: The Quiet Rebellion

I. A Visit from the Rebalancer

The temple quieted when Eshaan of the Karmic Fold arrived. Not through silence—but through restraint. He wore simple robes stitched with three black rings along the cuffs: the symbol of a Rebalancer. Neither priest nor judge, his authority lay in ambiguity.

Krishnamurthy greeted him with folded hands and bowed eyes—not out of humility, but calculation. Sudeep moved stiffly around him, silent but deferential. Venkatesh offered no welcome at all.

Eshaan's presence was not ceremonial. His inquiries were not official. His gaze, however, lingered on Arvind for reasons no one voiced.

At dusk, beneath the temple's sandstone awning, Arvind found him alone, combing through fragmented ledgers and notes.

"The systems work best," Eshaan said, without looking up, "when no one looks too closely at the glue."

Arvind felt something tighten—not in fear, but in recognition. Eshaan wasn't here to enforce doctrine. He was here to remind the faithful what fear could look like dressed in quiet.

II. A Hidden Conversation

Later, Arvind found Kalyani in the back archives. She had grown secretive over the weeks—curious, sharper. She showed him scrolls with names struck out in red ink—not sinful, but silenced.

"Some lives are removed," she whispered, finger trailing the void where a name had been.

"Why?" Arvind asked.

"Because not all karma is convenient. And not all truth is safe."

He looked down at the parchment—at a redacted soul—and knew this conversation should never leave the archives.

But it already had.

Chapter 6: The Fracturing Stone

I. Tension Between Brothers

Venkatesh no longer waited for Arvind during evening chants.

Tasks once shared were rerouted. Temple duties passed to others. There was no confrontation—only the deliberate absence of presence.

Krishnamurthy noticed. He never mentioned it.

Sudeep remained a shadow, still loyal, but slower to speak.

Every moment Arvind spent alone was filled with friction—not sharp, but grinding. Like a stone losing shape.

II. The Ritual of Reflection

When Arvind offered to lead the Bloodless Offering, whispers followed. It was meant as a gesture of devotion—a return to form.

He stood in the chamber, beneath painted glyphs of samsara, and recited the words.

"I absolve you... from the debts you name..."

A pause.

"And those left unnamed."

The silence broke like glass.

Gasps. Unease.

Not blasphemy. But enough to suggest karma did not see all without help. Enough to remind the

room that the doctrine relied on testimony—not omniscience.
A new kind of fear settled among the faithful. One that looked like honesty.

Chapter 7: The Forgotten Ledgers

I. A Journey to the Southern Archives

Assigned to deliver scrollwork to a southern monastery, Arvind used the journey to breathe without surveillance.

There, in a lesser-known archive, he expected routine. Instead, he found inconsistencies. Ledgers marked *duplicate*. Names with life spans extended or folded back. Souls appearing under two different karmic profiles—one virtuous, one condemned.

He held a scroll belonging to a girl who, five years ago, had served in their temple kitchen. In this version, she never existed.

Arvind stared at the candlelight flickering across her vanished record. For the first time, he wondered—not whether karma was real, but whether its keepers feared its truth more than its absence.

II. The Scribe Who Remembers

He met Samaya near the indexing shelves.

She didn't ask who he was. She seemed to know.

"There are more lost names than remembered ones," she said, not looking up. *"The records are balanced. But not complete."*

Arvind whispered, *"They change them?"*

"Not to deceive," she said, *"but to preserve belief. When the pattern breaks, someone smooths the thread."*

He felt no anger. Just understanding. And a growing desire to find the tear in the pattern itself.

Chapter 8: The Echoes of Impermanence

I. Return and Silence

Arvind returned to Vaikuntha as the harvest festival began. The scent of oil lamps, chant smoke, and marigold ash filled the air.

He walked the temple halls. He joined the rituals. He smiled when required.

But inside, he was a vessel now—still full, but slowly tipping.

II. A Festival of Renewal

The Rite of Ascendancy crowned a family of laborers—now reborn in standing through accumulated virtue.

Cheers echoed in the amphitheater. Sudeep beamed. Krishnamurthy nodded solemnly.

But Arvind remembered this family's original ledger. He had seen the red stamps. The revoked debts.

They were good people. But this ascension was curated. Not earned—adjusted.

He wondered how many others watched this same moment, and smiled through their silence.

III. A Decision Made in Stillness

That night, at his desk, Arvind lit a single taper and opened his private journal.

He wrote his name.

Below it, he wrote: *Current standing: Devotee. Future direction: Unwritten.*

And he left the page open.

Because some truths can't be closed once seen.

Chapter 9: The First Break

I. The Anomaly

It began with a ledger dispute in the southern quadrant—a miscalculation, the officials said. A clerical oversight. But the soul in question bore a name too familiar: *Saanvi Varadarajan*, Vasundhara's grandmother. Listed twice, under different outcomes.

This deviation shouldn't exist. But it did.

Vasundhara brought it forward discreetly, assuming correction. She had always honored the system, not undermined it.

Instead, she was summoned to a closed review chamber. When she returned home, she no longer entered through the front door. She sat by the edge of the courtyard alone, her gaze inward, as if bracing for a storm she recognized.

II. The Stand

Sudeep found her there. He didn't ask what had happened; he'd heard enough in whispers. Faction Auditors, Historians repositioned in the north wing, and her name marked for deliberation.

"You did nothing wrong," he said.

"Truth doesn't protect you if it's inconvenient," she replied.

The next day, during morning rites, Sudeep chose not to chant. Not in rebellion—but in solidarity.

No one spoke. But everyone noticed.

Chapter 10: Judged in Silence

I. The Review

The temple floor was cleared. No incense. No bells. Just an empty dais, and above it, the three-ringed seal of Rebalancers.

There was no crowd—just twelve chosen witnesses, including Arvind and Krishnamurthy.

The high voice of the adjudicator was calm:

"Deviation found within familial declaration. Truth sought outside sanctioned verification. Suggestive of doctrinal instability."

Vasundhara stood tall. She did not defend herself.

They asked Sudeep whether he would reaffirm the doctrine. They called it a cleansing gesture.

He said, *"Karma is not afraid of scrutiny. If your system is, the fear is yours."*
A sentence was passed. Dual dissolution. *For familial alignment in karmic dissonance.*
They called it balance.

Chapter 11: The Execution of the Devout

I. Ritual Precision

The crowd was summoned—not in mourning, but in reverence.
The executions were held not in secrecy, but in daylight, beside the statue of Narayana's Disc—symbol of precision and order. It turned slowly in the wind, polished to a mirror sheen.
There were no cries. No prayers. Only silence.
Sudeep asked for no last words. Vasundhara's eyes met Arvind's, not to beg or accuse, but to comfort.
As the ritual blade passed, a gust of wind moved through the chamber. Somewhere behind the watching crowd, Kalyani wept into her sleeves.
Arvind did not cry.
He stood still as stone.

Chapter 12: The Breaking of the Cycle

I. The Sound That Didn't Echo

Afterward, no chants rose in the air. No bells rang.
The temple bells had not gone silent.
They had gone *mute*.
The sound died in the cord. The pull had no voice.

II. Shifts Beneath the Stone

Krishnamurthy stopped attending counsel. He met no gaze. He spoke no name.
Venkatesh entered his duties, but with movements like borrowed bones. Even his robes seemed to hang without rhythm.
Kalyani no longer asked questions aloud—but Arvind once found dozens of small paper scraps under her bedding. They held questions no doctrine could bear.
And Arvind?
He turned his chants into whispers. Then into breath.
And then into thought.
Thought that moved like stone beneath water. Slow. Relentless. Impossible to stop.

Chapter 13: The Ledger With No Name

I. Summons Without Sound

Arvind received the summons folded into the morning offerings. No seal. No instruction. Just a blank slip of parchment.

He understood.

He followed the path down the narrow corridor behind the eastern shrine, where the air tasted of damp ink and burnt oil. A Historian waited—face veiled, voice low.

Before him lay a bound ledger. Heavy, worn. Its pages intact.

Its name space: blank.

"This is your record," the Historian said. "Your karmic record remains... indeterminate."

Arvind stared.

"Why show me this?"

"Because you are becoming a variable. And variables create errors."

Not being written did not mean being free. It meant being watched. A soul outside alignment was a glitch—and glitches were not tolerated.

II. The Unwritten Name

He opened the ledger. The pages weren't empty—but they did not correspond to anything he remembered. Events misaligned. Dates unanchored. A life flickering at the edges of recognition.

"What happens to a ledger that can't be filed?" he asked.

The Historian said nothing.

But the silence was answer enough.

Chapter 14: The Act That Cannot Be Undone

I. Kalyani's Choice

Kalyani came to him under lamplight, hands ink-stained and trembling. She had collected fragments: names redacted from records, children erased from school archives, women removed from rituals.

"I don't want to destroy doctrine," she said. *"I want people to know what's missing from it."*

She wanted to leave.

Arvind helped her. Quietly. Thoroughly. He altered access scrolls. He delayed a gatekeeper. He removed one name from a border record: hers.

And one from the watcher's roster: his own.

The world did not shift. The temple did not fall.

But Arvind's faith, already brittle, finally cracked.

II. The Price

The next day, officials arrived at his family home. Krishnamurthy was placed under karmic review. Not arrested—just *audited*.

"For inherited imbalance," they said.

Arvind said nothing.

To act against the system, you didn't have to shout. You only had to touch it. And it would punish someone else in your place.

Chapter 15: The Petition

I. Bargaining With Shadows

Arvind sought out Eshaan, the Rebalancer, and made a choice that required no ritual.

"Dissolve my soul's record. I'll go quietly. Just leave my family untouched."

Eshaan listened, unmoved.

"You misunderstand," he said. "You've already begun to disappear. The moment you withheld affirmation, the system began... subtracting you."

"Then why am I still here?"

"Because even removals require precision."

Arvind left with no confirmation. But in the archive that evening, his ledger was gone. Even the blank version.

The shelf where it sat bore a new inscription: *"Vacant."*

Chapter 16: The Final Debt

I. The Dissolution Ceremony

There was no crowd. No flower-strewn altar. No chant.

Arvind was summoned at dawn, told only that balance required offering—and he had been accepted. As if he had volunteered.

Krishnamurthy was not present. Venkatesh remained confined in quiet service. Kalyani was gone.

Arvind stood beneath the Disc—the silent, spinning emblem of karma's precision. Its polished metal did not reflect him.

A Historian approached, blade in hand. Not to threaten—but to finalize.

"Any last entry?" they asked.

Arvind looked at the parchment.

He did not write a prayer. Or a confession. Or even his name.

He wrote:

"You built a faith that could not bear witness. So it erased what it could not understand. Let this be your remainder."

He dropped the parchment into the ceremonial flame.

And then, he was gone.

Final Act: The Afterlight

I. The Doctrine Holds

The faction did not collapse. The temples still rose with their carved spires. The chants still echoed through the morning haze. Historians continued their quiet work.

The execution of Arvind was never recorded.

Because you cannot erase what was never written.

And so, the doctrine held.

On paper.

II. Kalyani's Silence

Far to the east, beyond the border shrines, Kalyani taught unnamed children to read unbound scrolls. She did not speak of Arvind. She never used his name. But sometimes—at dusk—she would press her hand to the inside of her wrist, where he once drew a spiral with ink and said: *“This is how systems look when they pretend to be infinite.”*

The children never asked. But they remembered.

III. Krishnamurthy at Dusk

He returned to the same stone bench each evening. He kept a ledger in his lap—blank. His lips moved in prayers, but his voice never rose.

He had once believed that karma could not lie.

Now, he simply hoped it could forgive.

IV. The Whisper

The name *Arvind* was forbidden. But in places where fires burned low and ink ran thin, some still whispered of:

- A man whose ledger vanished.
- A soul that stepped beyond the chain of balance.
- A silence that was not rebellion, but refusal.

Children turned the story into a parable. The faithful turned it into heresy. The rest just listened.

V. And in the Records...

In the farthest archive, behind a locked door no one was taught to open, a single page sits beneath glass.

Unlabeled. Untouched. Unread.

Until one night, years from now, a young initiate will find it, read its final line, and close the scroll with trembling hands.

And begin to ask: *“If this was erased... what else was?”*