

wonderful KRISHNA



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Dedicated To



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada
Founder Acharya, International Society for Krishna Consciousness
ISKCON

Compiled by
Radhika devi dasi and Hemangi Gopi devi dasi

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Message for Parents and Teachers

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the Founder Acharya of ISKCON, was very concerned about Vedic education. He said "Child is the father of man, so the basic principle of any type of life is to instruct the children from the very beginning in Krishna consciousness to enable children to grow to be the leaders of human society."

We are very pleased to present before you the 1st edition of 'Wonderful Krishna'.

This book is suitable for children around 10 years of age. The discussions are chosen in such a way so as to enhance their understanding of the various aspects of Krishna consciousness. Therefore please encourage them in this respect. We humbly request you all to spend quality time with them in order to help them blossom in Krishna consciousness.

We are thankful to Radhika devi dasi, Hemangi Gopi devi dasi and all the other devotees who have helped in bringing this book out. Devaki devi dasi and Shobalakshmi devi dasi worked tirelessly on the typing. We are very grateful to Dr. Rani Menon and Dr. Supriya Kulkarni for her generous contribution towards this publication. The stories based on Mahabharatha are from the book written by Krishna Dharma das.

We thank the Vaishnavas all around the world for their blessings, suggestions and continued support. We pray at the lotus feet of Shri Guru and Shri Gauranga that these devotional books be of some help in bringing about a positive change in the rapidly degrading civilisation.

Hare Krishna

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6 March 2004

Appearance day of Lord Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

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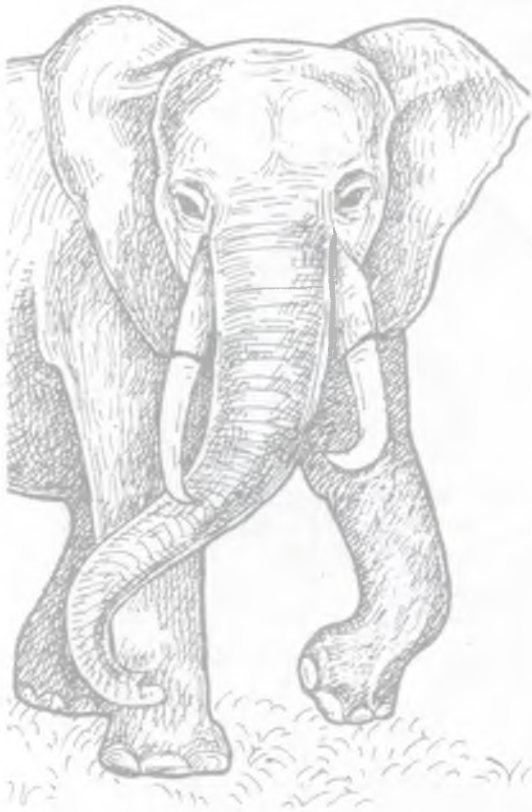
1 Gajendra



In the middle of the milk ocean there is a very high and beautiful mountain named Trikuta. It is eighty thousand miles high and eighty thousand miles broad. It has three main peaks made of iron, silver and gold. There are other peaks which are full of jewels and minerals and also trees, creepers and shrubs. There are many waterfalls and caves too.

The foot of the mountain is always washed by waves of milk that produce emeralds. The inhabitants of the higher planets love to spend their time here. The valleys beneath Trikuta mountain are covered by forests with different varieties of jungle animals and birds.

Trikuta mountain has many lakes and rivers with crystal clear water and beaches with small gems looking like grains of sand. In one of the valleys there was a garden called Ritumat belonging to Varuna. This garden was full of flowers and fruit trees. There were also many kinds of birds and honey bees. In the middle of the garden was a beautiful lake filled with shining golden lotuses.



Once the leader of the elephants, Gajendra came there with his family members and friends. Gajendra was so powerful that all the other animals respected and feared him. Gajendra broke many creepers and branches as he moved forward. He was perspiring and intoxicated. Entering the lake he bathed and felt relieved drinking the cool water. He called the elephants to come into the water and playfully sprayed them with water from his trunk. In this way they were having a lot of fun.

Suddenly, a strong crocodile came and gripped Gajendra's leg. Gajendra tried his best to get free but could not. The other elephants tried to help Gajendra but could not rescue him from the crocodile's grip. Seeing Gajendra in this helpless condition, his wives began to cry.

The elephant and the crocodile fought in this way pulling one another in and out of the water. This fight went on for one thousand years. Gradually, the elephant started losing his strength and sense of determination. On the other hand, the crocodile being an animal of the water, increased in physical strength and enthusiasm.

Soon Gajendra realised that he was in the clutches of the crocodile by the will of the Lord. He understood that he could not save himself. He thought "No one can save me now and therefore I shall seek the shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

In his previous life Gajendra was a Vaishnava king named Indradyumna. When Indradyumna retired from family life, he went to the Malaya Hills and started living in a small cottage. He lived a simple life and observed a vow of silence. Once it so happened that Agastya Muni came there. The muni was very angry when king Indradyumna remained silent without greeting him. Agastya Muni cursed him to become a dull, dumb elephant in his next life.

The elephant, Gajendra could remember the prayers he had learned in his previous life.

He prayed "I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Person, Vasudeva. You are extremely difficult to attain for those like me who are too attached to home, relatives, friends, money, servants and assistants. May the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is so merciful bestow upon me the benediction of liberation from the present danger and from the materialistic way of life."

The Lord always answers the sincere prayers of His loving devotees.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared there on the back of His carrier, Garuda. In His hands were the disc and other weapons.

Gajendra was in great pain, yet he took a lotus flower in his trunk and offered it lovingly to the Lord.

Out of His causeless mercy, the Lord cut off the head of the crocodile. The crocodile immediately assumed the beautiful form of a Gandharva. King Huthu was a Gandharva who had been cursed by Devala Muni and had therefore become a crocodile. Now, he had been delivered by the Lord and thus he returned to Gandharvaloka.

Gajendra, the king of elephants had been touched directly by the hands of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He was immediately freed of all material ignorance and bondage and received a beautiful spiritual form. The sages, saints and demigods all showered flowers. There was joyful music, singing and dancing in the heavenly planets. Everyone glorified these wonderful activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.





Activity Time

Discussion:

EVEN IN AN ANIMAL'S BODY ONE CAN PERFECT HIS LIFE STORY OF THE LITTLE MOUSE

One day a little mouse was running around looking for food. While scurrying here and there he reached the altar of Lord Vishnu in a temple. The altar was a little dark and the wick of the lamp was almost burnt out. While looking around in the darkness, the little mouse happened to see a bowl of food lying on the altar. Yum! Quickly, he ran towards it. But while running he passed the lamp. His whiskers pushed the wick straight up and it started to burn brightly.

Krishna was very pleased with his service and so at the end of his life he got a spiritual body.



Tug of War

- i) Make two teams of children.
- ii) Each team stands in a straight line and each child holds the waist of the child in front of him.
- iii) The two teams stand facing each other with a line in between.
- iv) The two children heading the teams then hold each other's hands and try to pull each other across the line. Both teams pull in opposite directions.

Whoever gets pulled across the line has to join the other team.

You can play the game for a fixed amount of time. At the end, the team which pulls more people across, is declared the winner. This game is great fun to play! After playing the game try and answer the following questions.

- * How did you feel when playing the game?
- * How did you feel when you pulled someone across the line?
- * How did you feel when you were pulled across the line?

This tug-of-war game goes on for all of us. Gajendra had to struggle with the crocodile. In the same way there are many things like crocodiles which will pull us, for instance, when we want too many things for enjoying or when we want the best for ourselves. Sometimes we may not feel like going to visit the temple. All these things are like crocodiles which affect our spiritual life.

Just like Gajendra offered a lotus and his heartfelt prayers, we too should offer prayers to please the Lord and the most simple prayer for all of us is the

Maha Mantra - Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama,
Rama Rama, Hare Hare.



Most of us know about the Olympic Games. This is a very important international sports event which is held once every four years. Thousands of people come from all over the world to watch these games. It is a great honour to win a medal at these games; especially a gold medal. Do you know that for a single race all the sportsmen practice for four years? They put in so much hard work in order to win a medal.

In the same way, we saw that the elephant Gajendra could remember the prayers of the Lord because he had practiced them his whole life as King Indradyumna.

We too must practice chanting regularly the Holy Name so that at the time of difficulty we can immediately turn towards the Lord and remember Him.



Prayer Book



1. Make your own little prayer book.
2. On the coloured page you'll find a picture of Gajendra. This will be the cover. Stick this on a piece of thin cardboard.
3. Take sheets of pastel coloured or white writing paper. Cut them according to the size of the cover. You can have as many pages as you want.
4. Place the cover page on top and a piece of thin cardboard below as the backcover.
5. Punch holes on one side.
6. Use fancy ribbons, wool or string to tie all the pages together in order to make a little book.
7. Decorate the cover and the pages.

On the first page write the 'Hare Krishna maha mantra.'

As you learn new prayers, you can write them on the following pages.

Your prayer book is ready. You can carry this with you to remember Krishna at all times.



2 The Lord's Sweeper



Famous amongst the Vaishnava kings of Orissa is Gajapati Raja Purshottama Dev (1470-1497). At the time of their reign, Orissa extended from the Ganges river in present day Bengal, to the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh in the south.

Once, while Maharaja Purushottama Dev was leading his army on a campaign to conquer the land South of Orissa, he came to Kanchi.

(Court of King of Kanchi, Selva Narsingha)

Messenger O King I bear terrible news.
Purushottamdev and his army huge
Stand ready for battle at the city gate.
Now what will be our fate ?

Army Chief 1 Should we prepare our army too?
Order King what will you have us do?

King Selva Narsingha Wait-a-minute, Hmmmm..... King Purshottamdev
(slowly and The bravest of the brave
thoughtfully) For his goodness he is known all around

A devotee of great renown
Now I will befriend the King
Let's invite the King Bring him, go bring

(King Selva Narsingha is seen pacing up and down)

Announcer we welcome King Purshottamdev,
The bravest of the brave

King Selva Welcome O King ! How gracious you are
Giving up all thoughts of war.
You accepted our love and friendship
Surely the beginning of a loving relationship.

(The Kings embrace)

King Selva On this most auspicious occasion
I offer to you my dear most possession.
The hand of my daughter Padmavati
Accept her as your queen O! Gajapati

(King Purshottamdev smiles and bows down at the elderly
King's feet and nods his consent)

Purshottamdev So be it. It shall be as you say
But I must take your leave today
And return to Orissa as soon as possible
To offer my services at the chariot festival
I long to see the Lord of my heart
The sweet Baladeva, Subhadra and Jagannatha
I invite you to this festival of the King of Kings
You must come, you must, O king.

(Rath yatra day, three chariots and the beautiful forms of Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra are seated in the raths. The devotees are chanting in different Kirtan parties)

Devotees	Jaya Jagannatha Jagannatha Swami Nayan Patha Gami Bhava tume Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare
----------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

(Purshottamdev enters bows down before the deities. He starts to sweep in front of the carts. He is singing blissfully)

Person 1	King or pauper, whoever one may be He must bow to the King of Kings you see
----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Person 2	What a glorious sight to behold Auspicious traditions he does uphold
----------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------

Person 3	A truly honorable position A sweeper to the Lord, such devotion
----------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

Narrator	King Selva Narsingha was unable to come to the Rath Yatra festival so he had sent his minister Chinnubhatta Godaraja. Chinnubhatta Godaraja walked here and there looking all around. He was very impressed with the arrangements. Suddenly he saw the King..... sweeping.
----------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Chinnubhatta (to himself)	Alas! What is this I see? Intolerable! It can't be A king doing the work of a chandala
-------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Certainly unfit for Padmavati's Varamala
I must inform my beloved King
The most honorable Selva Narsingha.

Narrator

After some time in King Purshottamdev's court,
the king is seen with a scroll in his hand. He is
reading and his expression shows that he is
very angry.

Purshottamdev

What impudence! I do say
I'll teach the King a lesson today.
He calls Lord Jagannatha's servant low class
How very crude and crass
Prepare the army. Let us go
We'll show them we're a formidable foe.

Narrator

Maharaja Purshottamdev lost the battle and
had to flee back to Puri. A very sad looking
Purshottamdev, haunted by the bitter taste of
defeat noticed a small ashrama along the way.
There lived a great devotee of Lord Jagannatha.
His name was Saikatacharya Purshottamdev
narrated the whole incident to him.

Saikatacharya

All blessing to you, your highness
I wish upon you all happiness
I must ask you a question
Did you seek Jagannatha's permission?

Purshottamdev

I thank you great sage, I realise my mistake
I was fighting for the Lord's sake
Blinded by anger, without bowing to my Lord
I left armed with just a useless sword.

	<p>The Lord is so kind and forgiving I'll return to Kanchi with an armour of blessing</p>
Narrator	<p>The Raja returned to Puri and went to Lord Jagannatha's temple He prayed with tears in his eyes.</p>
Purshottamdev	<p>Bereft of all good sense The king committed a grave offense By insulting Your servant he insulted You I pray to go on Your behalf. Bless me please do. My Lord forgive me I pray Without Your blessings, I went away Nothing can be a success without Your sanction Forgive me, Forgive me for my thoughtless action</p>
Narrator	<p>The doors closed. Purshottamdev stayed in the temple praying and crying to the Lord. Late in the night, he heard a voice.</p>
Lord Jagannatha	<p>It is a matter small. Give up all worry Organise your soldiers, now hurry We two brothers will accompany you again Your effort will not go in vain Leave on Sri Panchami, an auspicious day We will lead you to battle all the way.</p>
Narrator	<p>The news spread quickly. Everyone old and young wanted to join the battle.</p>
Purshottamdev	<p>The auspicious day has arrived. Let us set out. Will They come? I must not doubt. Are They really going to fight ?</p>

But They seem nowhere in sight !

Narrator

The army moved on. In a small village near Chilika lake, a lady named Manika stopped the king by waving to him.

Manika

I sell yogurt for a living
Two of your warriors, O king!
One on a black horse, one on white
Magnificently dressed, it was a glorious sight
They ate yogurt to Their hearts content
And left this ring in lieu of payment
They said that you'd pay instead
So please fulfill what They said.

Purshottamdev

The Ratnamudrika ring of Lord Jagannatha
Glories, glories! O Lord of my heart
You kept the promise You made to me
O ! Bhakta Vatsala, lover of Your devotee.

Narrator

The king held the ring lovingly to his heart and started weeping

Purshottamdev

O Manika you are so fortunate
I offer you an entire village in payment.

Narrator

That village came to be called Manikapatna after the name of the Lord's devotee. King Purushottamdev beckoned to his army.

Purshottamdev

With the Lord on our side, victory is sure
We have already won this war

Narrator

They soon reached the Kingdom of Kanchi and easily won the war.

Purshottamdev

Take this beautiful deity
And the beautiful princess Padmavati
I know Padmavati is perfectly qualified
But I am not, by mere beauty, satisfied.
Minister, please take good care of her
And marry her to a qualified sweeper.

Narrator

A year passed by and once more it was Rath Yatra day. The King was sweeping in front of the carts with great care.

Minister

I offer to you the hand of Padmavati
I know not of a more qualified sweeper, O Gajapati
Now I have fulfilled your instruction
Both of you live together in love and devotion
Serve Lord Jagannatha, Subhadra and Baladeva
sweet
Offer your lives at Their Lotus Feet !





Activity Time

Discussion:

The original, Ratha Yatra, took place three hundred miles south of Calcutta at Jagannatha Puri. Three wooden chariots forty-five feet high were pulled by the devotees along the two-mile parade route. Now Ratha Yatra is held in cities all over India, attended each year by millions of pilgrims.

When Shrila Prabhupada was a little boy, his name was Abhay. Abhay had heard how Lord Chaitanya, four hundred years before had danced and chanted at the Ratha Yatra festival. Abhay would sometimes look at the railway timetable or ask about the fare to Vrindavana and Puri, thinking how he would collect the money and go there.



Abhay wanted to have his own chariot to perform the Ratha Yatra festival. He turned to his father, Gaur Mohan for help. But there were some difficulties because Gaur Mohan could not afford to have a chariot made. Abhay started crying, but an old Bengali woman offered a cart which she had. The cart looked old, but it was the right size, about three feet high and operable. Gaur Mohan purchased it.

Both Gaur Mohan and Abhay together constructed sixteen supporting columns and placed a canopy on top resembling the original carts at Puri. They also attached the traditional wooden horse and driver to the front of the cart. They painted the cart in bright colours.

Abhay organised the festival with great enthusiasm. He engaged his playmates and his sister Bavatarini in helping him. The mothers in the neighbourhood agreed to cook prasadam.

Like the festival at Puri, Abhay's Ratha Yatra ran for eight consecutive days. His family members and the neighbourhood children joined in the procession, pulling the cart, playing drums and karatalas and chanting. Abhay led the children in chanting and in singing bhajans.

Abhay copied whatever he had seen at adult religious functions, including dressing the deities, offering the deities food, offering arati with a ghee lamp and incense, and bowing down to them. The eight-day festival brought so much joy to all the children, that each successive year brought a new festival, which Abhay would observe in the same way.

Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami,
nayana patha gami bhava Tume.

'Jagannatha Swami please be ever manifest before my eyes.'

On Ratha Yatra day Lord Jagannatha gives special mercy. He comes out of the temple to bless all those who do not have an opportunity to visit the temple. All glories to the most merciful Lord Jagannatha.

Ratha Yatra

The Lords are going to Vrindavana, Vrindavana, Vrindavana
Bright and shiny like the sun, Jaya Jagannatha.

Seated in raths on this wonderful day, wonderful day, wonderful day,
Canopies high so colourful and gay, Jaya Jagannatha.

They have come out for all to see, all to see, all to see,
Giving mercy to you and me, Jaya Jagannatha.

They glance at all with eyes so round, eyes so round, eyes so round,
The three worlds with Their names resound, Jaya Jagannatha.

Look at the ropes so thick and strong, thick and strong, thick and strong
For this chance we've waited long, Jaya Jagannatha.

Devotees pull with all their might, all their might, all their might,
It is such a lovely sight, Jaya Jagannatha.

All the devotees dance and sing, dance and sing, dance and sing,
Offerings for the Lord they bring, Jaya Jagannatha.

The wheels of the chariot go round and round,
round and round, round and round
The wheels of the chariot go round and round
Jaya Jagannatha! Jaya Baladeva! Jaya Subhadra! Jaya Shrila Prabhupada !

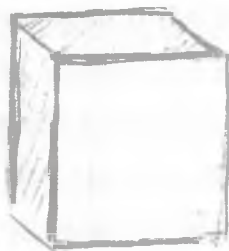
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare,
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.

(To be sung to the tune of 'Here we go around
the Mulberry bush or Wheels of the bus go round and round')

You have just read how little Abhay would celebrate Ratha Yatra in his childhood. You too can celebrate this wonderful festival! Prepare a list of things needed to make the Ratha Yatra a success.



Lord Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra



Cover a match box with white paper for Lord Baladeva, yellow paper for Lady Subhadra, black paper for Lord Jagannatha. If you like you can pull up the inside tray to make them taller.

Cut out Their eyes, beautiful smiles, tilaka and so on with glazed paper.

You can make a dress with crepe paper.

Decorate with sequins and other ornaments.

Make paper rolls for arms.

3 Ambarisha Maharaja



Long long ago there lived a great king named Ambarisha. He ruled over the entire earth. He ruled very well and was also a great devotee of the Lord.

Maharaja Ambarisha engaged all his senses in devotional service. His mind was engaged in meditating on the lotus feet of Krishna. His words in describing the glories of the Lord. His hands were used in cleaning the Lord's temple and his ears in hearing Krishna katha. He engaged his eyes in seeing the deity of the Lord. He engaged his sense of smell in smelling the fragrance of tulasi offered to the Lord and his tongue in tasting the Lord's prasada. He used his legs only for visiting the temples and other holy places. His head was for bowing down before the Lord and all his desires in serving the Lord twenty four hours a day.

Maharaja Ambarisha performed many great sacrifices like the Ashwamedha yagya. During these sacrifices, under the guidance of great saintly persons, many things were given away in charity. Hence all the citizens were used to receiving charity and hearing about the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Maharaja Ambarisha had once observed a vow of Ekadashi for one year.

At the end of the year he fasted without water for 3 days, bathed, performed deity worship and gave many cows in charity. The cows were decorated with silver and gold ornaments. He distributed prasada to everyone. When he was about to break the fast, the great sage Durvasa Muni came there as an uninvited guest. King Ambarisha welcomed him with great honour and requested him to eat. Durvasa Muni accepted the invitation but first wanted to bathe in the Yamuna.

In the meantime the auspicious time for breaking the fast was almost ending. Maharaja Ambarisha was wondering what he should do. He consulted the brahmanas. "O brahmanas, out of respect I must wait for Durvasa Muni and at the same time break the fast at the prescribed time. What should I do? May be I could drink water. This may be accepted as eating and also not eating." He drank a few drops of water.

Durvasa Muni returned from the Yamuna. By his mystic power he could understand that Ambarisha had drunk water without his permission. Durvasa Muni became very angry. He said, "O proud king, you have invited me as a guest but instead of feeding me, you yourself have eaten first. Now I shall punish you."

With an angry red face, Durvasa Muni uprooted a bunch of hair from his head and created a fiery demon with a trident in his hand. The demon charged towards Ambarisha but the king was not at all disturbed and meditated on the Supreme Personality of Godhead in his heart.



It is said that a fire in the forest immediately burns to ashes an angry

snake. In the same way, to protect His devotee, the Lord's Sudarshan Chakra came and immediately burnt the demon to ashes. Then the Sudarshan Chakra started moving towards Durvasa Muni who became frightened and started running to save his life.



Durvasa Muni ran in all directions to save himself. In the sky, on the earth, in the ocean, on different planets. But wherever he went he could feel the unbearable fire of the Sudarshan Chakra following him. He tried to seek protection from Lord Bramha and Lord Shiva but both of them advised him to take the shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Finally Durvasa Muni went to the abode of Lord Narayana and fell at His lotus feet. He prayed, "O Lord, please protect me. I have offended Your most dear devotee. Kindly save me from the reaction of this offence. Even if a person is going to hell, You can deliver him simply by awakening Your holy name within his heart." The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, "I am completely under the control of my devotees who have given up all material desires. I sit within the cores of their hearts. Even the devotees of My devotees are very dear to Me. You should go immediately to King Ambarisha and beg forgiveness. Only he can save you now."

Durvasa Muni approached Maharaja Ambarisha and fell at his feet. Maharaja Ambarisha felt very embarrassed and started offering prayers to the Sudarshan Chakra. First he glorified the powerful weapon of the Lord and then begged the Sudarshan Chakra to spare the life of Durvasa Muni.

In this way Durvasa Muni was freed from the fire of Sudarshan Chakra.

Durvasa Muni said, "My dear king, now I have understood the greatness of devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I committed an offence, yet you prayed for my good fortune. The pure devotees of the Lord can achieve anything and give up anything. O king, you are so merciful. You have saved my life.

All this time Maharaja Ambarisha had not eaten anything and had been waiting for Durvasa Muni. For one complete year he had been drinking only water. He received the sage very respectfully and fed him a variety of tasty dishes. Durvasa Muni was satisfied and asked the king to eat. He said, "My dear king, I am very pleased with you. You are a great devotee of the Lord. All the three worlds shall sing your glories." The great mystic yogi glorified the king and went through the skyway to Bramhaloka.





Activity Time

Discussion:



- * What do you see?
- * What are the answers your other friends gave?
- * Is your answer right ? -----
- * Do you think your friend's answers are right too ? -----

It is a magnified picture of a tiny droplet of water falling in a glass.

It is how we look at it isn't it ?

You all really saw what you thought it was.



There are two ways of looking at the glass. What would you say ?

In different situations people react in different ways. What do you think about the behaviour of these children? Could they have behaved any differently... Discuss



Go outside and play.
I don't care.
I'm going to play here.



My father didn't buy
a new bat for me.
Does he really love me?



My teacher didn't give me
the main part in the drama.
I don't think I'll ever act again.



There's such a long line for prasad.
Next time I think I'll eat at home.

Discuss more situations where you overreacted or saw something negatively.

We think we are right because we see things from our point of view.
We see that Ambarisha Maharaja tolerated the situation without getting disturbed. This is one of the qualities of a pure devotee.

Ambarisha Maharaja only drank a few drops of water. Yet how did Durvasa Muni see it?

How can we engage our senses in serving the Lord? Srila Prabhupada said: Chanting, dancing, fasting and feasting can take us back to Godhead.

The Lord always protects His devotees.



See Durvasa Muni Flee

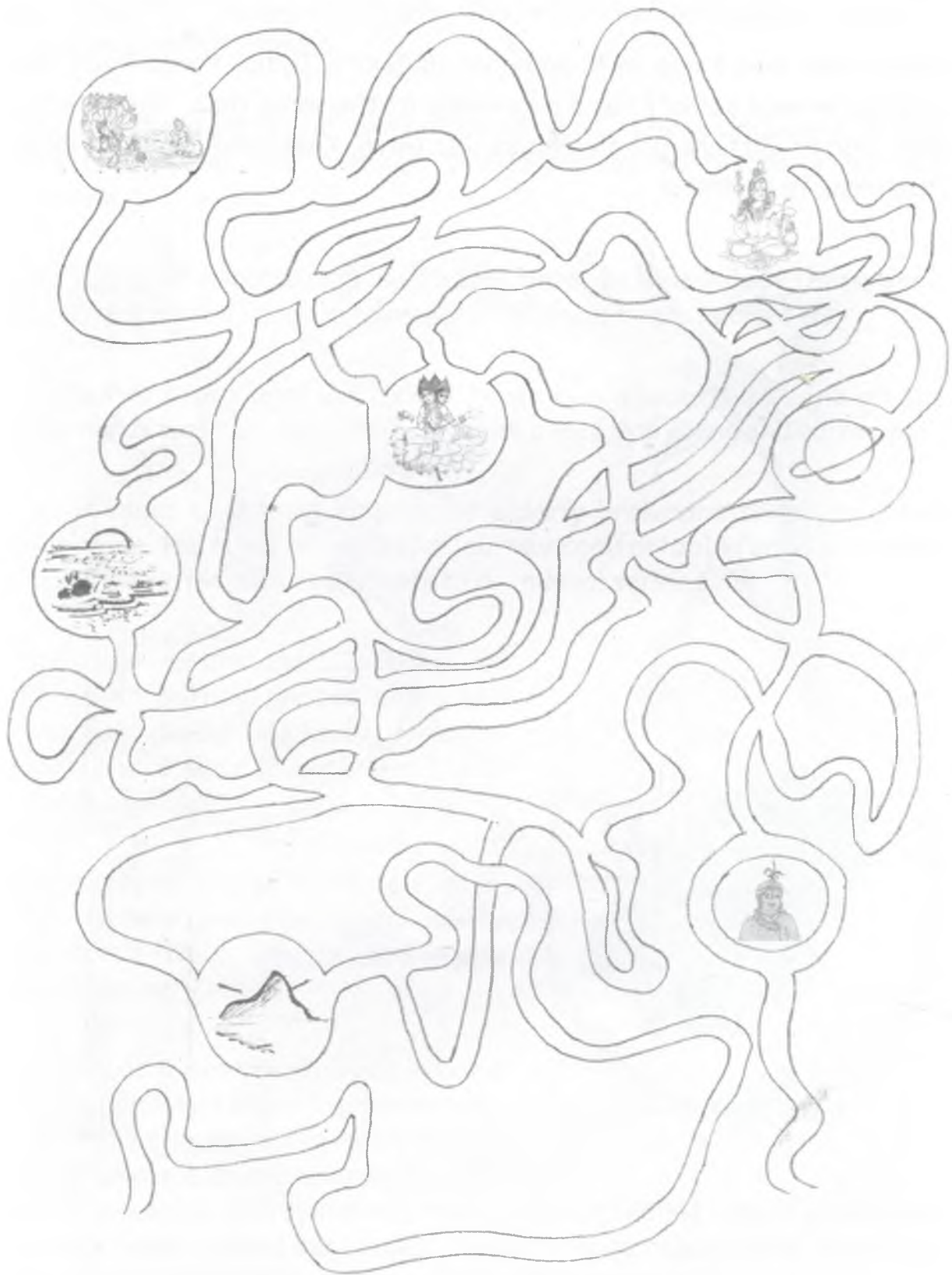
On the coloured page you will find pictures to make a flip book.

Cut the strips, colour Durvasa muni.

Bind them together to form a little booklet.

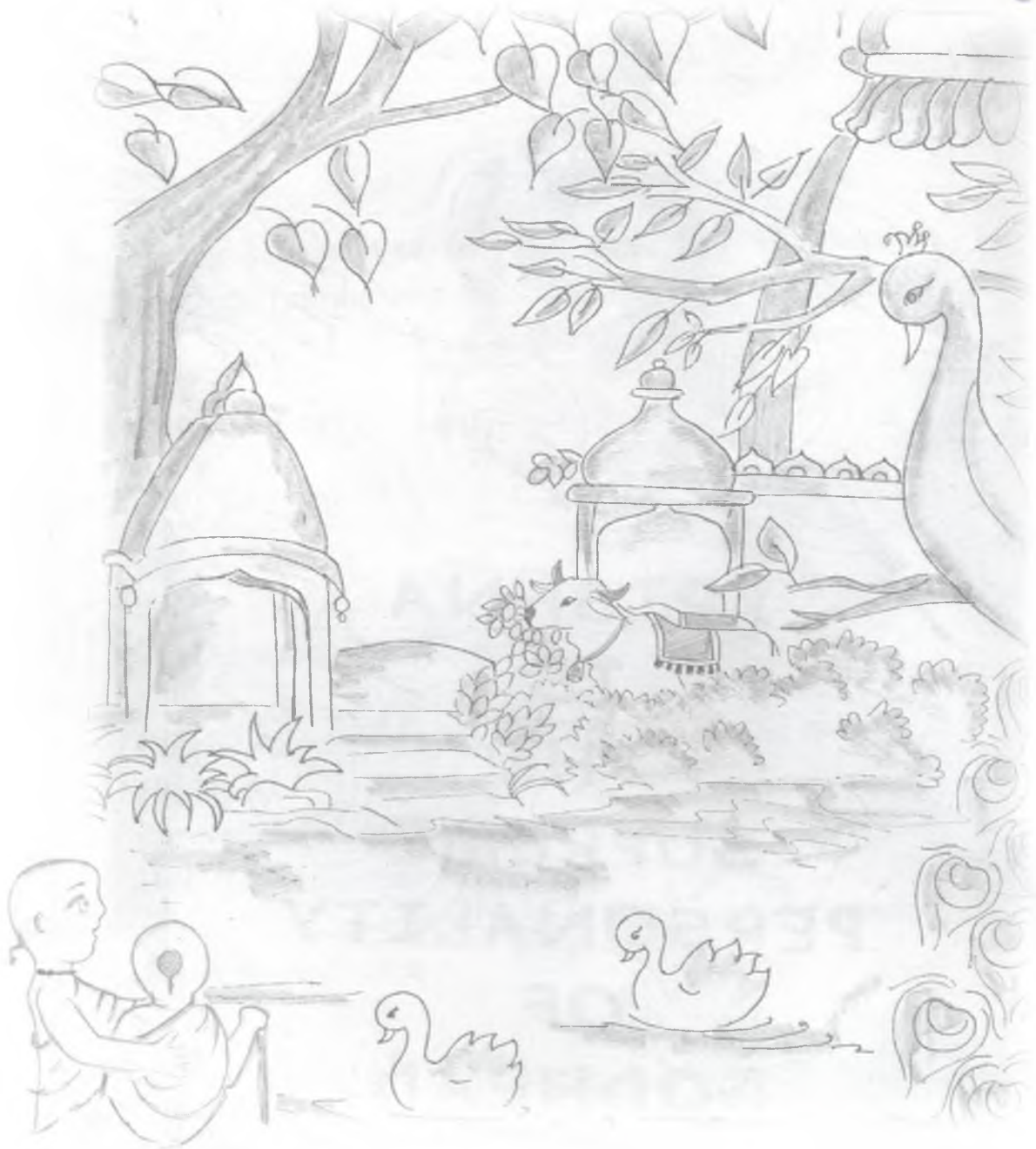
Flip the booklet to see Durvasa flee from Lord Vishnu's Sudarshana chakra

Trace the path taken by Durvasa muni



4 Sakshi Gopal

Many many years ago in Vidyanagar in South India, there lived two brahmanas who set off for a pilgrimage at the same time. They made a long tour of different holy places like Gaya, Kashi and Prayag. Finally they came to Mathura.



Mathura is the place where Lord Krishna appeared five thousand years ago. The river Yamuna flows here. There are twelve forests situated on the banks of the Yamuna.

One of the forests is named Vrindavana. The Vrindavana forest stretches from the town of Vrindavana up to Nanda-grama and Varsana.

The village of Panchakashi is situated here. In that village there was a big temple where Lord Gopal was worshiped in a very opulent way.

These two brahmanas visited all these holy places. Now, one of the brahmanas was rich and elderly and the other was young and quite poor.

The younger brahmana helped the elderly brahmana throughout the pilgrimage. He tried to make the journey comfortable for him in every possible way. He was even ready to do menial service.

The two brahmanas bathed at different bathing places along the river Yamuna, such as Keshi ghata and Kaliya ghata. Then they arrived at the temple of Gopal.

They stayed there for a few days. The beauty of the Gopal deity attracted their hearts and made them feel very happy.

One day as they were standing in front of the Lord, the older brahmana said, "You have served me so nicely during this pilgrimage. Due to your assistance I have been able to travel comfortably without feeling tired. Even my own son has never served me so well. I would like to repay you in some way. Therefore I promise to give you my daughter in charity."



The younger brahmana was surprised to hear these words. He replied, "My dear sir, you are saying something quite unusual. Such things never happen. You are from a rich aristocratic family and you are well educated. I am a simple brahmana with no decent education and no wealth. Dear sir, I am not a suitable bridegroom for your daughter, I rendered service to you only for the satisfaction of Krishna. It is said that the Lord is pleased when we serve the brahmanas."

But the older brahmana was not ready to listen. "My dear boy, please do not doubt me. I will surely give my daughter to you in charity. I have given my word."

The younger brahmana tried once more to convince the older one. "You have a wife and sons and you have a large circle of relatives and friends. You will have to take permission from all of them. Just consider the story of Queen Rukmini and her father Bhishmaka."

The older brahmana had made up his mind. "My daughter is my own property. Therefore I can do what I want and no one can stop me. I don't care about anyone else's opinion. Just accept my proposal."

"If you have decided to give your daughter to me, then say so before the Gopal deity."

The elderly brahmana made a solemn promise in front of the Gopal deity to give his daughter in charity to the younger brahmana.

"My dear Lord, You are the witness. I shall call You to testify, if it is necessary, later on."

Soon afterwards the brahmanas set off on their return journey. As before, the younger brahmana served the elder one very sincerely. After returning to Vidyanagar, both brahmanas went

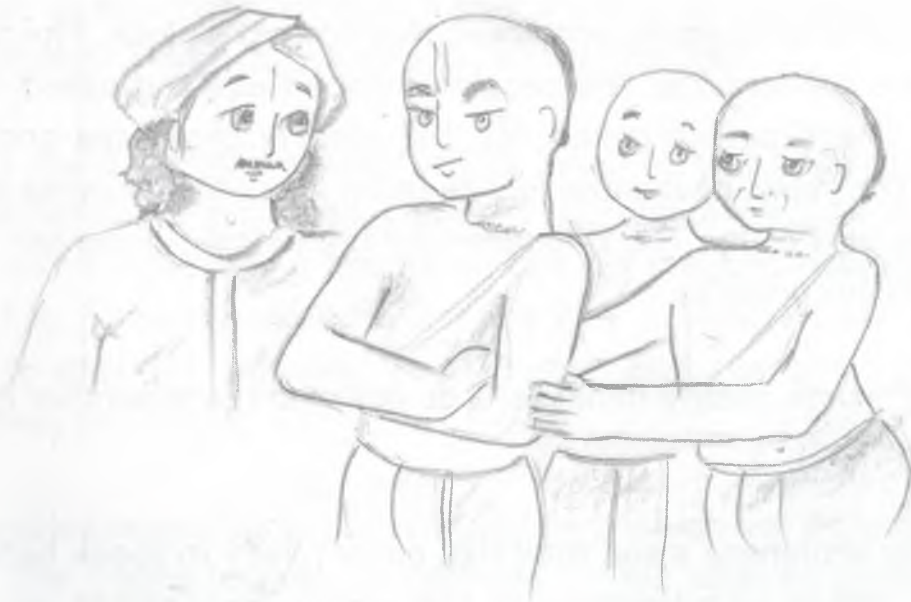
to their respective homes.

Some days passed by and the elderly brahmana started feeling anxious. He thought to himself, "I have given my word to a brahmana in a holy place. The time has come to fulfil my promise."

A few days later the elderly brahmana called for a meeting of all his relatives and friends. He told them the whole story. The friends and relatives were shocked. They started protesting and expressing their disapproval.

"If you give your daughter to a poor person the name of our family will be ruined", said a friend. "People will laugh at you", said another.

The elderly brahmana explained that he had made a promise in a holy place while on pilgrimage. Therefore he wanted to keep his word under any circumstance. The relatives did not agree. "If you give your daughter to that boy we shall cut off all connections with you".



His wife said, "If such a thing happens, we shall take poison and die."

The elderly brahmana said, "If I do not give my daughter to the young brahmana he will call Gopalji as a witness."

His son said, "The deity may be a witness but He is in a distant place. How can He come here to bear witness against you? When the young brahmana comes here, just say that you do not remember what you said. I will handle the situation."

The elderly brahmana was quite confused and started to pray to Lord Gopal to help him.

The next day the young brahmana came to the elderly brahmana's house. He bowed down and spoke in a humble voice, "You have promised to give your daughter in charity to me. Why are you quiet? Is there some problem?" The elderly brahmana remained silent. In the meanwhile his son came running out with a stick in his hand. "Oh what a fool ! You want to marry my sister? You are just like a dwarf who wants to catch the moon."

Seeing the stick, the young brahmana fled from the place. The next day however, he gathered all the people of the village and asked them to help him. These people called for the elderly brahmana and held a meeting . The young brahmana told them all about the promise made by the elderly brahmana. The villagers told the elderly brahmana that he should fulfil his promise.

"My dear friends, please hear me, I do not exactly remember making a promise like that."

The elderly brahmana's son took this opportunity to speak before the assembly, "While on pilgrimage to the various holy places, my father

carried much money. Seeing the money, this rogue stole it and gave my father some herbs to make him forget everything. Now he is claiming that my father promised to give him his daughter in charity. All of you assembled gentlemen, please judge whether this poor brahmana is a worthy husband for my father's daughter."

Hearing this story the people gathered there started having doubts. They were thinking that it was possible for a poor person to be tempted by riches and also give up religious principles.

The young brahmana begged the village people to believe him and not to listen to the son of the elderly brahmana. He explained to them how the elderly brahmana had insisted upon making this promise in front of the deity.

Finally he said, "I have called upon a great personality in this transaction. I have asked Him to be my witness. The entire world accepts the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Hearing these words, the elderly brahmana said, "If Gopal personally comes here to serve as a witness, I shall surely give my daughter to the young brahmana." His son also agreed to this condition.

Krishna is the Supersoul present in the heart of all living entities. He knows the desires of everyone. The elderly brahmana was willing to give his daughter to the young brahmana but his son and relatives were stopping him. The son was an atheist and very cunning. He was thinking of ways to stop the wedding. Now Krishna had created a situation wherein they all agreed.

The assembled people prepared an agreement which was signed by both parties. The young brahmana declared, "This elderly brahmana is certainly truthful and is following religious principles. He had no desire

to break his promise, but fearing that his relatives would commit suicide, he deviated from the truth. I shall call the Supreme Personality of Godhead as a witness. Thus I shall keep his promise intact. "

Some villagers started disbelieving and joking. Some said, "Who does he think he is? He wants the Lord Himself to come and bear witness." "Have you ever heard of such a thing?" said another.

After the meeting the young brahmana set off for Vrindavana. He bowed down to the deity and narrated the whole story in full detail. He prayed to the Lord, "My dear Lord, I don't want to become happy by marrying a rich girl. I am thinking that the brahmana has broken his promise and will have to suffer the reaction. You are very merciful. Therefore kindly protect the religious principles of us two brahmanas. Please bear witness in this case and help us."

Lord Krishna said, "My dear brahmana, please go back to your home and call a meeting of all the men. In that meeting, just try to remember Me. I shall certainly appear there and at that time I shall protect the honour of both of you brahmanas."

The brahmana said, "My Lord, even if You appear as a four handed Vishnu deity, none of these people will believe Your words. Only if You go there in this form of Gopal and speak Yourself will these people be satisfied."

Krishna said, "I've never heard of a deity walking from one place to another."

The brahmana replied, "That is true, but how is it that You are speaking to me although You are a deity? My dear Lord, You are the son of Nanda Maharaja. If you can talk, you can walk as well. "

Shri Gopalji smiled and said, "My dear brahmana, just listen to Me. I shall walk behind you and in this way I shall go with you. Do not try to see Me by turning around. As soon as you see Me, I shall remain stationary in that very place. You will know that I am walking behind you by the sound of my ankle bells. Cook one kilo of rice daily and offer it, I shall eat that rice and follow behind you."

The next day, the brahmana set off and Gopal followed him, step by step. The brahmana was very happy to hear the tinkling sounds of His ankle bells. The young brahmana walked in this way till he reached his town. Along the way, he offered rice to the Gopal deity.



When he neared his own village, he began to think, "I have now come to my village and I shall go to my home and tell all the people that the witness has arrived." The brahmana thought, if the people didn't directly see the Gopal deity, they would not believe that He had arrived. Thinking thus, he turned to look back. He saw the Supreme Personality

of Godhead, smiling. The Lord said, "Now you can go back home. I shall stay here and shall not leave."

The young brahmana went to the town and informed all the people about Gopal's arrival. Everyone was wonderstruck.

All the villagers gathered there and bowed with great respect. The people were attracted to the beauty of Gopal.

The elderly brahmana was very pleased and fell like a stick in front of the deity.

In the presence of all the people, Krishna bore testimony that the elderly brahmana had offered his daughter in charity to the young brahmana.

After the marriage ceremony was performed, the Lord said, "You two brahmanas are my eternal servants birth after birth. I am very pleased with the truthfulness of both of you. Now please ask for a benediction."

The brahmanas begged for a benediction with great happiness. "Please remain here so that people all over the world will know how merciful You are to Your servants." Eventually the king heard this wonderful story and came to see Gopal and was very satisfied. He constructed a nice temple. The Gopal deity was worshipped in the town of Vidyanagar for a long time and is famous as 'Sakshi Gopal'.



Activity Time

Discussion:

Mango Story



There was once a spiritual master who lived in a simple cottage near the edge of a forest. He had a number of disciples who lived with him. The guru took great pains to teach the young boys to become good devotees. He taught them about Deity worship, chanting, reading from Holy Scriptures and other aspects of devotional service. The boys were eager to learn and were always ready to serve their spiritual master.




One day the spiritual master called all his disciples. He made them all sit and placed a big ripe mango in each boy's hand.

"Now I want all of you to take this mango and go to a solitary place and eat it up. Remember, you have to eat it in a place where no one can possibly see you. When you have finished this task, come back here."


"Yes Guruji", replied the boys eager to please their spiritual master.

A few boys ran away quickly. Some waited and thought about the task, a few recited some prayer and then walked away.








One boy went into a dark cave. Two boys walked into the forest and climbed tall trees, some crawled under the bushes. After some time all the boys had eaten the mangoes and returned.





They shared their experience with their Guru. He smiled and said nothing.




Finally, only one boy remained. It had become dark but there was no sign of him. The boy had not returned even by mid-night. Everyone went to sleep. The Guru chanted softly on his beads, waiting for his disciple.



Next morning when the disciples got up they saw their missing friend. His clothes were crumpled. He looked tired. It seemed as if he had been walking all night. They were surprised to see that he still had the mango in his hand.



"O Spiritual Master, I am sorry. I could not follow your instructions. I searched everywhere but could not find a single place where I could eat the mango without anyone watching."



What does the little boy's answer tell you?



Think :-

I know my mind and feelings too
But I can't understand what's happening to you
There is someone who is present in trees, animals, plants & birds
He knows all our thoughts, deeds and words
As Paramatma, He is present in all of our hearts
He is the Supreme whole and we are His parts
His knowledge has no beginning or end
He is our dear most well wishing friend



Word Search

There are 13 witnesses who are watching us all the time. Can you spot them? The name of some witnesses appear more than once. Have fun finding as many as you can.



D	I	R	E	C	T	I	O	N	S
E	S	K	Y	N	O	O	M	A	U
M	K	Y	L	A	T	H	G	I	N
I	Y	L	A	N	D	F	I	R	E
G	N	I	N	E	V	E	O	Y	R
O	Y	A	D	R	N	U	S	K	I
D	D	E	M	I	G	O	D	S	F
S	K	Y	O	F	M	O	O	N	Y
W	A	T	E	R	E	T	A	W	K
W	L	U	O	S	R	E	P	U	S

Sun, Moon Day, Night, Evening, Supersoul, Land, Water,
Sky, Fire, Air, Demigods, Directions



Musical Dhams

Let's play a fun game which will remind us of the different holy places.

Make circles of thick rope or long scarves

Set them in a circle on the floor.

Name each circle with a name of a holy dham like 'Dwaraka,'
'Jagannatha Puri', 'Vrindavana', 'Mayapur'

It's a lot of fun if there is one circle less than the number of children.

As the music starts everyone walks around the dhams.

Stop the music after a minute and everyone quickly jumps inside one of the holy dhams.

Since there is one circle less, two children will squeeze together into one holy dham.

Remove one of the dhams and repeat the game.

Each time one dham is removed more children will need to squeeze together.

Whoever can't fit in to the circle is out.

Have fun!

5 Akshaya Patra

This is a short story from the Mahabharata.

Scene 1

(Duryodhana's palace)

Narrator Duryodhana was very envious of his cousins, the Pandavas. He was constantly thinking of ways to trouble them.

Duryodhana Pandavas ! Pandavas ! Pandavas ! Why is everyone always singing their glories? Indeed my heart burns whenever I hear their names. We have to think of a way to teach the Pandavas a lesson. Please listen Karna and my dear brothers, we have to make a plan to harm the Pandavas before they return from the forest.

Kaurava 1 Yes! Yes! We'll have to destroy them. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Another Ha ! Ha !

A servant Your majesty the great Sage Durvasa has arrived, accompanied by ten thousand disciples. They wish to have food and take rest here.

Duryodhana Durvasa Muni and ten thousand disciples ! Please lay out a wonderful feast and make all arrangements for them to be comfortable. Go quickly don't just stand here looking at my face.

Servant Yes, your majesty. (He exits)

Kaurava 1 Yes, yes. We should be careful. Durvasa Muni is known for his temper.

Kaurava 2 He often curses the people who offend him.

Duryodhana Come now, let's go and greet him.

Scene 2

(Durvasa Muni and his disciples are seated and Duryodhana and others are serving them)

Narrator Duryodhana took great pains to serve Durvasa Muni and his disciples. He didn't want to displease Durvasa Muni in any way.

Durvasa Muni Duryodhana come here. These dishes have become cold. Please take them away.

Duryodhana Yes. Yes. O dear sage. We will remove them immediately

Durvasa Muni And these fruits! I think you can feed them to the monkeys.

Sages Ha ! Ha ! Ha !

Duryodhana Yes. Yes. O great Sage , I will do as you say.

Narrator It was not easy to please Durvasa Muni. Sometimes he would ask for a meal to be prepared immediately. Then

he would go for a bath and return after a long time or he would say he was not hungry. On other occasions he would rise at midnight and ask for food. On the day he was about to leave he called for Duryodhana.

Duryodhana How can I serve you great sage ?

Durvasa Muni We are leaving today. Duryodhana, I am very pleased with you. You have served me well. Ask from me whatever you desire.

Narrator In his heart, Duryodhana was very pleased. He had already thought of a wicked plan to take revenge on the Pandavas. He spoke in a sweet voice

Duryodhana O great brahmana, just as you have been a guest in my house, I would like you to become a guest of Yudhisthira in the forest. He is a great king, with all good qualities. He is the best and eldest of our family. He therefore deserves to receive your blessings. You should go to him, when his entire family has finished eating and are preparing to rest. You will then be well received by these pious men.

Durvasa Yes. O king, I will do as you ask.

Narrator He then left with his disciples. They set off for the forest of Kamyaka. Duryodhana was overjoyed.

Duryodhana O Karna, our plan has worked.

Karna Yes. You have pleased Durvasa Muni and your desire will soon be fulfilled.

Kaurava 1 Your enemies are cast into an ocean of misery.

Kaurava 2 Through their own fault, they now face great danger.

Duryodhana Durvasa Muni and ten thousand disciples. How will they feed them. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Narrator Laughing and embracing they all rejoice.

Scene 3

(A few cottages in the forest.)

Narrator Some days later Durvasa Muni arrived at the Pandava camp just after Draupadi had eaten. Leaving his disciples on the outskirts of the camp, he walked in alone and appeared before the brothers. They all stood up with folded hands.

Yudhisthira O great sage. We are so pleased that you have come to our humble abode. Please be comfortable on this seat.

Narrator When Durvasa Muni was seated, Yudhisthira worshipped him very carefully by washing his feet and offering a lamp.

Durvasa Muni I have come here with my ten thousand disciples and we need to eat. We have been walking all day and are hungry. O King, please arrange for our food. We shall first take our bath and then return for the meal.

Yudhisthira Yes, we will do our best to serve you.

- Narrator When Durvasa Muni left, Yudhisthira expressed his great anxiety.
- Yudhisthira How can we possibly feed so many people? My dear Draupadi, please come here. Have you eaten?
- Draupadi Yes, I have finished my meal. Now our akshaya patra will not yield any more till tomorrow morning. Oh, what are we going to do? I am so frightened that Durvasa Muni will curse us.
- Yudhisthira Draupadi can you think of something?
- Draupadi For me, the welfare of my husband is more dear to me than my life itself. I think my only hope is to sincerely pray.
- Narrator Draupadi went to a corner and started praying very fervently.
- Draupadi O Krishna, O Lord of the Universe, Please hear my prayer. O Unlimited and all Powerful one, You always protect Your devotees when they are in danger. We seek Your shelter. O Lord ! Please save us.
- Narrator The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna is so kind and merciful. He always comes to help His devotees when they sincerely call out to Him. Within a few moments, He was standing in front of Draupadi who fell at His feet with tears in Her eyes.
- Draupadi Oh! Krishna, You have come. Please save us. We are in great danger of being cursed by Durvasa Muni. What shall we do?

Krishna
(smiling)

Yes, Yes. Don't worry. I will do whatever can be done. But right now I am hungry. Please feed me first.

Draupadi
(feeling
ashamed)

Oh ! How can I feed you my Lord ? The vessel given by the Sun God remains full until I have eaten. After I finish eating it will not yield any more food till the next day.

Krishna

Well I am too hungry to listen to all this. Just get the akshaya patra and show it to Me.

Draupadi

Here it is my Lord.



Krishna

Let me look at it carefully. Oh ! See there is a particle of rice and vegetable stuck here.

- Narrator The Lord quickly takes the particle and eats it happily.
- Krishna May the Lord of all sacrifices be satisfied with this food. Sahadeva, go quickly and bring the sage and his disciples here and feed them.
- Sahadev sets off to the river bank.
- Narrator The Pandavas looked around fearfully. There was no sign of food but they had full faith in Krishna.
- Scene 4
- Narrator Meanwhile, Durvasa Muni and his disciples were bathing in the river and chanting their prayers. Suddenly Durvasa Muni felt as if he had just eaten a large meal.
- Durvasa Muni Oh! I don't know why I am feeling so full. I don't think I'll be able to eat even a single morsel.
- Disciples Gurudev, we are also feeling like that. What's happening to all of us?
(all look at each other in surprise)
- Durvasa Muni Yudhisthira must have prepared a great feast for ten thousand of us.
- follower 1 If we don't eat , it will be a great offence.
- Another
follower Yudhisthira has great powers. He is a great devotee of the Lord.
- Durvasa Muni Yes, the Pandavas can consume us with their anger just as fire can consume a bale of cotton. Come let us quickly depart from this place before they see us again.

Narrator Although Durvasa Muni was a powerful mystic yogi, he knew that his power was nothing compared to the devotees of the Lord. He came out of the river and quickly walked away. His ten thousands disciples also fled in all directions so as not to meet any of the Pandavas.

Sahadeva Oh ! where is Durvasa Muni and his ten thousand disciples? I can see some waterpots and pieces of cloth lying around. But there is no sign of the brahmanas.

A passerby Who are you looking for?

Sahadeva I am looking for Durvasa Muni and his followers.

A passerby I saw them all departing sometime ago. They seemed to be in a great hurry to leave.

Sahadeva You mean they've all gone ? Are you sure ?

A passerby Yes..Yes..I saw them leave, with my own eyes.

Narrator Sahadeva returned to Yudhisthira and informed them of what had happened. Yudhisthira was still a bit anxious and wondered whether the sages would return. But Krishna reassured them that they were out of danger. Then He took permission to leave for His abode.

The Pandavas thanked their beloved friend for protecting them and then entered their cottages and rested for the night.



Activity Time

Discussion: The day Mr. Hand goes on strike

What an unusual title for a Puppet Show! Just follow the instructions and you'll see what its all about.

Two partners sit together and paint each others' hands. One is 'Mr. Hand' and the other is 'Mr. Stomach'. Now enact a little skit based on the following outline.



Hand	Fingers please come for a meeting I have a serious matter to discuss We do the hard work and Stomach does the eating Let's go on a strike, make no fuss
Fingers	Yes, yes we are ready to agree Come, there's no time to waste
Narrator	They dipped into dishes with great glee Hoping to enjoy the taste
Fingers	One, two, three days have gone by We're struggling with all our might Squeezing, squashing we did try Things aren't turning out quite right.

Narrator They were becoming weaker day by day
The strike had caused loss not gain.

Hand We must feed the stomach today
Only then we'll be healthy again.

Stomach I'm happy you have understood
That we all have a role to play
This is for everyone's good
Please do end the strike today

Everyone We're working together satisfied
Serving the stomach happily
Living separately we tried
We learnt our lesson as you see

Actually, this funny show has a deep meaning. Like the hand is a part of the body, we are all parts of Krishna. When we work and do things to make Krishna happy, we also become happy.

As pouring water on the root of a tree gives energy to the trunk, leaves, twigs and everything else, as supplying food to the stomach enlivens the senses and limbs of the body, simply worshipping the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service automatically satisfies all living entities who are parts of the Supreme Lord.

6 Sudama

Scene 1

(A broken down cottage.

Sudama's wife is sweeping and doing other household chores.

Sudama is worshipping tulasi and saying his prayers.)

Sudama's wife (to herself) O Lord, we have'nt been able to eat for the last three days. I am not worried about myself. But look at my husband, he has become so thin and weak. Yet he is always engaged in serving the Lord with love and devotion.

Sudama's wife gets up and goes to her husband who is reading the scriptures.

Wife My dear husband, I would like to ask you something.

Sudama (looking up) Yes my dear, what is it?

Wife Is it true that the Supreme Lord Krishna, the husband of the goddess of fortune is your personal friend?

Sudama Yes. We studied together at the ashram of Sandipani Muni. Oh! I feel so happy just remembering those wonderful days.



Wife Do you know that the Supreme Lord is very compassionate to brahmanas and willing to grant them His shelter? You are such a pure saintly brahmana. Please approach Him. He will certainly give you abundant wealth.

Sudama But my dear wife, I don't think I need wealth.

Wife Please listen to me. Lord Krishna is now staying in Dwaraka. It is said that He bestows all prosperity and material enjoyment on His sincere devotees.

Sudama These material things are not very desirable.

Wife
(begging) Please, please go there. Even if you don't ask for anything you can still go.

Narrator Sudama's wife tried to convince her husband to go to Dwaraka. Finally he agreed.

Sudama Yes, it is true that to see Lord Krishna is indeed the greatest achievement in life. I will certainly go.

Wife (happily) Oh my dear husband!

Sudama But..... I would like to take a gift. Is there anything in the house?

Wife No. But don't worry. I will go and borrow some chipped rice from the neighbours.

Narrator Sudama's wife goes to the neighbour. She returns with a few handfuls of chipped rice tied up in a torn piece of cloth.

Wife Please take this as a gift for your beloved friend.

Narrator Sudama sets off on the journey to Dwarka.

Scene 2

(A palace with guards outside.)

Sudama I wonder if I will be able to see Krishna. There are so many gates and guards here.

Narrator Sudama was so happy that he was going to meet his friend. He completely forgot everything else. The guards tried to stop him at the final gate. But suddenly Lord Krishna appeared, upon seeing His dear friend, he ran forward and embraced Sudama with great pleasure and with tears of joy.

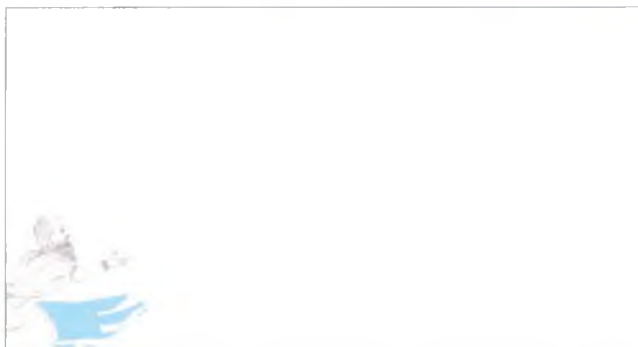
Krishna Oh my dear friend Sudama, I am so happy to see you again!

Narrator Krishna took Sudama by the hand and led him to the innermost part of the palace, to His own bedroom.

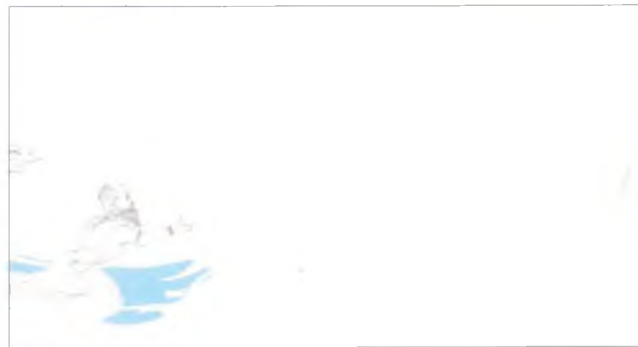
Krishna Please be seated, you must be tired after your long journey.

Narrator Krishna welcomed his friend in different ways. He personally washed His feet and sprinkled the water on His own head. Then He anointed Sudama with sandalwood and other scented paste. After this, He offered lamps and incense. A great feast was laid out for Sudama.

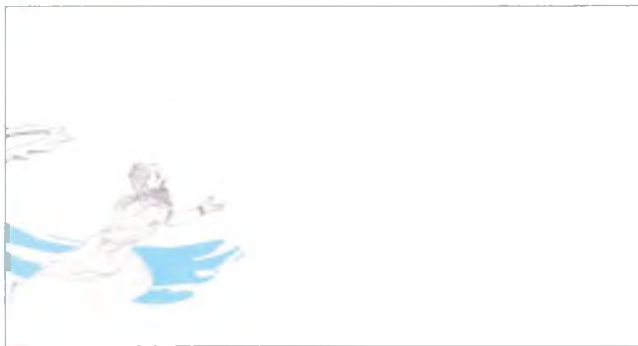
Colour the Pictures



8



7



6



5



4



3



2



1



Narrator The servants and others were surprised to see Rukmini, the goddess of fortune, herself fan the brahmana with a yak tail fan.

(The servants and the other people are watching the scene with astonishment)

1st maid Who is this poor brahmana? Look at his torn and
(to another) dirty clothes.

2nd maid He looks so weak and thin.

3rd maid He must have performed many great pious acts.

1 senior maid Yes, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has embraced him as if he were an older brother.

Narrator Krishna and Sudama sat down and happily talked about

the time they had spent together in the school of their guru.

Krishna I can see that although you are involved in household affairs, you are not spending too much time in collecting material wealth. Instead you have dedicated your life in spiritual activities. O Sudama, do you remember the time when our guru's wife sent us into the forest to fetch firewood? We were caught in a terrible storm with fierce rain and harsh thunder. Remember how we lost our way in the dark forest? We spent the night huddled together.

Sudama Yes, we stayed there and at sunrise our guru Sandipani Muni sent his disciples to search for us and showered so many blessings on us.

Krishna By the grace of the Spiritual Master, a person can fulfill the purpose of life.

Narrator In this way, Krishna and His friend talked to each other for a long time. Then suddenly the Lord smiled and said:

Krishna Oh brahmana, what gift have you brought for me? Whatever my devotees offer me with pure love, pleases me. If one offers Me with love and devotion; a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I accept it.

Narrator Sudama felt very embarrassed to show his simple gift and kept his head bowed down. Then Krishna snatched the little bundle of chipped rice from Sudama.

Krishna

What is this my dear friend, you have brought this for me?



Narrator

Krishna opens the bundle and happily eats the rice.

Krishna

Your gift has given me extreme pleasure. Indeed these few grains of rice will satisfy not only me but also the entire universe.

Narrator

He is about to take one more palmful but Rukmini, the goddess of fortune stops Him.

Rukmini

Oh my Lord, you have shown so much mercy to this brahmana. Now please leave something for me, my friends, the other queens and servants.

Scene 3

Narrator

Sudama spent that night in the palace. The next day he set off for home. Krishna accompanied Sudama on the road for a short distance and then both of them embraced and finally parted. Sudama had apparently received no wealth from Krishna but just being with

the Lord he was completely satisfied.

Sudama Who am I? A poor sinful brahmana. And who is Krishna? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in six opulences. Yet He has embraced me lovingly with His two arms. He treated me just like one of His brothers making me sit on the bed of his beloved queen who personally fanned me with a yak tail chamara.

Actually, now I realize if the compassionate Lord had granted me even a little wealth I might neglect the service of His Lotus feet.

Narrator Thus thinking of himself, Sudama finally came to the place where his cottage had been earlier. But now there stood a beautiful palace with high towers, beautiful courtyards and gardens filled with colourful flowers, fruits, trees and lotus ponds full with flocks of birds. Well-dressed men and women were moving about.

Sudama
(looking around
in amazement) Where am I? Whose palace is this? Where is my cottage?

Narrator Suddenly well dressed servants came forward to welcome Sudama. Some people played musical instruments. Sudama's wife comes running. She's beautifully dressed and bows down to her husband.

Sudama Oh my dear wife, the supremely opulent chief of the Yadu dynasty, Lord Krishna, has showered His mercy on us.

With tears in his eyes, Sudama comes forward and shares his thoughts.

Sudama

My dear friend Krishna, I am sure He knew that I secretly wanted to beg from Him. He said nothing about it when I stood before Him. Yet just like a merciful rain cloud he bestowed upon me the most abundant riches. He accepts and glorifies even a small service rendered to Him by His devotee. He was so pleased even with a little chipped rice. Oh, my dear Lord, I pray that I may serve you lovingly life after life.

Narrator

Sudama and his wife lived together in the palace for many years. Even though they were surrounded by material opulence, they remained unattached. They spent their time chanting and worshipping the most merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Shri Krishna.





Activity Time

Discussion:

Close your eyes. What do you think is in the box? Imagine you could have anything you wanted. How do you feel when you get a gift? Who would you like to receive this gift from? It is not the gift that matters, but also the person giving it and the thought behind the gift. A real gift is chosen with love and care and is meant to please the person who is going to receive it.



Do you know which is the best gift one can give?

Mona has been sick and missed school for a month.

The best gift you could give her

- a) Send her a get well card.
- b) Buy a game for her
- c) Visit her and help her with her school work.



Your mother is expecting many guests and has a lot of house work to do.

The best gift you can give her is

- a) Go out and play so that she is not disturbed.
- b) Ask her if you can help to clean the house or do any other job.
- c) Buy a bunch of flowers for her.



Ramu and Shyamu are both friends but for some reason they had an argument and are not talking to each other.

The best gift you can give them is

- a) Stop talking to them because they fight with each other.
- b) Become very friendly with only Ramu or Shyamu.
- c) Bring them together and make them friends again.



Why do you think Krishna was so pleased with Sudama's gift?



Give a Gift

You can give a little gift to your friends wrapped up in pretty wrapping paper made specially for them.

Make a stencil out of chart paper.

Draw a design like a lotus, tilaka or the word "Hare Krishna".

Cut out carefully.

Take a sheet of plain wrapping paper and spread it out.

Put the stencil firmly on one corner.

Paint in the cut out design using paint or sketch pens. When one design is complete, carefully pick up the stencil and place on another part of the gift paper.

Repeat this until the whole of the paper is covered.

You can decorate the space in between the patterns with glitter, sequins or spray paint. Keep it to dry.

Use it for wrapping a gift or covering a file.

7 Peace Messenger

Krishna set off with Satyaki in His chariot. This chariot was specially meant for travelling at high speed. It had two great wheels resembling the sun and the moon. It was beautifully decorated with carvings and small bells and precious stones. Krishna's chariot was pulled by four horses. There was a large dark blue banner with the emblem of Garuda. The charioteer's name was Daruka. He urged the horses forward and they sped away.

Krishna was headed on a special mission. For a long time the Kurus headed by Duryodhana were on the verge of a war with their cousins, the Pandavas. Earlier Duryodhana had organised an unfair dice game in which the Pandavas had lost all their wealth and property. Their wife Draupadi had been mistreated in public. Besides this, the Pandavas had lived in exile for thirteen years.

They had tolerated everything. Now as true Kshatriyas, the Pandavas wanted at least some of their property back so that they would rule it and live in peace.

The wise elders of the Kuru family advised Duryodhana to give back the rightful share to the Pandavas. But Duryodhana was surrounded by men like Karna, Shakuni and Dushasana, who misguided him. Duryodhana's father Dhritrashtra was blind and due to attachment for his son he was unable to make proper decisions.

Krishna was travelling all the way to Hastinapura to personally talk to Duryodhana and convince him to stop the war.

As they sped towards Hastinapura, Satyaki looked around and saw various omens like lightning flashing, rivers flowing backwards and fires on the horizon. Although Satyaki saw these terrible signs, he noticed that the area around the chariot was mild and calm. There was a

cool breeze carrying fragrant lotus petals and drops of water.

They passed through various provinces and were greeted by thousands of people standing on either side of the roads. Some were throwing flower petals, others were chanting. At the end of the first day's journey they arrived at Brikasthala. They rested for the night and continued the journey next morning.

On the day before Krishna's arrival, Dhritrashtra had called an assembly to discuss how to greet Krishna.

Dhritrashtra said, "Krishna is the Lord of Creation, the source of all power, wisdom and opulence. Let us welcome Him with great respect and honour. I will offer Him the most opulent palace of Dushasana and sixteen golden chariots drawn by excellent horses and many costly gifts. Let us decorate the city. Tomorrow we will declare a festival in honour of Krishna."

Vidura agreed with Dhritrashtra but also added, "What you are doing is good but don't think you can win over the Lord of the Yadus by offering Him wealth. His real desire is that you give at least five villages to the Pandavas."

Duryodhana said, "What Vidhura is saying is correct. There is no use of offering gifts to Krishna because He will think that it is a sign of weakness. Bhisma shook his head, "Krishna will not become angry whether He is properly received or not. We cannot insult Him nor can we win Him over. Whatever He desires will happen and we cannot check Him by any means. We should follow His directions O King, and make peace with the Pandavas."

Duryodhana had already discussed his wicked plans with Shakuni and Karna. Therefore these words made Duryodhana's eyes filled with

anger. "I will never share power with the Pandavas. When Krishna enters, I will take Him captive. Then the Yadus, Vrishinis, Pandavas and the whole world will be at my disposal."

Dhritrashtra was shocked to hear his son's words. "O child do not speak in this way. A messenger should never be harmed in any way, what to speak of one such as Krishna. He is our relative and dear to all of us."

Bhisma spoke with fury, "O king, your son chooses only evil and never good. You follow him on this unrighteous path towards certain ruin. I do not want to listen to any more words from this sinful person." Saying this, Bhisma strode out of the assembly hall in a rage. Dhritrashtra ended the session and everyone left.

Soon Krishna and Satyaki approached the outskirts of Hastinapur. Crowds of people lined the roads to greet Krishna. Ladies stood on the balconies and showered fragrant flowers. The sounds of musical instruments and conchshells filled the air.

Krishna dismounted the chariot. Fifty tall and well-armed soldiers walked ahead of Him to clear a path through the crowds. Loud shouts of "O Govinda!" were heard everywhere.

Krishna was brought directly to Dhritrashtra in the royal court and received with great respect. It was decided that there would be a full assembly on the following day when they would hear Krishna's message. Then taking Dhritrashtra's permission, Krishna left the court and went to Vidura's house to see Kunti.

Vidura was overjoyed to see Krishna approaching his home. They embraced each other lovingly. Then Krishna went inside to see His beloved aunt Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas. Kunti greeted Him and shed tears, thinking of her sons. Krishna saw that His aunt had become weak through fasting and grieving for her sons. They sat down to talk.

in a choked voice Kunti inquired about her heroic sons and how they had suffered.

She ended, "O Keshava, I do not grieve for the defeat of the dice game, the loss of the kingdom or even the separation from my sons. I grieve for my dear daughter-in-law Draupadi who was insulted in the court of the Kurus."

Krishna consoled His aunt, "You have given birth to five great heroes. Your sons are known for their virtues, they have controlled sleep, laziness, anger, joy, hunger and thirst. The time has now come for them to be installed as kings and surrounded by prosperity."

After respectfully bidding farewell to Kunti, Krishna returned to Duryodhana's palace. The palace was as high as a mountain. It was built of white marble and decked with precious gems and gold engravings. Krishna passed through three main parts of the palace and at last reached the central hall. Duryodhana was seated amidst a thousand kings and warriors. Next to him were Shakuni, Karna and Dushasana. Duryodhana welcomed Krishna warmly and personally worshipped Him, offered Him the traditional gift of a cow. He folded his palms and said:

"We welcome You, O Govinda. What can we do for You? Please accept an invitation to dine with us. We have prepared Dushasana's palace for Your residence, which is even superior to my own palace."

Krishna replied gravely: "I will not eat with you, O hero, nor shall I stay in Dushasana's palace."

Duryodhana smiled and spoke with false humility. He tried to convince Krishna to accept their hospitality. "Are we not as dear to You as the Pandavas?"

Krishna explained that He had come only as a messenger and would agree only after He had fulfilled His objective. "One should eat another's food only if there is love or if one is in distress." He also told Duryodhana that it was wrong of him to bear malice for the virtuous Pandavas. He would rather eat in the simple house of Vidura.

Leaving Duryodhana fuming, Krishna left the hall and went straight to Vidura's house. Vidura greeted Him and they ate happily together. Later they talked to each other. Vidura mentioned that Duryodhana was influenced by evil-minded people and would not accept good advice. Krishna told Vidura not to worry. He explained that He had come on a peace mission and would do His best to prevent the war.

After speaking to each other for a long time Krishna and Vidura rested briefly.

Next morning after completing their morning baths and worship, they set off for the assembly hall of the Kurus.

In the hall the Kuru elders waited with anticipation. Krishna entered the hall holding Vidura's and Satyaki's hands on either side of Him. He was greeted warmly by everyone and made to sit on a beautiful jewelled throne. With His divine vision Krishna saw many rishis approaching from the sky wishing to join the assembly. He asked Dhritrashtra to offer them proper seats. The rishis were duly offered golden seats and worshipped with great respect.

Krishna looked at Dhritrashtra and came straight to the point. He said, "May there be peace between the Kauravas and Pandavas. May no heroes be slain on either side. Only for this have I come O king, I have nothing more to say."

Then Krishna explained in detail how the noble Kuru dynasty was known

for its virtues and urged Dhritrashtra to come to the right path and not listen to his evil minded son, Duryodhana. He spoke for a long time but Dhritrashtra remained silent. Some rishis like Narada Muni, Parshurama and Kanwa also spoke. They agreed with what Krishna was saying. During these peace talks Dhritrashtra agreed with Krishna but was saying that he was helpless. Duryodhana was becoming more and more angry. As the discussion went on, Dhritrashtra spoke to Duryodhana and convinced him to make peace. Duryodhana was furious. He could not hear any more. He got up and strongly opposed Krishna's message of peace. In fact he cunningly blamed the Pandavas for all that had happened and finally said, "I will not give the Pandavas even that much land which can be pierced by the point of a needle."

Krishna chastised Duryodhana in a stern voice. By now even some of Duryodhana's brothers were convinced that peace was the only solution. Dushasna also had begun to favour peace. But Duryodhana could not tolerate the situation any more. He stormed out of the assembly hall. His ninety-nine brothers and ministers followed him.

After this Krishna tried again to speak to Dhritrashtra. He said many things and concluded, "One man should be sacrificed for the sake of a race, a race for the sake of a town, the town for the benefit of the country and the earth for the sake of the soul." But Dhritrashtra was too attached to his son to take this advice.

Dhritrashtra invited Duryodhana's mother Queen Gandhari to the assembly. Gandhari came to the assembly. She was also in favour of peace. Duryodhana came back. In a gentle voice she tried to convince him but he remained as obstinate as before. Gandhari tried to explain to her son but he did not want to listen. She said, "You have heard this advice again. One who ignores the good advice of well-wishers will regret it later. But his enemies will rejoice."

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By now Duryodhana was burning with anger. Everyone praised the Pandavas and criticised him. This time he left the hall and went straight to Dushasana's palace. There he spoke to Dushasana, Karna and Shakuni, "Krishna is swaying everyone's minds in favour of the Pandavas. We will quickly execute our plan to capture Krishna. We will grab Krishna and bind Him." Dushasana and Shakuni agreed. Karna was uncertain. Duryodhana laughed at his doubts. In the hall, Satyaki was watching Duryodhana carefully and he guessed that he was planning something. He whispered to Krishna about this. Vidura also felt that Duryodhana had some evil intentions.

When Duryodhana entered the hall, once more Vidura explained to him the glories of Krishna and of all the demons He had killed.

Finally, Duryodhana could take no more. He jumped up and ordered his soldiers to catch Krishna.

They rushed in with swords and bows. Krishna laughed and as He did so, His body flashed like lightening and began to grow. As He grew, many demigods issued from Him. Bramha sprang from His forehead. Agni appeared from His mouth. From His two eyes came Balarama and Arjuna who stood on His left and right sides. All the other Pandavas appeared and also hosts of Gandharvas, Yakshas and Rakshasas. Krishna's weapons shone brilliantly. From His pores emanated light, sparks and clouds of smoke. Almost everyone in the assembly closed their eyes. Only Bhishma, Drona, Vidura and Sanjaya were able to see Krishna as He manifested His universal form. The rishis also gazed upon Him, and offered prayers. There was the sound of heavenly music and showering of flowers.

Sanjaya described the event to Dhritarashtra who prayed for the vision to see Krishna, "O best of the Yadavas, I pray for the sight to see You." "O Kuru leader, let your eyes have sight." Immediately Dhritarashtra could see by the divine vision.

Outside the hall, a fierce wind blew. Huge waves were roaring over the ocean and thunder sounded in the sky and the earth trembled.

Krishna withdrew His mystical form and again assumed a two-armed form.

Taking permission from the rishis, He left the hall, holding the hands of Satyaki and Kritavarma. Gradually everyone left.

Only Duryodhana and his ministers remained seated. They were struck with wonder and unable to do or say anything. Their plan had failed miserably. Dhritarashtra and the Kauravas went to see off Krishna. Dhritarashtra begged Krishna not to blame him for his son's bad behaviour.

Krishna got onto His chariot and set off.

Before leaving He once again visited Kunti and told her what had happened.

"O Krishna, my sons must now fulfil their destiny and take control of the earth. They will not achieve it through peaceful means. They failed to protect Draupadi in the assembly at the dice game. Her honour cannot be restored unless they fight. O Krishna, tell my sons I am well and they have my blessings."

Krishna got onto His chariot and headed towards Hastinapura. The Kurus watched as the chariot sped towards the city's gates.

Krishna's peace mission had failed and now the war was certain. Due to Duryodhana's envious nature, thousands of warriors on either side were going to be slain. The world was about to witness bloodshed as had never been seen before.



Activity Time

Discussion:

Let's play a game of Blind Man's Buff.

One person is sent out of the room and is blindfolded. He is then brought inside and he tries to catch someone. If he touches anyone, that person is out. Then the one who is out is blindfolded and the game starts again. This game is enjoyable to play. See that the room is arranged in such a way that no one is hurt. Try and see everyone gets a chance to be blindfolded.

How did you feel when you played the game?

How did you feel when you were blindfolded?



Could you guess the name of the person you caught?

In this game one is blindfolded for fun. In the story we see that Duryodhana was 'blindfolded' by his own selfishness. Because of his selfish desires and envy, he could not see Krishna even though everyone else could.

All of us are also 'blindfolded'. When the devotees come and give us knowledge of Krishna Consciousness, we start seeing everything clearly just as if a blind fold is removed from our eyes. Therefore these are wonderful prayers which says :

Om agyana timirandhasya
Gyananjana shalakaya
Chakshur unmilitam yena
Tasmai shri gurave namah

I offer my respects unto my spiritual master .
He has opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge.

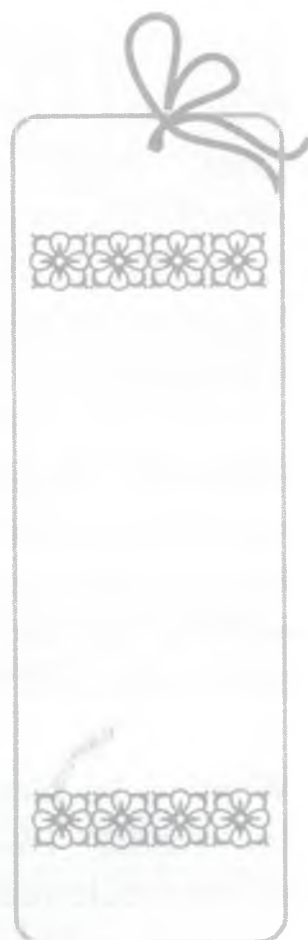
Duryodhana refused to accept the knowledge given to him by Lord Krishna and also by the spiritual master and other wise elders. Therefore he remained in ignorance and chose the wrong path..

Let us always seek the advice and blessings of the Lord through His representatives, the spiritual master and other senior devotees.



Make a bookmark

Take a piece of cardpaper 21 cms long and 5 cms wide.
Now neatly write down the above shloka.
Punch a hole at the top of the bookmark.
Pass some colourful ribbon or lace through the hole.
Decorate the bookmark in any way.
Use this bookmark when you are reading .



8 Shrutadeva and Bahulashva

In the city of Mithila, in the kingdom of Videha lived two great devotees of the Lord Shrutadeva and Bahulashva.

Shrutadeva was a poor brahmana. He was constantly engaged in devotional service to the Lord. He was peaceful, learned and lived a very simple life. By the will of the Lord, he obtained each day just enough to take care of himself and his family. He was very satisfied with whatever he got.

The ruler of the kingdom was named Bahulashva. He had palaces. He was a pure devotee of the Lord and regularly worshiped the Lord in His deity form.

Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead was pleased with both of them. He mounted his chariot and travelled to Videha with a group of sages. Among the sages, were Narada, Vyas, Asita, Maitreya and others. In every city and town which the Lord passed, the people came forward to worship Him. They brought gifts and flowers to please Him. The Lord glanced all around with affection and had a smiling, beautiful lotus like face.

Gradually, He reached Videha. In the cities and villages of Videha, hundreds of people lined up and greeted Him joyfully. Both the king of Mithila, Bahulashva and Shrutadev fell at the Lord's lotus feet. At exactly the same time, both came forward with folded hands and invited the Lord to be his guest along with the brahmana sages.

Wanting to please both of them, the Lord accepted both their invitations. Thus, He simultaneously went to both the houses and neither could see Him entering the other's house.

In this way, the Lord and His companions were present in both the houses although both the brahmana and the king thought He was present in his house only. This opulence of the Lord is described as Vaibhava Prakasha.

When Lord Krishna and the sages arrived at King Bahulashva's palace, seats of honour were laid out for them. When they were all seated, the king bowed down and washed their feet with love and devotion. He sprinkled the washed water on his own head and also those of his family members.

Then he worshipped the Lord and the sages with fragrant sandalwood paste, flower garlands, fine clothes, ornaments, incense, lamps. He also gave ornamented cows and bulls in charity.

He had arranged a grand feast for his guests. After everyone had eaten to their satisfaction, he held the Lord's lotus feet in his lap and happily massaged them with tears in his eyes. He offered beautiful prayers to the Lord. Afterwards, he begged the Lord and the sages to stay in Mithila for some days to bestow good fortune on the people.

Meanwhile, Shrutadeva received the Lord in his little hut with great enthusiasm. He danced with great joy waving his shawl. He laid out mats of grass and straw. He was so poor that he had to borrow mats from his neighbours.

Shrutadeva washed the lotus feet and sprinkled himself and his family with the wash water. He offered fruits, water, fragrant clay, tulasi leaves, kusha grass and lotus flowers.

He offered them simple prasad. Afterwards Shrutadeva massaged the Lord's feet and offered sincere prayers. He said "O Lord, you are the Supreme Soul and we are your servants, how can I serve You?

The Lord heard Shrutadeva's prayers and then he glorified the sages who had come with Him. He said " My dear Brahmana, you should know that these great sages have come here just to bless you. One can gradually become purified by seeing, touching and worshipping temple deities, places of pilgrimage and holy rivers. But one can immediately achieve the same result simply by receiving the merciful glance of these exalted sages.

In this way, both the devotees served the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the best way they could. The Lord stayed for some time with His two great devotees, Shrutadeva and Bahulasva. He was equally pleased with both of them and they attained the ultimate destination of their lives.





Activity Time

Discussion:

In this story we saw that Krishna performed a wonderful pastime called 'Vaibhav Prakash Lila'. He divided Himself into two just to please His devotees.

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna has many wonderful qualities. We cannot even count them. We are all parts and parcels of Krishna. Therefore we also possess some of His qualities.

Let us take an example to understand this: have you ever tasted ocean water? Even the tiniest drop tastes salty. Why? Because it is a part of the big ocean. The drop is of the same quality as the ocean, but it can never be the same in quantity. In the same way we all possess a tiny part of Krishna's vast opulences. Everything we have is meant for His service. We are eternally His servants.

We often see a person who may be rich and famous or intelligent and beautiful. However we can never see a person who possesses all these qualities in full. What to speak of possessing these qualities in full, even the little which we have is temporary.

KRISHNA is called Bhagavan. "Bhaga" means 'opulence' and 'van' means 'one who possesses'.

Only Krishna is :

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. All wealthy | 2. All strong |
| 3. All famous | 4. All beautiful |
| 5. All knowledgeable | 6. All renounced |

Anyone who possesses all the opulences in full is ALL ATTRACTIVE. In Sanskrit "Krishna" means all attractive. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one can be equal to or greater than Krishna.

Many of these opulences are displayed in His pastimes.



Make a 'wonderful Krishna' poster.

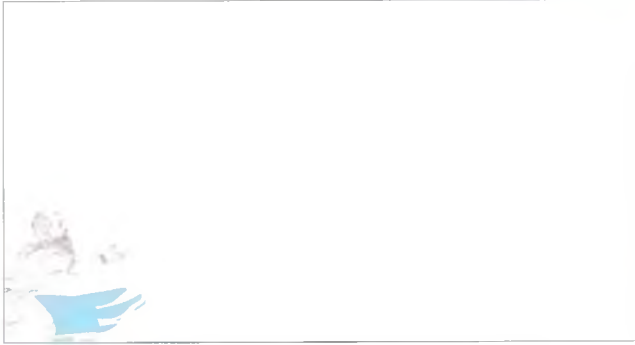
Take a large sheet of chart paper. In the middle write 'Wonderful Krishna', take pictures of Krishna's pastimes like 'Kaliya', 'Damodar' and 'Govardhana'. Write some lines about each pastime. Use colourful sketch pens or paints to decorate the poster.



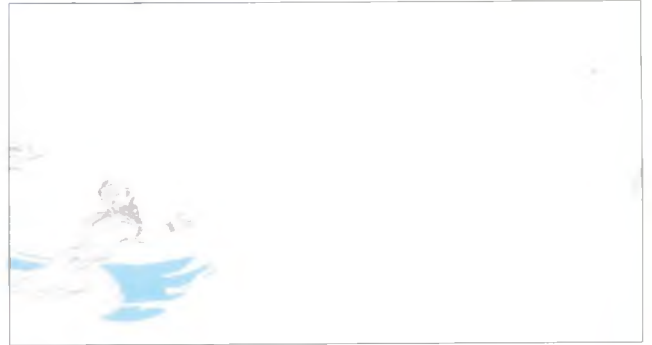


The Universal Form

Colour the Pictures



8



7



6



5



4



3



2



1



His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Shrila Prabhupada
Founder Acharya
- International Society for Krishna Consciousness



Bhakta Prahlad School (BPS),
Children's Wing of BACE

*B*haktivedanta *A*cademy for *C*ulture and *E*ducation

The Delaney Family Library
Saranagati Village
Please return or contact:
kardelaney@gmail.com