



## 6 Why the dust of Vrindavana is so soft



"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" The gopas giggled.



"Krishna You are such a baby".



"Your maiya only gives You calves to take care of Baby! Baby!" Hearing the teasing words of the gopas Krishna's lower lip started to tremble. Big tear drops fell from His rosy cheeks like shiny pearls. The words of His gopa friends rang in his ears. He pattered on His little lotus feet, back to the palace.



The sky was a bright orange. The sun was setting. Mother Yashoda was waiting at the doorway. She spotted her beloved child. He was all alone today. She ran ahead to welcome Kanha. Without even looking at her Krishna ran right past her.



"Kanha! Kanha!" Maiya called. "Listen to me" she said walking into His room. "Come let me bathe You, You are covered with dust.



"Why won't You talk to Your maiya? Tell me what the matter is. Are You hurt? Did Dauji say something to You?"



Krishna looked so sad. "Come I've made sweetmeats for You" said Mother Yashoda trying to coax her son to talk. "Do You want some sweet rice .... or puris filled with cream?"





But nothing seemed to make Kanha happy. In this way He fell asleep.

That night Yashoda spoke to Nanda Maharaja. "Kanha has become a big boy now. He is five years old. I've been thinking that we should hand over the charge of the cows to Him. What do you think? Am I right?" Nanda Baba agreed readily.

Next morning when Krishna woke up, Mother Yashoda said "I've spoken to Nanda Baba. He said Kanha has become a big boy now. From today He must take care of the cows. Be quick now, You have to take the cows to the forest"

Krishna leapt into His mother's arms with a big smile. He appeared like a fully bloomed lotus. That morning Krishna got ready very fast. In no time He was at the doorway.

He was amazed to see that there were so many cows.

Nanda Maharaja had nine lakh cows.

Yashoda maiya handed Krishna a lunch bag, an umbrella and His shoes.

"But maiya, what about My cows? How will they walk without shoes? Is there anything to protect them from the sun? If not, please give Me shoes and umbrellas for My cows too."





"Shoes, umbrellas for cows? Whoever heard of that Kanha? And we have nine lakh cows. Each cow has four hooves. Moreover cows don't need shoes."



"Maiya, if you won't give Me shoes and umbrellas for My cows, I too will go to the forest without My shoes and umbrella."



Mother Yashoda had no choice but to allow Krishna to go without shoes and an umbrella.



When the cows heard that Krishna would go into the forest without his shoes, their hearts filled with sorrow. The cows could not bear to think that their beloved Krishna would walk on the thorny rocky paths in the forests of Vraja.



They started stomping the ground with their hooves. They stomped and stomped till the dust of Vrindavana became very soft. In fact they stomped so hard that it became as soft as butter. Now they were happy that Krishna would have no trouble walking barefoot in the forests of Vraja.





## Activity Time

In this chapter we saw how the cows and calves united together to please Krishna.

Read the following Story

An old Brahmana priest lived in a holy place, in an ashram, with his seven disciples. There they worshiped very ancient and sacred Deities of Radha and Krishna. Many people would come to see these Deities and make donations for Their worship.

The guru, however, was growing weak due to old age. He knew that soon it would be time to leave his body. He did not feel confident to hand over to his disciples the entire services of these Deities.



One day a pilgrim donated a large ruby to the Deities.

"I think it should be sold for money." one disciple declared.

"No, no!" another cried. "Radha should wear it."

Yet another had his opinion, "It would be far better if we cut it into many small rubies. Then we could make a beautiful necklace for Her".

The disagreement among the disciples carried on for so long that the Brahmana felt that the Deities would never get Their ruby. But he did not interfere. He wanted his students to learn how to manage the ashram themselves. After a while he said. "That's enough.

Now each one of you go to the woods. Bring back one stick, no more than an inch thick."

The seven disciples stopped their quarreling and set out to obey their guru's order. When they returned, the old brahmana took their sticks. He tied them all firmly together with a couple of lengths of rope. He then asked, "Which one of you can break this bundle?"

The seven young men each tried in turn, but even the strongest failed. "It's not possible," they exclaimed, "Watch," their guru said, cutting the rope with a knife. Taking each stick on its own, he very easily snapped it into two;

"I am getting very old. Soon I will die. You are like a bundle of sticks. If you try to help each other, cooperate and work together, you will be strong and serve me well. But if you become divided and fight, you will become weak like these separate sticks. And then, who will care for our Radha and Krishna Deities? Remember united we stand, divided we fall."

Realizing their folly, the seven disciples agreed to set the ruby in a gold ring. That ring, they decided, was to decorate one of Krishna's fingers. Their guru, pleased at this decision, finally felt ready to leave them. Soon after, he peacefully gave up his body and returned to the spiritual world.

Later, when the people came to see the old brahmana's famous Deities they often asked, "How did Krishna get such a beautiful ring?"

The disciples would always answer. "By the strength of a bundle of sticks."

What were the disciples fighting for ?

Why did the Brahamana allow his disciples to fight among themselves ?

What does the bundle of sticks represent ?

How do we know that the disciples learnt their lesson well ?

Give a suitable title for the story

## Discussion:

### Let's Join Hands

Stand in a circle

Cross your hands and hold the hands of the person next to you.

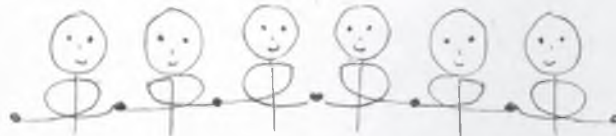
Now without breaking the circle all of you have to uncross your hands.

It can be done but may take some time.

- What did you feel when you started playing the game?
- What did you feel and do at the end of the game?
- What were you thinking of?

Some tasks can be done alone and some tasks require team work.

It is easy to perform a task when we pool in our strength, our intelligence and our talents.



### Srila Prabhupada tells a story

In a little village there lived a an old man with his seven sons.

One late evening all the sons were gathered around the father, massaging him as he lay on his bed. The father was very pleased to see all his sons serving him.

He closed his eyes and went to sleep. Suddenly he got up with a jerk. He saw that three of his sons were pulling one leg and another three were pulling the other leg and one was tugging at his head. Each one wanted to show that he was better than the other.

" Please stop you are hurting me" he cried. " You cannot satisfy me if you are fighting amongst yourselves".

The sons realised their mistake and felt ashamed.

What did you learn from this story? Who is our Supreme Father and how can we serve Him?

## Devotee Doll Chain



Let us make a chain of happy, smiling devotees who are chanting and dancing together

Fanfold a piece of drawing paper evenly. To start the fanfold, fold 1 end of the paper over about 1 inch. Then turn the paper over and fold the end up. Continue folding the paper in accordionlike pleats.

After you've finished folding, draw your design for the paper dolls. Make sure at least some parts of the design touch both sides of the paper so the dolls "hold hands." Draw only one half of the doll, since the other half will be across the top fold. Cut out the doll pattern. Then decorate each doll with markers, or glue on trims such as ribbon, yarn, or fabric scraps. You could also draw neck beads and tilak for the dolls.

