



Story of Krishna

Pre-Birth Background

About 5000 years ago, the King Ugrasena was ruling over the Mathura (Northern part of Bharat). The old King Ugrasena had two children, Prince Kamsa and Princess Devaki. Princess Devaki was to wed the Yadu dynasty Prince Vasudeva. Meanwhile, in the kingdom of King Ugrasena, there was internal conflict. King Ugrasena was a good king, but Prince Kamsa was a ruthless tyrant. Prince Kamsa wanted to take over his father's throne, he craved for power. Prince Kamsa was a cruel person. He threw king Ugrasena into prison and himself became the king. He started bothering his own people. Nobody was happy in his kingdom.

Though Kamsa was an evil person, he loved his sister Princess Devaki very dearly. It was a time of Devaki's wedding. Princess Devaki and Prince Vasudeva happily married together. Kamsa out of his love for his sister, decided to be the bride and the groom's charioteer for the day. While Kamsa drove the chariot bearing Devaki and Vasudeva out of the wedding hall, a voice from the heavens boomed. It was a sky prophecy, which informed Kamsa that Devaki's eighth child would be his slayer. It talked about how he was an evil and cruel person. The sky prophecy said, "Hey! Kamsa!! Devaki's eighth child would kill you and end your tyrannous rule".



Kamsa was very superstitious and did not want to take any chances. He wanted to strike down Devaki that very moment. He wanted to kill his sister Devaki who he loved very dearly. But Vasudeva intervened, and begged Kamsa not to slay Devaki and show her some mercy. Vasudeva went on to further explain that they were just newly married and it was his duty to protect Devaki. He further promised Kamsa that he would hand over any child born to them, if he would let Devaki live. Kamsa too did not want to have the blood of his beloved sister on his hands. He agreed and placed them under house arrest with strict vigil on them.

Devaki and Vasudeva were locked in their own palace. This is where they spent their time because Kamsa wouldn't allow them to leave their house. Devaki gave birth to her first child and the guards informed Kamsa. Earlier Kamsa wanted to kill only eighth child. But his associates advised him to kill all the children. Kamsa too didn't want to take any chances. So he came and took the newborn baby and killed it. Every time a child was born, the guards would inform him and he would do the same. Six of Devaki and Vasudev's children met their death this way. Devaki and Vasudev were very sad but they were helpless. Now Kamsa was eagerly waiting for the seventh and eighth child of Devaki.



It just so happened that the seventh child of Devaki and Vasudeva was born at night. Devaki and Vasudeva saw this as the perfect opportunity to try and save their seventh child. The guards were fast asleep, so Vasudeva easily slid out of the palace undetected. He crossed the river Yamuna and went to the neighboring Gokul (a place near Mathura) and left the child with his second wife Rohini and quickly returned to the palace undetected. This child was named Balarama. In the morning Vasudeva sent word to Kamsa that the child was stillborn.





Story of Krishna

Krishna's Birth

When Kamsa learnt that the seventh child was stillborn, he was very pleased. Now he was waiting for the eighth child to be born. He knew that the next child was the one prophesized to be his slayer. Not wanting to take chances with the birth of the eighth child, Kamsa put Vasudeva and Devaki into the dungeon chained and doubled the guards. All was going according to Kamsa's plan until the night Devaki's eighth child was born.

Lord Vishnu himself had told Vasudeva that he would be taking the form of Vasudeva and Devaki's eighth child, Krishna, to free the world from much evil Kamsa. HE also told Vasudeva that the night he would take birth, Vasudeva must take him to his friend, cowherd chief Nanda's house in Gokul.

As predicted by Lord Vishnu, Krishna was born in the midnight on the 8th day of the Hindu month of Shravan (July-August). Vasudeva prepared to take Krishna to Nanda's house in Gokul. With the magic power of Lord Vishnu, the heavy chains that held Vasudeva slid right off, many guards outside of Vasudeva and Devaki's cell fell into deep sleep and Vasudeva could easily take baby Krishna (eighth child) right out of the dungeons. Now all that lay between Vasudeva and Nanda's house was the river Yamuna.

The weather was very unpleasant, with rain pouring down and the night was extremely dark and windy. But Vasudeva knew he had to cross the river to go to Nanda's house and he could not stop. So, slowly Vasudeva began



to tread his way across the stormy river. The water came up to his knees, but Vasudeva kept going. The water reached Vasudeva's waist, but he still kept going. Vasudeva held baby Krishna on top of his head and kept going forward. Soon, the water was up to Vasudeva's mouth, but he kept going.

Pleased by Vasudeva's determination and love for Lord Vishnu, baby Krishna stuck out his foot from the basket and touched the waves of bank Yamuna. Blessed with a touch from the Lord Vishnu (in form of baby Krishna) himself, the river parted itself creating a small path for Vasudeva to walk across. Vasudeva then could easily cross the river.

By the time Vasudeva arrived at Nanda's house at Gokul, it was really late at night. Everyone in the village was fast asleep other than Nanda. On the same night Yashoda, Nanda's wife, had given birth to a little girl. Vasudeva quickly placed baby Krishna beside Yashoda and took the little girl as his eighth child.

Vasudeva walked back across the river, which closed its gap as he walked towards the prison. When Vasudeva returned back to dungeon, the chains and clasps easily snapped back onto Vasudeva and the guards awoke from their slumber. Upon seeing the newborn child, the guards rushed to Kamsa to inform him.

Kamsa was delighted that after eight years of waiting he could finally kill the child that was supposed to kill him. As he grabbed the little girl and started swinging her around, the baby escaped from Kamsa's grasp and flew away. In midair the baby transformed into her true form Goddess Durga. Durga looked fiercely at Kamsa and told him to cause no more injustice to his sister Devaki. She also let him know that his slayer, Devaki's eighth child, was still alive and he would kill Kamsa one day.



Color the following picture of Mata Yashoda and Krishna.

