The Birthday Month Week 1

Balaram’s Birthday & Brahma Vimohan

**Week 1- Balaram Purnima and Brahma Vimohan Lila-**

**Balaram’s Birthday and Brahma Steals the Boys and Calves**

Week 2- Dhenuka (the donkey demon)

Week 3- Jhulan Yatra (the swing festival)

Week 4- Aghasura (the snake demon)

# Balaram Purnima

Oops!! I sent an email last week that contained the story about lord Brahma stealing the boys and calves, which was supposed to go for this week!

I also included the story of Balaram’s Appearance if you would like to read/tell it tomorrow. It is very connected with Krishna’s Birth story for next week so it might be a good idea.

## **Resources and Links**

* *Infallible Gopal* by Sita Gilbakian, available on Amazon.com in India and the US. https://www.amazon.com/Gopal-Infallible-Vol-Sita-Gilbakian/dp/1886069174
* Balaram Coloring Book- There is a beautiful coloring book for only $3.95 <http://www.innerpath.com/coloring-book-krishna-balarama/> in the usa
* <https://blservices.com/product-category/books/coloring-books/> in the UK
* <http://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/krishna-balarama-in-vrindavana-coloring-book-NAI160/> in India
* *Swing in the Monsoon* by Urmila from her reading program series- Dr Best Learn to Read available from illuminationeducation.com

## **This Week’s *Lila Katha***

**Balaram’s Appearance**

Lord Krishna has many incarnations and many forms. All the forms are the same God. Sometimes all the forms look the same. Sometimes each form looks a little different from the others. In each different form, Krishna has a different mood. Each expanded form of Krishna likes to be a servant of Krishna. It is so much fun to serve Krishna that He likes to do it Himself! This is the story of how the first expansion of Krishna, Lord Balaram, appeared on earth. The demon king, Kamsa, had heard that Devaki’s eighth child would kill him, and he was scared. Narada Muni had also told Kamsa that many demigods were taking birth in the Yadu family. Then Kamsa got really scared and decided that any of Devaki’s children might kill him. So, Kamsa put Devaki and her husband, Vasudeva, in prison. They had heavy chains on their bodies so they couldn’t run away. Devaki gave birth to six babies in Kamsa’s prison. Kamsa killed each baby. Devaki and Vasudeva were very sad to lose their babies. They waited for Krishna to come. Then Balaram went into Devaki’s womb. Balaram is an expansion of Krishna. Then Krishna told Yogamayā to bring Balaram from Devaki’s womb to Rohini’s womb. Rohini is also a wife of Vasudeva. Yogamaya didn’t think she was powerful enough to do that. Krishna said He will help her. When Balaram left Devaki’s womb, it seemed the baby had died in the womb. He was sad because he wanted to kill the child himself! Then Yogamāyā told Rohini, “I am bringing Devaki’s child and putting Him in your womb.” Rohini was very happy. So, Balaram has two mothers! Balaram was born in Vrindavan. His mother Rohini stayed there because her husband Vasudeva was in prison in Mathura. Krishna and Balaram both have Vasudeva and Devaki as their parents, and Rohini is Balaram’s mother, too! Everyone called Balaram Krishna’s older brother and they played together when they were little boys. They have many wonderful adventures. Balaram always thinks that He is a servant of Krishna and helps in many ways.

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**Lord Brahma Steals the Boys and Calves**

Śukadeva Gosvāmī was very much encouraged when Mahārāja Parīkṣit asked him why the cowherd boys did not discuss the death of Aghāsura until after one year had passed. He explained thus: "My dear King, you are making the subject matter of the transcendental pastimes of Kṛṣṇa fresher by your inquisitiveness."

It is said that it is the nature of a devotee to constantly apply his mind, energy, words, ears, etc., in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and for one who is rapt in hearing and chanting Kṛṣṇa, the subject matter never becomes hackneyed or old. That is the significance of transcendental subject matter in contrast to material subject matter. Material subject matter becomes stale, and one cannot hear a certain subject for a long time; he wants change. But as far as transcendental subject matter is concerned, it is called *nityanavanavāyamāna.* This means that one can go on chanting and hearing about the Lord and never feel tired but will remain fresh and eager to hear more and more.

It is the duty of the spiritual master to disclose all confidential subject matter to the inquisitive and sincere disciple. Thus Śukadeva Gosvāmī began to explain why the killing of Aghāsura was not discussed until one year had passed. Śukadeva Gosvāmī told the King, "Now hear of this secret with attention. After saving His friends from the mouth of Aghāsura and after killing the demon, Lord Kṛṣṇa brought His friends to the bank of Yamunā and addressed them as follows: 'My dear friends, just see how this spot is very nice for taking lunch and playing on the soft sandy Yamunā bank. You can see how the lotus flowers in the water are beautifully blown and how they distribute their flavor all around. The chirping of the birds along with cooing of the peacocks, surrounded by the whispering of the leaves in the trees, combine and present sound-vibrations that echo one another. And this just enriches the beautiful scenery created by the trees here. Let us have our lunch in this spot because it is already late and we are feeling hungry. Let the calves remain near us, and let them drink water from the Yamunā. While we engage in our lunch-taking, the calves may engage in eating the soft grasses that are in this spot.'"



On hearing this proposal from Kṛṣṇa, all the boys became very glad and said, "Certainly, let us all sit down here to take our lunch." They then let loose the calves to eat the soft grass. Sitting down on the ground and keeping Kṛṣṇa in the center, they began to open their different boxes brought from home. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seated in the center of the circle, and all the boys kept their faces toward Him. They ate and constantly enjoyed seeing the Lord face to face. Kṛṣṇa appeared to be the whorl of a lotus flower, and the boys surrounding Him appeared to be its different petals. The boys collected flowers, leaves of flowers and barks of trees and placed them under their different boxes, and thus they began to eat their lunch, keeping company with Kṛṣṇa. While taking lunch, each boy began to manifest different kinds of relations with Kṛṣṇa, and they enjoyed each other's company with joking words. While thus enjoying lunch with His friends, Lord Kṛṣṇa's flute was pushed within the belt of His cloth, and His bugle and cane were pushed in on the left-hand side of His cloth. He was holding a lump of foodstuff prepared with yogurt, butter, rice and pieces of fruit salad in His left palm, which could be seen through His petal-like finger joints. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who accepts the results of all great sacrifices, was laughing and joking, enjoying lunch with His friends in Vṛndāvana. And thus the scene was being observed by the demigods from heaven. As for the boys, they were simply enjoying transcendental bliss in the company of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



At that time, the calves that were pasturing nearby entered into the deep forest, allured by new grasses, and gradually went out of sight. When the boys saw that the calves were not nearby, they became afraid for their safety, and they immediately cried out, "Kṛṣṇa!" Kṛṣṇa is the killer of fear personified. Everyone is afraid of fear personified, but fear personified is afraid of Kṛṣṇa. By crying out the word "Kṛṣṇa," the boys at once transcended the fearful situation. Out of His great affection, Kṛṣṇa did not want His friends to give up their pleasing lunch engagement and go searching for the calves. He therefore said, "My dear friends, you need not interrupt your lunch. Go on enjoying. I am going personally where the calves are." Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa immediately started to search out the calves in the caves and bushes. He searched in the mountain holes and in the forests, but nowhere could He find them.



At the time when Aghāsura was killed and the demigods were looking on the incident with great surprise, Brahmā, who was born out of the lotus flower growing out of the navel of Viṣṇu, also came to see. He was surprised how a little boy like Kṛṣṇa could act so wonderfully. Although he was informed that the little cowherd boy was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he wanted to see more glorified pastimes of the Lord, and thus he stole all the calves and cowherd boys and took them to a different place. Lord Kṛṣṇa, therefore, in spite of searching for the calves, could not find them, and He even lost His boy friends on the bank of the Yamunā where they had been taking their lunch. In the form of a cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa was very little in comparison to Brahmā, but because He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He could immediately understand that all the calves and boys had been stolen by Brahmā. Kṛṣṇa thought, "Brahmā has taken away all the boys and calves. How can I alone return to Vṛndāvana? The mothers will be aggrieved!"

Therefore in order to satisfy the mothers of His friends as well as to convince Brahmā of the supremacy of the Personality of Godhead, He immediately expanded Himself as the cowherd boys and calves. In the *Vedas* it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead expandes Himself in so many living entities by His energy. Therefore it was not very difficult for Him to expand Himself again into so many boys and calves. He expanded Himself to become exactly like the boys, who were of all different features, facial and bodily construction, and who were different in their clothing and ornaments and in their behavior and personal activities. In other words, everyone has different tastes; being individual soul, each person has entirely different activities and behavior. Yet Kṛṣṇa exactly expanded Himself into all the different positions of the individual boys. He also became the calves, who were also of different sizes, colors, activities, etc. This was possible because everything is an expansion of Kṛṣṇa's energy. In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*it is said, *parasya brahmaṇaḥ śakti.* Whatever we actually see in the cosmic manifestation--be it matter or the activities of the living entities--is simply an expansion of the energies of the Lord, as heat and light are the different expansions of fire.

Thus expanding Himself as the boys and calves in their individual capacities, and surrounded by such expansions of Himself, Kṛṣṇa entered the village of Vṛndāvana. The residents had no knowledge of what had happened. After entering the village, Vṛndāvana, all the calves entered their respective cowsheds, and the boys also went to their respective mothers and homes.

The mothers of the boys heard the vibration of their flutes before their entrance, and to receive them, they came out of their homes and embraced them. And out of maternal affection, milk was flowing from their breasts, and they allowed the boys to drink it. However, their offering was not exactly to their boys but to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who had expanded Himself into such boys. This was another chance for all the mothers of Vṛndāvana to feed the Supreme Personality of Godhead with their own milk. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa gave not only Yaśodā the chance of feeding Him, but this time He gave the chance to all the elderly *gopīs.*

All the boys began to deal with their mothers as usual, and the mothers also, on the approach of evening, began to bathe their respective children, decorate them with *tilaka* and ornaments and give them necessary food after the day's labor. The cows also, who were away in the pasturing ground, returned in the evening and began to call their respective calves. The calves immediately came to their mothers, and the mothers began to lick the bodies of the calves. These relations between the cows and the *gopīs* with their calves and boys remained unchanged, although actually the original calves and boys were not there. Actually the cows' affection for their calves and the elderly *gopīs'* affection for the boys causelessly increased. Their affection increased naturally, even though the calves and boys were not their offspring. Although the cows and elderly *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana had greater affection for Kṛṣṇa than for their own offspring, after this incident, their affection for their offspring increased exactly as it did for Kṛṣṇa. For one year continually, Kṛṣṇa Himself expanded as the calves and cowherd boys and was present in the pasturing ground.

As it is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Kṛṣṇa's expansion is situated in everyone's heart as the Supersoul. Similarly, instead of expanding Himself as the Supersoul, He expanded Himself as a portion of calves and cowherd boys for one continuous year.

One day, when Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, was maintaining the calves in the forest, They saw some cows grazing on the top of Govardhana Hill. The cows could see down into the valley where the calves were being taken care of by the boys. Suddenly, on sighting their calves, the cows began to run towards them. They leaped downhill with joined front and rear legs. The cows were so melted with affection for their calves that they did not care about the rough path from the top of Govardhana Hill down to the pasturing ground. They began to approach the calves with their milk bags full of milk, and they raised their tails upwards. When they were coming down the hill, their milk bags were pouring milk on the ground out of intense maternal affection for the calves, although they were not their own calves. These cows had their own calves, and the calves that were grazing beneath Govardhana Hill were larger; they were not expected to drink milk directly from the milk bag but were satisfied with the grass. Yet all the cows came immediately and began to lick their bodies, and the calves also began to suck milk from the milk bags. There appeared to be a great bondage of affection between the cows and calves.

When the cows were running down from the top of Govardhana Hill, the men who were taking care of them tried to stop them. Elderly cows are taken care of by the men, and the calves are taken care of by the boys; and as far as possible, the calves are kept separate from the cows, so that the calves do not drink all the available milk. Therefore the men who were taking care of the cows on the top of Govardhana Hill tried to stop them, but they failed. Baffled by their failure, they were feeling ashamed and angry. They were very unhappy, but when they came down and saw their children taking care of the calves, they all of a sudden became very affectionate toward the children. It was very astonishing. Although the men came down disappointed, baffled and angry, as soon as they saw their own children, their hearts melted with great affection. At once their anger, dissatisfaction and unhappiness disappeared. They began to show paternal love for the children, and with great affection they lifted them in their arms and embraced them. They began to smell their children's heads and enjoy their company with great happiness. After embracing their children, the men again took the cows back to the top of Govardhana Hill. Along the way they began to think of their children, and affectionate tears fell from their eyes.

When Balarāma saw this extraordinary exchange of affection between the cows and their calves and between the fathers and their children--when neither the calves nor the children needed so much care--He began to wonder why this extraordinary thing happened. He was astonished to see all the residents of Vṛndāvana so affectionate for their own children, exactly as they had been for Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, the cows had grown affectionate for their calves--as much as for Kṛṣṇa. Balarāma therefore concluded that the extraordinary show of affection was something mystical, either performed by the demigods or by some powerful man. Otherwise, how could this wonderful change take place? He concluded that this mystical change must have been caused by Kṛṣṇa, whom Balarāma considered His worshipable Personality of Godhead. He thought, "It was arranged by Kṛṣṇa, and even I could not check its mystic power." Thus Balarāma understood that all those boys and calves were only expansions of Kṛṣṇa.

Balarāma inquired from Kṛṣṇa about the actual situation. He said, "My dear Kṛṣṇa, in the beginning I thought that all these cows, calves and cowherd boys were either great sages and saintly persons or demigods, but at the present it appears that they are actually Your expansions. They are all You; You Yourself are playing as the calves and cows and boys. What is the mystery of this situation? Where have those other calves and cows and boys gone? And why are You expanding Yourself as the cows, calves and boys? Will You kindly tell Me what is the cause?" At the request of Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa briefly explained the whole situation: how the calves and boys were stolen by Brahmā and how He was concealing the incident by expanding Himself so people would not know that the original cows, calves, and boys were missing.

While Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were talking, Brahmā returned after a moment's interval (according to the duration of his life). We have information of Lord Brahmā's duration of life from the *Bhagavad-gītā:* 1,000 times the duration of the four ages, or 4,300,000 x 1,000, comprise Brahmā's twelve hours. Similarly, one moment of Brahmā is equal to one year of our solar calculation. After one moment of Brahmā's calculation, Brahmā came back to see the fun caused by his stealing the boys and calves. But he was also afraid that he was playing with fire. Kṛṣṇa was his master, and he had played mischief for fun by taking away His calves and boys. He was really anxious, so he did not stay away very long; he came back after a moment (of his calculation). He saw that all the boys, calves and cows were playing with Kṛṣṇa in the same way as when he had come upon them, although he was confident that he had taken them and made them lie down asleep under the spell of his mystic power. Brahmā began to think, "All the boys, calves and cows were taken away by me, and I know they are still sleeping. How is it that a similar batch of cows, boys and calves are playing with Kṛṣṇa? Is it that they are not influenced by my mystic power? Have they been playing continually for one year with Kṛṣṇa?" Brahmā tried to understand who they were and how they were uninfluenced by his mystic power, but he could not ascertain it. In other words, he himself came under the spell of his own mystic power. The influence of his mystic power appeared like snow in darkness or the glow worm in daytime. During the night's darkness, the glow worm can show some glittering power, and the snow piled up on the top of a hill or on the ground can shine during the daytime. But at night the snow has no silver glitter; nor does the glow worm have any illuminating power during the daytime. Similarly, when the small mystic power exhibited by Brahmā was before the mystic power of Kṛṣṇa, it was just like snow or the glow worm. When a man of small mystic power wants to show potency in the presence of greater mystic power, he diminishes his own influence; he does not increase it. Even a great personality like Brahmā, when he wanted to show his mystic power before Kṛṣṇa, became ludicrous. Brahmā was thus confused about his own mystic power.

In order to convince Brahmā that all those cows, calves and boys were not the original ones, the cows, calves, and boys who were playing with Kṛṣṇa transformed into Viṣṇu forms. Actually, the original ones were sleeping under the spell of Brahmā's mystic power, but the present ones, seen by Brahmā, were all immediate expansions of Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is the expansion of Kṛṣṇa, so the Viṣṇu forms appeared before Brahmā. All the Viṣṇu forms were of bluish color and dressed in yellow garments; all of Them had four hands decorated with club, disc, lotus flower and conchshell. On Their heads were glittering golden jeweled helmets; They were bedecked with pearls and earrings, and garlanded with beautiful flowers. On Their chests was the mark of *śrīvatsa;* Their arms were decorated with armlets and other jewelry. Their necks were smooth just like the conchshell, Their legs were decorated with bells, Their waists decorated with golden bells, and Their fingers decorated with jeweled rings. Brahmā also saw that upon the whole body of Lord Viṣṇu, fresh *tulasī* buds were thrown, beginning from His lotus feet up to the top of the head. Another significant feature of the Viṣṇu forms was that all of Them were looking transcendentally beautiful. Their smiling resembled the moonshine, and Their glancing resembled the early rising of the sun. Just by Their glancing They appeared as the creators and maintainers of the modes of ignorance and passion. Viṣṇu represents the mode of goodness, Brahmā represents the mode of passion, and Lord Śiva represents the mode of ignorance. Therefore as maintainer of everything in the cosmic manifestation, Viṣṇu is also creator and maintainer of Brahmā and Lord Śiva.



After this manifestation of Lord Viṣṇu, Brahmā saw that many other Brahmās and Śivas and demigods and even insignificant living entities down to the ants and very small straws--movable and immovable living entities--were dancing, surrounding Lord Viṣṇu. Their dancing was accompanied by various kinds of music, and all of Them were worshiping Lord Viṣṇu. Brahmā realized that all those Viṣṇu forms were complete, beginning from the *aṇimā* perfection of becoming small like an atom, up to becoming infinite like the cosmic manifestation. All the mystic powers of Brahmā, Śiva, all the demigods and the twenty-four elements of cosmic manifestation were fully represented in the person of Viṣṇu. By the influence of Lord Viṣṇu, all subordinate mystic powers were engaged in His worship. He was being worshiped by time, space, cosmic manifestation, reformation, desire, activity and the three qualities of material nature. Lord Viṣṇu, Brahmā also realized, is the reservoir of all truth, knowledge and bliss. He is the combination of three transcendental features, namely eternity, knowledge, and bliss, and He is the object of worship by the followers of the *Upaniṣads.* Brahmā realized that all the different forms of cows, boys and calves transformed into Viṣṇu forms were not transformed by a mysticism of the type that a *yogī* or a demigod can display by specific powers invested in him. The cows, calves and boys transformed into Viṣṇu *mūrtis,* or Viṣṇu forms were not displays of Viṣṇu *māyā* or Viṣṇu energy, but were Viṣṇu Himself. The respective qualifications of Viṣṇu and Viṣṇu *māyā* are just like fire and heat. In the heat there is the qualification of fire, namely warmth; and yet heat is not fire. The manifestation of the Viṣṇu forms of the boys, cows and calves was not like the heat, but rather the fire--they were all actually Viṣṇu. Factually, the qualification of Viṣṇu is full truth, full knowledge and full bliss. Another example can be given with material objects, which are reflected in many, many forms. For example, the sun is reflected in many waterpots, but the reflections of the sun in many pots are not actually the sun. There is no actual heat and light from the sun in the pot, although it appears as the sun. But the forms which Kṛṣṇa assumed were each and every one full Viṣṇu. *Satyam* means truth, *jnānam,* full knowledge, and *ānanda,* full bliss.

Transcendental forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His person are so great that the impersonal followers of the *Upaniṣads* cannot reach the platform of knowledge to understand them. Particularly, the transcendental forms of the Lord are beyond the reach of the impersonalists who can only understand, through the studies of *Upaniṣads,* that the Absolute Truth is not matter and that the Absolute Truth is not materially restricted by limited potency. Lord Brahmā understood Kṛṣṇa and His expansion into Viṣṇu forms and could understand that, due to the expansion of energy of the Supreme Lord, everything movable and immovable within the cosmic manifestation is existing.

When Brahmā was thus standing baffled in his limited power and conscious of his limited activities within the eleven senses, he could at least realize that he was also a creation of the material energy, just like a puppet. As a puppet has no independent power to dance but dances according to the direction of the puppet master, so the demigods and living entities are all subordinate to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As it is stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,*the only master is Kṛṣṇa, and all others are servants. The whole world is under the waves of the material spell, and beings are floating like straws in water. So their struggle for existence is continuing. But as soon as one becomes conscious that he is the eternal servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, this *māyā* or illusory struggle for existence is immediately stopped.

Lord Brahmā, who has full control over the goddess of learning and who is considered to be the best authority in Vedic knowledge, was thus perplexed, being unable to understand the extraordinary power manifested in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the mundane world, even a personality like Brahmā is unable to understand the potential mystic power of the Supreme Lord. Not only did Brahmā fail to understand, but he was perplexed even to see the display which was being manifested by Kṛṣṇa before him.

Kṛṣṇa took compassion upon Brahmā's inability to see even how He was displaying the force of Viṣṇu in transforming Himself into cows and cowherd boys, and thus, while fully manifesting the Viṣṇu expansion, He suddenly pulled His curtain of *yogamāyā* over the scene. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not visible due to the curtain spread by *yogamāyā.* That which covers the reality is *mahāmāyā,* or the external energy, which does not allow a conditioned soul to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead beyond the cosmic manifestation. But the energy which partially manifests the Supreme Personality of Godhead and partially does not allow one to see, is called *yogamāyā.* Brahmā is not an ordinary conditioned soul. He is far, far superior to all the demigods, and yet he could not comprehend the display of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore Kṛṣṇa willingly stopped manifesting any further potency. The conditioned soul not only becomes bewildered, but he is completely unable to understand. The curtain of *yogamāyā* was drawn so that Brahmā would not become more and more perplexed.

When Brahmā was relieved from his perplexity, he appeared to be awakened from an almost dead state, and he began to open his eyes with great difficulty. Thus he could see the eternal cosmic manifestation with common eyes. He saw all around him the super-excellent view of Vṛndāvana--full with trees--which is the source of life for all living entities. He could appreciate the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana where all the living entities are transcendental to ordinary nature. In the forest of Vṛndāvana, even ferocious animals like tigers and others live peacefully along with the deer and human being. He could understand that, because of the presence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in Vṛndāvana, that place is transcendental to all other places and that there is no lust and greed there.

Brahmā thus found Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, playing the part of a small cowherd boy; he saw that little child with a lump of food in His left hand, searching out His friends, cows and calves, just as He was actually doing one year before, after their disappearance.



Immediately Brahmā descended from his great swan carrier and fell down before the Lord just like a golden stick. The word used among the Vaiṣṇavas for offering respect is *daṇḍavat.*This word means falling down like a stick; one should offer respect to the superior Vaiṣṇava by falling down straight, with his body just like a stick. So Brahmā fell down before the Lord just like a stick to offer respect; and because the complexion of Brahmā is golden, he appeared to be like a golden stick lying down before Lord Kṛṣṇa. All the four helmets on the heads of Brahmā touched the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Brahmā, being very joyful, began to shed tears, and he washed the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa with his tears. Repeatedly he fell and rose as he recalled the wonderful activities of the Lord. After repeating obeisances for a long time, Brahmā stood up and smeared his hands over his eyes. Seeing the Lord before him, he, trembling, began to offer prayers with great respect, humility and attention.

## **Mayapur Adventures**

This month, we have some new characters ☺ This story is about two sisters who move to Mayapur from Brazil.

My name is Nitai Priya and I am 5 years old. I have an older sister. Her name is Vishnu Priya and she is nine. We live in Brazil, in the very Northeast. Yes, and if you were wondering, we don’t live close to the Amazon. The Amazon is far North. This morning I heard Mum talking to Dad in the kitchen. They were talking about moving, moving to Mayapur. My mind started spinning. Moving?!! Why would we move? We were happy! I had friends, we lived on the same street as my Grandma and my best friend. I love my school. My best friends go to the same school. I was happy. Why would mom and dad want to move. I dashed to the kitchen and burst with questions.

“Why are we moving? I don’t want to move!”

“Well honey, we were just about to ask you if you wanted to move.” my mom replied.

 “Yes, don’t worry. Come and see these pictures.” Comforted my dad.

Then my sister entered the kitchen. She seemed to already know I was upset. My parents showed me pictures on the computer- but most of the pictures were of Paris, where we would only stop for one week. We would live in Mayapur for a year. I actually felt hopeful about it though.

2 months later…

Well the big day is tomorrow- we are flying! That makes today the packing day. Well my parents packed most of it but I had to pack my bit as well. I ran to my bedroom and started putting all my toys in a large suitcase. My dad passed the room. “What are you doing?” He asked in surprise. He entered the room. I packed up all my empty shampoo bottles from my treasure chest that had stickers all over it. They were my most prized possession.

“Honey, why don’t you leave them here and take your other stuff instead. You may lose them there and we will come back here.”

I agreed even though I really really wanted to bring them.

The next morning I woke up in the airport. My parents had taken me to the airport while I was asleep. I hate flying. My ears hurt and it was terrible. I was scared. My mum told me that I should sing the Nrisimhadev Prayers whenever I was scared, so I started singing quietly and eventually fell asleep. I woke up when we were landing in Frankfurt in Germany. We got off the plane and entered the airport which was huge and white and reminded me of the milk ocean- it was so big! My dad pushed the cart while I sat on the luggage and it felt like I was sailing across a milky sea. My sister Vishnupriya sat behind me on the luggage. It was really fun.

After a while in the milky ocean airport, we boarded another plane. Now we were flying from Frankfurt to Paris. As we sat down at our seats we noticed our flight was really empty. We sat down on our seats, me and my sister next to each other. There was a lot of turbulence on this flight, and suddenly my sister barfed on top of me! The next moment I was covered in yellow chunky vomit from head to toe! That made me really cranky and my mother took me to the bathroom and started wiping my hair with tissues. The thing was- as soon as we entered the bathroom there was huge turbulence so the plane kept rocking from side to side. I held on to my mom tight. “Namaste narasimhaya… prahladahlada dayine… “

After the plane started flying smooth again and I got most of the vomit off, we went back to ours seats and soon landed.

Paris, Paris, Paris! We’ve all heard of it at some point in our lives. I’m sure you’ve heard of it. Well I’d never heard of it- I’m only five. The airport was endless and huge like Frankfurt- we walked and walked and walked but never found the exit. I got crankier and tired-er but eventually we found it and went to the temple. Radha Paris-Ishvara are dreamy and they have sweet smiles. I had never seen something more beautiful than Them.

The next day we went to the museum to see Mona Lisa. When we got close to the painting, many people were crowded around it and she wasn’t even beautiful. The deities are more beautiful.

Mum and dad told me that our flight got cancelled so we would have to stay in Mumbai for one night. At least the airline gave us a hotel.

And then we arrived in Kolkata. After such a long journey with so many airports, finally we were in India! We got to the hotel and when we reached, they gave me and my sister teddy bears. They were so cute! After a while we went to the Juhu temple, and everything felt right. I just stared at the gorgeous forms of the deities- they even had Sita Ram Laxman Hanuman. The next day we got on our last airplane.

I took a deep breath. By now I am sure you know where we are. Yes, we are in Mayapur! The air was fresh and everything was so green. I loved it and never wanted to leave. I fell in love on the first day and the truth is, I didn’t leave after a year like my parents told me. I am still here, falling in love with Mayapur more and more. ☺

## **Songs for Week 1**

This song is great for the Brahma Vimohan Lila-

Check the email for the original song attachment.

Do I see you coming home, coming home to me?

Do I see you coming home, coming home to me?

From your days, so fun and free.

From your days, so fun and free.

Do I hear your small flute sound, fall upon my ears.

Do I hear your small flute sound, fall upon my ears.

It sounds so far, yet so near.

It sounds so far, yet so near.

Do I see a dust cloud rise from your lotus feet?

Do I see a dust cloud rise from your lotus feet?

And cows and the calves on the street.

And cows and the calves on the street.

Dooo, doo, doo, dooo.

Dooo, doo, doo, dooo.

La, la, la, la, la.

La, la, la, la, la.

Do I hear you coming home, tinkling of your bells

Do I hear you coming home, tinkling of your bells

They sound so sweet, I can tell.

They sound so sweet, I can tell.

Do I hear the cowherd boys singing all the while?

Do I hear the cowherd boys singing all the while?

Of your dance, your deeds, your smile.

Of your dance, your deeds, your smile.

Do I see you weary- weave your way?

Do I see you weary- weave your way?

Time for sleep not far away.

Time for sleep not far away.

Dooo, doo, doo, dooo.

Dooo, doo, doo, dooo.

## **Bhajans and Shlokas for Parents**

This is from [www.vedabase.com-](http://www.vedabase.com-) I thought it was beautiful for parents and older siblings to meditate on Balaram on His birthday.

1. SB 10.65.28-29
2. *rāma rāma mahā-bāho* *na jāne tava vikramam
yasyaikāṁśena vidhṛtā* *jagatī jagataḥ pate*
3. Synonyms:
4. [*rāma*](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=rama)*[rāma](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=rama)* — O Rāma, Rāma; *[mahā](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=maha)-*[*bāho*](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=baho) — O mighty-armed one; *[na](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=na) [jāne](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=jane)* — I do not appreciate; *[tava](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=tava)* — Your; *[vikramam](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=vikramam)* — prowess; *[yasya](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=yasya)* — whose; *[eka](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=eka)* — one; *[aṁśena](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=amsena)* — by a portion; *[vidhṛtā](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=vidhrta)* — is sustained; *[jagatī](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=jagati)* — the earth; *[jagataḥ](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=jagatah)* — of the universe; [*pate*](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=pate) — O master.
5. Translation:
6. **[Goddess Yamunā said:] Rāma, Rāma, O mighty-armed one! I know nothing of Your prowess. With a single portion of Yourself You hold up the earth, O Lord of the universe.**

*paraṁ bhāvaṁ bhagav*

*]pppato
 bhagavan mām ajānatīm
moktum arhasi viśvātman
 prapannāṁ bhakta-vatsala*

Synonyms:

[*param*](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=param) — supreme; *[bhāvam](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=bhavam)* — the status; *[bhagavataḥ](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=bhagavatah)* — of the Personality of Godhead; *[bhagavan](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=bhagavan)* — O Supreme Lord; *[mām](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=mam)* — me; *[ajānatīm](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=ajanatim)* — not knowing; *[moktum](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=moktum) [arhasi](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=arhasi)* — please release; *[viśva](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=visva)* — of the universe; *[ātman](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=atman)* — O soul; *[prapannām](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=prapannam)* — surrendered; *[bhakta](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=bhakta)* — to Your devotees; *[vatsala](http://vedabase.com/en/synonyms-index?original=vatsala)* — O You who are compassionate.

Translation:

**My Lord, please release me. O soul of the universe, I didn’t understand Your position as the Supreme Godhead, but now I have surrendered unto You, and You are always kind to Your devotees.**

## **This Week’s Activity**

Of course this activity will be a little bit after the fact- but if you feel inspired you can encourage your little girl (or boy) to make their own Rakhi for a brother or for Balaram. If your little one is 4 ½ to 5, this skill should be good for them, but don’t push it if your little one is not interested. You can just mark your calendar to come back to this later.

How to crochet a chain with your fingers-

1. Make a slip knot.
2. With your dominant hand, insert your thumb and pointer through the loop.

You can make your fingers like the beak of a little bird and cheep away, waiting for the mommy bird to give it a worm.

1. With your non-dominant hand, hand the little bird beak the yarn .
2. The little bird-beak fingers of the dominant hand catch the worm and pull it through. This will make a long long loop. You will need to pull the yarn back out until the loop is small enough to be workable again. If it’s not too gross, you can explain that the worm gave the baby bird a tummy ache so the mommy is taking it out again.
3. Continue steps 2-4 till you have something that looks like a braid on one side and a chain on the other. Keep going till the chain is long enough to tie around a brother’s wrist.

## **This Week’s Recipe**

**White Cake**

If you make this recipe with white flour and white sugar, it will turn out pretty white like Balaram. However this cake is pretty good with fifty fifty white and whole wheat and also with brown sugar instead of white for a healthier option.

**Mom tip:** to increase the production of insulin and **decrease the sugar high in your kids,** add **1 tsp of cinnamon to any dessert recipe.** Lots of them already have it of course.

Ok, honestly this is not a very rich cake. But the texture is great and if it has a rich creamy frosting it makes up the difference. It would be excellent for a fresh fruit and cream kind of compilation. I have a my favorite frosting recipe at the end. Make sure you make the frosting way in advance because you have to let it cool.

 If I want to make a richer cake, I make it with a cup of coconut oil and a cup of yogurt instead of 2 cups yogurt.

**Yogurt Cake**

Juice of 6 Lemons- instead of using lemon juice I sometimes use more yogurt to amount the same liquid

2 Cups Sugar

2 Cups Yogurt I have also made this cake using off, bad, curdled milk with excellent results. I prefer actually to use 1 cup yogurt and 1 cup coconut oil for a cake that is more moist but also more fattening.

2 Teaspoons Vanilla

3 Cups White Flour

2 Teaspoons Baking Soda

Whisk together Lemon Juice, Vanilla, Yogurt and sugar.

Sift flour and soda together

Stir flour into liquids

Poar into two greased pans.

If you have an oven, Bake on high 10 minutes. Then reduce and bake twenty minutes more. Remove and let it cool for ten minutes before taking it out of the pan.

**Creamy buttery frosting** that is to die for:

This really is a great recipe to do with your kids as there is a lot of stirring and whisking. You do need an eggbeater for this one though.

Take **1 Cup of butter** out of the fridge to let it get to room temp. This is two sticks if you are in the US.

Dissolve **1 cup of sugar** into **1 cup of milk** on medium heat.

In a bowl, mix **4 tablespoons white flour**, **3 tablespoons cornstarch**, **half a cup milk** and **1 tsp vanilla essence**.

When the milk syrup is boiling, whisk it as you pour in the liquid. Keep whisking for about a minute till the whole thing becomes a bubbly mass.

Take it off the heat and let it cool to room temp. Then, get your eggbeater out and beat the butter together with the pudding-like stuff you made on the stove. Your kids will love to do this part!

Your icing is ready to ice a cake-but make sure the cake is not hot or it will melt the icing.

Watch even the adults lick the icing off of the cake.