

# STORY TELLING \_ ENGLISH

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# Class: LKG, UKG

## **STORY : GOVINDJI TEMPLE IN VRINDAVAN**

This is the story of Govind Dev ji temple of Vrindavan.

Rupa Goswami was a great Vaishnava acharya. One day when he was doing the Govardhan Parikrama, he became very sad. He wanted to have Lord Krishna's darshan. He sat under a tree near river Yamuna and began to weep.

At that time a beautiful little boy appeared and asked him, "Dear acharya, why are you crying?"

Rupa Goswami saw the beauty of the boy and told Him that he wanted to have darshan of Lord Krishna.

The young boy took him to a small hill and said, "Everyday one cow comes here and lets its milk flow here. Don't you want to see whom the cow gives the milk to?"

The boy disappeared from there. Rupa Goswami called the Vrajavasis and carefully dug that place. There under the ground was a beautiful deity of Lord Govind Dev ji.

Everybody was so excited to see the Lord. They bathed the Lord with great ceremony and worshipped Him with love and devotion.

## **STORY: KRISHNA AND THE FRUIT VENDOR.**

One day when Krishna was playing in the house, he saw that the fruit vendor had come to sell fruits. Krishna immediately stopped playing and rushed towards the door to buy fruits. Just then he remembered that His mother Yashoda, always gave some grains to the fruit vendor and buys the fruits in exchange of the grains. So Krishna went to the big container and took a handful of grains and ran towards the door. When the fruit vendor saw Krishna, he was

very captivated and wonderstruck by Krishna's beauty. He noticed that the grains kept dropping from Krishna's hand. When Krishna reached the fruit vendor He only had a few grains left in His hand but because the fruit vendor was so captivated by Krishna's beauty, he let Krishna have all of the fruits and happily accepted the little grains that Krishna gave. Krishna was happy and went to His home with all the fruits in his hands. Suddenly a miracle took place! Krishna filled the empty fruit basket with precious gold jewels. The fruit vendor was astonished and understood that Lord Krishna has blessed him. If a devotee of Krishna gives anything with love and devotion to Krishna, Krishna will bless him a lot in return.

### **STORY : EATING MANGOES SECRETLY**

Once in the holy place of Chitrakoot, there was a gurukul where many boys studied. One day the teacher asked the boys to go and pick a mango from the tree. Everybody did so, very enthusiastically. The teacher then instructed them, "Now all of you should go to a place where nobody can see you. Eat your mango and then come back. Please make sure that nobody sees you while you are eating the mango." "Yes, Sir," said the children happily and ran off to find a secret place.

One boy hid under the table, while others hid under a bush. Some boys hid within open boxes. Two boys found a suitable spot behind a wall, while another found a place inside a dustbin. In this way, all of them ate their mangoes in secret places and went back to the teacher. However, one student brought the mango back with him.

On seeing this, the rest of the students started teasing him. Some commented, "Oh, you couldn't find a single place to hide and eat the mango?" One student stated, "Poor kid, he is probably not well!". Another said, "Maybe he doesn't like mangoes!". While this was going on, the guru called the student over and asked, "What happened? Why did you not eat the mango?". The student then replied, "Dear Gurudev! You taught us that God is everywhere. He is also seated within our heart. Therefore, I could not find any place where He is not watching me. I am sorry but I was unable to do as you said."

The teacher was very pleased to hear the boy's answer. He embraced the boy and said, "My dear child, whatever I have taught you, you have understood well. I am so proud of you. All of us should always remember that God is within us

and watching us all the time. If we can understand this, then we will never be tempted to do wrong things in life.”

All the students sincerely listened to the guru’s lesson and took inspiration to live a God conscious life. They apologized to the student for making fun of him and admired his understanding.

# Class: I, II, III

## STORY : THE MYSTERIOUS SEED

There once lived a great king. He ruled his kingdom fairly and wisely and the people in his land were very happy. But the wise king was growing old and he began to worry about choosing a good responsible successor.

The king then summoned all the youths of his kingdom. He gave each a seed and asked them to plant them and return with healthy plants grown from these seeds the following year. Many people came and took away seeds

Among them was a young boy, Madhav, who loved gardening. He was sure his plant would grow to be the healthiest with many beautiful flowers. He sowed the seed and looked after it day and night but, to his dismay, the seed did not grow into a plant.

After one year, all the young people gathered outside the palace hoping to show their plants and to become the next king. All of them had brought plants with the most beautiful flowers blossoming on them, except Madhav! He was very embarrassed because his pot did not even have a plant, let alone flowers! The king observed everyone and admired the plants till he came to Madhav and asked him why he did not have a plant. Madhav sadly told him that although he had looked after the seed as best as he could, it had not grown at all.

To everyone’s amazement, the king hugged Madhav and declared him to be the next king for his honesty and hard work. Everyone was surprised at the king’s decision. The king then revealed that all the seeds he had given away had been boiled, so that they absolutely could not grow into plants. He wanted to test who

was the most honest among them. So for his honesty , Madhav was chosen as the next king.

## **STORY : THE OLD WOMAN AND HER HALF POMEGRANATE**

Lord Buddha is one of the Dashavataras or ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

Once in a place called Rajagriha, Lord Buddha was accepting collections of charity from people. He sat under a tree and began receiving the gifts.

King Bimbisara came and gave him gifts of lands, houses and valuable properties.

Then came Prince Ajata Shatru who also gave many rich and valuable gifts.

Many wealthy merchants brought cash donations, food grains etc. for charity

Buddha accepted all their gifts by extending His right hand

Then came a very old woman. She said to Lord Buddha – “Lord I heard that you are collecting money and gifts for charity. I am a poor old woman and have nothing big or valuable. I was eating this pomegranate and had eaten it half when I heard the news. I have nothing else to give. Please, Lord accept this”

At once Lord Buddha came down Himself and accepted the gift with both hands, in deep gratitude

King Bimbisara, Prince Ajata Shatru and all those present were very surprised seeing this.

The King said to Lord Buddha – “O Lord, why did you receive her half pomegranate with both hands but accepted our gifts with only your right hand?”

Lord Buddha replied – “O King, All of you gave a part of what you have but this old woman gave all that she had without keeping anything for herself”.

## **STORY: DASIYA BAURI'S COCONUT**

In Puri, there is a beautiful temple of Lord Jagannath ,Lord Baladeva and Their sister Subhadra. Many years ago there lived a simple man named Dasiya Bauri. Though he was poor he visited the temple everyday to worship Lord Jagannath.

One day on the way to the Jagannath temple, Dasiya Bauri met a coconut seller. The seller had a huge bag of heavy coconuts. He was struggling to carry the huge bag. Dasiya showed some kindness and so helped the man by lifting one end of the bag. In this way they carried the huge bag all the way to the market. The coconut seller was very happy with Dasiya Bauri and wanted to reward him . Dasiya Bauri said - "If you want to give me something then please give me a coconut. I will offer it to Lord Jagannath". So the coconut seller gave him a large green coconut filled with sweet water.

He reached the temple and directly went to the head priest."Today I have brought a coconut for my Lord Jagannath. Please can you offer to Him?"

The proud priest mocked at Dasiya. He said "Lord Jagannath only accepts best dishes cooked with best ingredients. Why will he accept your coconut?"

Dasiya Bauri was disappointed. He stood outside the temple and pleaded to Lord Jagannath - "O Lord, You are the master of this universe. Everything already belongs to you. I am a poor man who can offer You only this coconut. If you wish, then please accept this coconut"

Then a miracle occurred! Two long bluish hands extended from inside the temple. The Hands accepted the coconut and blessed Dasiya Bauri.

Being pleased with Dasiya's devotion, Lord Jagannath personally accepted his devotee's loving gift with His own Hands.

# Class: IV, V, VI

## **STORY : A DEVOTEE ATTRACTS LORD SHIVA BY READING SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM**

Once there lived an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna by name Poonthaanam. He worshipped Lord Krishna with all his heart and soul.

People loved him for his beautiful discourses from Srimad Bhagavatam.

In Kerala there is a temple of Lord Shiva which is kept open only for a few days during a year. For the rest of the year it is kept closed.

Once Poonthaanam reached this temple and had a bath in the holy river. He worshiped the merciful Lord Siva, felt happy and stayed there for few days.

He recited Srimad Bhagavatam everyday in front of the deity and several hundreds of people listened to his sweet discourse on the wonderful pastime in the 10th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam named “Lord Krishna Teases Queen Rukmini.”

In that pastime, Lord Krishna decides to play a prank on His beloved wife Queen Rukmini. He playfully asks Her why She chose to marry the Him when She had better choices like King Sisupala, Salva, Jarasandha, etc. Hearing this Queen Rukmini faints and Lord consoles Her. This is the gist of the chapter.

Poonthaanam finished reading this part of the chapter and kept the bookmark at the end of the chapter so that he can continue reciting from the next chapter.

Next day, to his surprise, he found the bookmark at the beginning of the same chapter.

So Poonthaanam read the same part for the second time. Each day the bookmark would be found at the beginning of the chapter and each day Poonthanam would narrate the pastime of Lord Krishna and Rukmini. This was repeated for the rest of the days.

It was the last day to close the temple for the year. Poonthanam finished the discourse and was returning from the temple with the other devotees. Suddenly he realized that he left Srimad Bhagavatam book in the temple itself. He hurried back; crossed the river and reached the entrance to the temple, which was closed. He was all alone. He could hear some voices. Somebody was reciting Srimad Bhagavatam inside the temple. It was the same part of the chapter that Poonthanam had recited for all these days. Poonthanam decided to peep inside to see who was it. As he looked through the keyhole he saw that it was none other than Lord Siva himself reading from Poonthanam's Srimad Bhagavatam book! Mother Parvati and his other Bhoothaganas were listening. Their eyes were filled with tears out of devotion. Poonthanam stood there motionless and heard the whole recitation. At the end, Lord Siva asked Parvati devi, "Did you like the Bhagavatam recitation"? Parvathi replied, "Yes, it was nice, but was not as good as Poonthanam's".

Lord Siva replied, "Yes. That is true. I also like to hear Bhagavatam from Poonthanam. That is why I placed the bookmark again and again at the beginning of the same topic every day." Hearing this Poonthanam who stood outside was shaken up and uttered the holy name of Krishna loudly. When he watched again, Lord Siva and Mother Parvati had disappeared from his sight!

## **STORY : GRATEFUL HEART - HAPPY HEART**

Long long ago, there was a kingdom ruled by a strong and generous ruler called King Danveer. He had a wise minister by the name of Buddhimanta who was patient and devoted to God. King Danveer was a good King. Many citizens came to him to have their problems solved. He gave thousands of cows to devotees in charity and also provided them with pasturing grounds. On seeing his charitable nature, people started calling him Danveer, the generous one.

In the daily activities of the court, King Danveer thought that he was the one making everything happen. He forgot that it was the Lord who had given him everything. The minister on the other hand, saw God as the controller of everything. He knew that everything that occurred only happened because God wanted it to take place according to His will. In spite of these differences, the king appreciated the minister and they were great friends. Once in a while when the King went for hunting, the minister would accompany him.

One time while they were out for hunting, the king met with an accident and lost one finger from his hand. The minister bandaged the king's hands and tried to pacify him. My dear King Danveer he said, "Take this to be the Lord's will. Whatever happens by the will of the Lord happens only for good. So don't worry about your lost finger. Something good is surely going to come out of this." The King was already in pain from the wound and therefore he could not control his anger. He snapped at Buddhimanta. : Be quiet, you rude man!" Buddhimanta tried to speak of the Lord's mercy. The king shouted, "Guards! Capture him and lock him in the jail."

Danveer was determined to continue his hunting plan for the day and he took his horses deeper into the forest. Meanwhile in the heart of the jungle, a gang of deadly dacoits were staying. They wanted to kill a man and offer him as a sacrifice to their goddess. They captured Danveer, tied him up with thick ropes and dragged him to the place of sacrifice.

At the horrible moment when the sword was about to cut the neck of King Danveer, one of the dacoits noticed something unusual about the king, Suddenly, the leader shouted loudly, "Hey! This man is not complete. He has one finger missing, He can't be sacrificed. We cannot offer an incomplete human to our goddess. She will not be pleased with us."

Disappointed the dacoits let Danveer go.

The King immediately left for his kingdom all the while remembering his minister's wise words. Straight away he headed to the jail and released Buddhimanta. He asked his minister to forgive him. "Buddhimanta, I cannot forget your wise words. You were absolutely right. But tell me something. If as you say, everything happens due to the mercy of the Lord, then why did the Lord allow you to be put in the jail!"

My dear King, it is the mercy of the Lord working again. Don't you see? If you hadn't put me in prison, I would have been sacrificed instead of you!" At that moment King Danveer was firmly convinced and laughed aloud gladly agreeing that it was certainly the mercy of the Lord.

## **STORY : THE LORD WHO STOLE THE KHEER**

The famous temple of Sri Kheer Chor Gopinath is situated in a small village named Remuna in Orissa. The Krishna Deity here stole Kheer, for His beloved devotee - Sri Madhavendra Puri.

Over 500 years ago, Madhavendra Puri discovered a Deity of Gopala now known as Srinathji, on top of the Govardhana Hill in Vrindavan. Once Gopal Deity appeared in a dream to Madhavendra Puri and asked him to bring sandalwood pulp and camphor from Jagannatha Puri and apply it on the body of the Deity. Madhavendra Puri started his journey and reached Remuna on his way to Puri. He visited the temple of Gopinatha and felt blissful to have darshan of the Lord. He then asked the temple priest about the food that they offer everyday to the Deity. The priest told him about the special kheer, as tasty as nectar, which they prepare for the offering.

The kheer was brought before the Deity to be offered to the Lord. At that very moment, Madhavendra Puri desired to taste it thinking that he would also make the same kheer for his beloved Lord Gopala in Vrindavan. Immediately he realized his offence that he had desired to taste the food, before it was offered to the Lord. Madhavendra Puri was ashamed for his selfish thought. He wanted to

repent for his offence. He left the temple and went to a far off place for chanting the holy names of the Lord.

That night, Lord Gopinatha Himself appeared in the dream of the temple priest. The Lord asked him to go to Madhavendra Puri and give him the pot of kheer which He had hidden in the temple. The priest got up, and was very astonished about what the Lord said to him in his dream. He quickly left his house and opened the temple. Wonder of wonders!!! he found a pot of kheer hidden there and went to Madhavendra Puri with the pot.

On hearing the whole dream from the priest, Madhavendra Puri became overwhelmed with joy. The Lord loves His true devotees very much.

## **Class : VII, VIII, IX**

### **STORY : APPEARANCE OF LORD JAGANNATHA**

King Indradyumna was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and was very eager to see the Lord face to face. One time, by the Lord's arrangement, a devotee of the Lord arrived in the court of King Indradyumna, and in the course of discussion he began to talk about an incarnation of Lord Vishnu named Nila-madhava. After hearing this, King Indradyumna desired to worship Lord Nila-madhava and so sent some brahmanas in different directions to search for and inquire about the deity of Lord Nila-madhava.

Vidyapati, one of the brahmanas, after wandering in many places, finally came to a district inhabited by Sabara community. There he took shelter in the house of Vishwavasus. When he arrived, the master of the house was not there, but his young daughter, Lalita, was there alone. In a short time, the master of the house returned and instructed his daughter to render all services for

the brahmana guest. For some time Vidyapati stayed there, and later, by the special request of the Sabara, he married his daughter.

Vidyapati noticed that every night the Sabara would go out, and on the next day by noon, he would return. Vidyapati inquired from his wife about the reason for this, and she informed him that her father would go out to a secret place to worship Sri Nila-madhava. Vidyapati immediately became eager to see Sri Nila-madhava, and finally one day, by the repeated request of his daughter, the Sabara Vishwvasu bound the eyes of Vidyapati and took him to see Sri Nila-madhava.

As they were leaving, Vidyapati bound some mustard seeds in the border of his cloth, and so while passing along the path, he secretly kept putting the seeds along the way. When they reached the deity of Sri Nila-Madhava, Vidyapati, on seeing the great beauty of the Deity of Sri NilaMadhava, began to dance in joy and offered prayers.

Vidyapati then immediately went to King Indradyumna and gave him the good news. From the mustard seeds thrown along the path by Vidyapati, small plants had grown. So by following these plants the King was able to trace the path to Sri Nila-madhava. When they reached the spot, however, the Deity had disappeared! They could not find him.

After some time, the king became disappointed at so much delay in seeing Sri Nila-madhava. Deciding that his life was useless, he lay down on a bed of kusha grass, being determined to give up his life by fasting. At that time Lord Jagannatha spoke to him in a dream as follows: “My dear King, don’t be anxious. I shall come floating in from the sea in My wooden form as Daru-Brahman. The king and his men soon saw on the shore a huge piece of wood marked with a conch, disc, club and lotus.

Although he engaged many men and elephants to move that Daru-brahman, they were not able to do so. But that night, in a dream Lord Jagannatha again spoke to the King, saying, “Bring My previous servant Vishwvasu, who used to serve Me as Nila-madhava, and place a golden chariot in front of Daru-brahman!”

To carve the Deity of Lord Jagannatha from the Daru-brahman, Vishwakarma, the architect of the demigods, was given the task. He promised that if he were allowed to work behind closed doors for twenty-one days, the Deity would be carved. Immediately preparations were made.

Vishwakarma, then took Daru-brahman into the temple and closed the doors, after making the King promise that, under no circumstances, the king or anyone was to open the doors before twenty-one days were completed. If that happened, then Vishwakarma would have to leave from there immediately.

After fourteen days had passed, however, the King was unable to hear the sounds of the sculptor's tools. He became very anxious. Although his minister again and again forbade him, the King, on the advice of his queen, opened the door of the temple by force with his own hand.

Inside, the King did not find the sculptor, but instead he saw that the Daru-brahman was manifested in three forms, as Lord Jagannatha, Subhadra and Balarama.

Upon closer look, he saw that Their fingers and toes were unfinished. Then the King, thinking himself a great offender, decided to end his life.

Lord Jagannatha appeared to the King in his dreams. The Lord said, "I have no material hands and feet, but with My transcendental senses I accept all the items offered in service, by My devotees. I am eternally situated here in Nilacala in the form of Lord Jagannatha with Lord Baladeva and Subhadra.

## **STORY : THE KING AND HIS FOUR WIVES**

Once upon a time there was a rich King who had four wives. He loved the fourth wife the most and adorned her with best clothes and treated her to the finest of delicacies. He took care of her and gave her nothing but the best. He also loved the third wife very much. He was very proud of her and always wanted to show off her to his friends.

He loved his second wife too. She was always kind, considerate, and patient with him. Whenever the King faced some problems, he always turned to his second wife and she would always help him out to get through the difficult times.

Now, the King's first wife was a very loyal partner and had made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the King did not love his first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

One day, the King fell severely ill, and he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his luxurious life and thought, "Now I have four wives with me. But, when I will die, I'll be all alone. How lonely I'll be!" Thus, he asked the fourth wife, "I loved you the most, endowed you with the finest clothing, and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No way!" replied the fourth wife and she walked away without another word. Her answer cut like a sharp knife right into the King's heart.

The sad King then asked the third wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

"No!" replied the third wife. "Life is so good over here! I want to live more and enjoy more!" The King's heart sank and turned cold.

He then asked his second wife, "I always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company!" "I'm sorry, I can't help you this time!" replied the second wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." Her answer came like a bolt of thunder and the King was devastated.

Then a voice called out: I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The King looked up and there was his first wife. Greatly ashamed of how he has treated his first wife, the King said, "I should have taken much better care of you when I had the chance!"

In truth, we all are living like this king having four wives in our lives. Can you think of them?

Our fourth wife is our body, No matter how much time and effort we spend in making us look good, it will leave us when we die.

Our third wife is our possessions, status, and wealth. When we die, it will all go to others. Our second wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been there for us when we're alive, the furthest they can stay by us is upto the grave. And our first wife is, in fact, the Supersoul or the Lord of our heart, often neglected in pursuit of material wealth and sensual pleasure.

### **STORY : A HUNTER BECOMES A DEVOTEE**

Once upon a time, the great sage Narada Muni was on his way through a forest to bathe at the confluence of the three sacred rivers, the Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati.. As he was walking, he came across a deer lying on the path. He saw that the animal was pierced by an arrow, had broken legs, and was left there in injured state. A few steps ahead, Narada saw a boar, which also had broken limbs and was suffering from a lot of pain. When he went further, he saw a rabbit suffering a similar fate. The sage was aggrieved to see these animals in acute distress. As Narada Muni advanced further, he caught sight of a hunter behind a tree, equipped with a bow and arrows, and poised to kill. The hunter appeared fierce, with reddish eyes. As Narada left the forest path, making his way towards the hunter, all the birds and animals immediately saw him and fled. Seeing the animals flee, the hunter was upset and disappointed with Sage Narada. But he stopped himself from uttering any abuse. Composing himself, he asked, "Oh great saintly person! Why have you left the path and come towards me? Simply by seeing you, all the animals I was hunting have fled". Narada Muni replied, "I have come to you with a doubt in my mind. I was wondering whether the boar and other half killed animals belong to you". The hunter replied, "Yes, I have left them in that condition".

Narada Muni asked him why he wasn't completely killing the animals. The hunter replied, "My name is Mrigari, enemy of the animals. My father taught me

to kill them in that way. When I see half-killed animals suffer, I feel great pleasure”. Narada Muni then told the hunter that he had one thing to request from him. The hunter, thinking that the sage wanted one of the animals, said, “I have many skins if you would like them. I shall give you the pelt of deer or tiger.” Narada replied, “I do not want any skins from you. I just want you to promise me one thing. Please from this day, do not leave the animals half dead, but instead kill them completely”. The hunter looked perplexed, and inquired, “But what is wrong with the animals lying there half dead?”

Narada replied, “If you leave the animals half dead, you are purposefully giving them pain. Therefore, you will also suffer that same agony in the future. To kill animals is in itself a great sin, but to give them more pain purposefully is an even greater sin”. Narada continued, “In your forthcoming lives, all the animals that you have killed will kill you, one after another.”

As Narada began telling him about the sins of animal killing and meat eating, Mrgari heard everything and became speechless with shock. As Narada continued explaining , Mrgari became more and more aware of the sinful nature of his activities, and was afraid for the reactions that he would have to face. He said, “I have been taught this profession right from my very childhood. What can I now do to become free from the sins I have committed? Please help me, O great sage”. Narada Muni took pity on the poor hunter and assured him that he would help him reduce his burdens of sinful activities if he sincerely followed his instructions. Mrgari agreed to Narada’s words.

“First of all break your bow and then I shall tell you what to do”, instructed Narada.

“If I break my bow, how I will I maintain myself?”, Mrgari asked.

Narada assured him, “Don’t worry, The Supreme Lord Krishna who maintains all the living beings of this entire creation will surely take care of you too”.

Convinced by Narada’ words, Mrgari immediately snapped his bow in two, and cast it aside. He fell down at the sage’s feet, as a sign of surrender. Narada then advised the hunter to return home and distribute whatever possessions he had, to

brahmanas. He told him to subsequently leave home with his wife, taking only some cloth to wear.

“Leave home and go to the river. There you should construct a small cottage. In front of the cottage you should grow a Tulasi plant on a raised platform. After planting the Tulasi tree before your house, you should daily circumambulate the plant, and serve her by offering her water and other auspicious items such as incense and flowers. You should continuously chant the Hare Krishna mantra. Every day, sufficient food will be arranged for both you and your good wife. You can take as much food as you want”.

After instructing Mrigari, Narada brought the three half-killed animals back to life. Mrigari was struck with wonder. Narada then left to complete his pilgrimage. Mrigari returned home and began to sincerely follow the sage’s instructions.

The news of a hunter becoming a saint soon spread all over the village, and even beyond. People began to visit to take darshan (audience) of the hunter-turned-saint. As customary, they would bring with them a gift, often food items. As a result, Mrigari and his wife received enough food to feed ten or twenty people. Nonetheless, they were careful not to overeat, and to only accept as much as they needed.

After many months, one day, while speaking to his friend, Parvata Muni, Narada requested him to come with him to see the hunter. Parvata Muni happily accepted the invitation. When they arrived, Mrigari spotted the two sages from a distance. With great joy and eagerness, he began to run toward them, but hesitated to fall down and offer obeisances because ants were running around his guru’s feet. He removed his shawl and carefully whisked them away with a cloth. Only after ensuring that the ground was clear, did he fall down flat to offer his respects.

Narada was extremely pleased to see the transformation in Mrigari. Mrigari, who hunted down animals and took pleasure in their pain was completely changed so much that now he was careful about not wanting to hurt even the little ants!

Narada Muni blessed him saying, “My dear hunter, such behaviour is not astonishing. A person in God’s service is automatically non-violent. He is the best of gentlemen”.

# **Class : X, XI, XII**

## **STORY : MADHU AND LORD ALARNATH**

Lord Alarnath is a form of Lord Vishnu and His temple is situated in Orissa.

Once upon a time there lived a brahmana whose name was Ketana. He and his wife, lived a simple life. They had a little boy whose name was Madhu.

Ketana worshipped Lord Alarnath every day. He offered food to the Lord first, before he and his family ate it.

Ketana’s wife was a good cook. Each time she cooked, the house filled with delicious smells. Ketana’s son, Madhu was an obedient son. He played quietly in the house. He respected his parents’ words.

One day, Ketana had to go out to beg for food items, as brahmanas used to do in the olden days. So he called his son to him, ‘Madhu, come here! I have a task for you’

‘Yes, father. What is it?’ Madhu asked.

‘Madhu, I have to go to the nearby town for few days. So from today, you have to offer food to Lord Alarnath just like we do every day. After He blesses the food, you can eat,’ said Ketana. Saying so, Ketana went away.

Next day, Madhu carefully brought the bowls of food that his mother had prepared. He placed Tulsi leaf on each dish and placed it in front of Lord Alarnath’s deity.

‘Dear Lord, please accept this food. I am just a little boy. I am not sure how to offer it to you properly. Please eat,’ he said. Madhu then went out to play with his friends.

When he came back, Madhu went back to Lord Alarnath's deity. He saw that the bowls of food were left untouched.

'Dear Lord, You have not accepted our food. I am sorry, if I did not offer it properly. My father will not be happy with me. Please eat, my dear Lord,' said Madhu to Lord Alarnath.

After some time, when Madhu returned, he saw that still the food remained untouched. Now his eyes filled with unhappy tears.

'My dear Lord, you have still not accepted our food. I don't know to tell those big big mantras like my father does.. I beg you Lord, please eat!' said Madhu and ran outside in tears.

He sat outside his house and wiped his tears. When he came inside, he noticed that the bowls were empty!! He was overjoyed and had a big smile on His face. However, his mother was shocked to see the empty bowls.

'Where is the prasadam, Madhu?' his mother asked.

'Lord Alarnath ate everything, Ma,' he replied.

The same thing happened the next day and the day after that too. Madhu's family had no food to eat for three days!

Every time Madhu offered a meal to Lord Alarnath, He ate everything!

When Ketana returned, his wife told him what had happened. Ketana did not believe Madhu's words and thought that Madhu had distributed prasadam to his friends. Ketana decided to find out the truth for himself.

'Madhu, what have you been doing with the Lord's prasadam? Tell me the truth,' he asked Madhu angrily.

'Father, Lord Alarnath ate everything' .Madhu replied innocently. "I offered it to him just like you taught me"

'What ??? Lord Alarnath cannot eat, Madhu! He is a stone deity,' said Ketana.

'But father, He is the one who ate everything. I am telling you the truth', replied Madhu.

Ketana decided to see for Himself. To check if his son was telling the truth, Ketana hid behind a pillar near the deity and watched Madhu.

As usual, Madhu offered bowls of food to Lord Alarnath and prayed to the Lord to accept the food.

After Madhu left, Ketana saw Lord Alarnath reach down and pick up a bowl of hot sweetened rice.....

Completely astonished, Ketana jumped from behind the pillar and grabbed the Lord's arm. Due to this sudden movement, the hot sweetened rice spilled on Lord Alarnath's fingers.

'Stop! What are you doing? How can a stone deity eat? If you eat everything we offer, we will have no food!' Ketana screamed.

The Lord smiled and answered - 'Ketana, your son Madhu is telling the truth. He has faith in Me and so offers food with love and devotion. But though you worship Me every day, you do not believe that I can eat the offered food. I will never accept offerings from a faithless person like you. But I accept the offerings of Madhu, because he offers them with so much love and faith.

Saying so, Lord Alarnath disappeared. Ketana shamefully realized that Madhu had been telling him the truth. 'Madhu, at this young age you have such faith in God which I didn't have. I am sorry to have doubted you, my dear son,' Ketana said, hugging his son.

In the Alarnath temple in Brahmagiri, Odisha near Puri, the deity of Alarnath is known for these scars. Even today priests point out where it was burnt by the sweetened rice.

## **STORY: LORD JAGANNATH'S MAHA-PRASADA**

Narada Muni once went to Vaikuntha and served Mother Laxmi very attentively. Sri Laxmi was very pleased and requested Narada Muni to ask for any boon. Narada Muni replied, "My dear Mother Laxmi, you must promise that whatever I ask for, you will grant." Laxmi Devi accepted his request. The great saint revealed his wish: Narada Muni requested Laxmi Devi to give him the maha-prasada remnants of Lord Narayana.

Suddenly Laxmi Devi's mood changed and she began to worry. "Please ask me for anything else except for the Lord's prasada," she begged. "A few days ago the Lord instructed me not to give His prasada to anyone. You must understand that I cannot disobey my husband's order. My dear son, I cannot give you prasada" .

But Narada was very adamant and reminded Devi of her promise. "You are the dear wife of Lord Narayana," Narada Muni said. "You must grant me this boon. Somehow or another you must give me the Lord's maha-prasada" Laxmi was now in great trouble. What to do? She told Narada Muni to wait and that she would look into what could be done to satisfy his desire. At noon Laxmi Devi lovingly served lunch to her husband, Lord Narayana. Even though Devi performed her duties with attention and expertise, still the Lord marked that his wife was very unhappy. Lord Narayana gently asked her the reason for her distress. Taking shelter at the Lord's lotus feet, Laxmi explained her predicament. Lord Narayana mercifully comforted His crying wife and said, "Just for today I will cancel this restriction. You may take My plate of remnants and give it to Narada. But you must deliver the prasada in such a way that I do not see. When I turn my face to the side you may take the plate away as if I do not know."

The goddess became joyful. Following her beloved husband's instruction, she deftly removed His plate of remnants when He was not looking.

Laxmi immediately took the maha-prasada plate and happily presented it to Narada Muni. Narada Muni, dancing in ecstasy, eagerly honored the Lord's remnants. He relished Lord Narayana's prasada, and did not stop even for a second from chanting the Lord's holy name and dancing in great joy. As his ecstatic emotions increased, he could not control himself. Narada Muni with his vina in tow started running all over the universe like a madman. Chanting and dancing without stopping, he ran from planet to planet.

Finally he reached Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva was surprised to see Narada Muni chanting and dancing in such a state of ecstasy. Narada Muni, swimming in the waves of Vishnu prema ( Love for Lord Vishnu), did not notice Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva spoke to Narada Muni. "Narada, I know you

are always in ecstasy because you constantly chant the name of Lord Narayana. But I have never seen you in such a condition! What happened to you?”

Then Narada Muni cooled down and explained everything. “I got so much pleasure and ecstasy after honoring the Lords maha-prasada that I can’t stop dancing and chanting,” Narada breathlessly exclaimed. Lord Shiva, folding his palms replied, “Oh Narada! You are so fortunate that you have tasted the mahaprasada of Lord Narayana.” Lord Shiva smiled hopefully. “Dear Narada, have you brought any prasada for me?”

Narada felt very sorry for he had not brought any prasada to share with Lord Shiva. Putting his head down, Narada stood with folded hands before Lord Shiva. Then he saw that a morsel of prasada had stuck to his fingernail. Narada gasped, “Oh yes! Here is some prasada! Prasada kanika matra. A morsel of prasada just for you.”

Narada Muni carefully held up his hand for Lord Shiva’s inspection. “Oh Shiva. You are so fortunate. Please take this maha-prasada.” Narada Muni put his finger into Shivaji’s mouth. As soon as that small morsel of maha-prasada touched the tongue of Mahadeva, he felt great ecstasy and happiness, so much so that he could not remain quiet. Lord Shiva started to chant and dance. His dancing increased as his ecstasy intensified. His dancing became so vigorous that he manifested the Tandava, the dance indicating the time of annihilation. The whole universe started to shake. Everyone became frightened, thinking “What happened? Why is this dance taking place untimely? It is not time for the annihilation.”

No one was brave enough to stop Shiva from dancing the annihilation dance. The devas begged Mother Parvati to pacify the lord, otherwise the whole universe would be destroyed. Mother Parvati arrived on the scene and saw Lord Shiva dancing in uncontrollable ecstasy. Mother Parvati humbly approached Lord Shiva, and when he came to his external senses, she inquired, “My dear Lord! What happened to you? What has caused you to dance in such ecstasy?” Lord Shiva explained that he had received Lord Narayana’s maha-prasada from Narada Muni. Parvati Devi eagerly asked, “My dear husband, have you kept any

maha-prasada for me?” Lord Shiva could not answer. He had managed to get only one morsel of prasada from Narada. How could he have saved any? Parvati was angry that she did not get maha-prasada. “I am deprived of Lord Narayana's prasada.” She was so furious that the fire of her anger started to burn the whole universe. From the lower planets to the higher planets, everyone felt the burning heat. The sages and saints understood that everything was going to be finished by the hot anger of Mother Parvati. No one could pacify her.

Finally all of the demigods headed by Lord Brahma rushed to Vaikuntha to inform Lord Vishnu. Hearing the situation, Lord Vishnu traveled to Kailash riding on the back of Garuda. As soon as Parvati Devi saw Lord Narayana, she came forward to offer her obeisances. Lord Narayana blessed his devotee and told her, “I will give you as much as maha-prasada you want. Please be pacified and give up your anger. Otherwise, all of your children will be finished.” But Mother Parvati protested. “I will not be satisfied if You give your maha-prasada only to me. I request You to give your maha-prasada to all of my children, to all of the living entities. I do not want to see any of my children suffer like I am suffering now due to being deprived of your maha-prasada. You must arrange something so that all living beings, even the dogs may honor Your maha-prasada”

Lord Narayana smiled and said ” Tathastu. Let it be so.

“My dear Parvati, to fulfill your desire I will appear in Nila-chala-dham. My temple will be famous for distributing My prasada. Whoever takes My prasada will be liberated. All of my prasada will be offered to you first. Then only will the remnants become maha-prasada. This maha-prasada will be distributed to everyone without consideration. You will have your temple just behind Mine in the inner courtyard. Lord Shiva, because he neglected to give you maha-prasada, will stay at a distance. He will have his temple outside the courtyard.”

The Lord appeared in Puri as Jagannath. Parvati Devi is there in the name of Bimala Devi. All of Jagannath's prasada is offered first to Bimala Devi. Then only is it distributed as maha-prasada. In Puri there is no distinction between low and high-casts for taking Jagannath maha-prasada. Jagannath maha-prasada

is so pure that sastra says that a brahmana can take maha-prasada from the mouth of a dog. It can never be contaminated.

## **STORY : SUDAMA VISITS KRISHNA AT DWARAKA**

When Krishna appeared in this world 5,000 years ago, He lived in the world just like any ordinary human being. Sudama was among those devotees who was Krishna's childhood friends in His school. Krishna left Vrndavana when He was sixteen, and later He married and went to live as King of Dvaraka.

Sudama was a poor brahmana. He had no rich attire and could not provide rich clothing for his wife and children. In fact they were not even eating sufficiently as there was no enough food for all. Whatever income came to him without difficulty, he accepted. He engaged his time in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and so was a great devotee of Krishna.

Often Sudama's wife used to address her husband, "My dear lord, I know that Lord Krishna, the Supreme Lord of all the universes, is your personal friend. You are also a devotee of the Lord, and He is always ready to help His devotee. We have no other shelter but Krishna. Therefore, please go to Him in Dvaraka. I am sure that He will understand your impoverished condition.

Sudama, however, thought there to be no need to ask material benefit from Lord Krishna. But one time when she made this request, Sudama thought, "If I do go there, I shall be able to see the Lord personally. That will be a great opportunity, even if I don't ask any material benefit from Him." So he told his wife that he would go and that she should at once prepare some foodstuff that he could offer as a presentation to his friend.

Sudama's wife had nothing in the house, but she went out and collected some chipped rice, which is the lowest grade of rice, from her neighbours, and she tied it up in a handkerchief. Sudama took the presentation and started at once toward Dvaraka. As a devotee, he was always thinking of Krishna, and now he became absorbed in the thought that he would soon be able to see the Lord.

Krishna's palace at Dvaraka was not accessible to all, for it was a king's palace and was guarded all around. Sainly persons, however, were allowed to enter and meet the king. When Sudama went into the palace, at that time, Lord Krishna was sitting with His Queen Rukmini. When Krishna saw His friend Sudama coming, immediately the Lord got up and went forward to receive him, and He embraced him feelingly. Krishna welcomed the brahmana with love and respect. He said, "My dear friend, it is our great fortune that you have come here."

He made him sit comfortably and began washing his feet personally. All the people present there were surprised to see this. "Who is this poor brahmana? He was not even clean, and he was so skinny, yet Lord Krishna has embraced him in His two arms, and now He was washing the brahmana's feet."

Sudama was served the best foods and drinks and given the royal treatment. Seating Sudama on His own cushioned bed, Krishna then began to remember their days together when they were both studying in the Gurukul.

"My dear friend," Krishna said, "I think you may remember our activities during the days when we were living as students. You may remember that once we went to collect fuel from the forest on the order of the guru's wife. While we were collecting the dried wood, we by chance entered the dense forest and became lost. There was an unexpected dust storm and then there was lightning in the sky and the explosive sound of thunder. Then sunset came, and we were lost in the dark jungle.

"After this, there was severe rainfall; the whole ground was overflowed with water, and we could not trace out the way to return to our guru's house. You may remember the heavy rainfall that lasted for such a long time that we got stuck the whole night in the deep dark forest . In that distressed condition, we took each other's hand and tried to find our way out.

"We passed the whole night in that way, and early in the morning our guru sent his other disciples to search us out. He also came with them, and when they reached us in the jungle, our guru had said with great compassion, 'My dear

boys, it is very wonderful that you have suffered so much trouble for me. He was greatly pleased with his two disciples and blessed them whole heartedly

Lord Krishna talked a long time with His friend Sudama. Then, just to enjoy His friend's company, He began to smile and asked, "My dear friend, what have you brought for Me? Has your wife given you some nice eatables?"

"How can I offer such an insignificant thing?" thought Sudama and hesitated to give the chipped rice to Krishna. But the Lord knew his heart. He knew very well, since He is situated in everyone's heart, that the brahmana had come to see Him on the instigation of his wife to get some material opulence. Moreover, He knew fully well that Sudama's love for Him was not tainted by any desire for material benefit. Krishna then decided He would very lavishly award Sudama.

"What is this?" Lord Krishna snatched the bundle of chipped rice, which was tucked in a corner of Sudama's shoulder pack. "Oh My dear friend," Krishna went on enthusiastically, "you've brought Me such nice palatable chipped rice. It will please not only Me but the whole creation." It is understood from this statement that Krishna, being the original source of everything, is the root of the entire creation.

While speaking in this way, Lord Krishna ate a morsel of the rice, but when He attempted to eat a second morsel, Rukmini, the goddess of fortune, checked the Lord by taking hold of His hand.

"My dear Lord," she said, "by Your taking this one piece of rice Sudama will become wealthy not only in this life but in the next. You are so kind that this one morsel of rice is enough to cause him who offered it to become very opulent in this life and continue as such in the next."

Sudama did not appear to have received anything from Krishna, nor did he ask anything; the whole time he was merged in an ocean of transcendental bliss. After taking rest that night in the palace, the next morning he started for his home. He was completely absorbed in remembering the dealings with the Lord, and he was happy to have seen Him.

He kept remembering – “Krishna allowed me to sit on His bedstead, and when I was tired, Rukmini began to fan me. Thinking in this way, Sudama reached his home. But when he looked for his cottage he saw in its place a huge, gorgeous palace made of valuable stones and jewels and glittering like the sun.

“What is this?” he thought. “How am I seeing these changes? Does this palace belong to me or to someone else? Surely this is where I used to live—it is the same place—but how wonderfully it has changed!” Then one dazzling opulence and beauty after another was revealed to Sudama Brahmana. His old neighborhood had become transformed into an area of parks with nice lakes full of lotus flowers and lilies and flocks of multicolored birds. Beautiful men and women were strolling in the parks and musical chanters who looked like demigods came forward to greet him. On hearing of her husband’s arrival, the wife of the brahmana ran out of the palace to greet him. She appeared so beautiful that it seemed as if the goddess of fortune herself had come to meet him. The brahmana was surprised to see his wife so beautiful and so greatly affectionate, and without saying a word he entered the palace with her. His inner chambers were like the residence of the king of heaven. The palace was surrounded by many columns of jewels, rich canopies of velvet and silk hung in various places, and everything was opulent.

Sudama could understand that the Lord considered such an insignificant offering as a handful of chipped rice, offered in affection by His devotee, a great thing and that He had given him riches more wonderful than any seen on earth, or even possessed by the demigods in the heavenly planets. Sudama thanked Lord Krishna for His causeless mercy upon him