

Gopal and the Little Braid That Wouldn't Grow



Before We Begin



Shri Vallabh

This story is inspired by one kirtan from pushtikirtan.com. These kirtans express the divine experiences of Pushtimargiya poets. The pictures are based on their descriptions. This little book is for younger children who cannot yet read or understand the kirtans, so they may experience a little of their beauty and divinity.

This story is an adaptation inspired by the kirtans. We do not claim that it is an authentic account. Please forgive any mistakes.



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Mother Yashoda held out milk to her little Gopal. It was milk from the white cow. Her beautiful boy was close beside her, and she coaxed him to drink. There was something she wanted to tell him about his little braid.



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“Drink, Gopal, and your little braid will grow,” Mother told him. A little braid, growing longer! That was her loving promise to her beautiful son. As she offered him the milk, she spoke of how he would grow, too.



“Among all the children, your head will rise the highest,” she said. Little Gopal drank the milk Mother gave him. She looked at her son with such love: her beautiful child, with his little braid and so much growing still ahead.



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Mother spoke of the other children of Vraj, too. They would grow as they watched him, she said, and the little calves would grow as well. Her words held Gopal and the children and the calves together, while she kept offering him milk.



One moment, Mother gave Gopal his milk. The next, her fingers felt his hair. Had the little braid grown yet? She checked, then went on feeding him. Milk, and another gentle touch: Mother kept trying, with all her love for her little boy.



But the little braid was still little. It had not grown longer after all. Yashoda looked at Gopal and smiled. There he was beside her, her beautiful son, with the same small braid—while his mother smiled over the milk and all her loving coaxing.

Original Kirtan and English Meaning

Dhaurikau Pay Pijai · Surdas · Raag Asavari

English below: an original translation prepared for this book.

धौरीकौ पय पीजै हो गोपाल जासौं तेरी बैनी बढ़ै ।

Drink the white cow's milk, Gopal, so that your little braid may lengthen.

सब लरिकनमें सुनि सुंदर सुत तुव शिर अधिक चढ़ै ॥१॥

Listen, beautiful son: among all the children, your head will stand highest.

देखि देखि और व्रजबालिक बलि और बच्छ बढ़ै ॥

Watching you, the other children of Vraj will flourish, and the calves will grow too.

कंस केशी सब बैरिनके उर अनुदिन अनल दढ़ै ॥२॥

Day by day, a fiercer fire will blaze in the hearts of Kansa, Keshi, and all your foes.

छिनु अँचवत छिनुहीं छिनु टटोवत ऐसेही जनन रढ़ै ।

A sip, then a touch to the hair, again and again: so Mother lovingly coaxes him.

सूरदास मुसिकाय यशोदा शिरतें काड़ी न कढ़ै ॥३॥

Surdas says: Yashoda smiles; the little braid still does not reach any farther from his head.

Source text and original cover illustration: pushtikirtan.com