

Krishna's Plays with the Cows (Gai Khilayave)

From the Cows' Play, Food Offering
and Aarti collection



Before We Begin



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This story is inspired by the kirtans in Gai Khilayave Bhog Aarti 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.



Krishna longed to play with the cows. But Nanda, His father, saw how big they were and how quickly they ran. He tried to hold his dear boy back. The cows were full of life, and Nanda wanted little Mohan to be safe among them.



Herdsmen stood on every side to watch over the cows. Still, Nanda was not quite reassured. Mother Yashoda and Rohini, too, reminded everyone to take care. Then came word of Dhumar: she would not play without her beloved Lala. Krishna was the playmate she was waiting for.



Krishna took His little herding stick and ran toward Dhumar. He called out to her with the deep cowherding call, “Hunk! Hunk!” In the great cattle enclosure, Dhumari played with Him. Mohan joined her so joyfully that the whole scene was filled with the delight of their play.



A smile spread across Krishna's beautiful face. He lifted His flute and played a sweet tune. Everyone gathered to watch Him with the cows, their eyes resting steadily on their dear Shyam. Around Him were happy playmates and cows; at the heart of it all was His lovely smile.



How beautifully the cows were dressed! Little anklets circled their feet, and mehndi decorated them. Golden leaf designs shone on their backs. They turned this way and that around Krishna, raising their tails and pricking up their ears. Each cow played in her own lively way beside Him.



The cowherd boys called to the herd. Flutes and cow horns sounded together, and the cows' bells rang out with a great, deep sound, like thunder. Krishna played happily among them. Mother Yashoda delighted in her beloved boy, while the joyful cowherding calls rose around Him.



Gopal went out to play with the cows in a white garment. A red ornament, shaped like a cow's ear, adorned Him. His yellow cloth fluttered, and the children of Vraj turned again and again to look at Him. The cowherds called Dhorī, Dhumari, Kajar, and Piri by name.



Each cow was shown her very own calf. As soon as she saw her little one, she hurried toward it. Krishna and the cowherd boys laughed together at the happy sight. Among the cows and calves, Gopal shared their delight, and His companions were filled with joy.



Beside the River

Beside the Kalindi river, Krishna watched over the cows. He held His flute in His left hand and waved His yellow cloth with His right. Again and again, He called them by name: Dhorī, Dhumār, Peelī, Peehar, Kari, and Kajar. His loving care reached the whole herd.



There on the riverbank stood beautiful Giridhari, the keeper of the cows. His herding stick was with Him as He watched them. One deep call of “Hunk! Hunk!” brought the cows running to Him. They gathered around their beloved Krishna, and He kept none of them apart.

Kirtans Used

गाय खिलायवे भोग आरती

Cows' Play, Food Offering and Aarti

<https://pushtikirtan.com/occasion/052-gai-khilayave-bhog-aarti>

Page references below use the printed book page numbers.

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गायखिलायो चाहत गिरिवरधर

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