

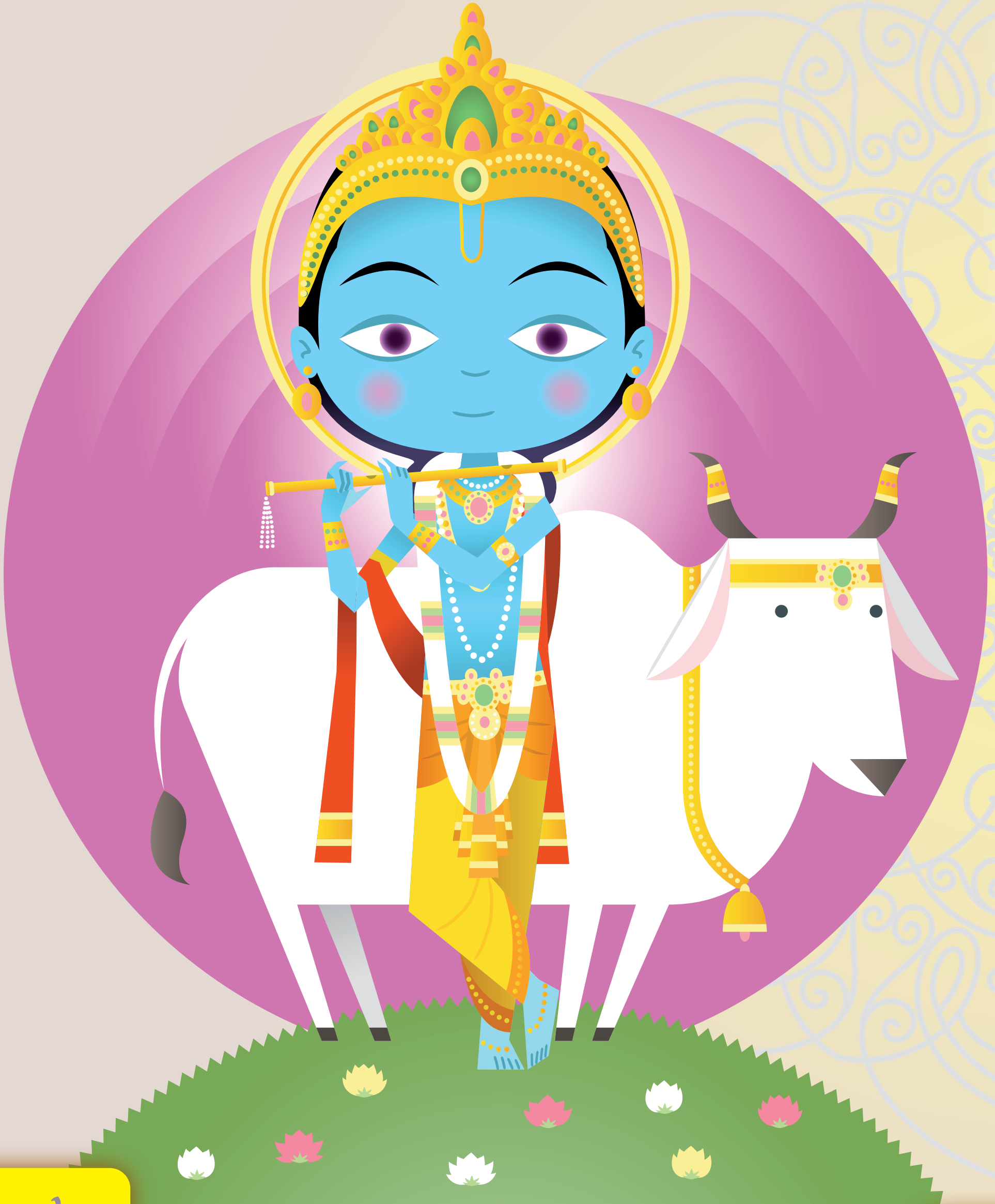
# Stories of Hinduism

Learning Objective:

To explore how Krishna is represented in Hindu stories.

Why is Krishna important for Hindus?

Think, pair, share.



Hindus believe Brahman is a universal soul that can take on many forms.

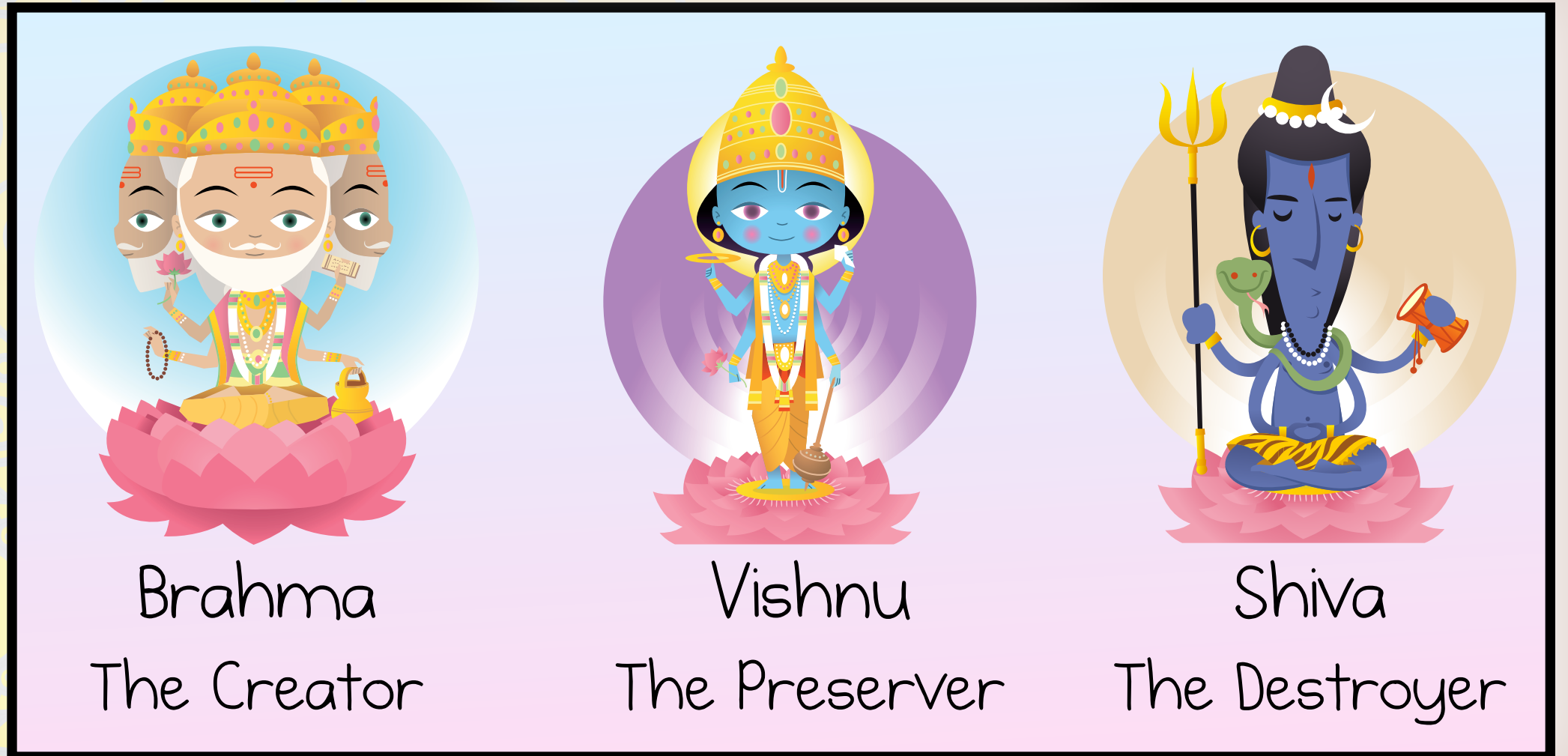
Brahman has three main forms, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. They are called the Trimurti.

Krishna is the eighth avatar of Vishnu. He delivered a famous message known as the Baghavad Gita which asks people to act selflessly.

Krishna features in several Hindu stories and poems, including 'Lord Krishna the Butter Thief', 'Lord Krishna and Kaliya the Snake' and 'Lord Krishna and Lord Bramha'.

# Brahman

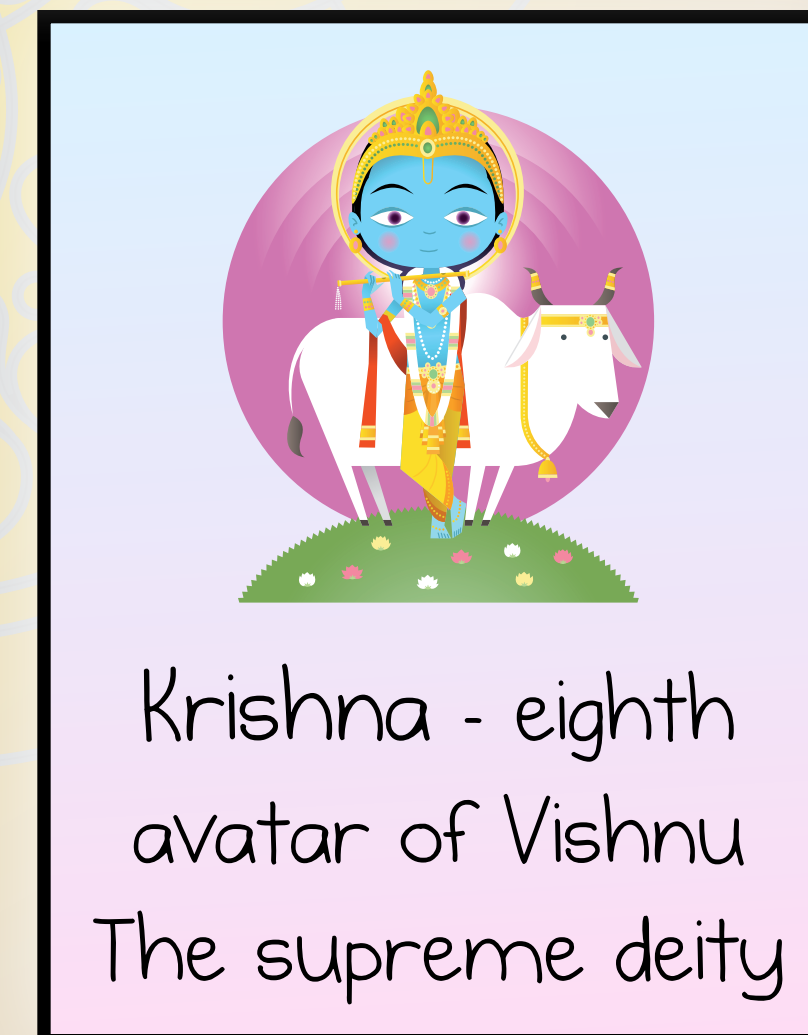
The Universal Soul



Brahma  
The Creator

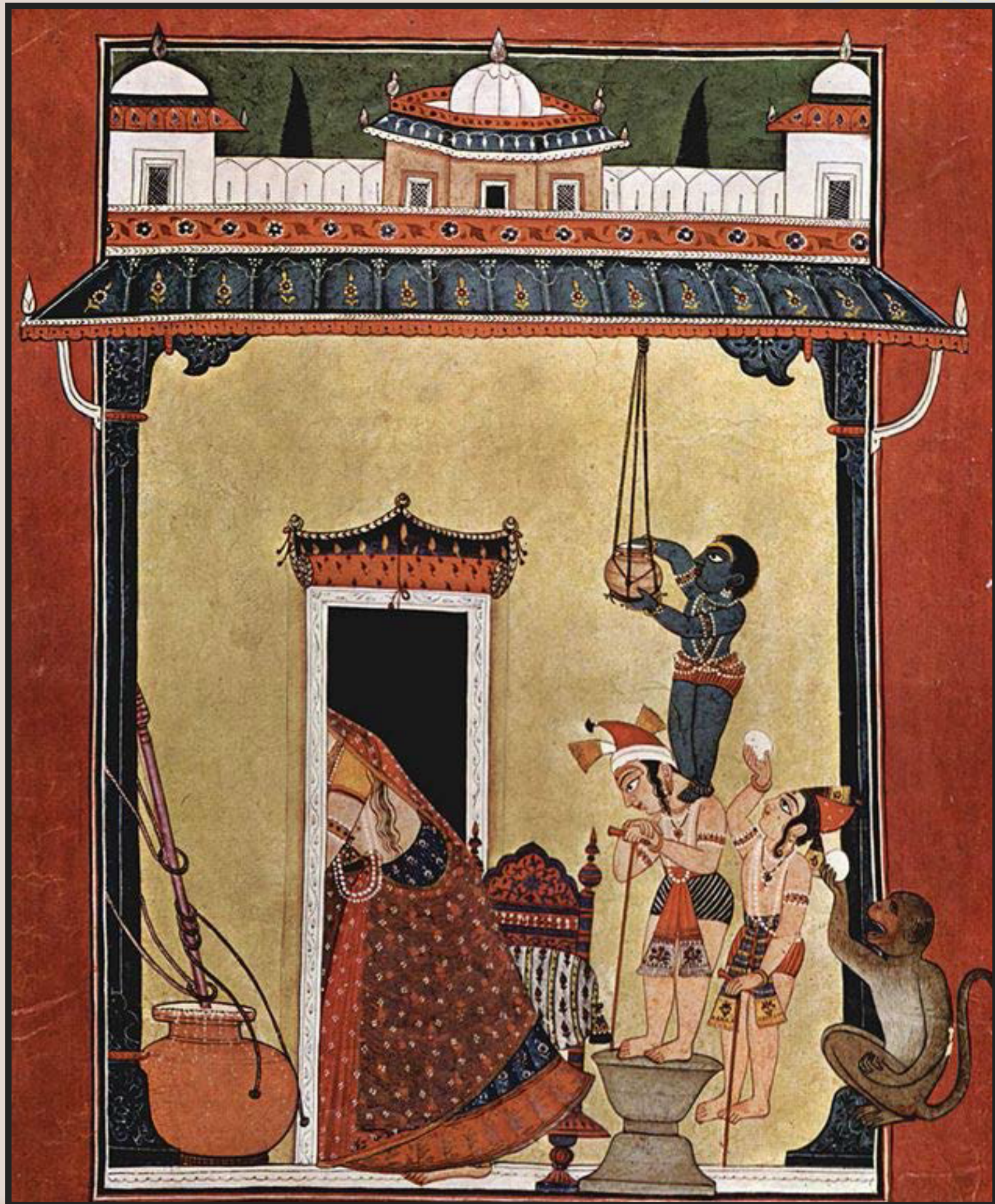
Vishnu  
The Preserver

Shiva  
The Destroyer



Krishna - eighth  
avatar of Vishnu  
The supreme deity

# Krishna the Butter Thief



When Krishna was a child he loved butter. He would go into the houses in the village with his friends and eat any butter, yogurt or milk he could find. To try to stop the boys from eating the food, his mother, Yasoda, hung it from high places.

One day Krishna threw stones at the hanging milk pots, damaging them. Krishna drank the milk that spilt. Then he took the butter and fed what he couldn't eat to the monkeys.

Krishna became worried that his mother would be cross, so he ran and hid. When Yasoda saw the mess she picked up a butter churning stick and began to look for Krishna to teach him a lesson. When she found him his face was wet with tears. She was overcome by motherly love and her anger faded away.

# Krishna and Sudama



Krishna and Sudama were good friends. Krishna had everything he needed and more, but Sudama was very poor. One day Sudama's wife told him they did not have enough food to feed their children. Sudama was sad but he did not want to ask favours from anyone. His wife suggested he visited Krishna, so he did.

Sudama took the last of the food they had in a small package to give to Krishna as a gift. When he got to Krishna's palace everyone was surprised that the great king ran to meet such a poor man.



Upon seeing Krishna's wealth Sudama became embarrassed about the small gift he had brought. Krishna snatched the present and exclaimed he had never tasted such good food.

Sudama stayed with Krishna for three days. They ate from plates made of gold. Sudama thought often of his hungry children but he could not bring himself to ask Krishna for any favours. When he left the palace Sudama worried about his family. He wondered how he would explain to his wife that he wasn't bringing anything back. As he approached the place his home had been, he realised it had gone. In its place there was a magnificent palace. His wife came out from it dressed in elegant clothes. She told Sudama that Krishna had ended all their miseries.



How is Krishna represented in these stories?

Think,  
pair,  
share.

What can you learn about Krishna from these stories?

What messages are being conveyed in the stories?

Which 'big questions' are these stories exploring?



## Krishna the Butter Thief

Krishna takes on the role of a mischievous boy in this story. Some people think this shows that God is the source of all human tendencies, even mischief. Seeing this side of Krishna could help to make God easier to relate to.

Some Hindus say the story teaches its reader not to disobey elders and that stealing is wrong. Others think that Krishna took the butter to give pleasure to his devotees and that he could not be accused of stealing as everything on earth belongs to God.

Is it always wrong to steal?

## Krishna and Sudama

In this story Krishna is a great king. Even though he lives in a palace and has all that he needs, he does not forget who his friends are. Most Hindus think this story teaches its reader that true love doesn't distinguish between rich and poor or people of different statuses. This story is often used to remind Hindus about Krishna's true love.

Would Sudama have been rewarded if he had asked for a favour?

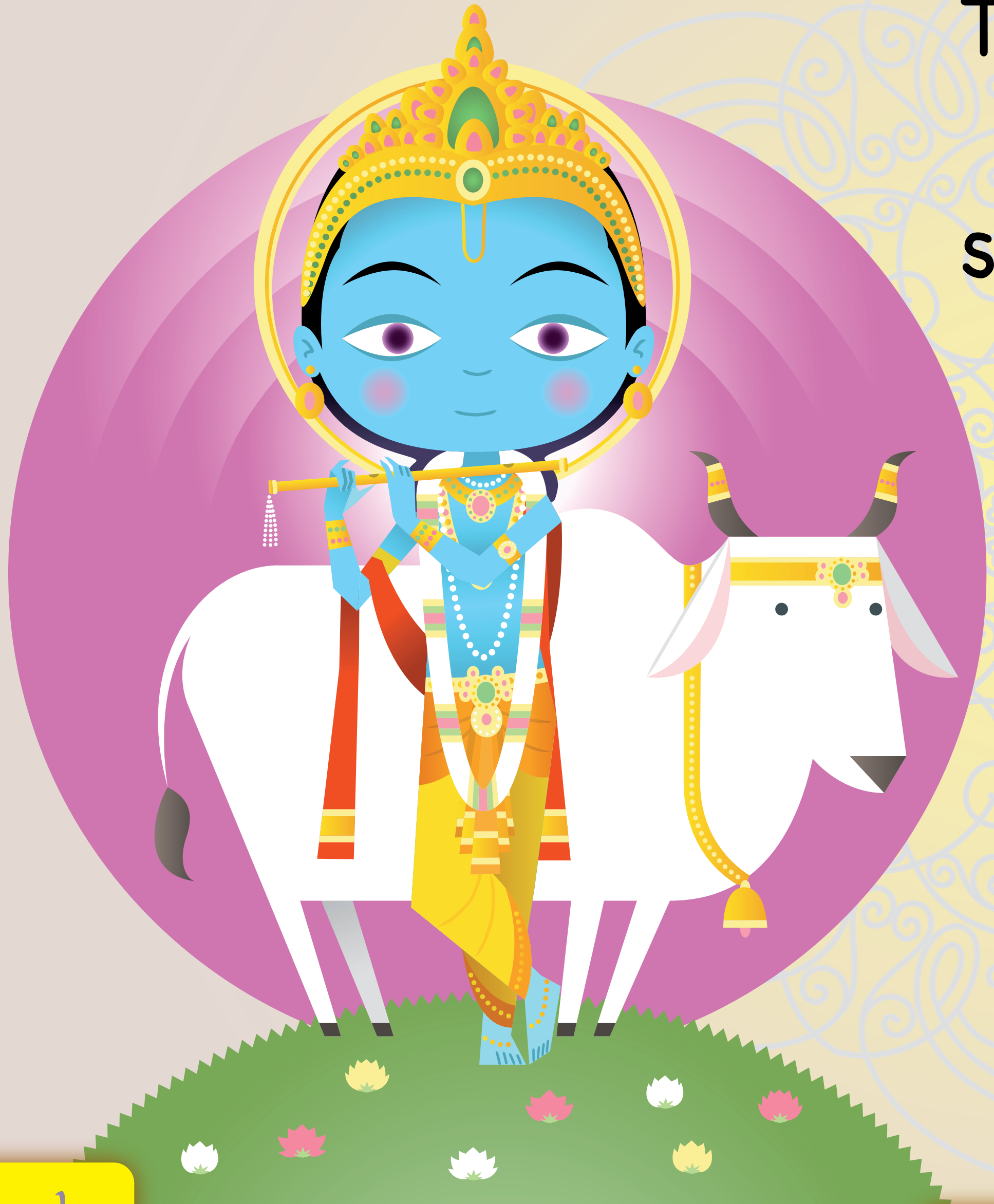
Would asking for a favour have made Sudama less deserving of help?



Plenary

Think,  
pair,  
share.

Why are cows  
sacred to Hindus?



back

next

Traditionally the cow in Hindu society was seen as a maternal figure or a caretaker. Cows were a symbol of wealth and unselfish giving as Hindus relied on them to survive. They consumed their dairy products, tilled fields with them and used their dung as fertiliser and fuel. Even Krishna helped to look after cows and enjoyed eating their butter.

