

Killing Vyomasura

A. The Story

Late one morning, Krishna went to play with His cowherd boyfriends on the top of Govardhan Hill. They were pretending to be thieves and policemen. Some of the boys became police constables, some became thieves, and some took the role of little lambs. While they were enjoying their fun pastimes, a demon known as Vyomasura, “the demon who flies in the sky,” appeared on the scene. He was the son of another great demon named Maya. These demons could perform wonderful magic.

Vyomasura took the part of a cowherd boy playing as a thief and stole many boys who were playing the parts of lambs. One after another, he took away almost all the boys and put them in the caves of the mountains and sealed the mouths of the caves with stones.

Krishna could understand the trick the demon was plying. He caught hold of Vyomasura just like a lion catches hold of a lamb. The demon tried to expand himself like a hill to escape arrest, but Krishna wouldn't let him get away. He was immediately thrown on the ground with great force and killed.

After killing the Vyoma demon. Lord Krishna released all His friends from the caves of the mountain. He was then praised by His friends and by the demigods for these wonderful acts. He returned to Vrindavan with His cows and friends.

B. What Vyomasura represents...

The Vyomasura demon represents the need for us to stay away from thieves and cheaters.

C. Bad Association

Our behavior and our spiritual life are influenced very much by the company we keep. If we are good friends with people who are not of good character we will pick up some of their bad habits. And if we spend time with nice saintly people, we will develop their good qualities.

Have you ever had the experience of being with your friends when he was in a grumpy mood? After a while you probably felt grumpy, too. And if you're around someone bright and cheerful, you are likely to be in good mood. In the same way, the best way for us to improve ourselves is by associating with people who have very good qualities.

D. How can Krishna help?

1. Always try to associate with Krishna's devotees.
2. When times are difficult, take shelter of the Lord by chanting His holy name.
3. By reading books about Krishna and His devotees we can understand what good qualities are and the purpose of life.
4. Have a parent, teacher or an adult you trust that you can confide in or talk to. Tell them if someone is trying to influence you in a bad way.

GOPAL'S FUN SCHOOL

5. Pray to Krishna that you may be strong and Krishna conscious so that you may also have good qualities and make good choices.
6. Don't spend time with people who have bad habits or qualities like taking drugs, drinking, or who are cruel.

E. Stealing

Stealing and cheating are two more undesirable qualities we must rid ourselves of if we want to become pure. Stealing is a form of dishonesty. Krishna owns everything and whatever we have is given to us by Krishna. We should only take what is our share. He will provide whatever we need; it is not necessary to steal. It is said that we should view another's belongings as garbage in the street. Who would ever consider taking, or even touching garbage? Likewise, we shouldn't even consider taking someone else's property.

What do you think?

What would you do if you found a gold watch and you knew who lost it?

What about a person who is very poor and steals food to feed his family? Is that wrong?

What could you do if you did steal something, but later regretted it?

F. How can Krishna help?

1. Let's memorize a verse from the *Sri Isopanishad* that will remind us that we should only take our share.

*Isavasyam idam sarvam
Yat kinca jagatyam jagat
Tena tyaktenabhunjitha
Ma grdhah kasya svid dhanam*

Translation: Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.

2. Offer your food to Krishna. By doing this we please Him and we remind ourselves that He gave us everything. Whatever we have should be offered to Krishna for His enjoyment.

G. Cheating

In our own behavior we must not cheat others. Our dealings with everyone, friend or enemy, should be truthful and straightforward. We must also be careful not to be cheated ourselves. Especially in our spiritual life, we must be careful not to be fooled by someone who claims to be a great devotee but is preaching the wrong philosophy. A "religious" cheater can actually lead us away from Krishna. This is another reason we must learn the scriptures well --- so we don't get cheated.

GOPAL'S FUN SCHOOL

It seems that a lot of people are cheated these days. People are following many religions that do not teach the truth. Why do you think this is so?

Sometimes, if following the truth means that you have to give up something dear to you or live a bit uncomfortably. You might prefer to accept something that you know is not true. It may seem easier. In this way, people may want to be cheated. Then they don't have to make any uncomfortable changes in their lives.

Even if we are not cheating or stealing ourselves, we must give up the association of people who do. We might think that it is all right to have friends who have these faults as long as we are not like that. But the power of association is very strong. We run a big risk by being too friendly with people who are not honest. They cannot be trusted and their bad behavior will only affect us negatively.

H. How can Krishna help?

1. Follow Krishna's instruction in Bhagavad Gita. If you know His teaching, you won't be misled by a cheater.
2. Take advice and shelter from a spiritual master or a devotee.
3. Again, have an adult you can talk to if you feel that someone is taking advantage of you.
4. Don't become friends with people whom you know are not honest. If you know they lie to other people, how can you be sure they won't lie to you?

A Poem about a Thief

Once there was a tricky thief
Who rode upon a train,
Thinking with much guilt and grief:
"I will not steal again."

"Men who ride this train have wealth,"
the thief thought, with a sigh,
"But I must control myself;
I shall not steal and lie."

Sunset came, their bags he eyed;
The good men fell asleep.
Opening each he looked inside;
Then he began to weep.

"I don't want to steal," cried he,
"Oh mind, you're not my friend!
You've always been my enemy.
You'll be my bitter end!"

“I'll beg Krishna's holy name
to help me win this fight.
Oh, wild mind, you shall be tamed,
If I must chant all night!”

Morning came and all the men
Woke up and looked around.
“Who's the thief?” they shouted then.
Their bags could not be found.

“Gentlemen,” the thief began,
“allow me to explain.
There is a thief, a sinful man,
And he's the one to blame.

“All he took was just a look.
Your bags got switched around.
He's become a saintly crook.
Your things are safe and sound.

“Armed with Krishna's holy name,
I fought the thief all night.
This morning I don't feel the same.
I think I won the fight.”