Old King Ugrasena of Mathura had two children, Prince Kamsa and Princess Devaki. While King Ugrasena was a good king, Prince Kamsa was a ruthless tyrant. Now Princess Devaki was to wed a nobleman named Vasudeva.

Kamsa out of the love he bore for his sister decided to be the bride and groom's charioteer for the day. While Kamsa drove the chariot bearing Devaki and Vasudeva out of the wedding hall, a voice from the heavens boomed informing Kamsa that Devaki's eight child would be his slayer.

Kamsa being the superstitious type would take no chances. He wanted to strike down Devaki that very moment. Vasudeva intervened, he begged Kamsa not to slay Devaki and show her some mercy. He further promised Kamsa that he would hand over any child born to them, if he would let Devaki live. Now Kamsa not wanting to have the blood of his sister on his hands agreed and instead, placed them under house arrest.

Every time a child was born, the guards would inform Kamsa and he would take the child and kill it. Six of Devaki and Vasudev's children met their death this way. It so happened that the seventh child was born at night, and Devaki and Vasudeva seeing the opportunity decided to try to save the child.

The guards. were asleep, so Vasudeva easily slid out of the palace undetected. He went to neighboring Gokul and left the child with his second wife Rohini and quickly returned to the palace (this child was named Balrama). In the morning he sent word to Kamsa that the child was still born.

Kamsa was pleased, he knew the next child was prophesized to be his slayer. Not wanting to take chances with the birth of the eight child, Kamsa had Vasudeva and Devaki thrown into the dungeon chained.

The eight child was born on the eight night of the month of Shravan. It was raining heavily and the skies thundered as if the Gods were trying to pay homage to the new born child. Then the miracle happened, Vasudevas chains fell off and the prison door opened by itself. Vasudeva found the guards to be asleep, so he decided that he would escape with the child and leave him at his friend Nanda's place in Gokul.

Picking up the child, Vasudeva placed him in a basket. He then carried the basket on his head and made his way to Gokul.