

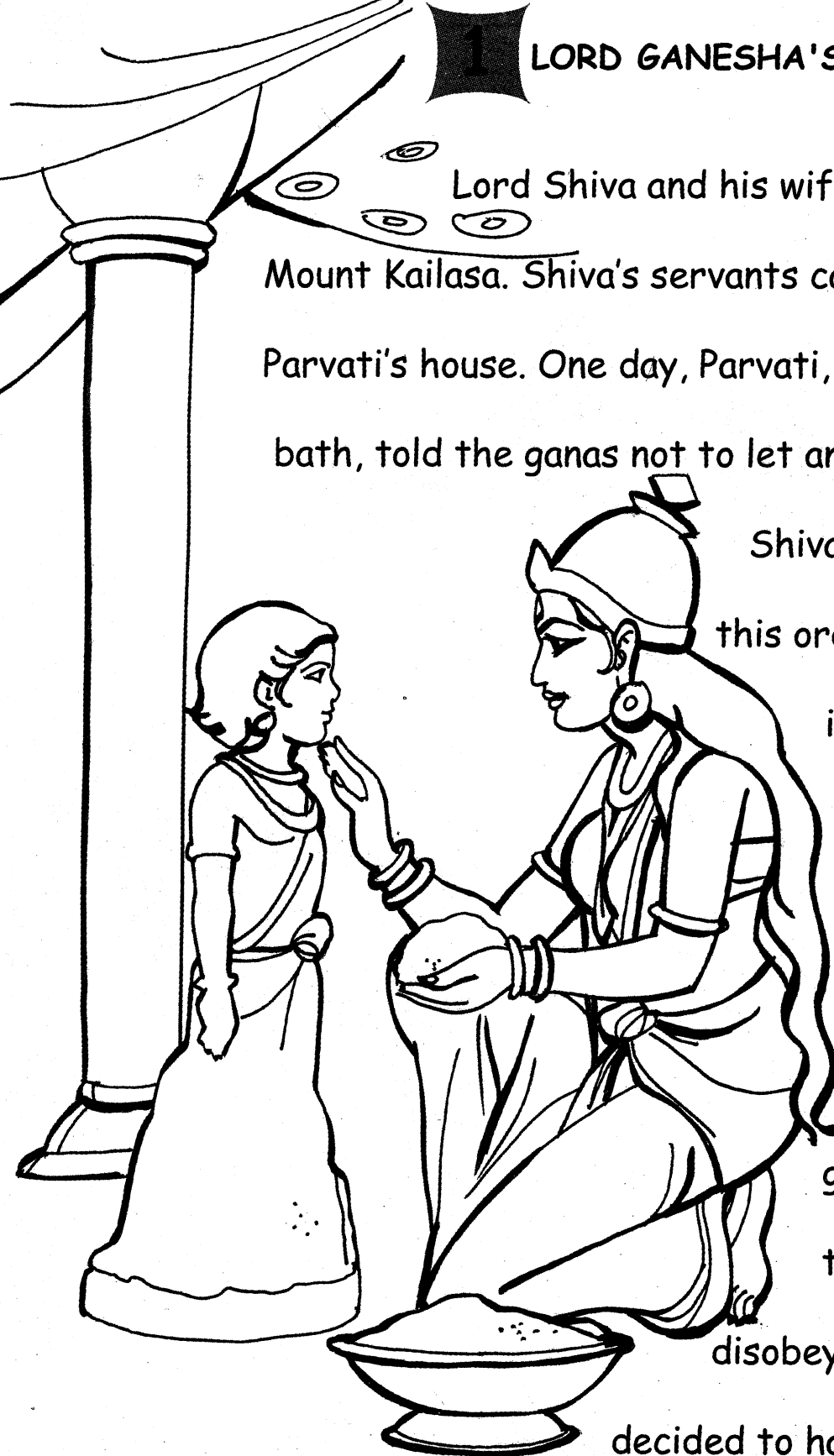


**Puranic Tales for the Young**

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## 1 LORD GANESHA'S BIRTH



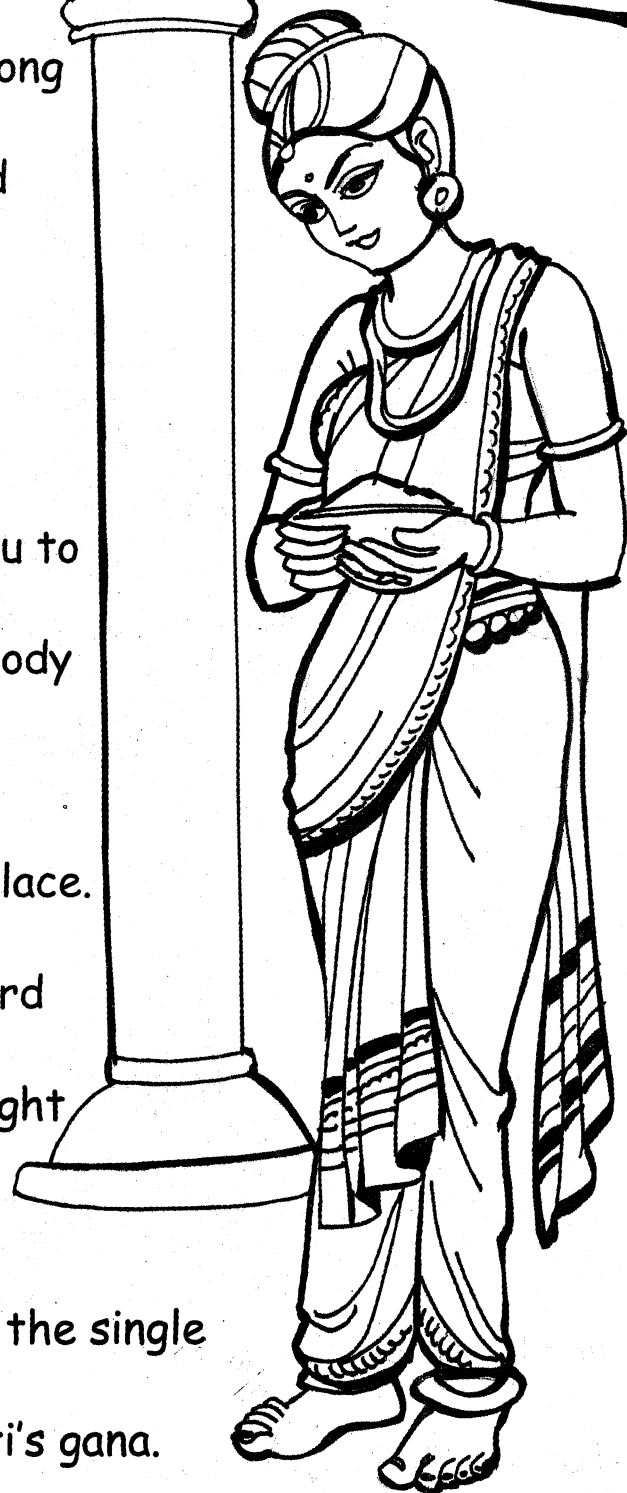
Lord Shiva and his wife, Parvati, lived in Mount Kailasa. Shiva's servants called ganas guarded Parvati's house. One day, Parvati, before taking her bath, told the ganas not to let anybody in. Lord

Shiva did not know of this order and he walked in. None of his servants dared to stop him. When Parvati saw Lord Shiva inside, she got very angry with the ganas for disobeying her. She decided to have her own gana to guard her.

She removed the sandalwood paste that she had applied on her body and made it into a figure of a young, strong and handsome boy. She was very pleased with her creation. She breathed life into this figure and it came alive.

Parvati said, "You are my son, I want you to guard my palace and make sure that nobody enters, not even Lord Shiva".

Shortly, Lord Shiva came to Parvati's palace. This gana did not allow him to enter. Lord Shiva was upset and sent his ganas to fight him. Thousands of them led by Nandi, who was the leader of his ganas, fought the single boy. None of them could win over Parvati's gana.





Lord Shiva was taken aback. He sent the devas led by

Indra to fight him

But, they too lost out to

the gana. The Lord did not

give up. He called his son

Kartikeya, the

Lord of war, to teach the gana

a lesson. Kartikeya also

returned a loser. Seeing

this, Brahma and Vishnu got worried.

They decided to help Lord Shiva.

Parvati got angry when she heard that

Shiva was being helped by the two

Lords to fight her brave son. To make

sure that her gana

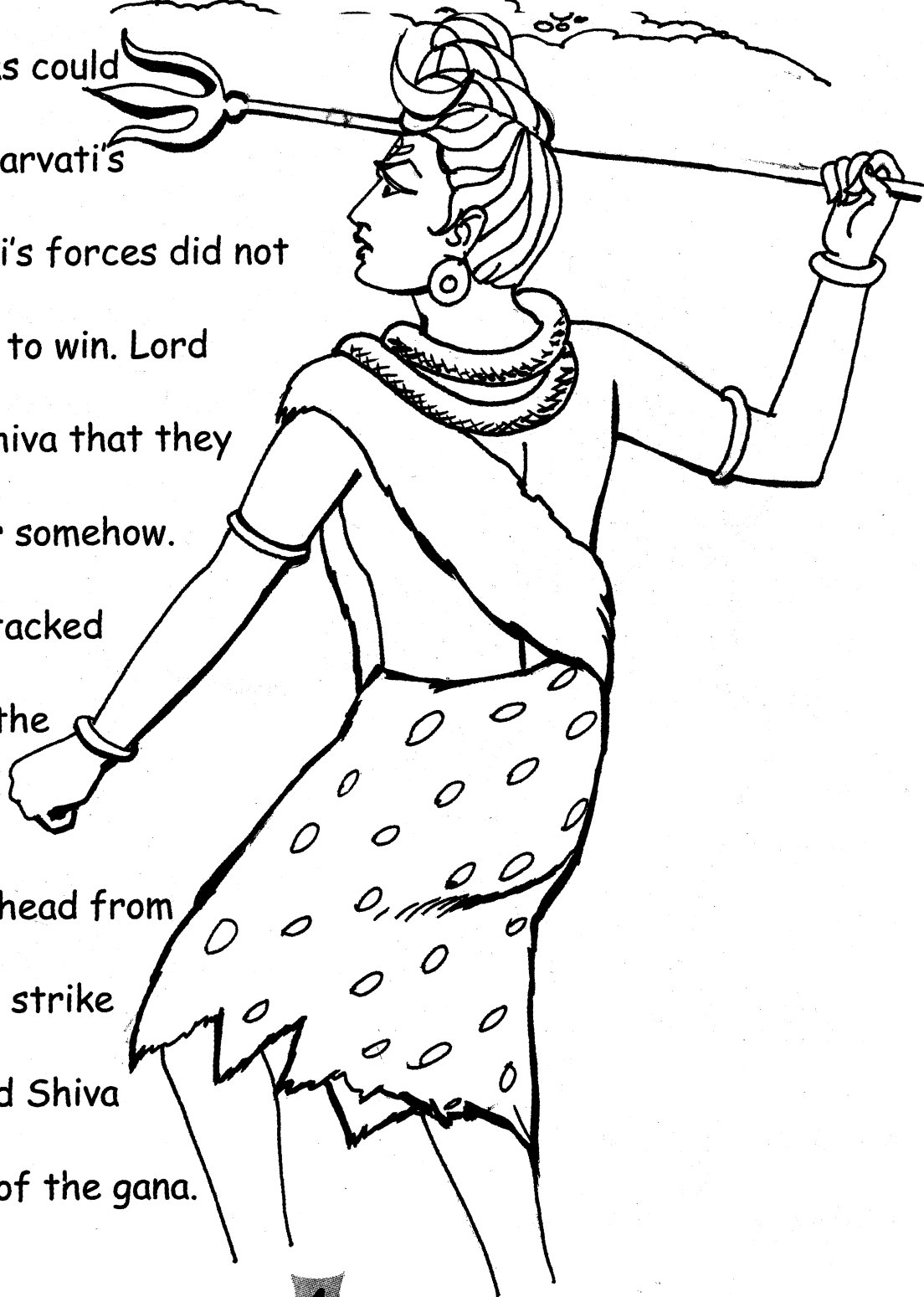
would be equally strong to fight the Lords, Parvati made two powerful

forces; Kali and Durga. They created their armies and a great battle

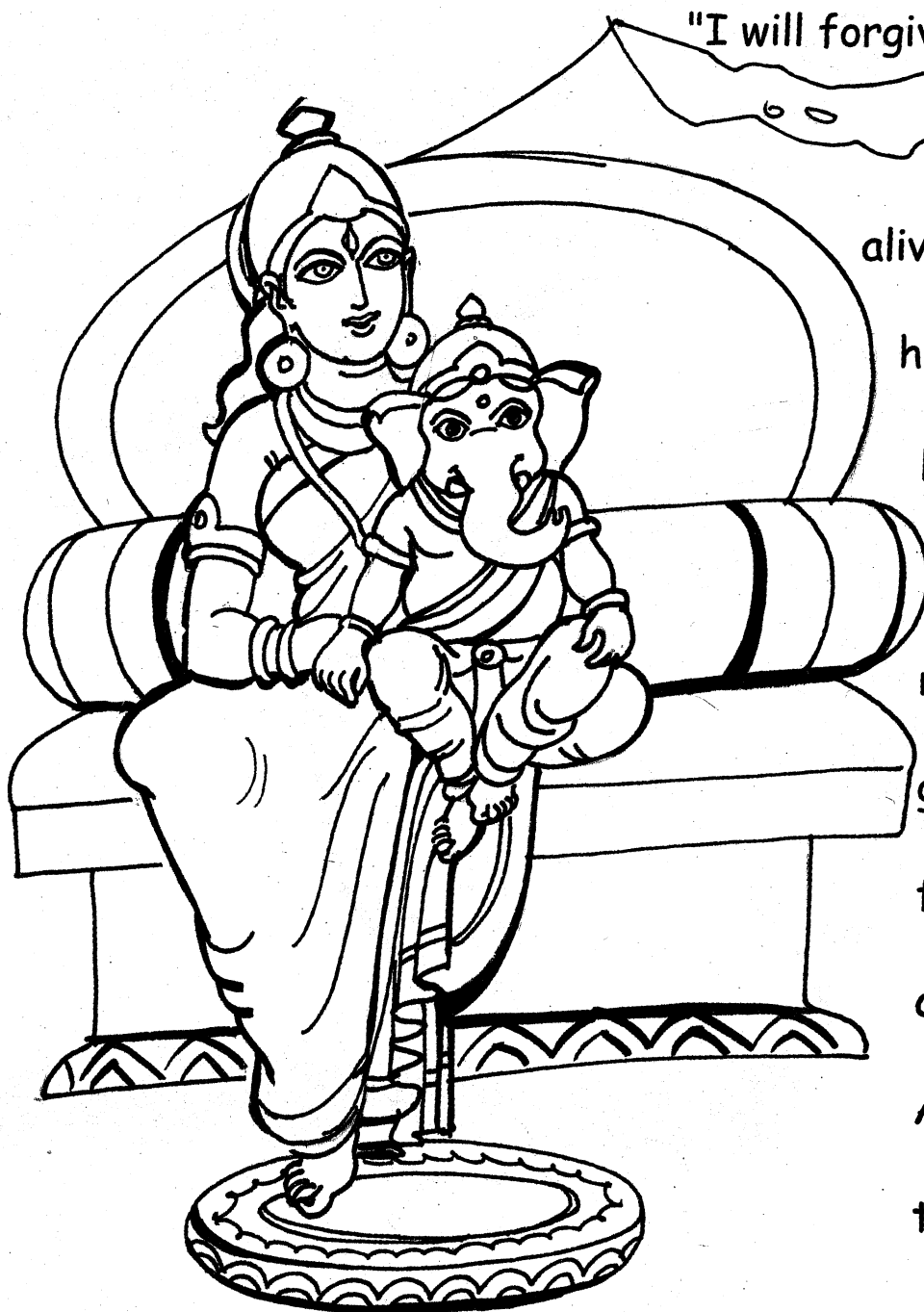
began.

The devas and ganas could not come close to Parvati's strong gana. Parvati's forces did not give them a chance to win. Lord Vishnu told Lord Shiva that they should end this war somehow.

So, Lord Vishnu attacked Parvati's son from the front while Lord Shiva aimed at his head from the back. With one strike of the Trishul, Lord Shiva removed the head of the gana.



Parvati burst into anger on hearing what had happened. "I will kill every deva and gana in this world", she said. When Brahma and Vishnu heard this they both came running to her and begged, "Please forgive Lord Shiva and take back your curse". She replied,



"I will forgive only when he brings

my son back

alive and accepts him as

his son too.

Lord Shiva readily

agreed to this. He

requested them to

get the head of the

first living being that

crossed their path.

At once they left for

the search.

It was an elephant that they saw first and so they brought its head.

Lord Shiva told Lord Brahma to fit the head onto the gana's body.

At once he came back to life. Thus

Parvati's son got the head of an

elephant. The loving mother embraced

her son and seated him on her lap.

Lord Shiva blessed the boy. "You

are my son too. You have showed us

your strength. From today you will be

the head of all the ganas and we will

call you Ganesha. Everyone will worship

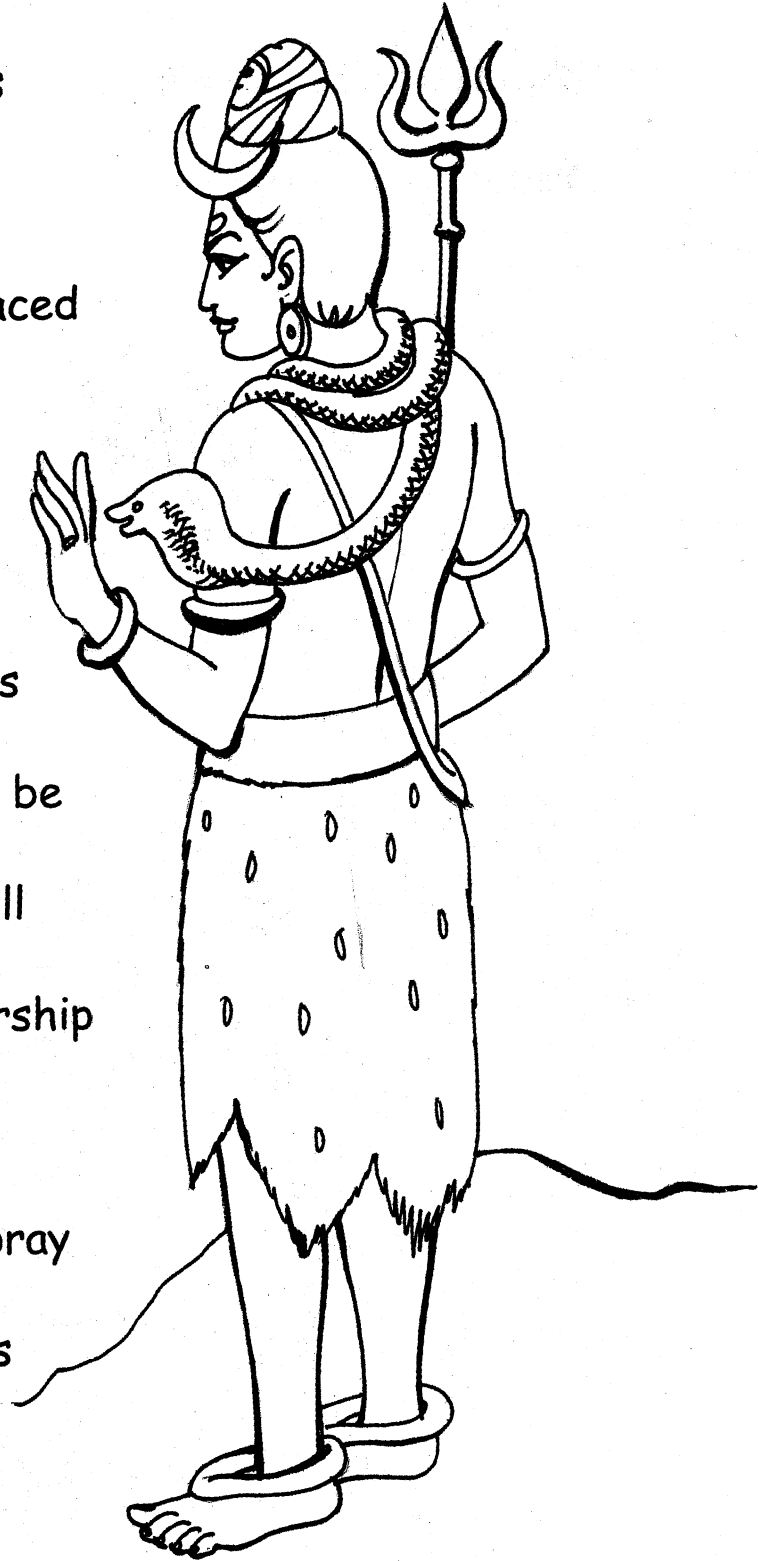
you. Anybody who wishes to be

successful in any undertaking will pray

to you first to remove all obstacles

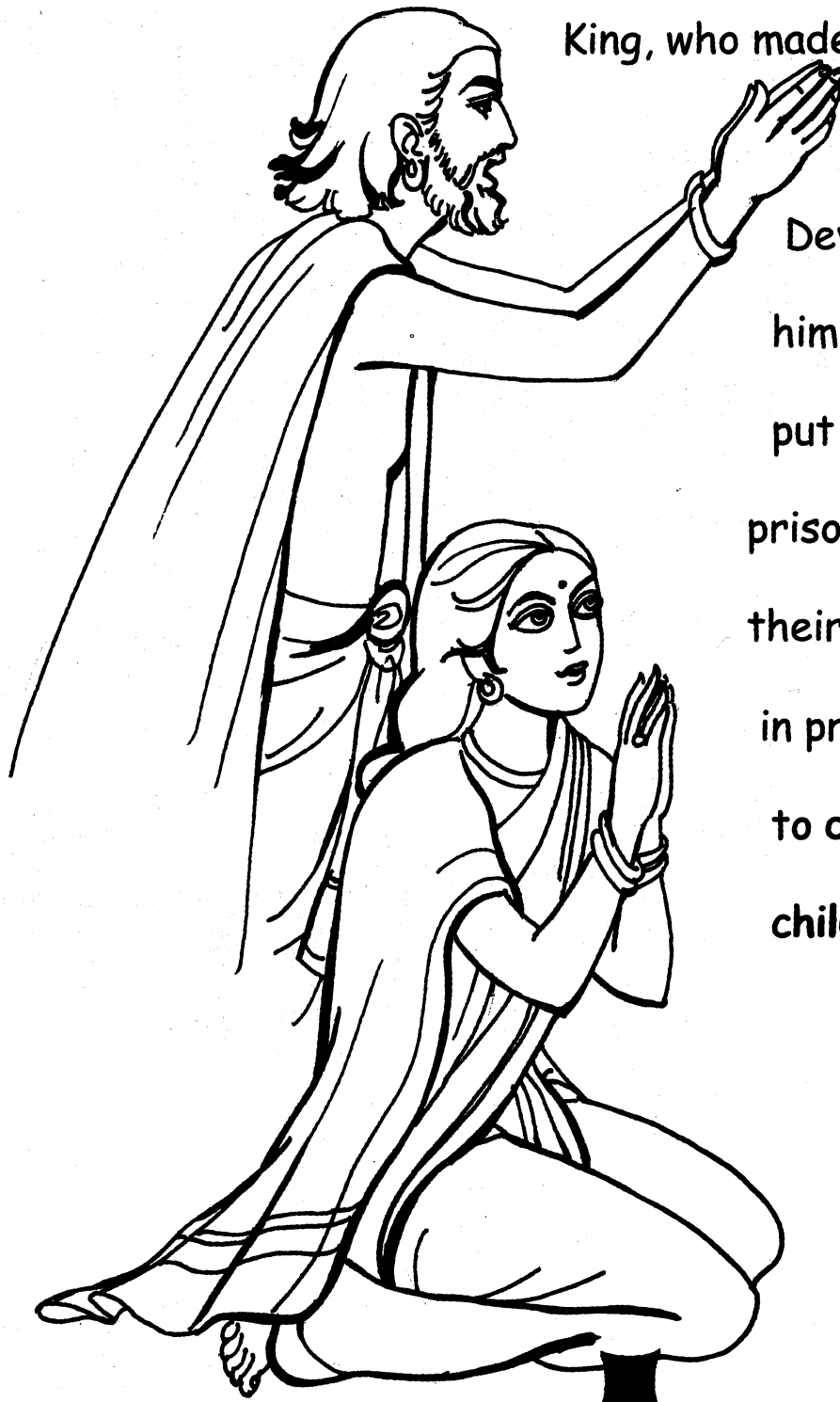
and you will be worshipped as

Vighnesvara", said Lord Shiva.



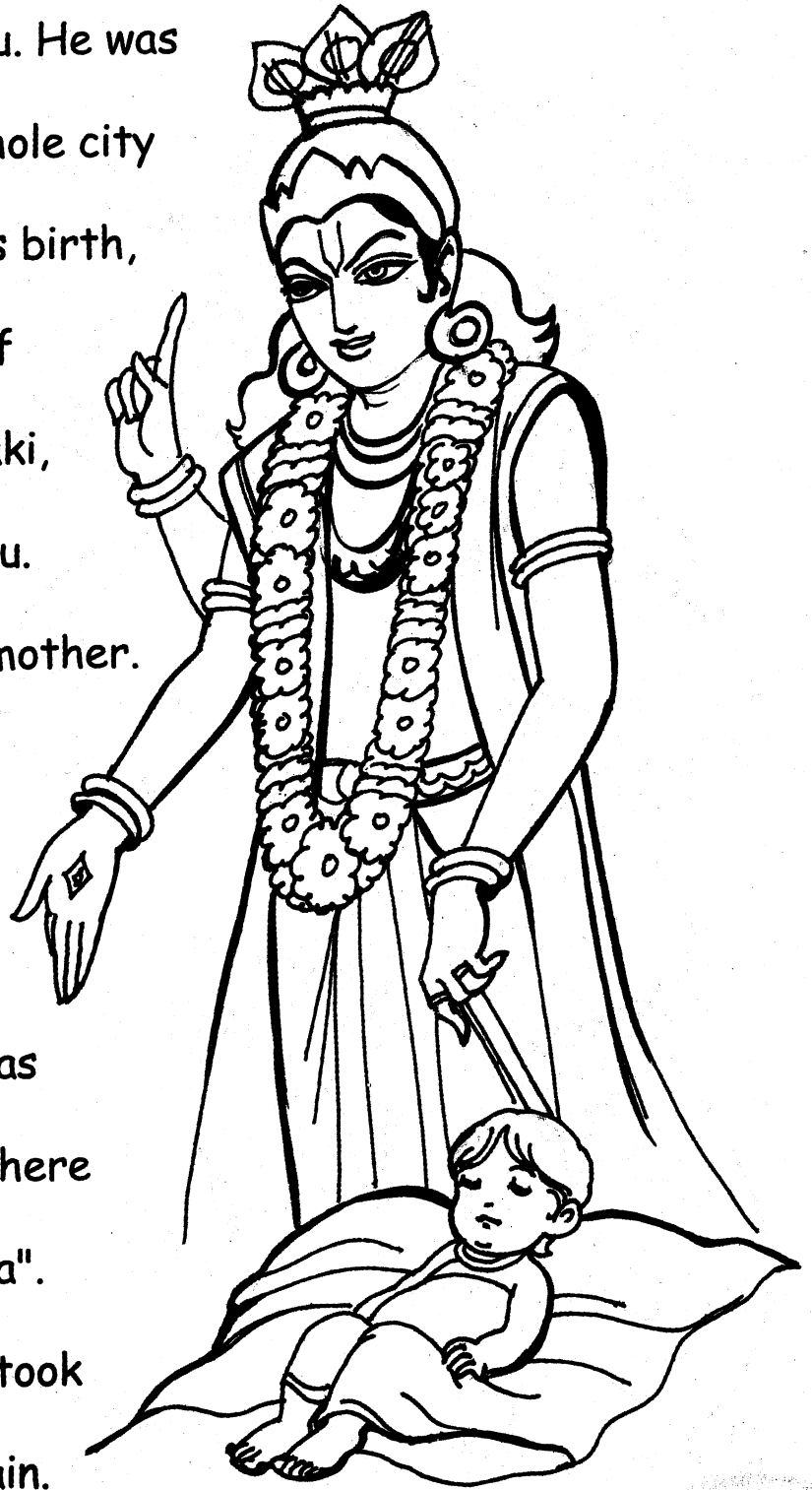
## SRI KRISHNA'S BIRTH

It was the month of August, the flowering season. Lord Vishnu decided to be born in this world. He chose Devaki and Vasudeva as his parents. Devaki was the sister of Kamsa, a cruel

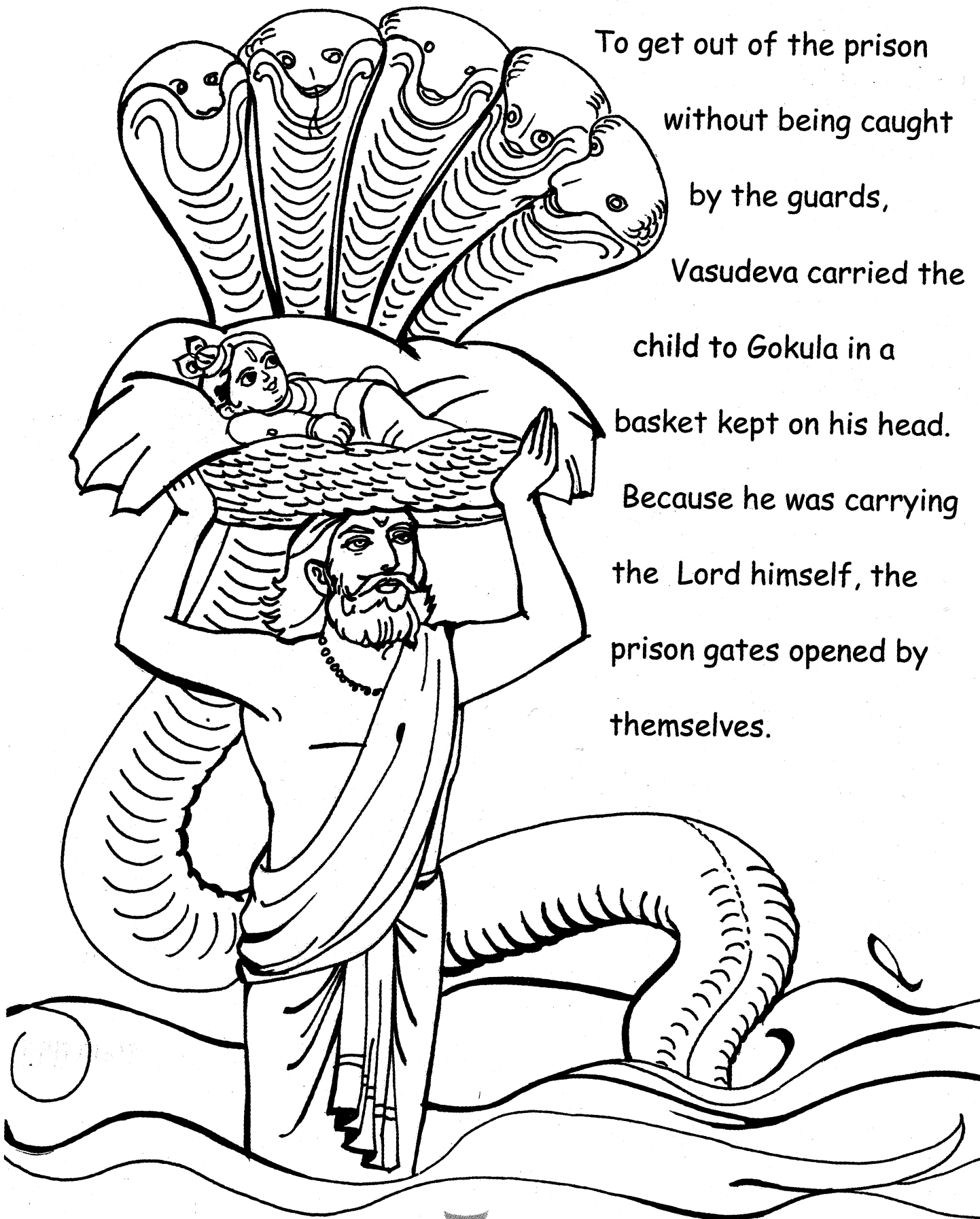


King, who made people suffer. One day Kamsa heard that one of Devaki's children would kill him. So, to save himself, he put Devaki and Vasudeva in prison. One by one he killed their seven new-born babies in prison. But, he failed to do this with the eighth child.

This child was Lord Vishnu. He was born at night when the whole city was asleep. Soon after his birth, the baby took the form of the Lord and said to Devaki, "Mother, I am Lord Vishnu. I have chosen you as my mother. I know Kamsa will try to kill me. So let father take me to Nanda, who is the chief of the Yadavas in Gokula. I will grow up there with my brother Balarama". Saying this, Lord Vishnu took the form of the baby again.



Devaki and Vasudeva were very happy with the Lord's darshan and did as they were told.

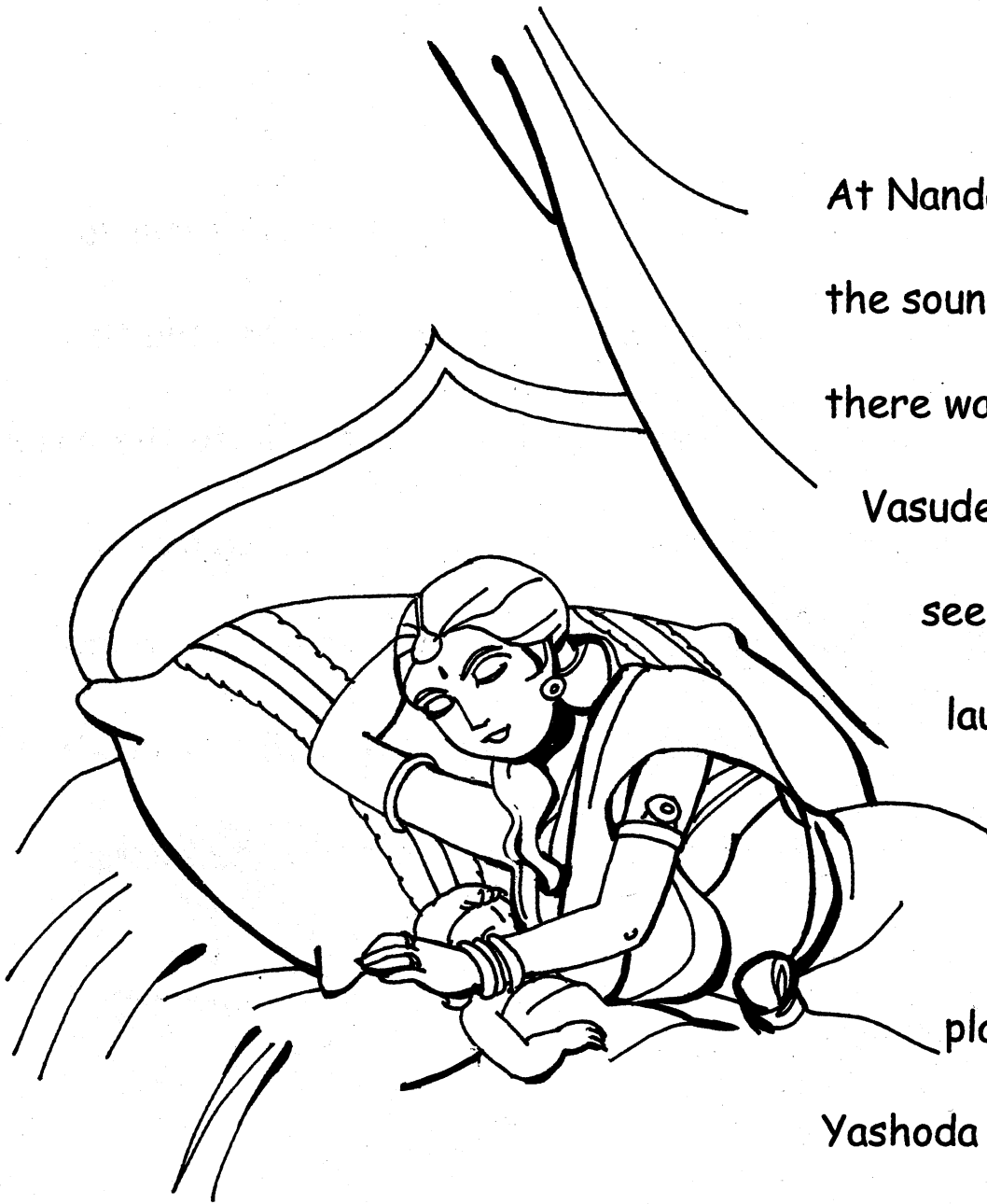


To get out of the prison  
without being caught  
by the guards,  
Vasudeva carried the  
child to Gokula in a  
basket kept on his head.  
Because he was carrying  
the Lord himself, the  
prison gates opened by  
themselves.

He found the guards of the prison in deep sleep. Vasudeva came to a large overflowing river. He was not sure how he would be able to cross it. But with a strong faith in the Lord, he stepped in to the river. The river, as though bowing to the Lord, parted. It created a path for Vasudeva to walk through. As he was crossing halfway, it started to rain heavily. "Oh! My child is going to get wet", he said to himself. Suddenly, a huge snake rose from the river and covered the basket with its five-headed hood.







At Nanda's house, except for the sound of a baby's gurgle, there was total silence.

Vasudeva looked around to see where the baby's laughter was coming from. He saw a beautiful girl happily playing by the side of Yashoda who was fast asleep.

Vasudeva gently lifted his son out of the basket and placed him next to Yashoda. Then he wrapped the baby girl and placed her gently in to the basket. Vasudeva then rushed out of the house.

He was back at Dwaraka before sunrise. Since Yashoda had given birth to the baby that night, nobody in Gokula had yet got the news of the birth.

The next morning, the people of Gokula celebrated the birth of Yashoda's son. Thus, the eighth child of Devaki was safe in Yashoda's lap. During the child's naming ceremony, the priest blessed Yashoda's son and named him Krishna, as he was blue in colour. The priest said, "This is no ordinary child. He is Lord Vishnu himself who has taken birth to fight evil". Both Yashoda and Nanda were very happy.



## GOD RESIDES IN EVERYONE

One morning Ganesha asked his mother, Parvati, if he could play in the garden. Mother Parvati agreed, but warned him not to play for too long. Even before she could finish speaking,

he was gone. In the garden Ganesha chased colourful

butterflies. He climbed trees and ate their sweet

fruits. He tried to catch a deer but it was too

fast for him. At last he

was too

tired to

play, so he

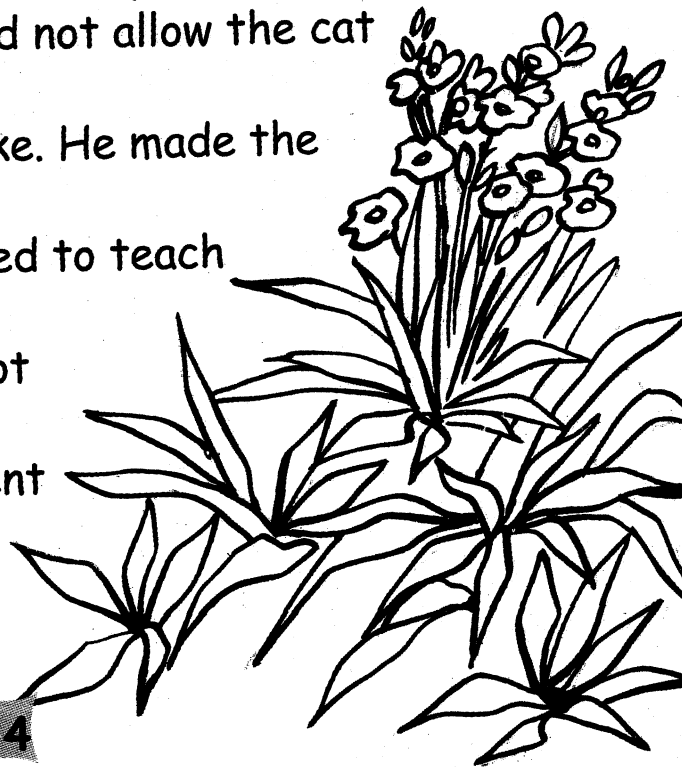
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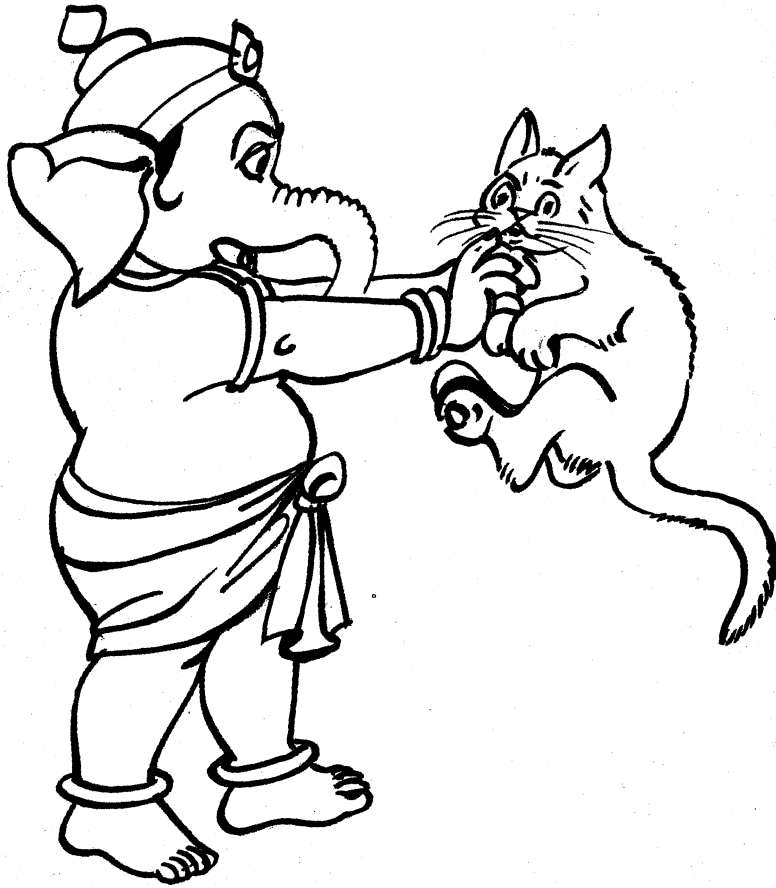
a tree.





Just then Ganesha heard a mewing. It was his pet cat. It walked up to Ganesha gently and climbed on to his lap. It closed its eyes and went to sleep. Ganesha knew that it was not a good habit to sleep in the daytime. So, he did not allow the cat to sleep and tried to keep it awake. He made the cat stand on its hind legs and tried to teach it something. But, the cat was not interested, it only purred and went back to sleep on Ganesha's lap.





Ganesha was not pleased. How could his pet disobey him? So he caught hold of the cat and scratched its face. The cat jumped out of his hold and ran away.

By now Ganesha was hungry and he went to his mother. He asked, "is food ready mother?". Parvati replied, "Yes my child, but first let me finish dressing my wounds". Ganesha was puzzled. He looked closely at his mother and saw horrible scratches on his mother's lovely face.

He was shocked and asked, "Mother who did this to you? I shall tell father and get that naughty person punished".

Parvati replied lovingly, "The person who did this is none other than my dear son Ganesha".

Ganesha got angry.

He said, "I hurt my

dear mother! It is

impossible!

Besides I was

in the

garden all

this time

playing by

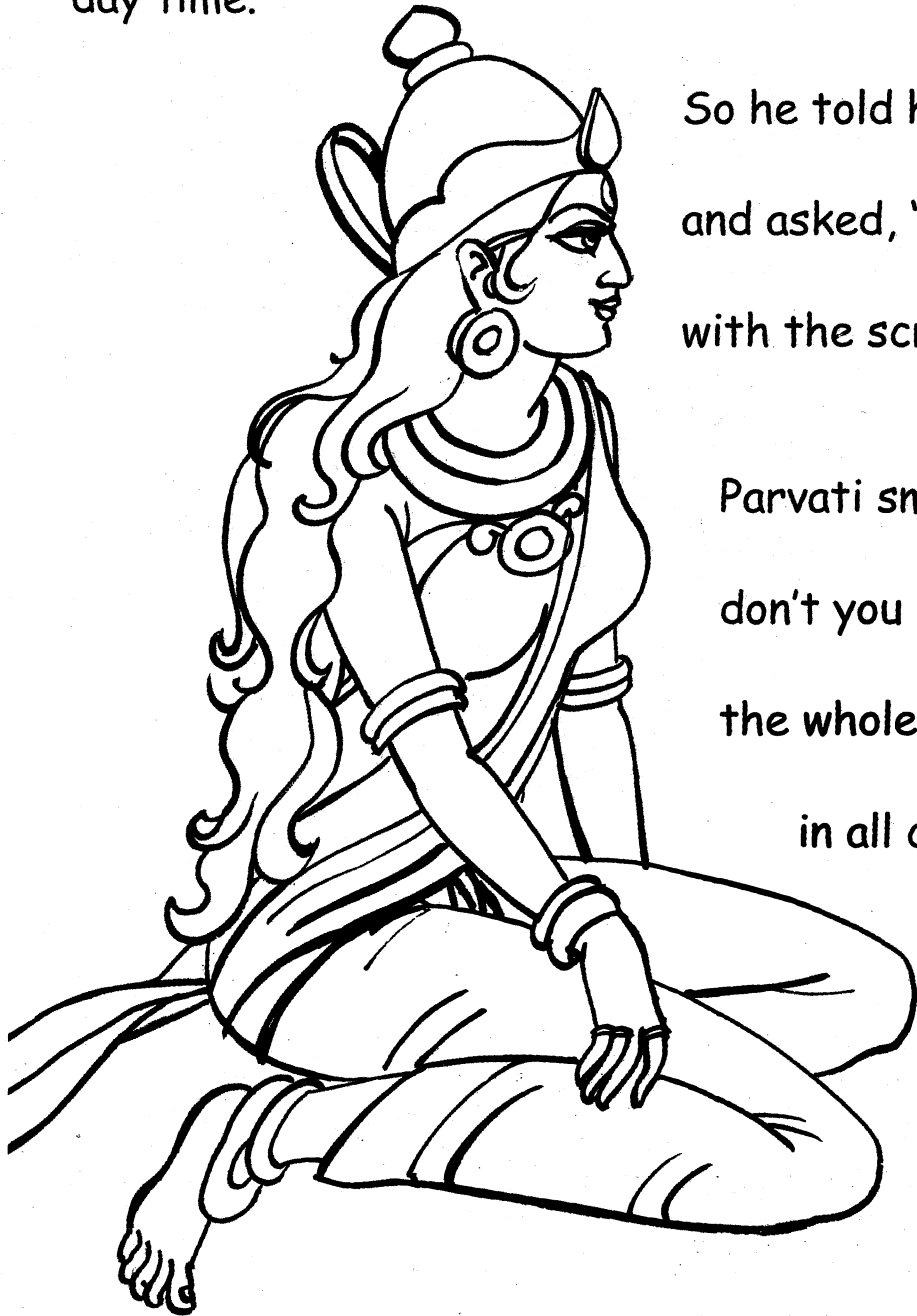
myself.

Some other

boy must have come in and pretended to be me".



But, Parvati gently shook her head and asked, "Ganesha, tell me, did you hurt anyone while playing in the garden? Did you play with any pet animal and hurt it in any way?". Ganesha now remembered how he punished his pet cat who had the habit of sleeping in the day time.



So he told his mother about that and asked, "But, what has that to do with the scratches on your face?".

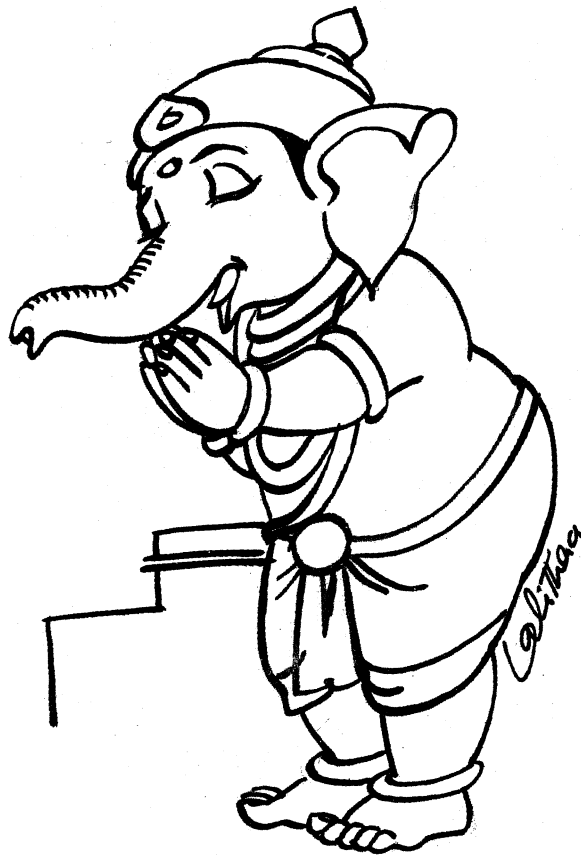
Parvati smiled and said, "Ganesha, don't you know I am the mother of the whole universe. It is I who live

in all creatures. When you

hurt anything in this creation you are hurting me".

Ganesha now understood. He realised that his mother loves all her children equally and suffers equally with all. Bowing down before his mother, Ganesha said, "Mother, from today I will not hurt any person or any creature by thought or action".

Each one of us must try to make this promise that Ganesha made. Only then will Mother Parvati shower Her divine grace on us.







## KRISHNA SHOWS HIMSELF TO YASHODA

One afternoon Yashoda was busy cooking.

Krishna and his friends were playing.

Suddenly Balarama ran to his mother and said, "Mother, Krishna is eating sand".

At first Yashoda did not believe him. Soon the other friends too said the same thing. "What is wrong with

Krishna? Why is he

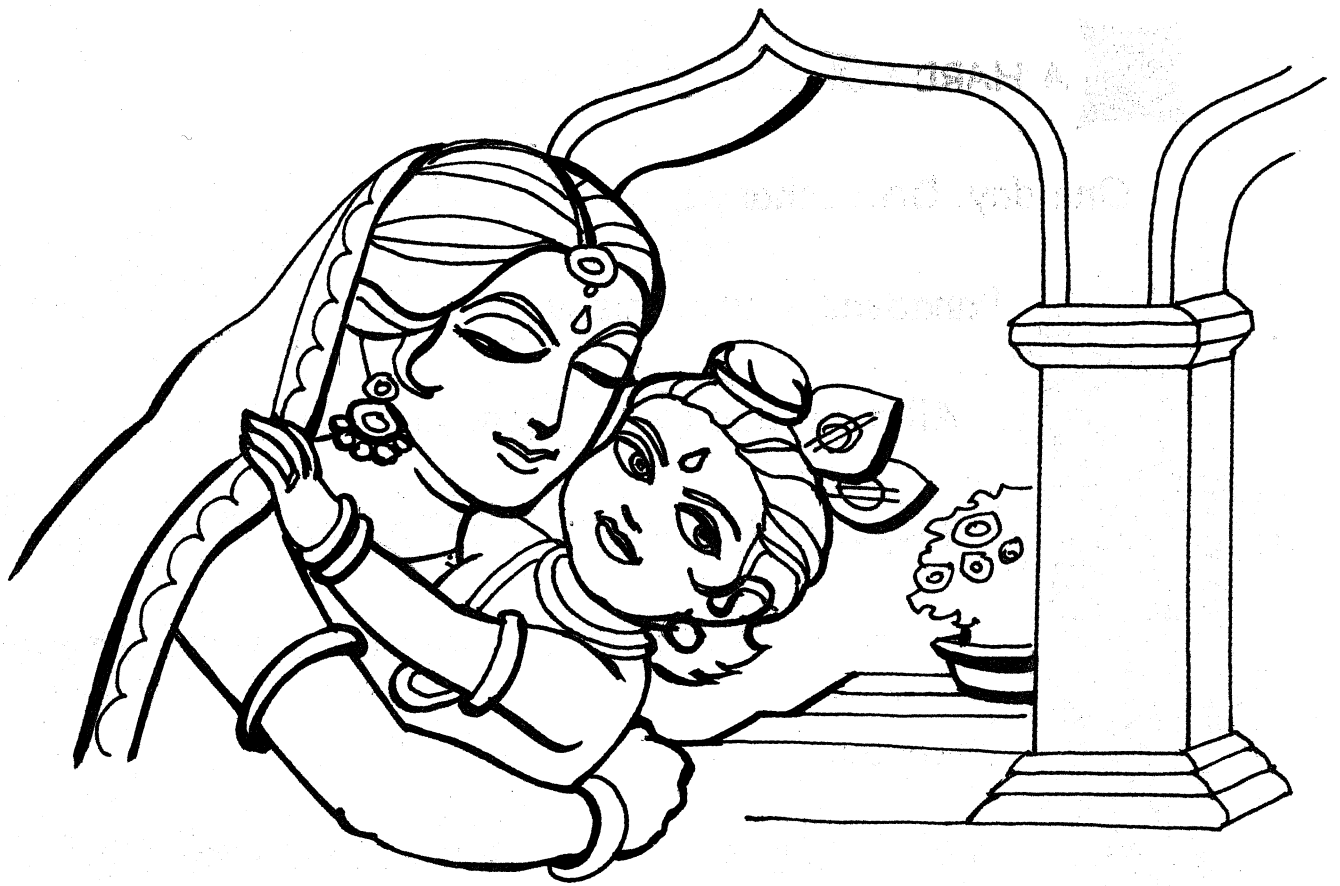
eating sand? At home I keep making all kinds of sweets for him", she wondered.

Trying not to get angry, she called him and asked, "What is this? I hear you are eating sand. Am I not feeding you enough?". In a pleading voice Krishna replied, "But, Mother, I have not eaten any sand. Balarama is telling lies. If you don't believe me, just look into my mouth". Yashoda said, "Alright. Open your mouth. Let me see".



Krishna opened his mouth. Oh! What did mother Yashoda see! - the whole universe. There was a strange light. She saw all the Gods. She even saw herself with Krishna sitting on her lap. For a moment Yashoda went blank. She thought her eyes were playing games with her. She looked again. It was as though she was seeing a movie of this whole universe in his mouth.





This frightened her. She was wonderstruck and a little confused too.

"Oh Lord! Please protect my child", she prayed. She also remembered what the priest had said at Krishna's naming ceremony. "This is no ordinary child. He is Lord Vishnu himself who has taken birth to fight evil and wrong doers". Yashoda prayed to the Lord to take care of this child.

Krishna once again became her loving child. She cuddled him and rocked him. Yashoda decided to treat the whole scene as a dream and soon forgot about it.



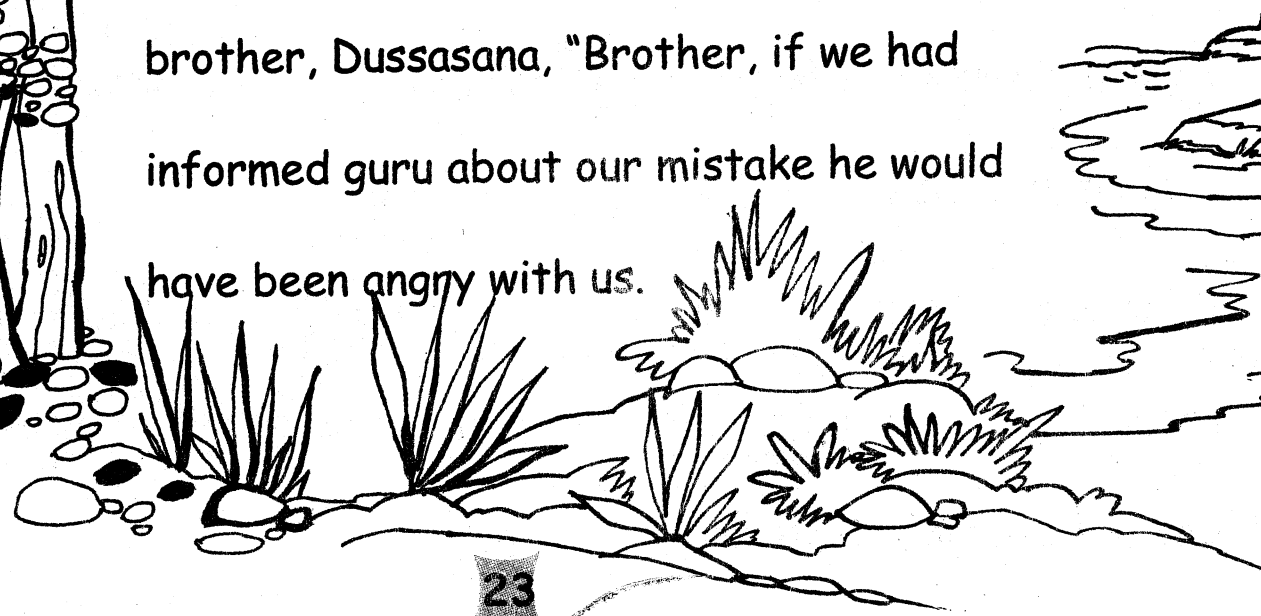
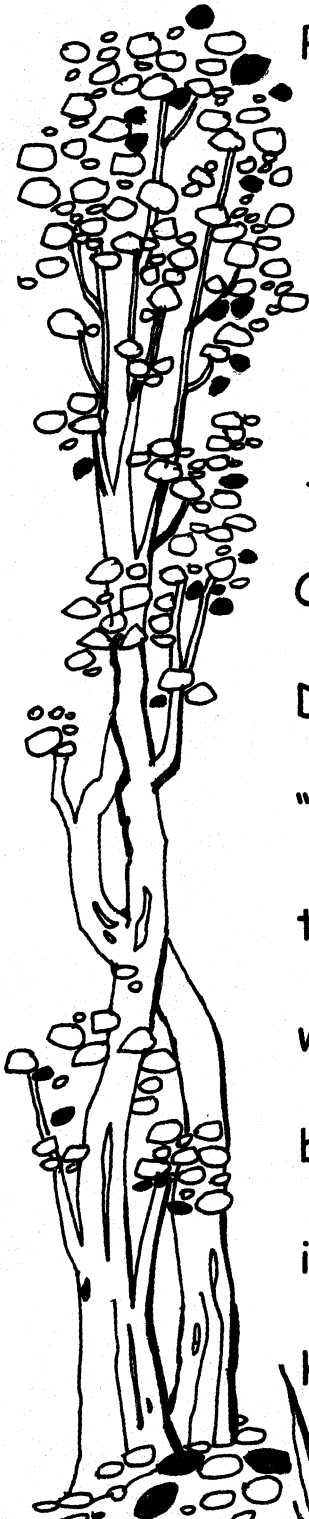
## A HARDWORKING STUDENT

One day, Dronacharya, the guru of the Kauravas and the

Pandavas, was on his way to the river for an oil bath.

All his students accompanied him. They were supposed to carry a vessel of oil but they had forgotten to bring it. They were afraid to tell their guru about this.

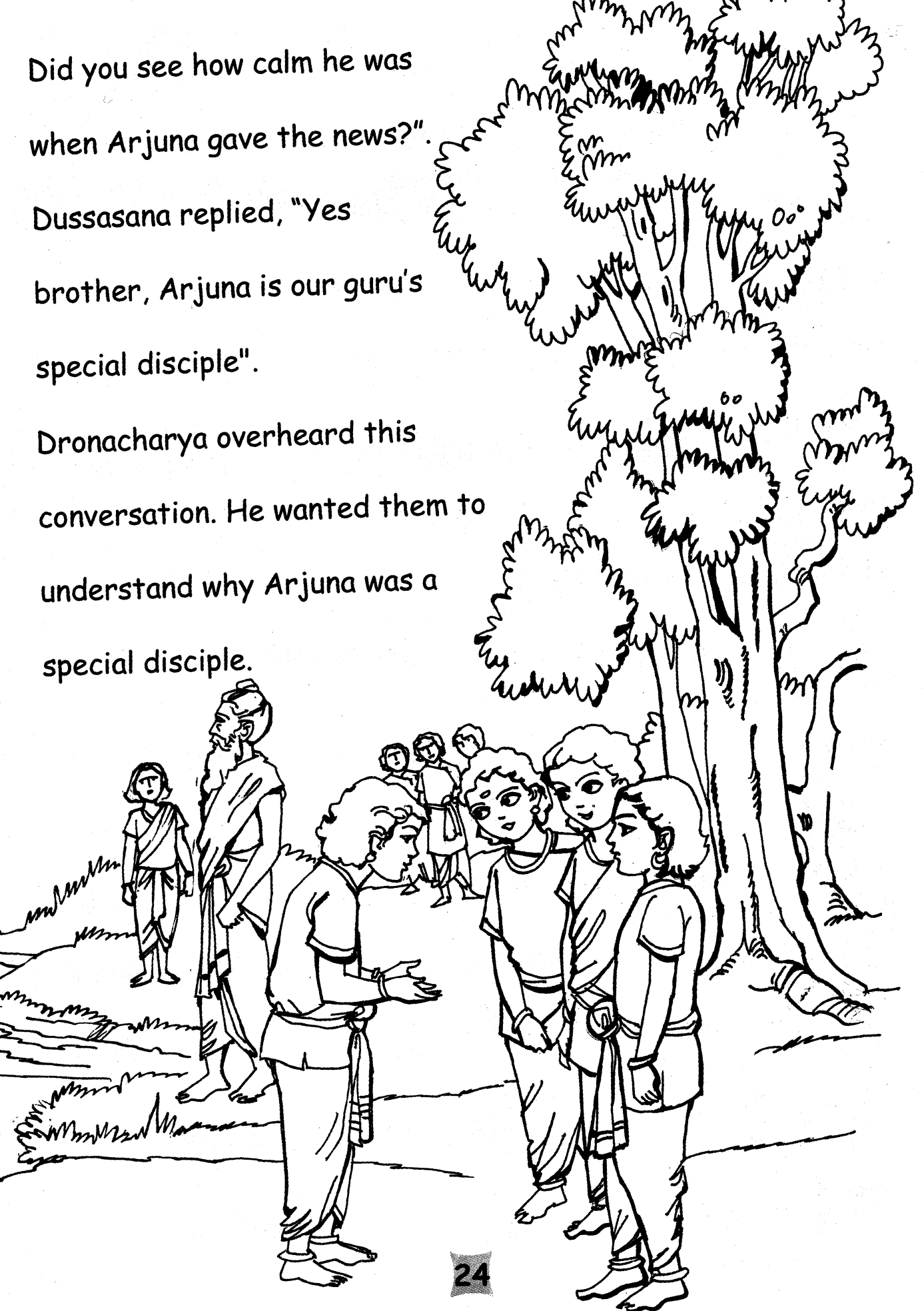
One of them suggested that Arjuna should tell Dronacharya, as the guru liked him. Arjuna said, "why not?", and told his guru who then sent Arjuna to fetch the oil vessel without getting angry with him. Seeing this, Duryodhana told his younger brother, Dussasana, "Brother, if we had informed guru about our mistake he would have been angry with us."

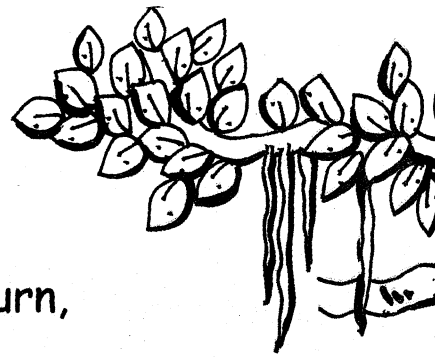


Did you see how calm he was when Arjuna gave the news?"

Dussasana replied, "Yes brother, Arjuna is our guru's special disciple".

Dronacharya overheard this conversation. He wanted them to understand why Arjuna was a special disciple.



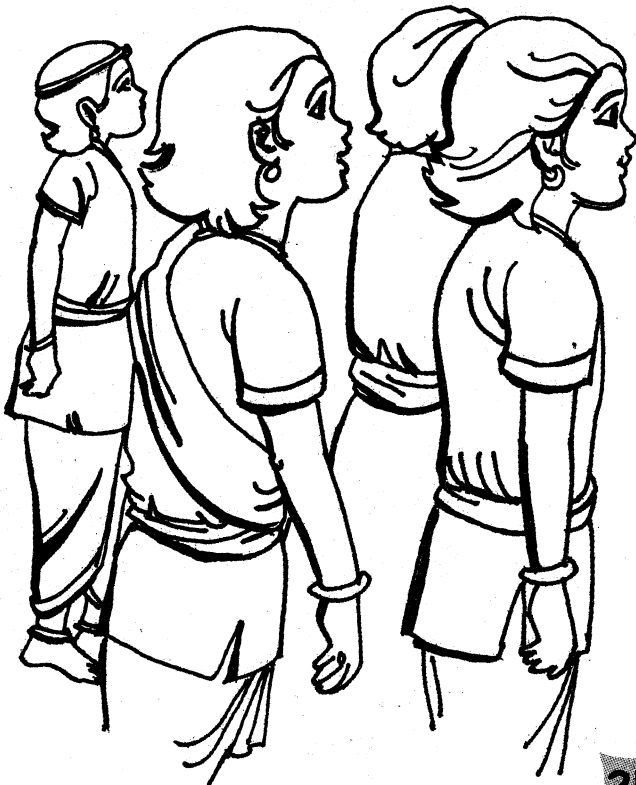


When the Pandavas and the Kauravas were waiting under a banyan tree for Arjuna to return,

Dronacharya wrote a mantra on the ground with his arrow.

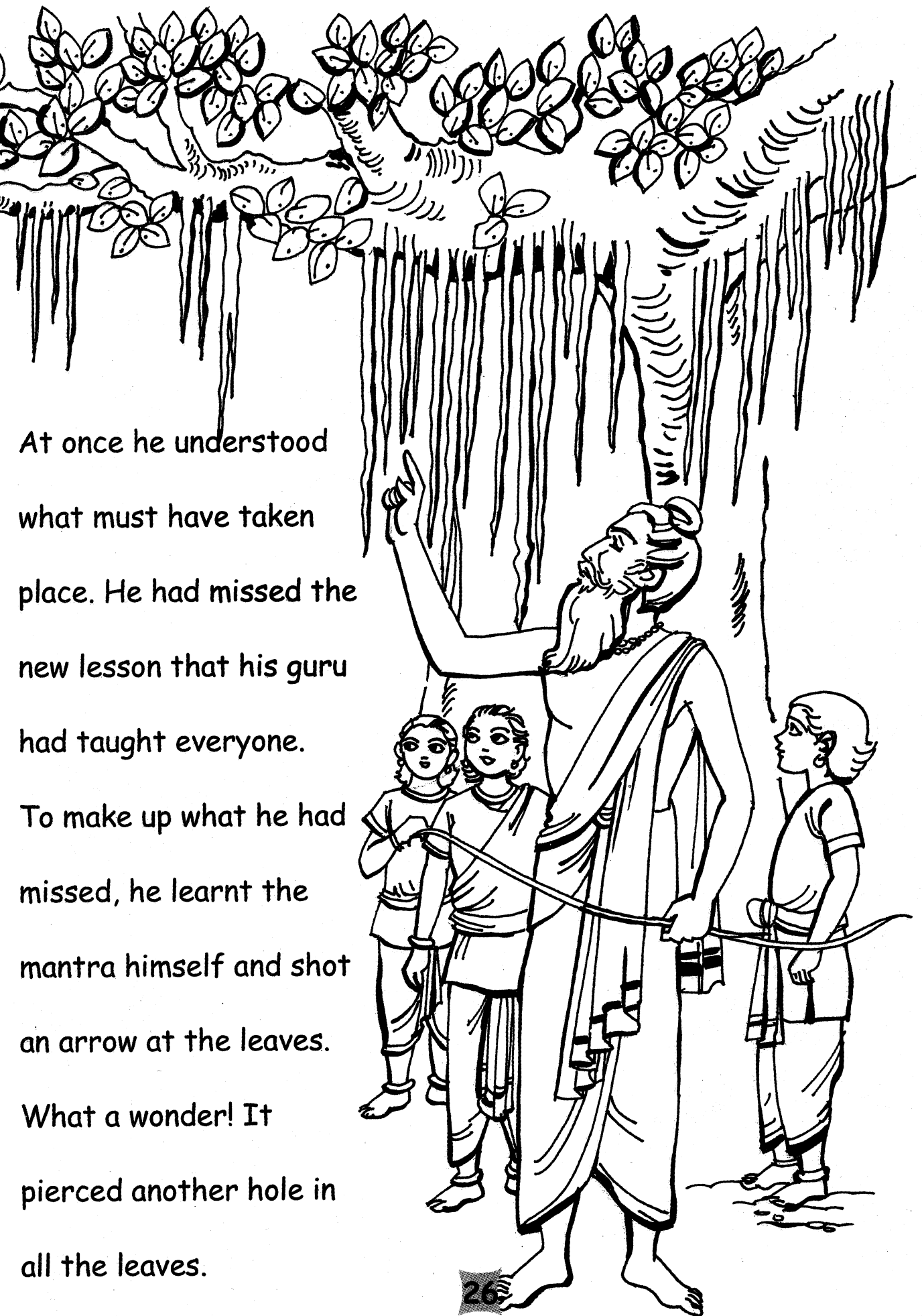
He told his students, "Listen princes! This mantra is very powerful. I will utter this mantra and shoot an arrow at the leaves. See what happens". The arrow pierced every single leaf of the tree. All the students were wonderstruck at what they saw but they did not say or do anything. They quietly followed their guru to the river.

A little later, Arjuna returned with the oil vessel. He came to the



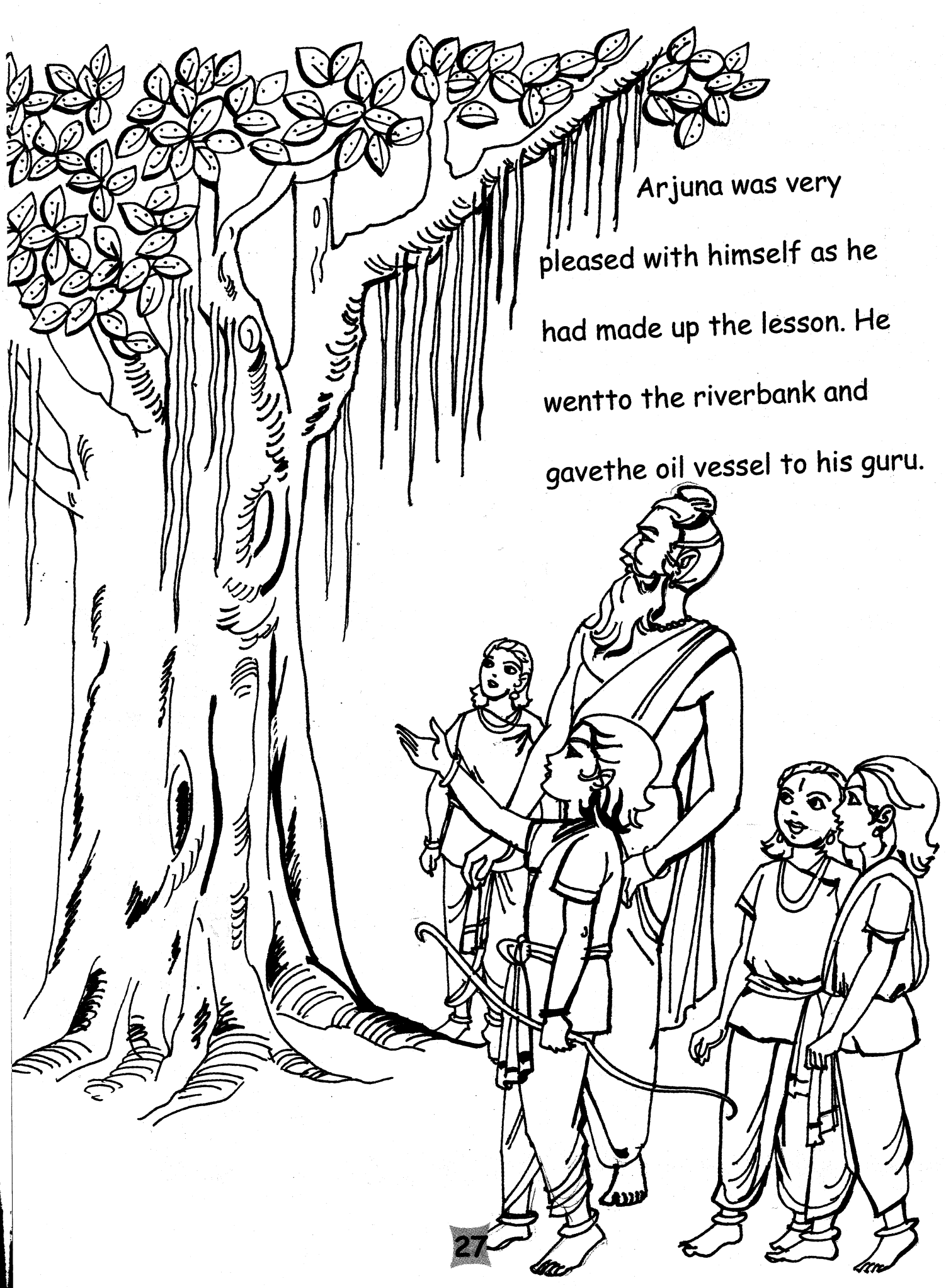
spot where the banyan tree was.

He saw a mantra written on the ground. He also saw that all the leaves of the tree had been pierced.



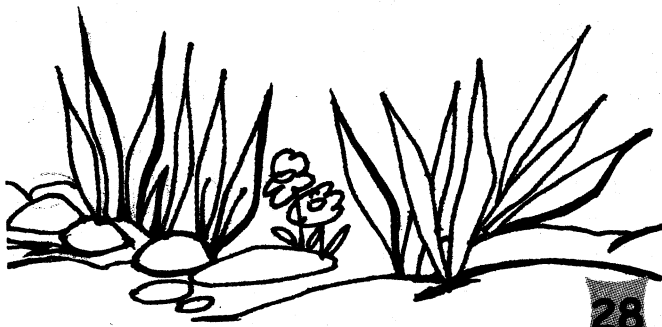
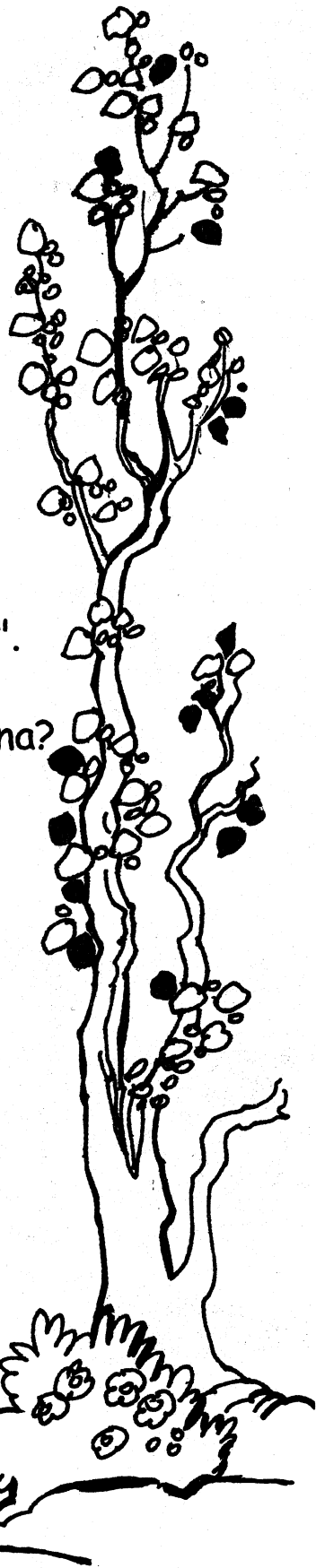
At once he understood what must have taken place. He had missed the new lesson that his guru had taught everyone. To make up what he had missed, he learnt the mantra himself and shot an arrow at the leaves. What a wonder! It pierced another hole in all the leaves.





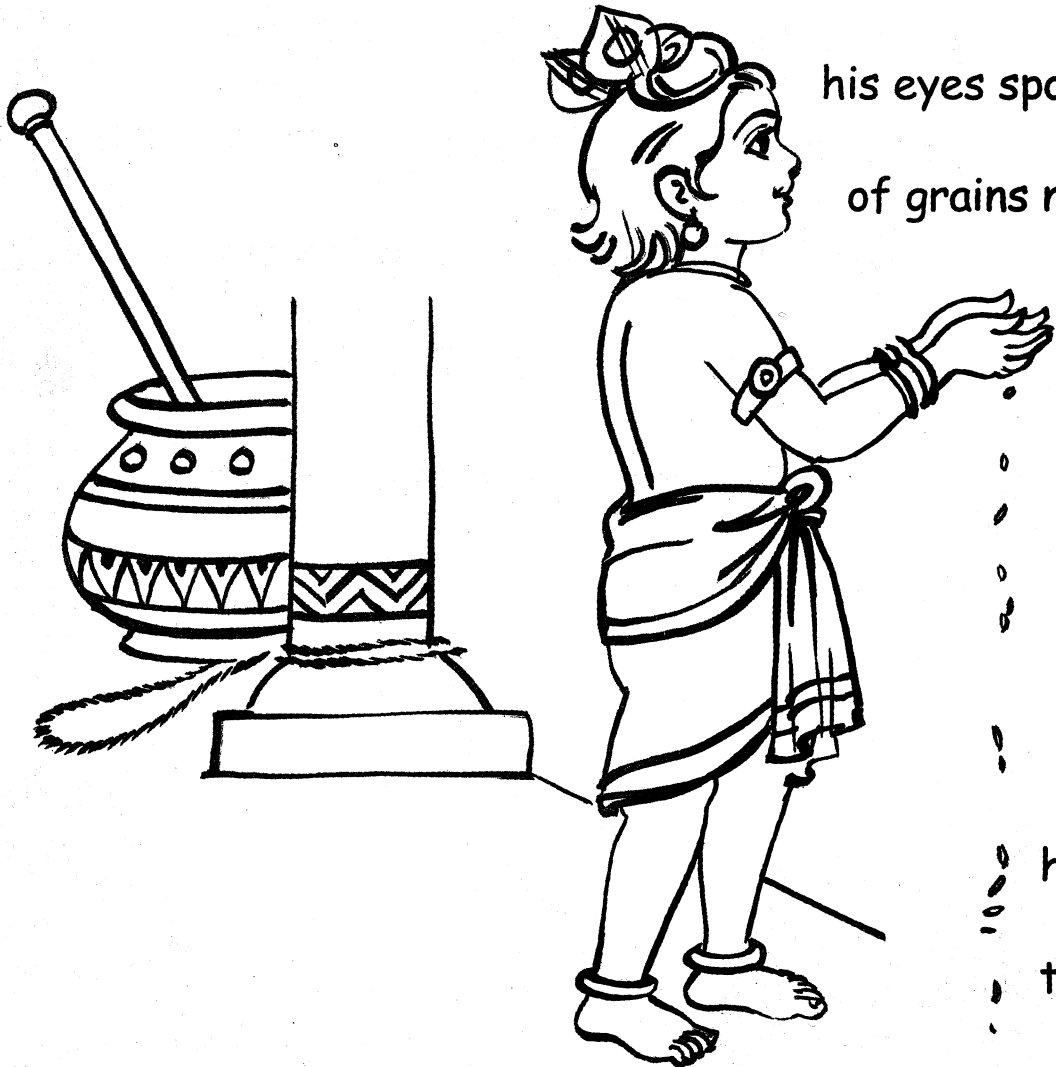
Arjuna was very pleased with himself as he had made up the lesson. He went to the riverbank and gave the oil vessel to his guru.

After a bath, Dronacharya, the Pandavas and the Kauravas returned the same way. This time they were surprised to see two holes in each leaf of the same banyan tree. Arjuna looked at his guru and said, "Oh Guruji! Without your permission I learnt the new mantra. I did not want to miss the new lesson that you had taught my brothers and cousins". Dronacharya smiled and said, "Do you see Duryodhana? None of you thought of learning or using the new mantra. Arjuna had that eagerness. That is why he is a good student. So don't be jealous, but try to be hardworking like him".



One day, Krishna was playing in the courtyard with Balarama and his other friends. They heard a fruit seller shouting, "Jamuns for sale". They stopped playing and rushed to the fruit seller.

"These are my favourite fruits but how do I buy them? I have no money", Krishna said to himself. He looked around, suddenly



his eyes spotted a heap of grains nearby. He

picked up a

handful and

went to the

fruit seller.

By the time

he reached

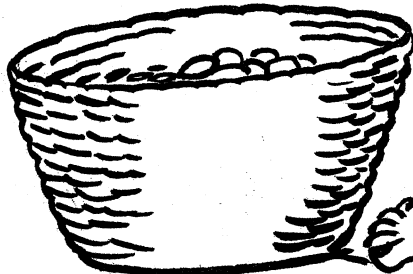
the fruit

seller, his hands were only half full, as, much of it had spilled

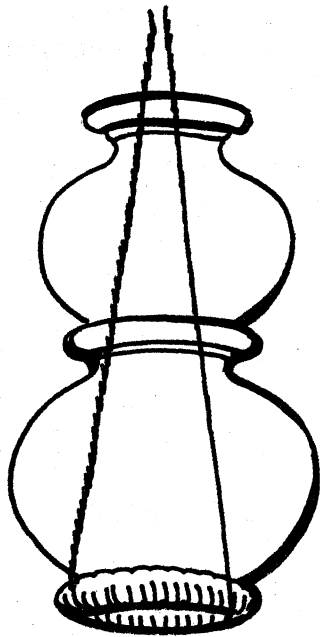
along the way.

Holding out the remaining grains to the fruit seller Krishna said, "Lady, please give me some fruits in exchange for these grains".

Feeling sorry that he had only a small amount



left, Krishna said, "I picked up a handful but, on the way most of it dropped. This is all that I have"



The fruit seller was pleased with the little boy's simplicity and honesty. His smile and tinkling anklets melted her heart.

She was so pleased with him that she said,  
"My child! You do not have to give me any grains.

You can have as many fruits as you wish. Please keep those grains with you. Take as many jamuns as you want". Krishna's eyes almost popped out with excitement. "Thank you so much", he said. Quickly he dropped whatever grains he had in his hands into her basket and opened his hand to receive the fruits. The fruit seller filled Krishna's cute little palms with as many jamuns as they could hold.

She was so happy with the little boy that she was not interested in selling anymore for the day. So she packed up and returned home early. As she was emptying her basket she could not believe her eyes.

The grains that Krishna dropped into the basket had turned into gold.

"Oh! The Lord himself came in person to bless me. I am so lucky", she thought.

This was Krishna's way of showing that anyone who offered him anything with love and affection would be blessed with a lot of happiness.



## GANESHA - THE WISE SON

One day, Lord Shiva played a game on Ganesha and Kartikeya. He

showed them a

huge mango and said,

"This is a very sweet

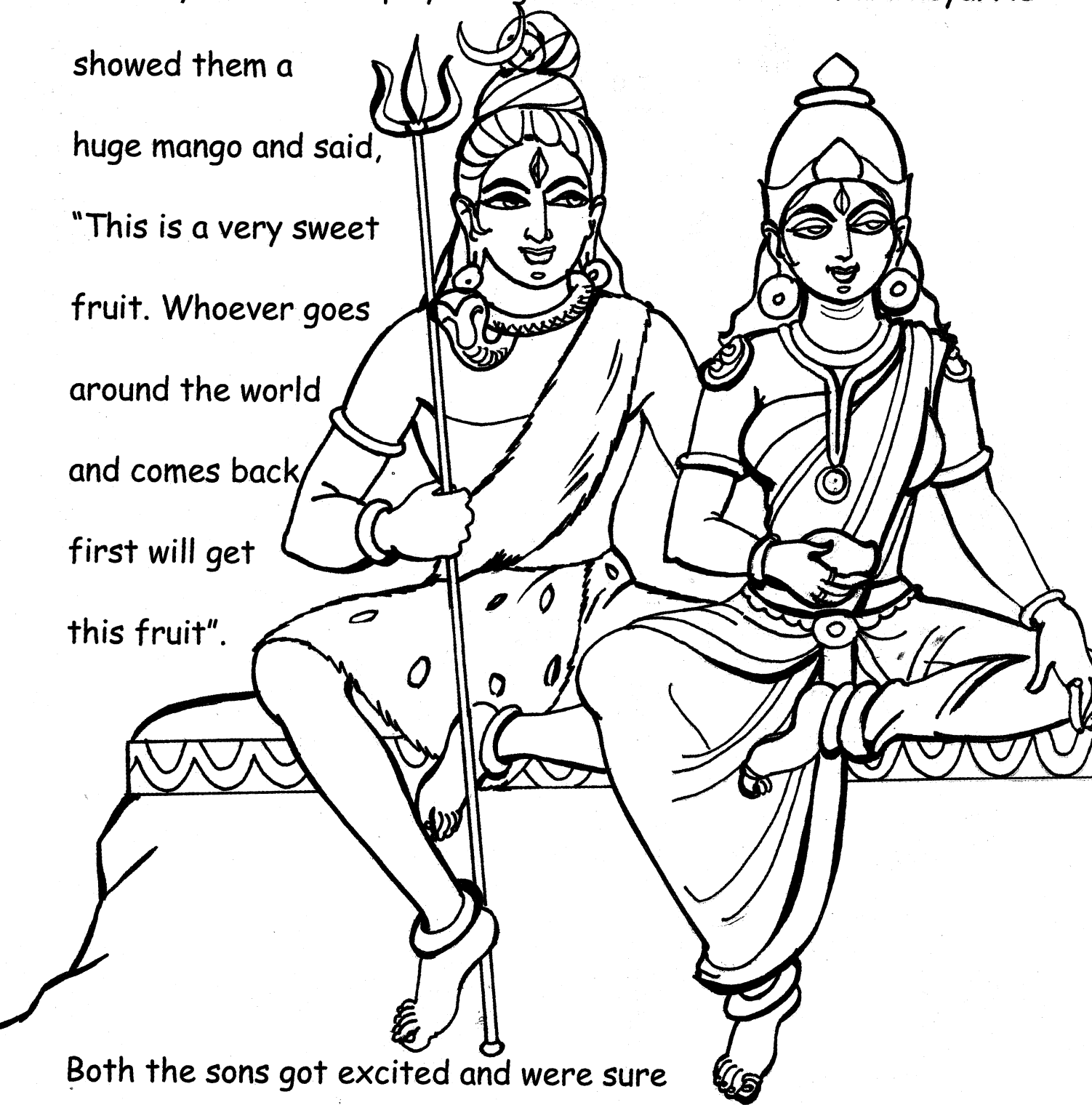
fruit. Whoever goes

around the world

and comes back

first will get

this fruit".



Both the sons got excited and were sure

of winning. Lord Shiva continued, "This place where your mother and

I are sitting will be the starting and the finishing point".

Kartikeya could not wait to get started. He was in a hurry. Being a warrior, he was sure he would win the race. He received his parents blessings, patted his peacock saying, "You have to fly your fastest", and started off. Parvati asked her husband, "Who do you think will win the race?". Lord Shiva smiled and said, "Wait and watch". They saw that unlike Kartikeya, Ganesha was in no hurry. Very slowly he walked around his parents three times. Then

he bowed before them and stretched out his hands for the fruit.





Parvati looked at Ganesha curiously.

Lord Shiva said, "Son, that was very fast! Did you go around the world?"

With a cute smile,

Ganesha replied,

"Mother Parvati

and Lord

Shiva, you are

the whole

universe. The

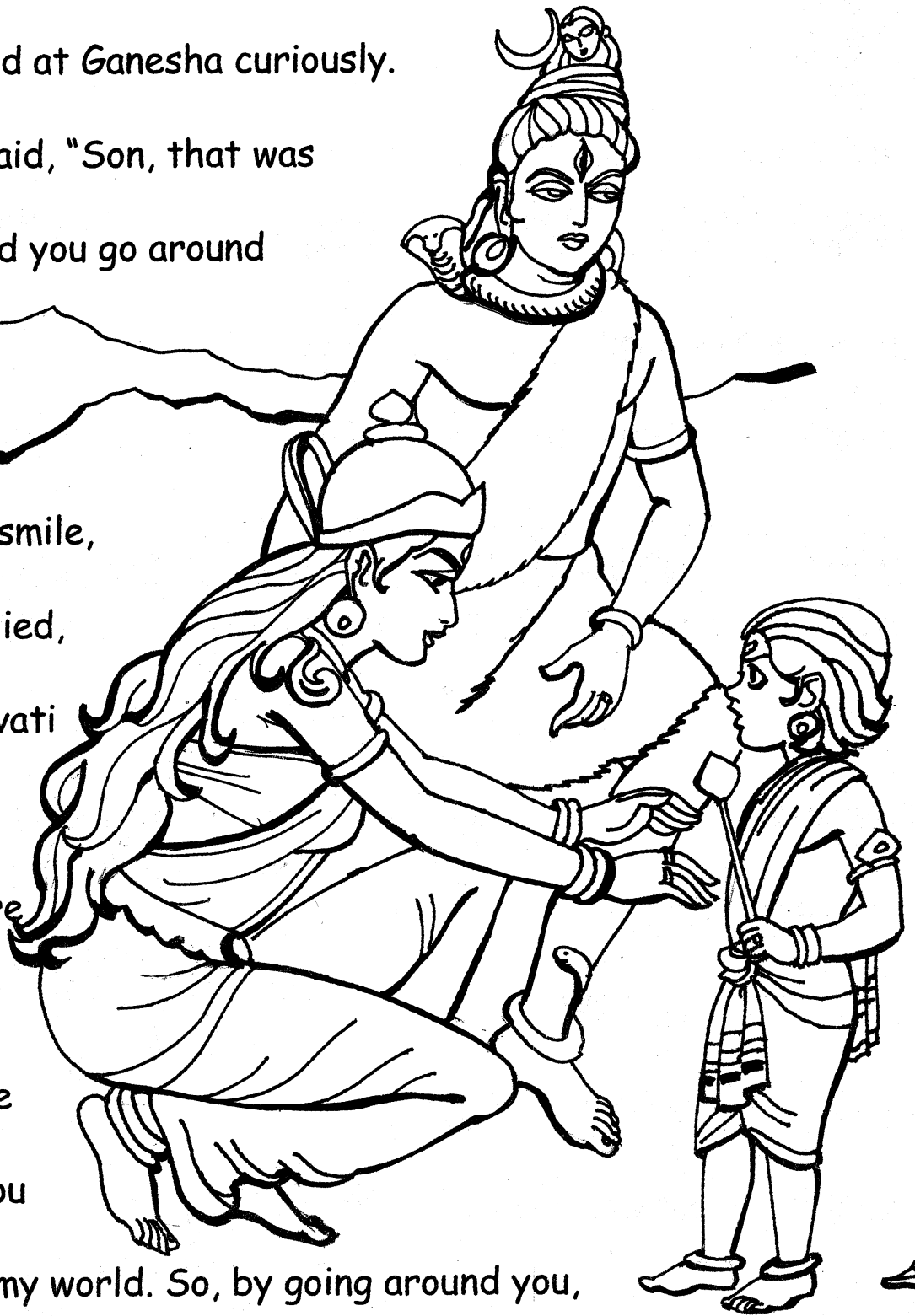
world is in you

and you are my world. So, by going around you,

I have gone around the universe. Now I am first and I should

receive the mango". Lord Shiva saw how clever Ganesha

was and said, "Alright. You win".



Just then Kartikeya returned feeling very pleased with himself.

He was shocked to see Ganesha eating the fruit. He said, "Ganesha! How can you have the fruit? You did not go around the world! I have won, I should get the fruit". Lord Shiva explained, "Your brother was wise and devoted to his parents. He went around your mother and me as we are his world. You were so sure of winning, that you did not wait to think. Remember, power alone will not lead you to victory in life".

"Oh father! Please forgive me. I thought I was a wise person. But now my brother has taught me that I must think before acting". Kartikeya bowed before his parents and accepted his brother as the winner.



Krishna and Sudama were childhood friends. They studied in the same gurukula and spent a lot of time together. After completing their studies, they both went back to their own families.

Sudama married a humble girl called Sushila and they had many children. They were so poor that Sudama's friends teased him and called him "Kuchela" - one who wears torn clothes. Sushila felt very sad. She suggested to her husband that he should ask his

friend Krishna for help.



Sudama liked the idea of meeting his old friend after many years but decided not to ask Krishna for anything. Sudama told Sushila, "Alright. I will go. It will be wonderful to see my friend after all these years. But how can I go empty handed? Can you give me something as a gift to take to Sri Krishna?". Sushila said,

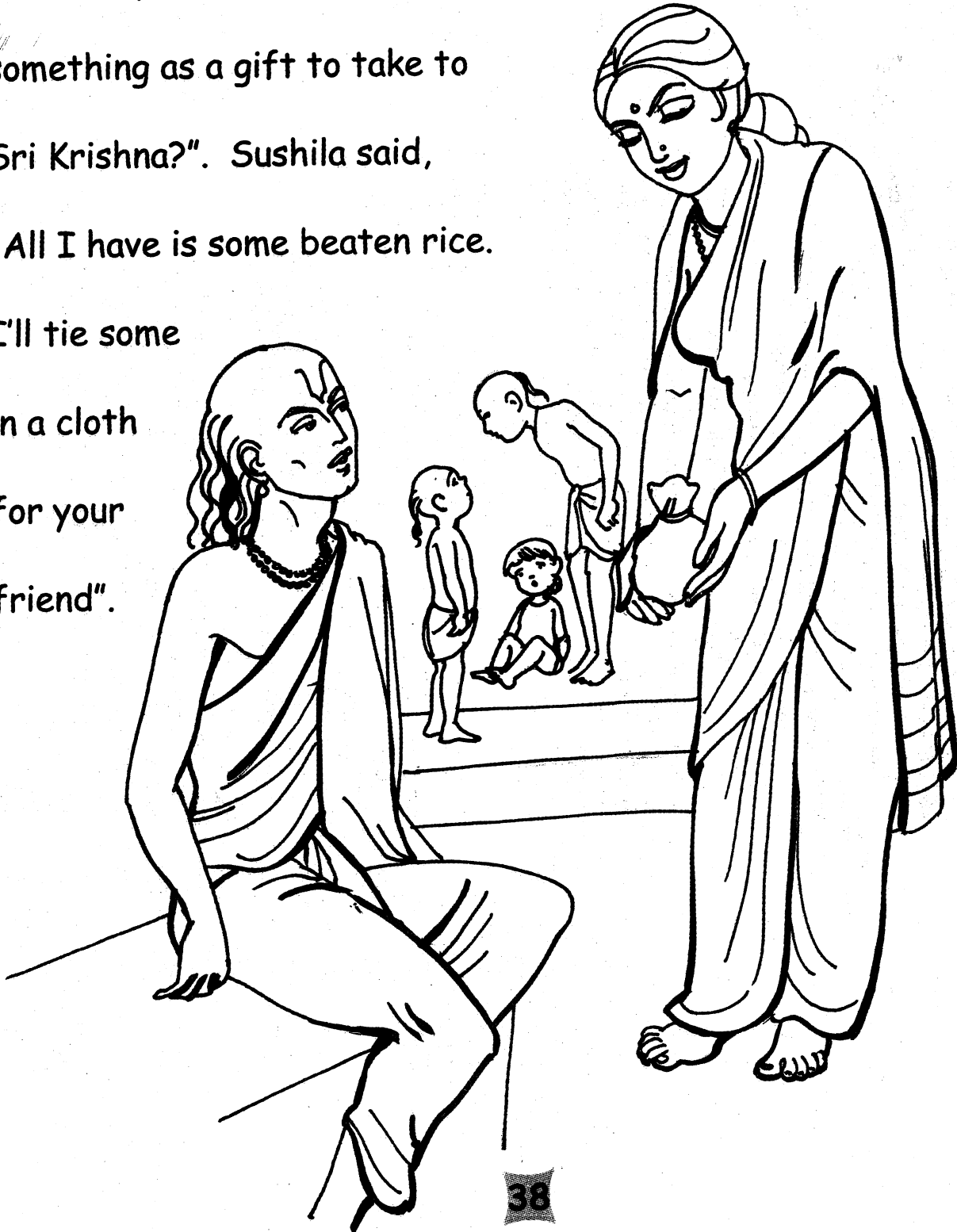
"All I have is some beaten rice.

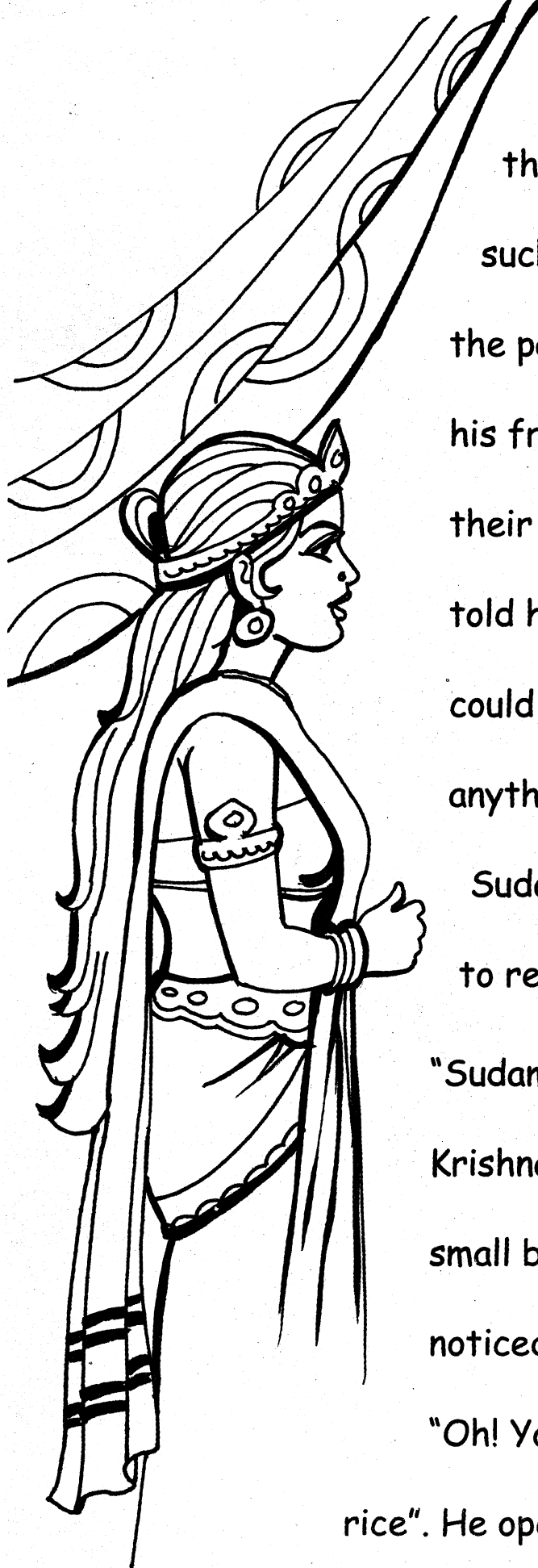
I'll tie some

in a cloth

for your

friend".





On his way to Dwaraka, Sudama kept thinking of Krishna and how they became such dear friends. When Sudama entered the palace, Krishna ran forward and hugged his friend. They both talked for hours about their wonderful time at the gurukula. Sudama told his friend that he now has a family. He could not bring himself to ask Krishna for anything. But, Krishna, the Lord, knew Sudama's reason for coming. So he decided to reward his friend with plenty of wealth. "Sudama, what did you bring for me?", asked Krishna. Sudama was shy to give his friend the small bundle that he had brought. But, Krishna noticed Sudama holding a bundle and cried out, "Oh! You have brought my favourite beaten rice". He opened the bundle and ate a mouthful.





"This is great. This rice tastes so good. It reminds me of our days together at the gurukula", said Krishna.



That night Sudama slept in the palace without any worries. Next morning, Sudama took his time in wishing Krishna goodbye. He found it painful to part with his dear friend. It was only while he was walking towards his home, that he

remembered Sushila's words.

He realised that he had not

asked Krishna for

anything. But he was

very happy that he

could have a darshan

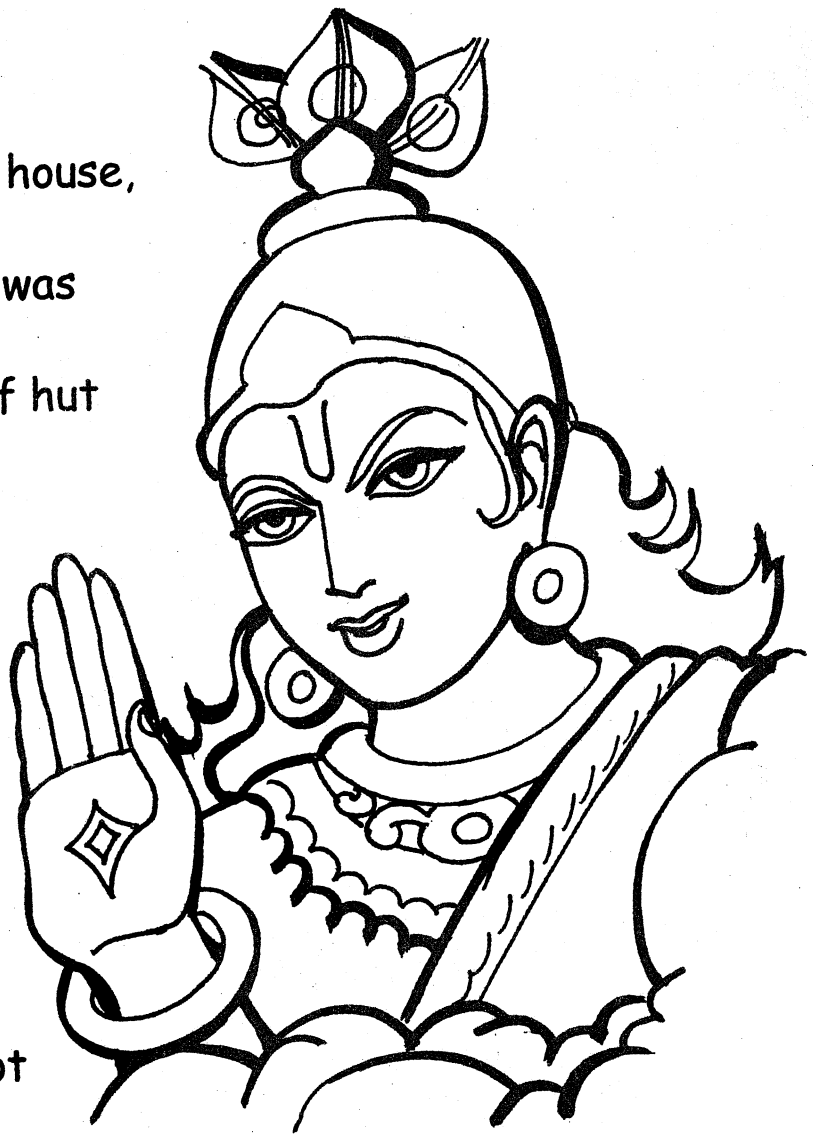
of his friend.



As Sudama was nearing his house,  
he suddenly stood still. He was  
stunned. The thatched roof hut  
was not there anymore.

In its place was a mansion.

A woman dressed  
beautifully with heavy  
jewellery rushed out to  
greet Sudama. He could not  
recognise his wife, Sushila and his children.



All were grandly dressed, "My dear husband, when we got up this  
morning we found ourselves inside this mansion!", she exclaimed.

Sudama looked at his family, smiled and said to himself, "This must  
be the work of Lord Krishna. He knew what I wanted even though I  
did not ask him". Sushila said, "Lord, your faith in Krishna has blessed  
us. Let us spend the rest of our lives in devotion to the Lord".



## PRAHLADA - LORD VISHNU'S DEVOTEE

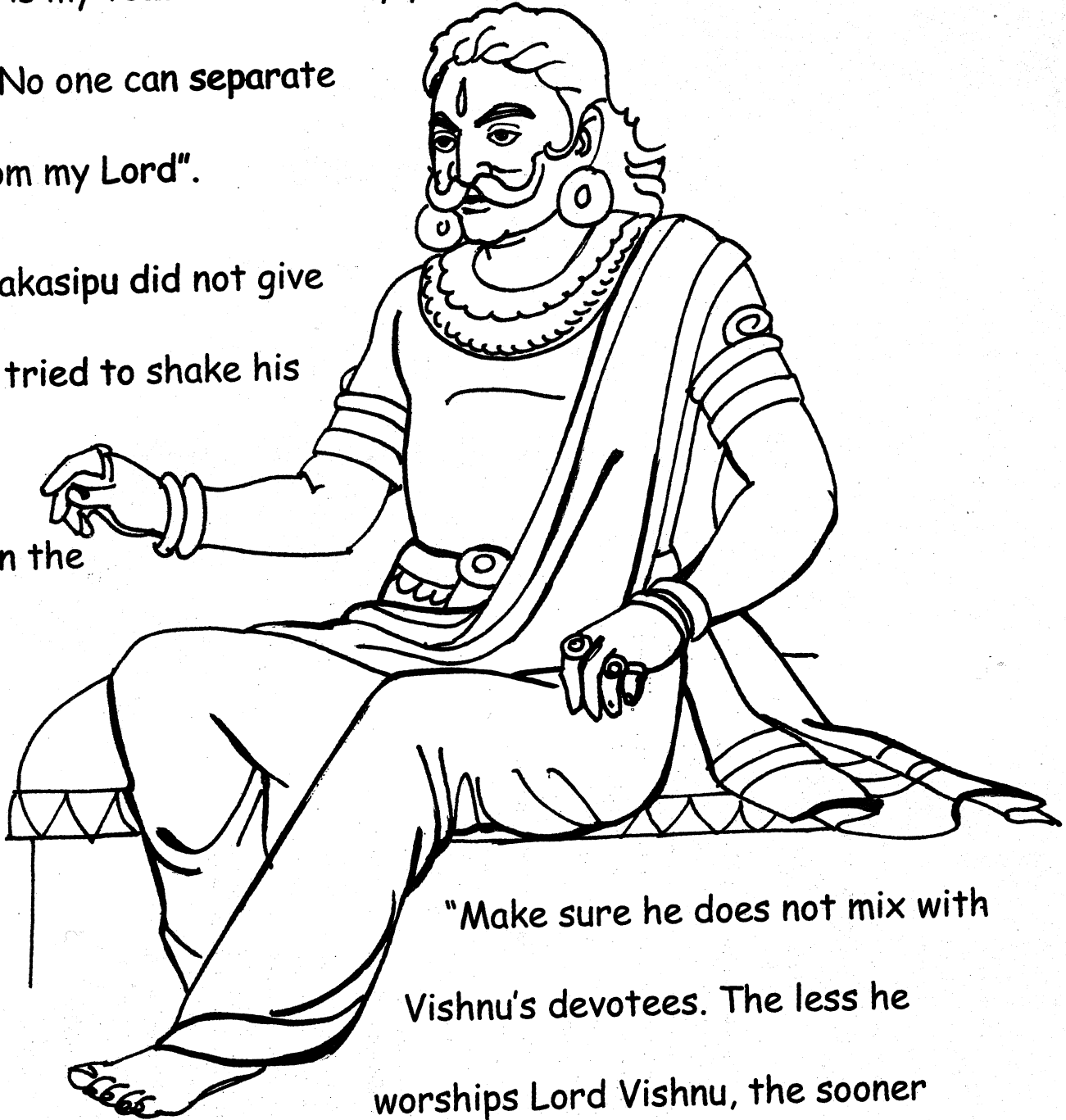
Prahlada, son of an asura called Hiranyakasipu and Kayadhu, was Lord Vishnu's devotee. Prahlada was different from other children of his age. He spent the whole day thinking and singing the Lord's name. But father Hiranyakasipu was not happy.



He believed that he was greater than God and so his son should not worship anybody else. On his son's fifth birthday he said, "Son, I want you to learn to be a great prince with power and money. You will have special teachers to teach you".

The child was not interested and said, "Please father, I don't want to be a King like you. There is nothing more for me to learn. Lord Vishnu is my teacher. He is my protector. I am in Him and He is in me. No one can separate me from my Lord".

Hiranyakasipu did not give up. He tried to shake his son's faith in the Lord.



"Make sure he does not mix with Vishnu's devotees. The less he worships Lord Vishnu, the sooner he can learn the kingly arts", he told the teachers.

Then Hiranyakasipu asked Prahlada again, "Tell me son, what did you learn from your teacher today". Prahlada replied, "Surrendering everything that one has to the Lord is the highest lesson I learnt today". The furious father lost his patience. "Kill him", ordered Hiranyakasipu. "How dare he worship my enemy Vishnu, who killed my brother", he shouted. The asuras used powerful weapons, wild elephants and poisonous snakes to attack Prahlada, but all failed. He was even buried underground, but nothing worked. Then, Hiranyakasipu himself

charged forward to strike his own son.

"Where is your Lord Vishnu, Lord of the worlds you speak so highly of? Is he here in this pillar?", he asked, smashing the pillar.



Just then a frightening thunder sound was heard. Lord Vishnu, in the form of Narasimha stepped out. He gripped Hiranyakasipu and killed him.

Prahlada recognised his Lord Vishnu. He went to Him and offered his prayers.

Lord Narasimha showed his true self as Lord Vishnu and blessed him with long life.



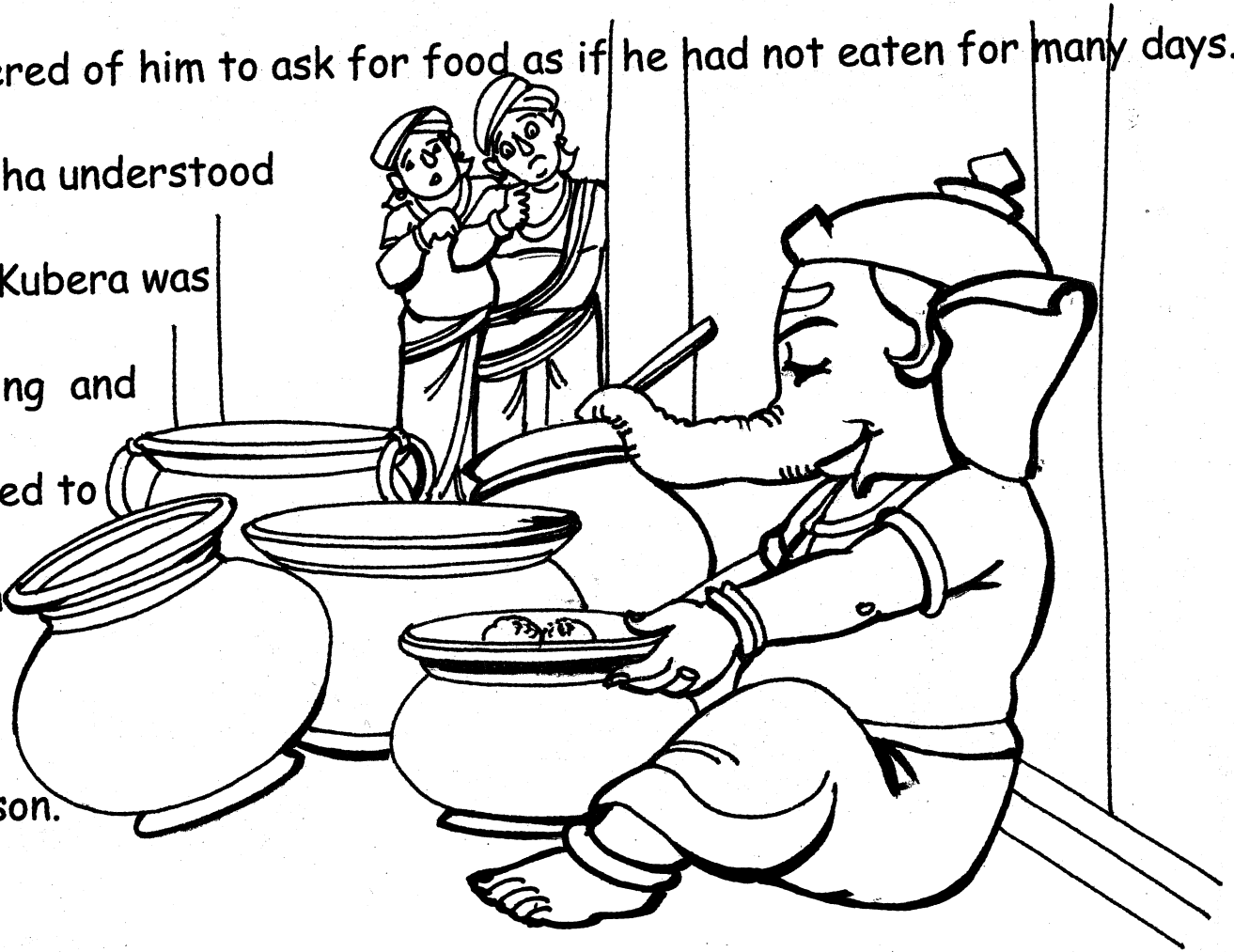
## LORD GANESHA AND KUBERA

Kubera was a very rich King. He was very proud of his wealth. Once, he invited Lord Shiva and Parvati to his palace for lunch. He ordered his cooks to prepare a grand meal to show off his wealth. Lord Shiva came with Parvathi and his son Ganesha. Ganesha asked Kubera, "Where is your dining hall? I am very hungry, please serve me food".



Kubera was surprised at Ganesha's behaviour. He felt it was ill-mannered of him to ask for food as if he had not eaten for many days.

Ganesha understood what Kubera was thinking and decided to teach him a lesson.

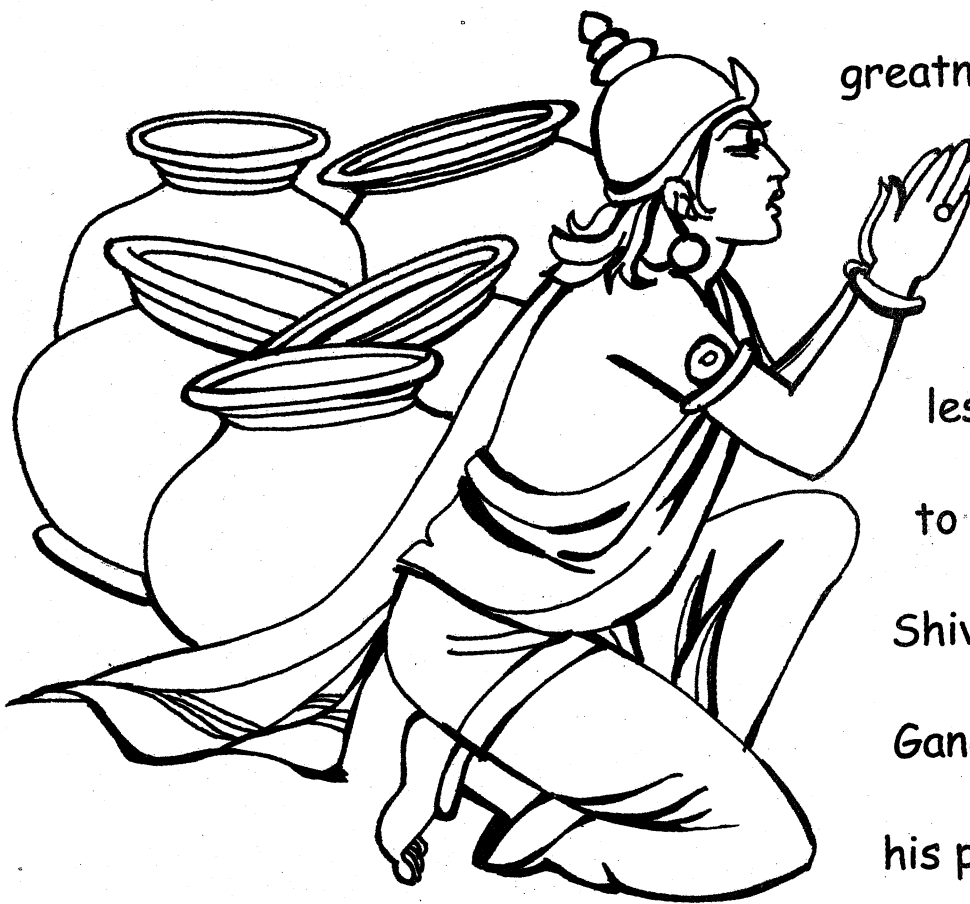


Ganesha started eating and soon finished all the cooked food in the palace. He then asked for all the uncooked food like rice, dhal, and vegetables and ate them too. Next he asked for the firewood. He finished eating that and said that he was still hungry. The cooks got worried. They ran to Kubera to explain what had happened. Kubera, the proud King, was not disturbed by this.

He ordered his servants to buy more food. The cooks returned empty handed. All the food items were out of stock. Kubera was shocked. "How is this possible? Is Ganesha playing a trick on me?", he thought. Suddenly he realised that all his wealth was nothing in front of God's power.

Kubera fell at Lord Shiva's feet and begged forgiveness. He said, "Oh! Lord, I was wrong in being proud. I wanted to show my

greatness to you. Lord Ganesha has taught me a good lesson. Please ask him to stop eating". Lord Shiva replied, "Go to Ganesha and seek his pardon".





Kubera knelt at Lord Ganesha's feet and said, "Please forgive me Lord. You have shown me that any amount of wealth or food offered to you without devotion is not liked by you". Lord Ganesha replied, "You are right. You cannot win me over with wealth. I am pleased with a simple offering as long as it is given with devotion and humility".

Kubera had learnt his lesson. Let us remember that true devotion is more important than the quantity when we make any offering to God.



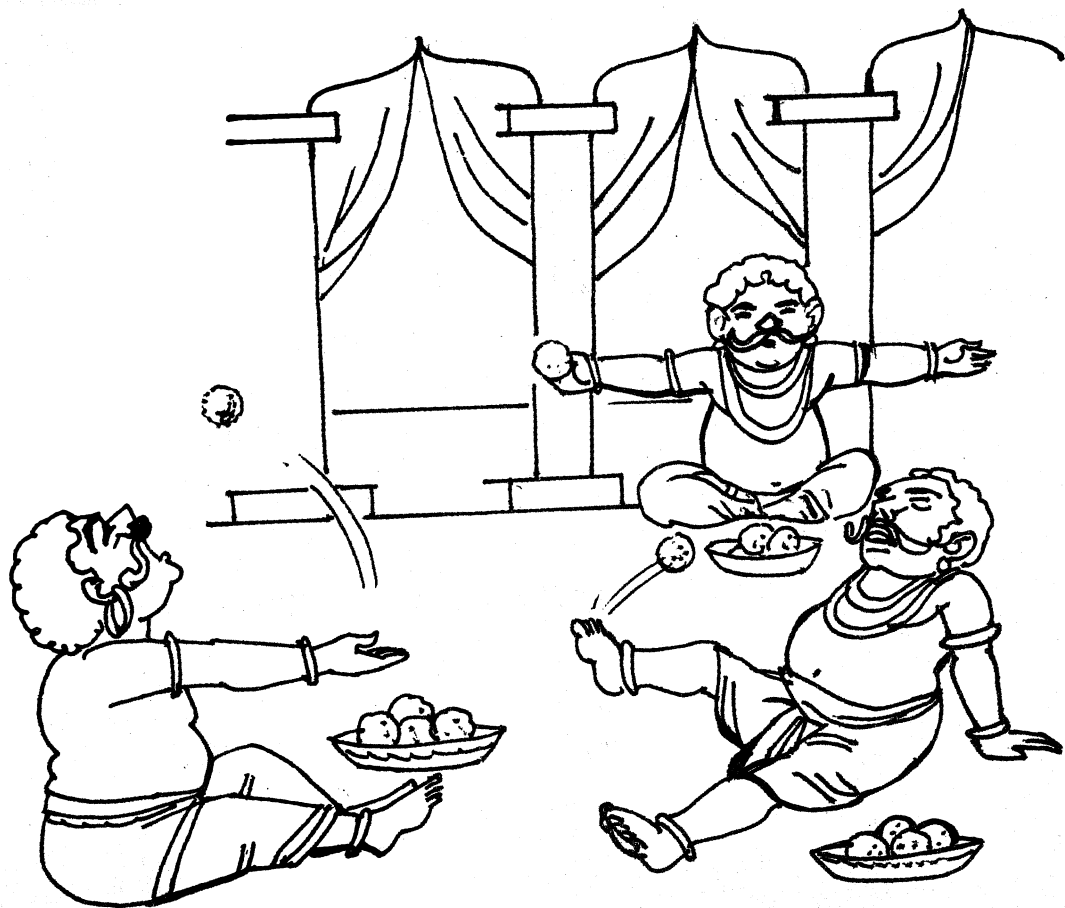
## THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

The asuras were always at war with the devas. Since the devas always won, the asuras were jealous of them. Once they complained to Lord Brahma. "You always take their side, that is why they do well in everything". The Lord replied, "I do not take sides. I treat everybody equally. The devas do better because

they are sincere in their work and

they always think of others first".

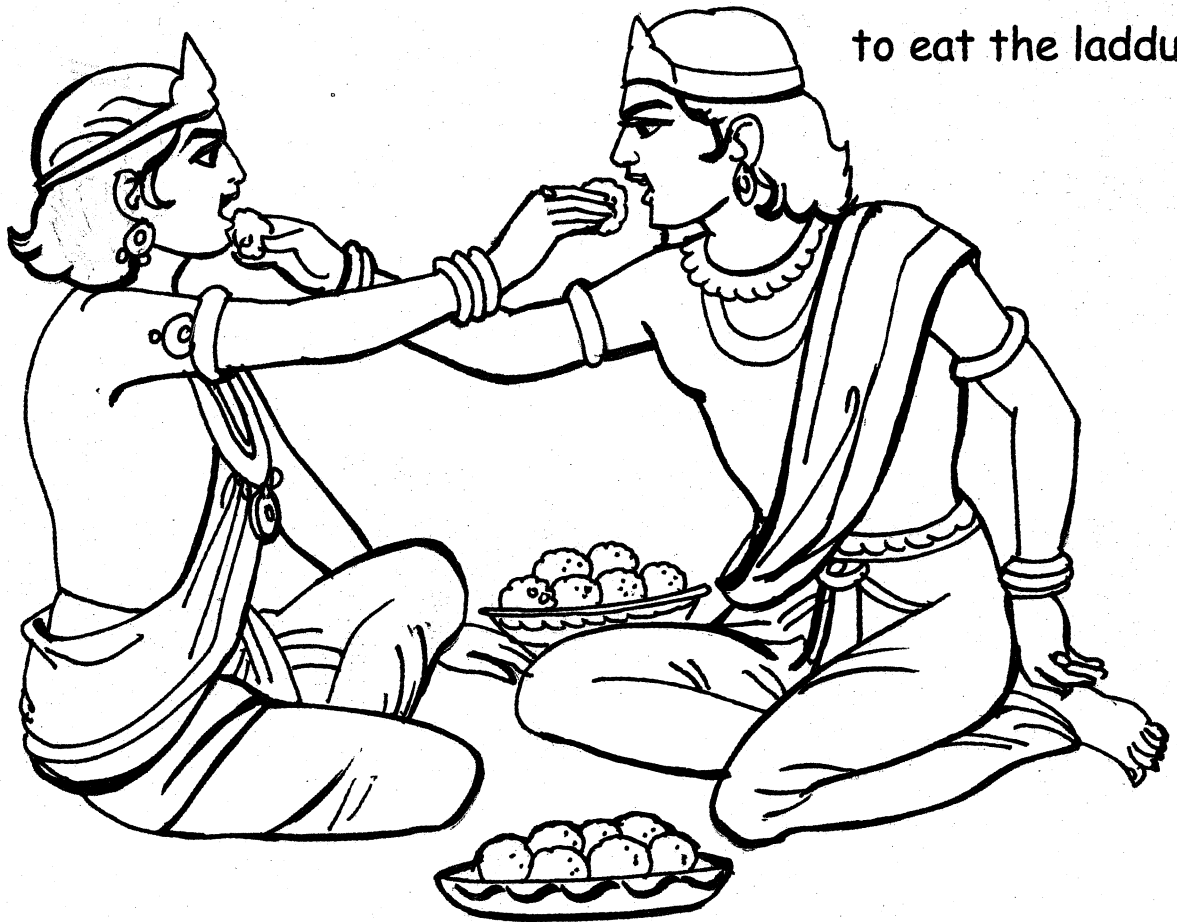




The asuras did not believe this. To prove this point to them, Lord Brahma conducted a test in the form of a feast. He served laddus to all of them and said, "your test begins now. You should eat the laddus without bending your elbows and your backs". The asuras sat to eat. They tried all means to eat the laddus without bending their elbows and backs. But in the end, gave up. They had to accept defeat.

Lord Brahma now called the devas and put them through the same test. The humble devas passed the test easily! Each deva gave the laddu to the one sitting opposite him. So their elbows and backs remained straight. Lord Brahma told the asuras, "Look, you thought about yourself first that is why you could not eat the laddus. But the devas thought of feeding others first and so everybody got

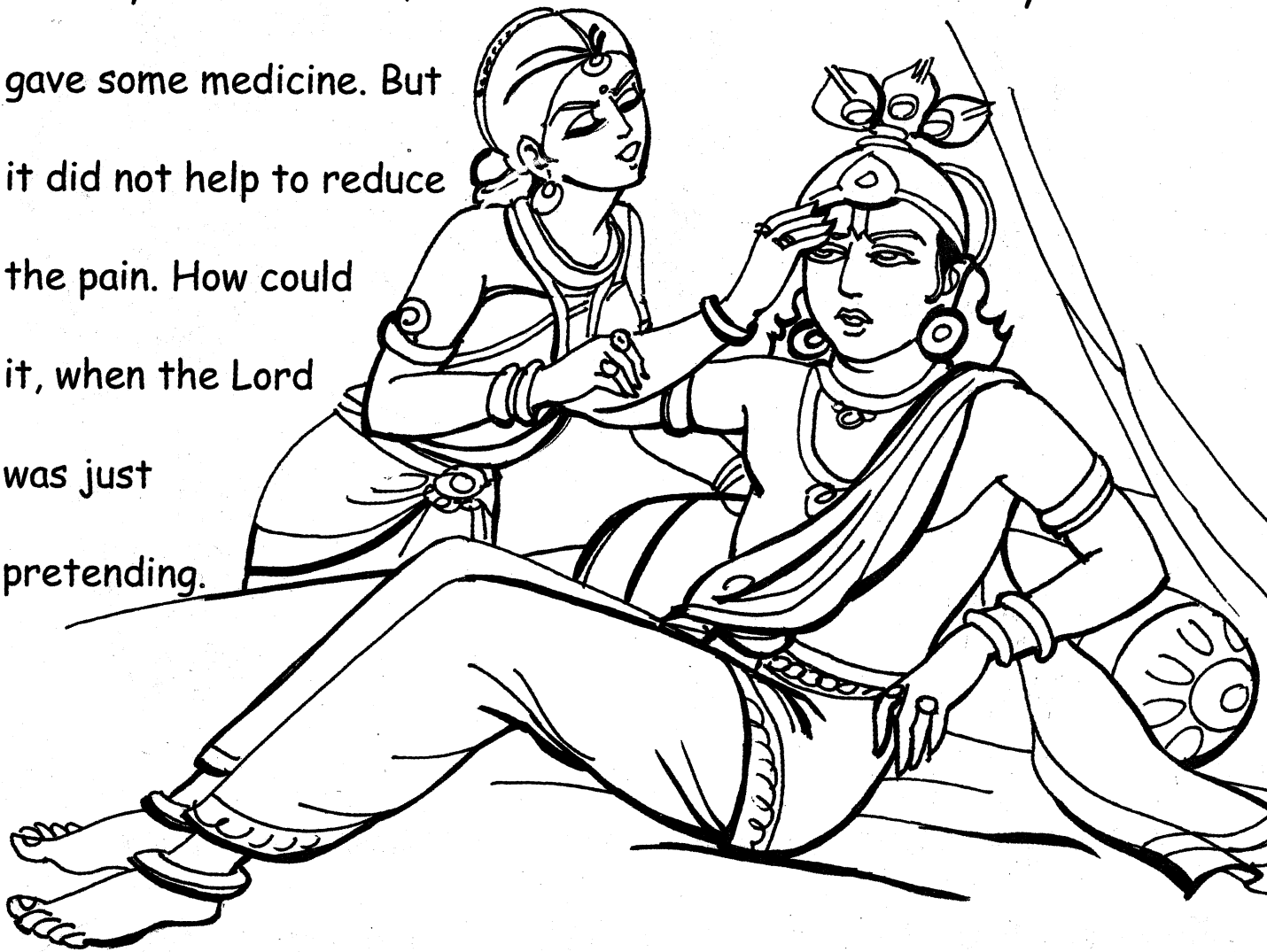
to eat the laddus".

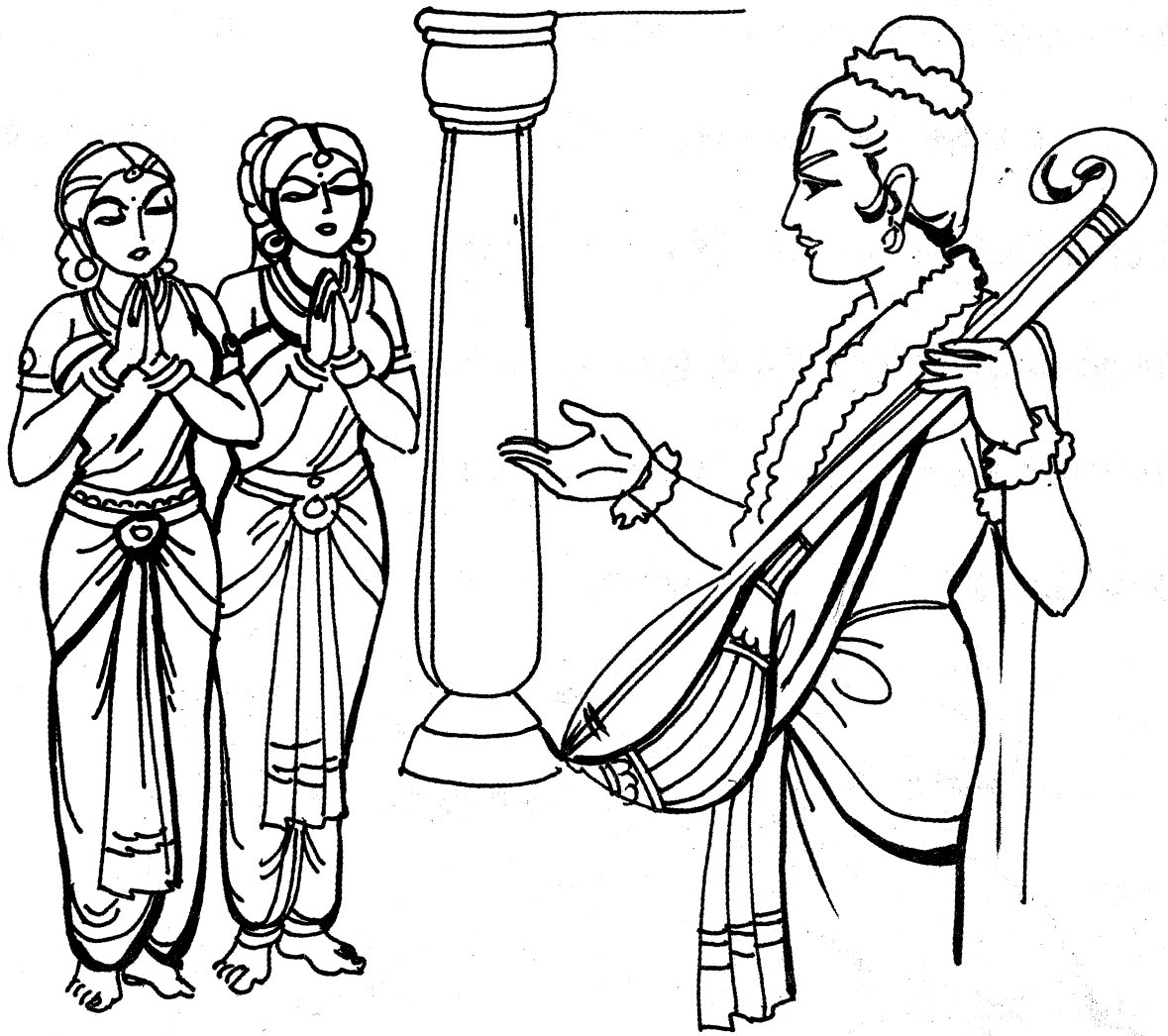




Therefore understand the truth that those who think of the needs of others first and are not selfish, will always succeed.

Lord Krishna wanted to test his devotees and see who had the greatest love for him. He thought of a plan. One day when his wives, Rukmini and Satyabhama, and Narada were with him he pretended to faint and held his head. The Lord cried out, "My head aches terribly". Dhanvantari, the doctor was called immediately and he gave some medicine. But it did not help to reduce the pain. How could it, when the Lord was just pretending.





Those around the Lord were worried. Narada asked Krishna, "Lord, please tell us the medicine that can cure you. We will get it for you from anywhere". The Lord smiled and said, "The only medicine that can cure me is with my devotees and it would be very difficult for you to get it". Narada asked, "Why do you think we would not be able to get the medicine? Are we not your devotees too? Please tell us who has the medicine and we shall immediately get it for you".

There was a big smile on the Lord's face. He said, "Is that so? The medicine that can cure me is the dust of the feet of a true devotee. That would be enough. If it were applied on my forehead the ache will go away. Who among you is ready to offer me that medicine?" Shocked, Narada said, "I am not ready to do what you are asking us to do, Lord!". The Lord's wives, Rukmini and Satyabhama too said,

"Never, we shall never do such a wrongful act".





Narada asked Krishna again, "Oh! Lord please do not tease us. Please show us the way to get the right medicine to cure you". The Lord replied, "Narada, go to Brindavana and ask the gopikas there. Let me see if I have one sincere devotee among them who loves me".



Narada went to Brindavana immediately. He told the gopikas about the Lord's headache and the medicine that will cure him.

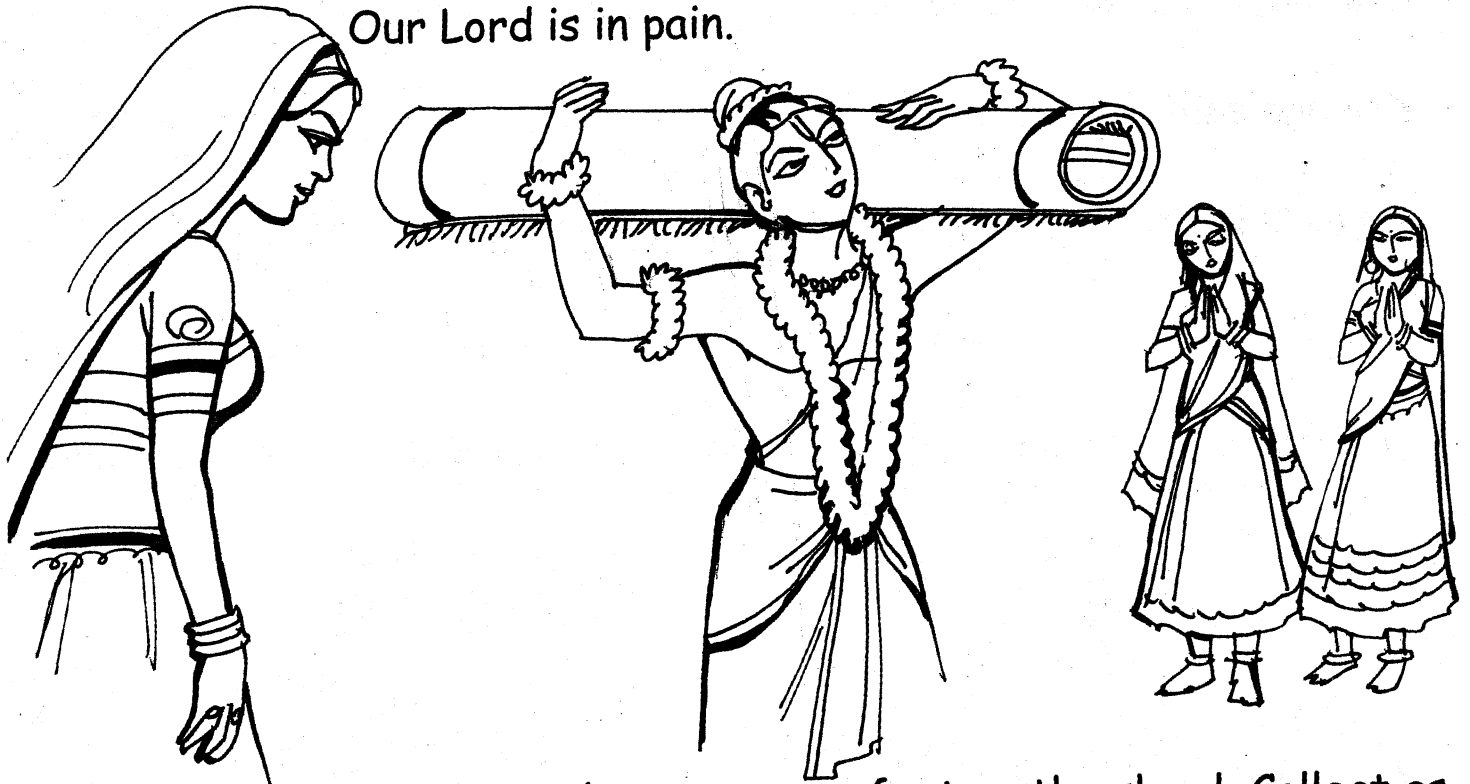
The gopikas could not bear to hear that their Lord was in pain. They cried, "Our Lord was fine when he was here with us in Brindavana.

What happened in Dwaraka? Nobody is looking after him properly".



Then one gopika came forward and said, "Let us not waste time talking.

Our Lord is in pain.



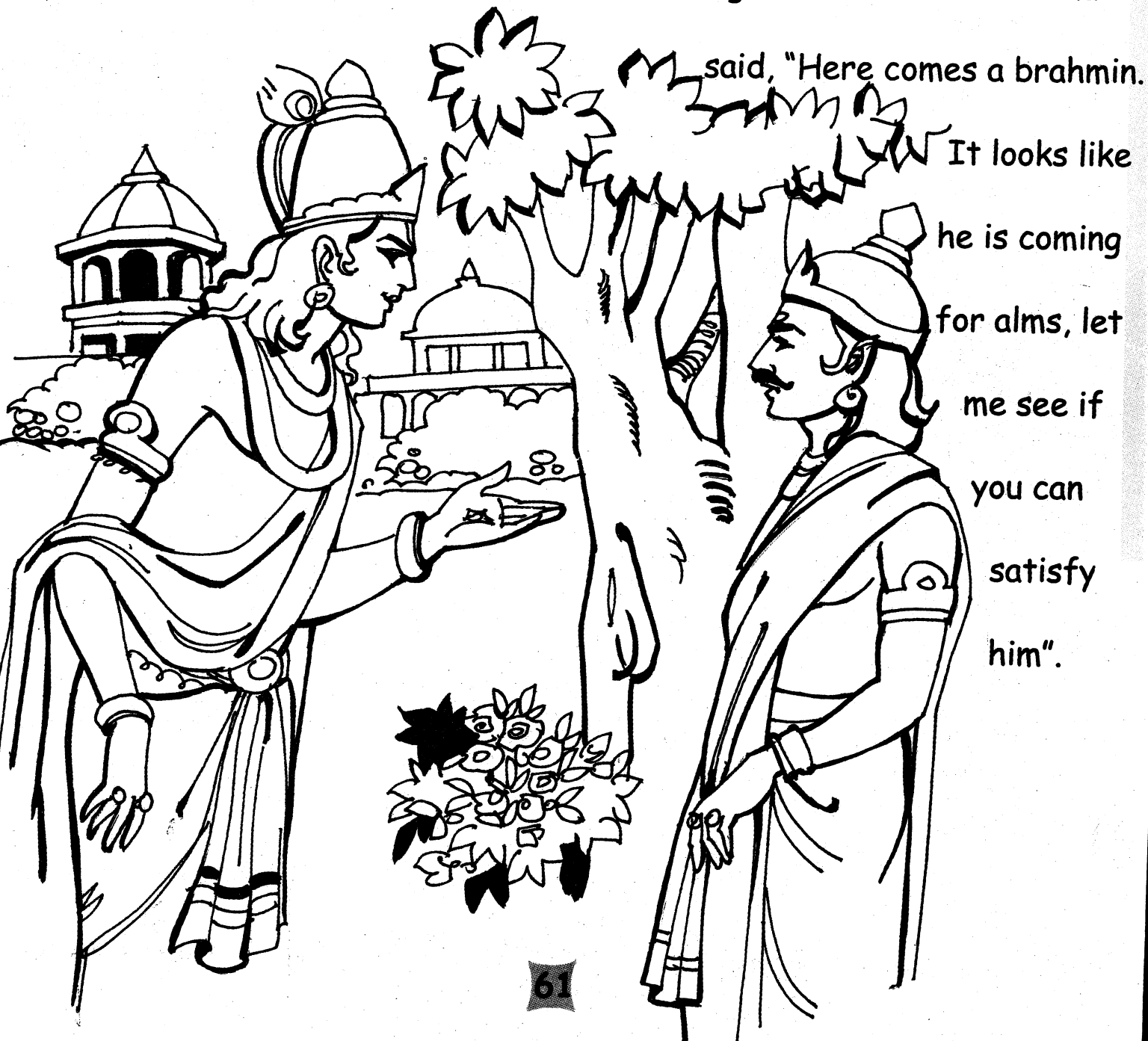
Here is my shawl, come girls stamp your feet on the shawl. Collect as much dust as possible. We must relieve the Lord of his headache".

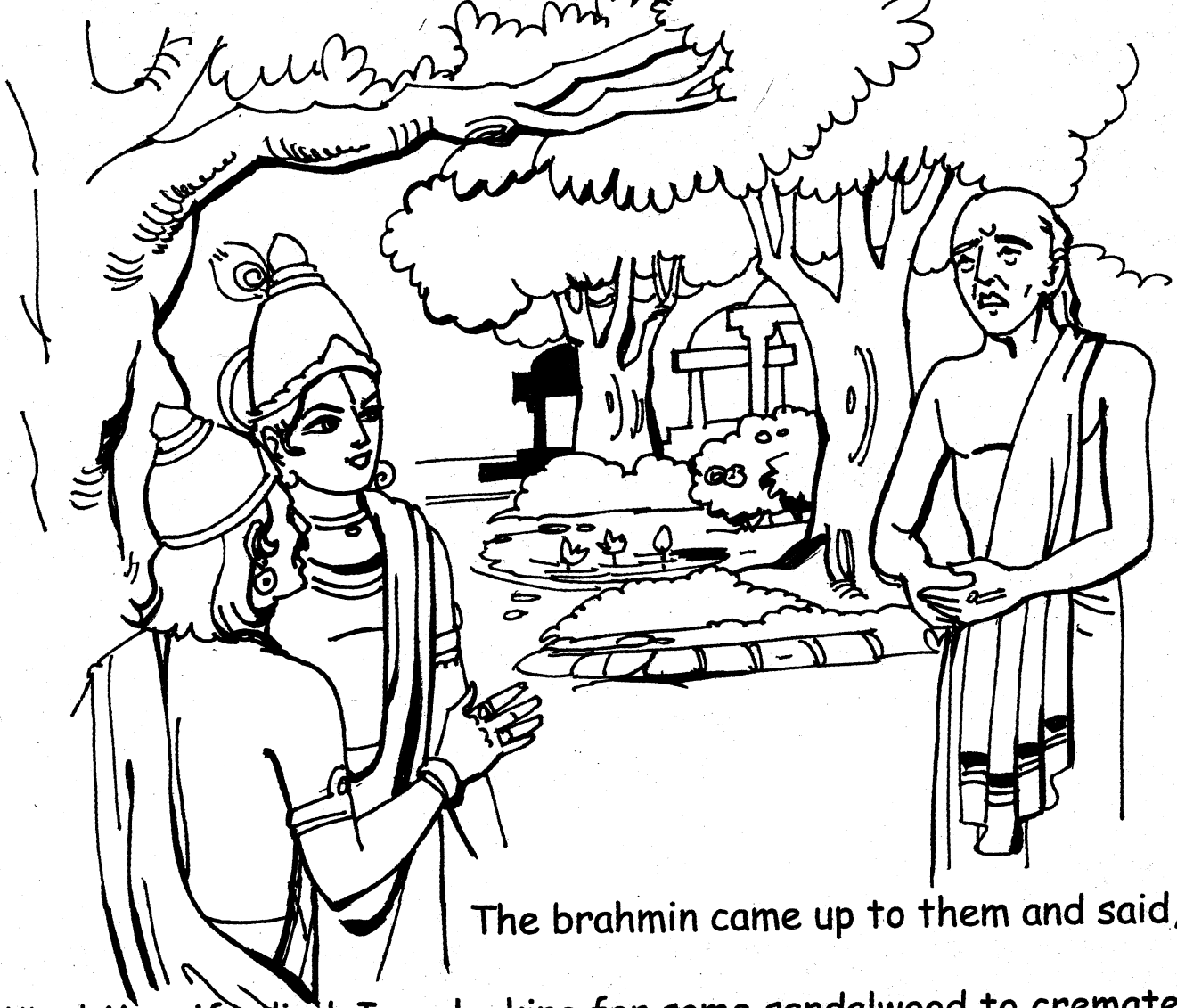
At once all the gopikas filled the shawl with dust. They folded it and gave the shawl to Narada. He could not believe what he saw and said, "What have you all done? How can the dust of your feet be put on the Lord's forehead? All of you will be punished". The gopikas replied, "We are not concerned about what happens to us as long as our Lord is cured of his pain. We do not mind being punished for his sake".

Now Narada and the others understood what Lord Krishna meant when he spoke of pure and true devotion. The Lord had taught them a lesson.

## KARNA - THE GREAT GIVER

One day, Krishna and Arjuna were relaxing in the palace garden. Krishna said, "Arjuna, you may be great in archery, but none can surpass Karna in giving". Arjuna was slightly jealous of Karna, so he said, "Krishna, you always praise Karna. Have you not seen me giving charity?". Just then they saw a man walking towards them. Krishna





The brahmin came up to them and said, "Oh King! My wife died. I am looking for some sandalwood to cremate her. Can you help me?". Arjuna called his servant and ordered him to give the brahmin as much sandalwood as he wanted. After some time, the servant returned empty-handed along with the brahmin. He said, "There is no stock of sandalwood in the palace, Sir. Nor is it available in the market". So, Arjuna told the brahmin, "I am sorry that I am not able to help you. I would have given it to you if it was available". The brahmin replied, "Alright, let me try to get it from Karna".

The brahmin went to Karna's palace and said, "I need some sandalwood to cremate my wife's body. I could not get it anywhere. I pray for your help". Karna asked him to sit and sent his servant to get sandalwood.

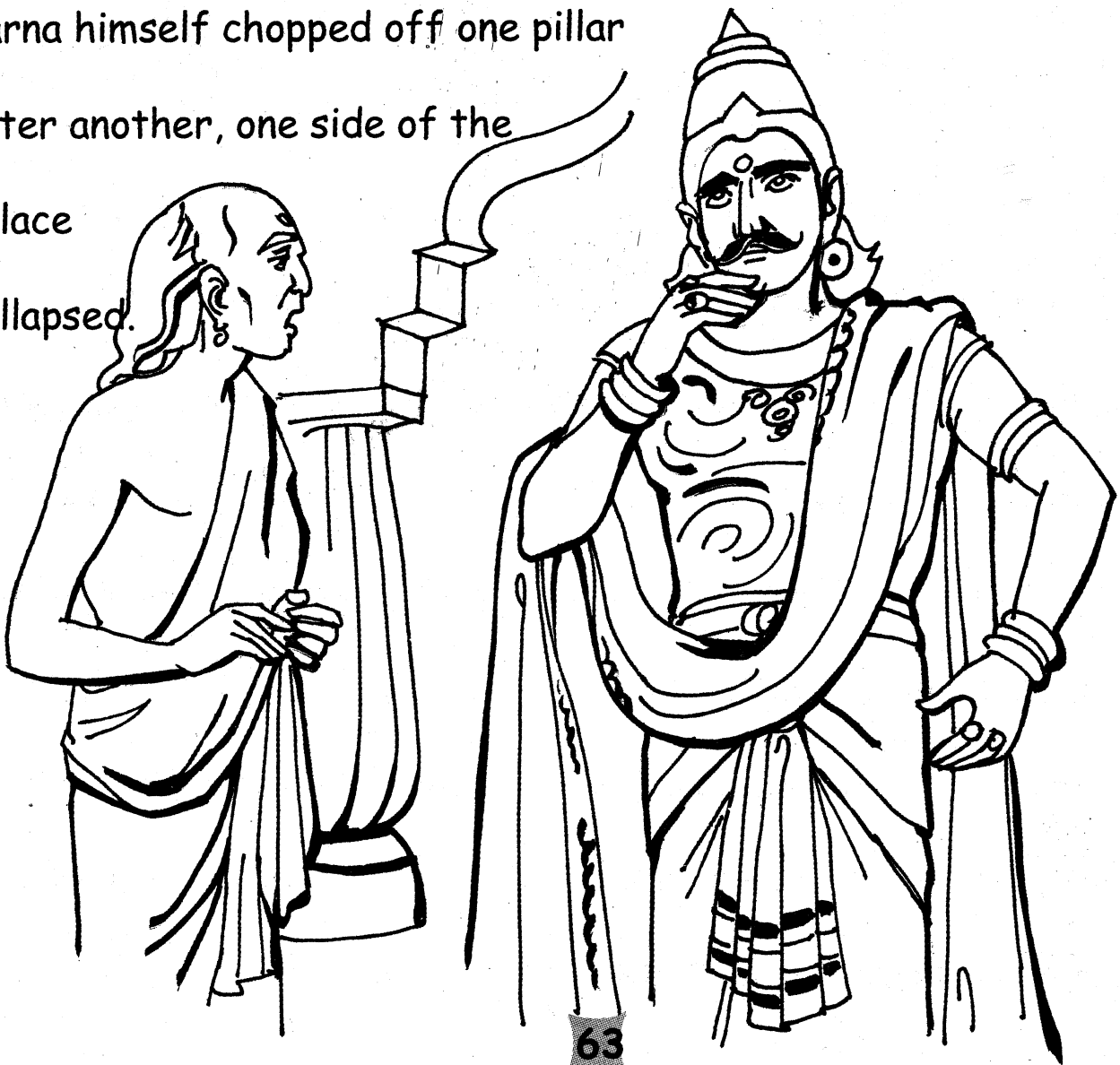
The servant returned saying, "No log is available either in the palace or anywhere else". Hearing this, the brahmin was about to leave sadly,

when Karna stopped him. He ordered his servants to get an axe and chop off the pillars of the palace that were made of sandalwood. As

Karna himself chopped off one pillar

after another, one side of the

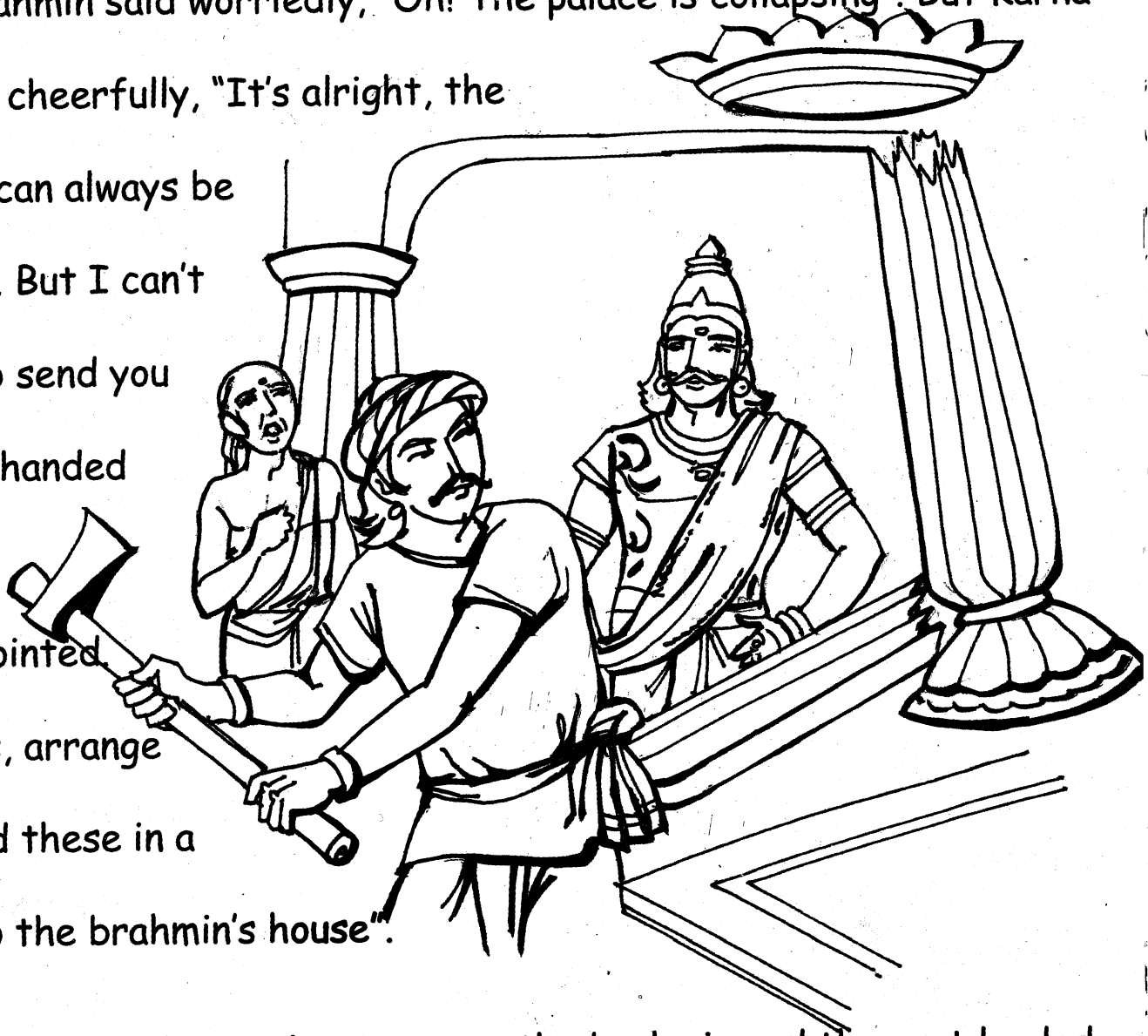
palace  
collapsed.



The brahmin said worriedly, "Oh! The palace is collapsing". But Karna replied cheerfully, "It's alright, the

palace can always be rebuilt. But I can't bear to send you empty-handed and

disappointed. Guards, arrange to send these in a cart to the brahmin's house".

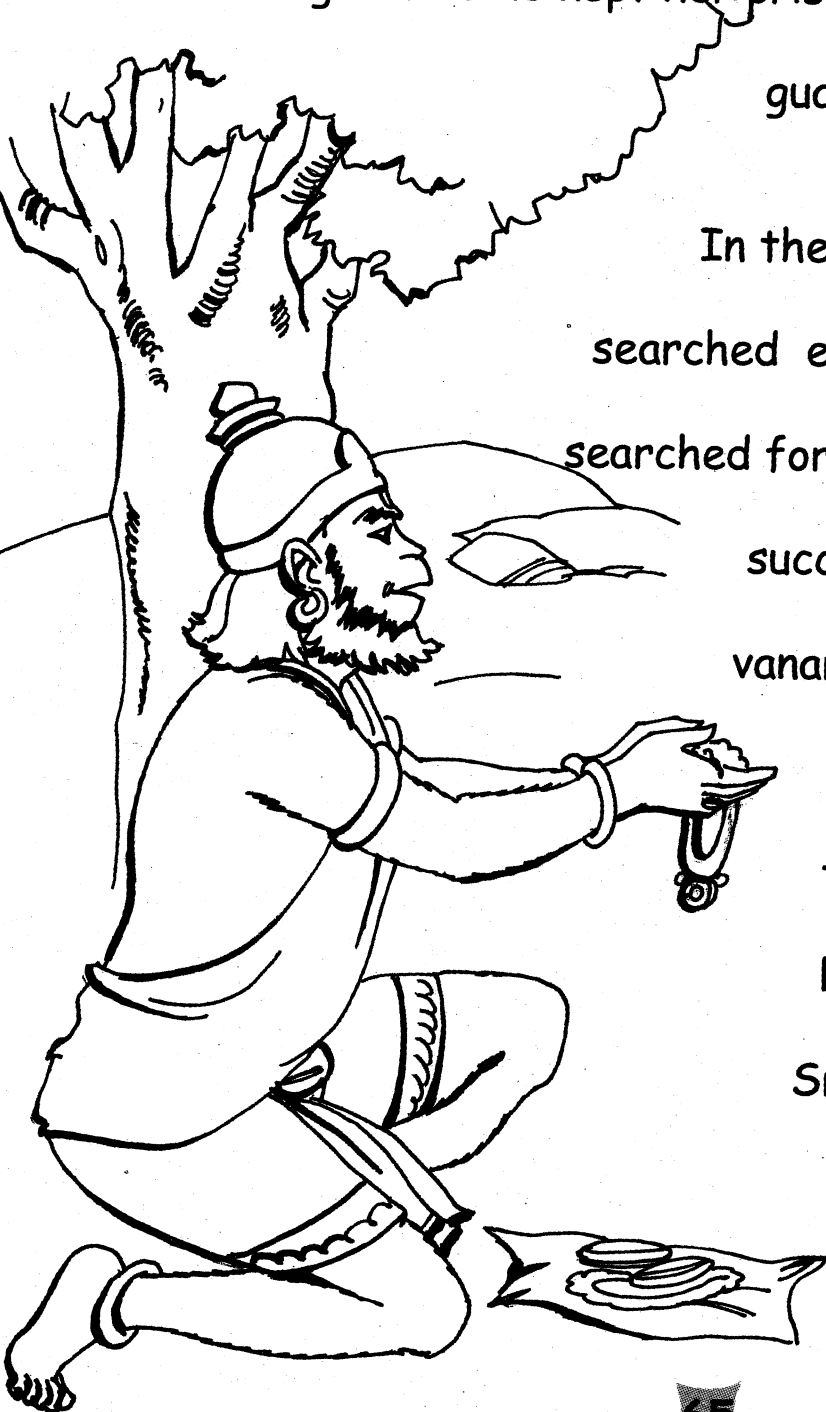


On the way, Krishna and Arjuna saw the brahmin and the cart loaded with sandalwood. Arjuna asked, "How did you manage to get the sandalwood?". The brahmin replied, "The great Karna chopped off the pillars of his palace", and he walked away. Krishna said, "Arjuna, do you understand now. One who has a heart to give, will find a way to give. That is why I praise him. I think you too will agree now". Arjuna said, "Yes, I understand my Lord".

## 14 CLEVER HANUMAN

Sri Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were living in a forest called Dandakavana. One day, a rakshasa King called Ravana, carried Sita away to his Kingdom. He wanted to make her his wife, but she wouldn't agree. So he kept her prisoner in Lanka, in a garden guarded by rakshasis.

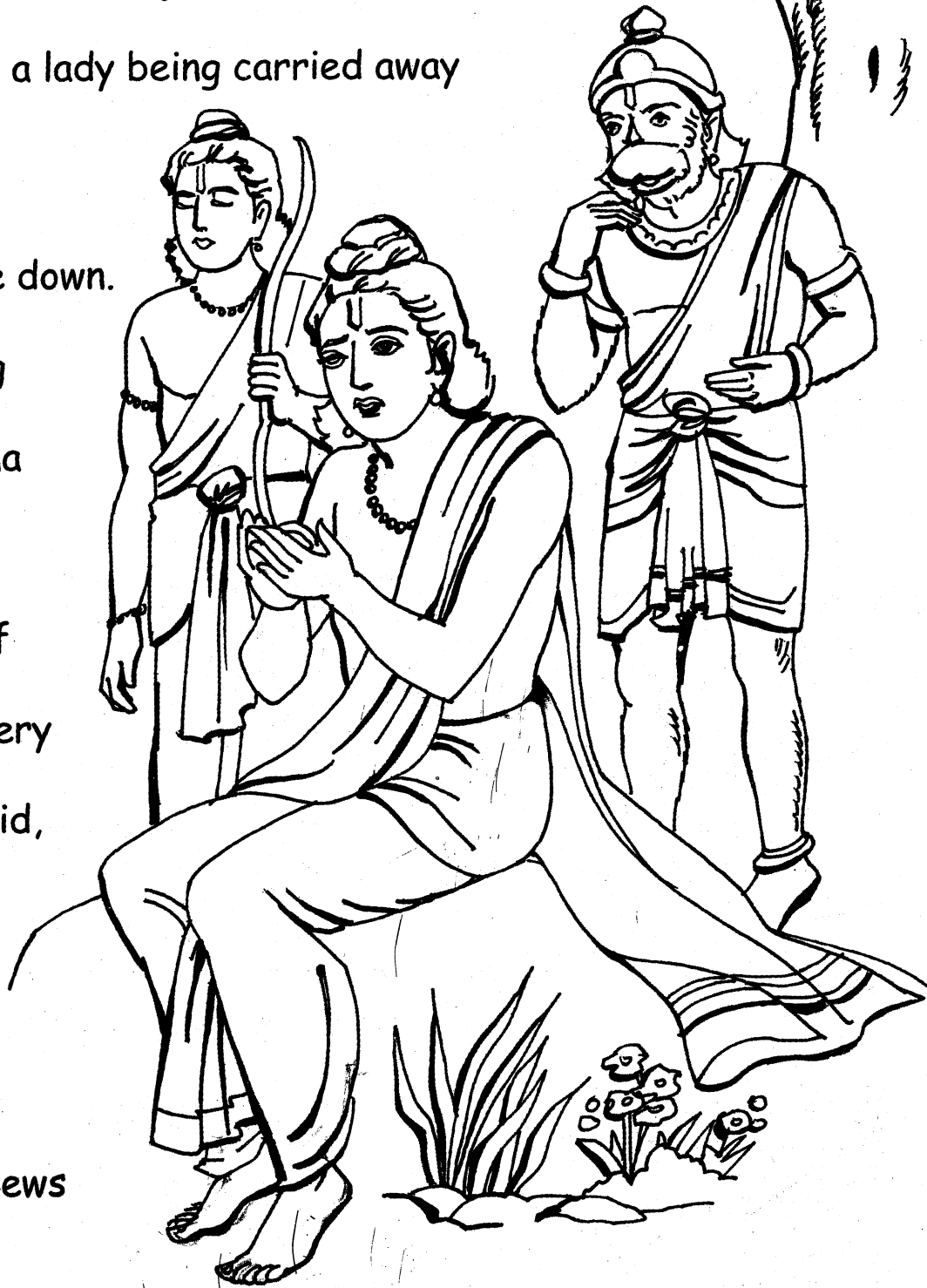
In the forest, Rama and Lakshmana searched everywhere for Sita. They searched for many days, but without any success. One day, they met two vanaras (monkeys), Sugriva and Hanuman. Sugriva became a friend while Hanuman became a great devotee of Sri Rama.



On hearing about Sita, Sugriva showed a small bundle of jewels to Rama, saying, "We saw a lady being carried away by a rakshasa.

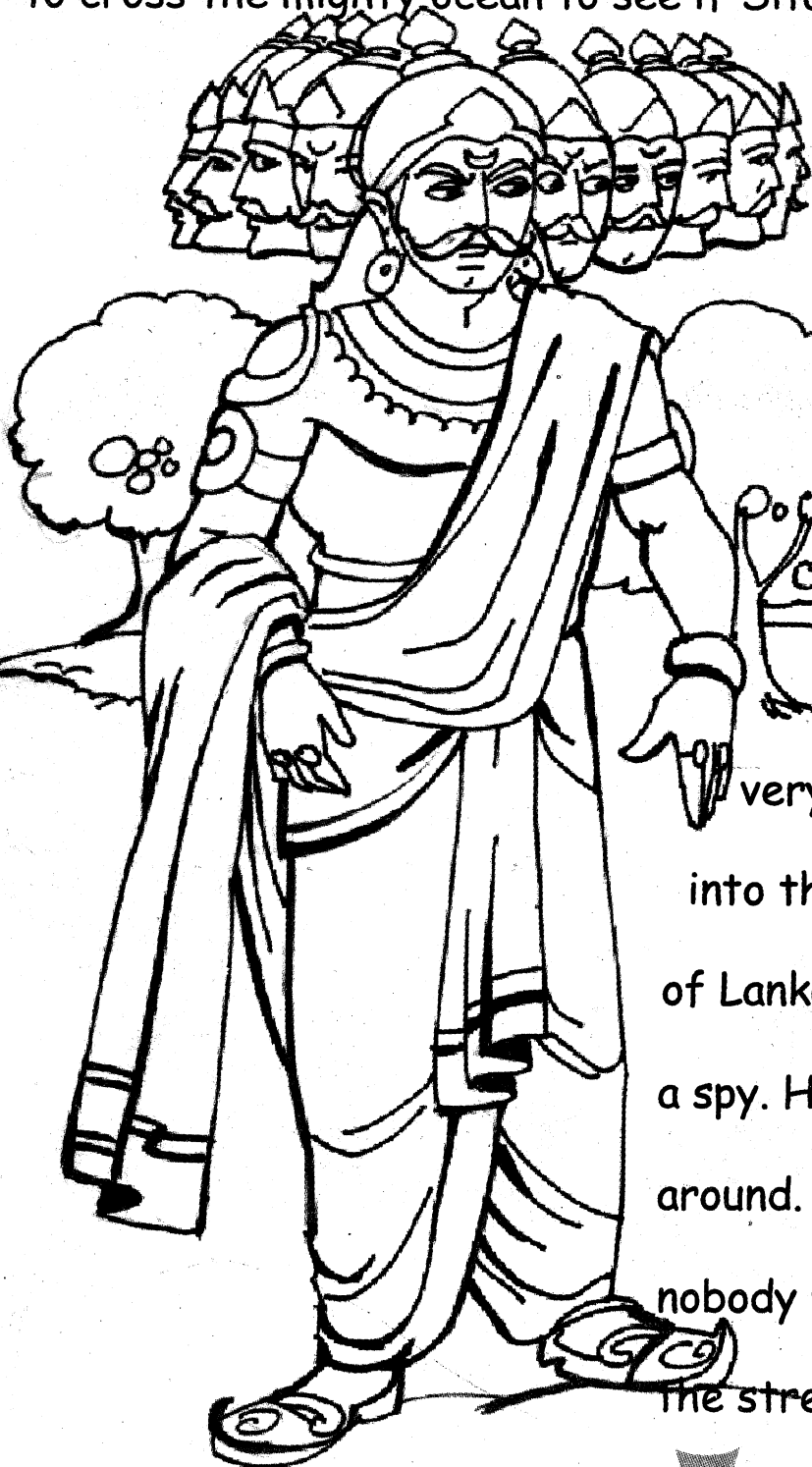
She threw these down.

They were flying southward". Rama recognised the jewels as that of Sita's and felt very sad. Hanuman said, "Don't worry my Lord, I will go southward and bring you good news about Sita".





Hanuman and his vanara friends, formed a search party and went southward. They met an Eagle called Sampati, sitting on a hill near the ocean. He told them, "I saw Sita being carried by Ravana across the ocean to Lanka". Now all the vanaras got worried. How were they to cross the mighty ocean to see if Sita was really there in Lanka?



Each vanara tried to guess how far he could jump. In the end

they all turned to

Hanuman. They

said, "You are the

only one who can do

it". So, Hanuman made himself

very big and like a great bird, leapt

into the sky and reached the shores

of Lanka. Now, Hanuman had to become

a spy. He thought, "There are guards all

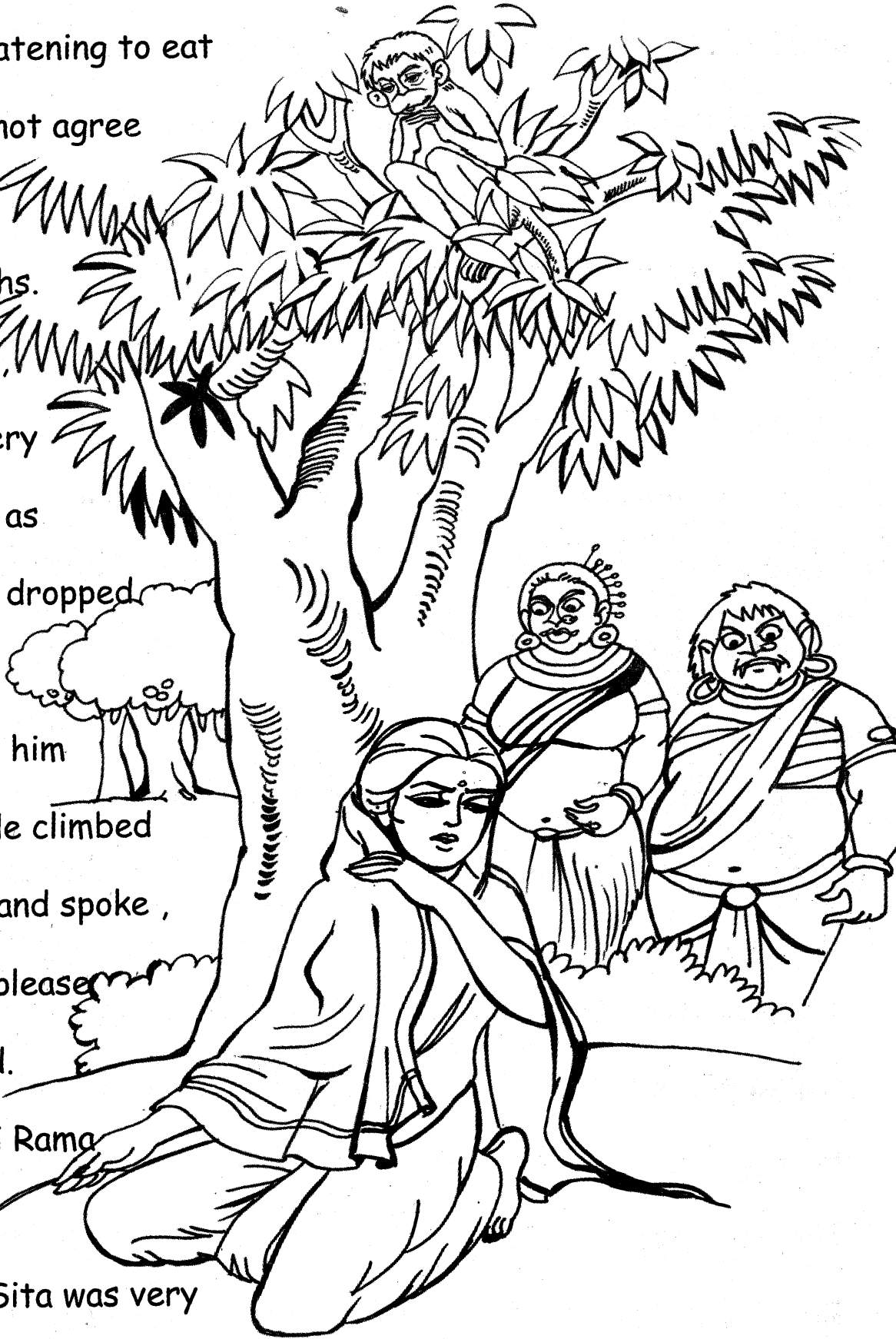
around. Let me become so small that

nobody will notice me". He went around

the streets and saw the beautiful city

of Lanka. He searched for Sita **67** everywhere.

Finally, he found her in a garden called, "Ashoka Vana". He hid himself on a tree and saw Sita sitting with a sad face. Ravana had just come in and was threatening to eat Sita if she did not agree to marry him within six months. On hearing this, Hanuman got very angry. As soon as Ravana left, he dropped the ring that Rama had given him on Sita's lap. He climbed down the tree and spoke, "Mother Sita, please don't be afraid. My master, Sri Rama will soon come to save you". Sita was very happy to see the ring and Hanuman, **68** the messenger.



Hanuman decided to teach Ravana a lesson before he left Lanka. To put some fear into him, he uprooted trees and killed a few rakshasas. Ravana asked his son Indrajit to fight Hanuman. Indrajit used his snake arrows which coiled around Hanuman's hands and legs and tied him up. He was taken to Ravana's palace. Hanuman, who could have easily become smaller in size and escaped, decided to have some fun. He wanted to enter the palace and make a mental note of the city. He thought, "I'll explain to Sri Rama everything about Lanka so that it will become easier for him to defeat his enemy".

Ravana wanted to punish Hanuman. He ordered his men, "Tie his tail with rags. Put oil on it and set it on fire". But Hanuman had other plans. As the men tied his tail in rags, it kept growing longer and longer. The more oil they poured, the longer the tail became. As no more oil was available, they had to stop. The soldiers took the bound Hanuman through the streets of Lanka and then set fire to his tail. Immediately, Hanuman shrank himself. The ropes and rags that bound him slipped to the ground. But, the tip of his tail was still burning. Hanuman leapt onto a house-top before anybody could catch him. He leapt from house to house, tree to tree shouting, "Long live Rama! Long live Sita!". He set Lanka in flames while the rakshasas looked on helplessly.

He said, "This should teach them a lesson. Let them see what a mighty force Sri Rama has. I hope now Ravana is frightened enough to return Sita". He then dipped his tail in the ocean to put off the fire.

Now Hanuman grew in size and taking a mighty leap was back with his friends.

They all went to Sri Rama happily narrating Hanuman's tale. They all went to Sri Rama happily narrating Hanuman's

tale. Rama praised Hanuman

"Thank you Hanuman, you are truly very brave

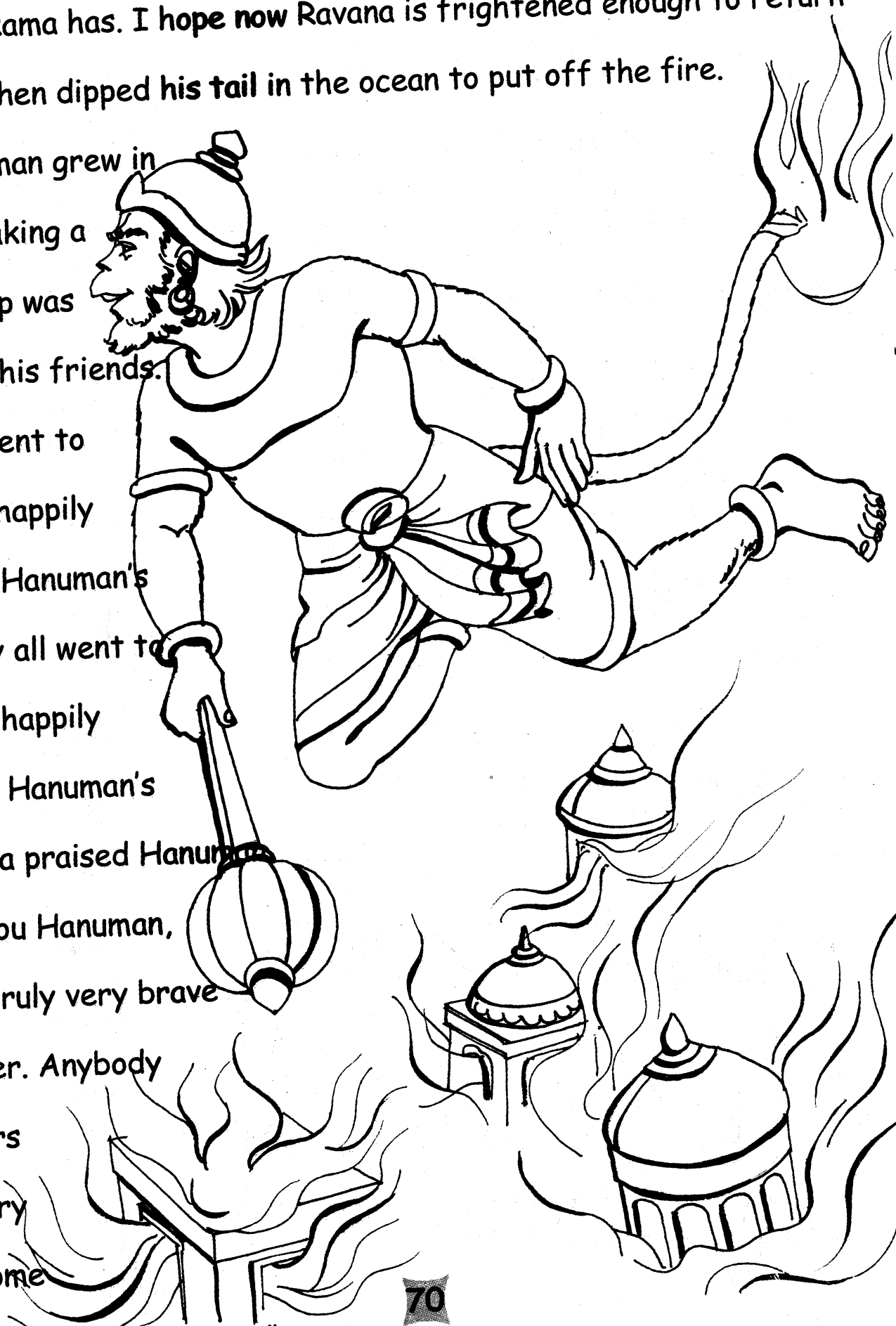
and clever. Anybody

who hears

your story

will become

as brave and clever as you."

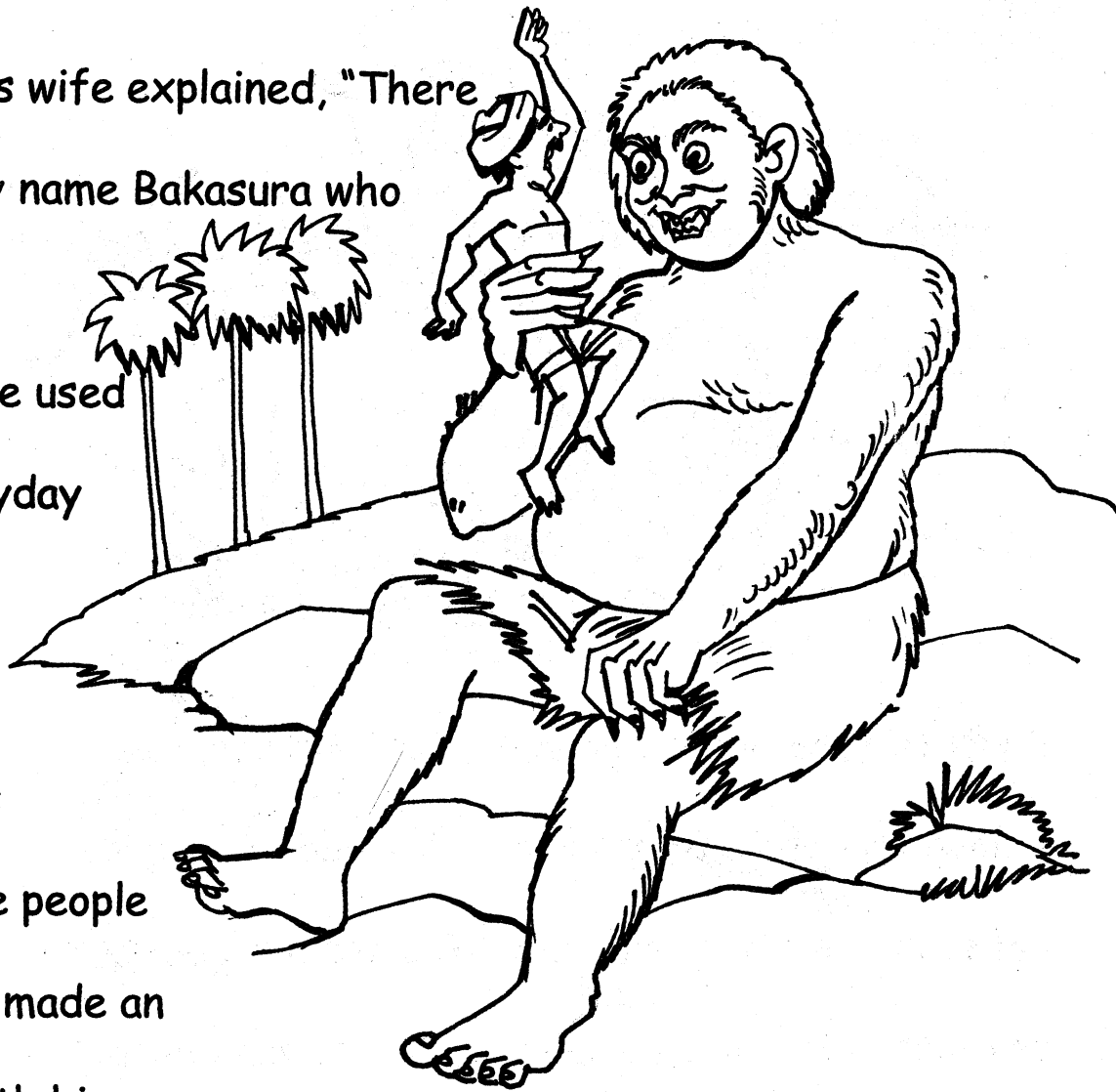


## KUNTI'S SACRIFICE

The Pandava brothers with their mother, Kunti were living in a poor, old brahmin's house. For a few months, they were disguised as poor people to escape from their enemies. One day as usual, Yudhishtira and others went out for Bhiksha. Bhima and Kunti stayed back at home. At that time they heard somebody crying. They ran to the other portion of the house and saw the brahmin and his wife crying. Kunti asked, "What is the problem mother? Why are you crying like this?"



The brahmin's wife explained, "There is an asura by name Bakasura who lives in the nearby hill. He used to come everyday and kill many people in the village for his meals. So, the people of the village made an agreement with him.



They said that everyday they will send him a cart load of food, a man and two bullocks for him to eat so that many people wouldn't get killed everyday. The asura had agreed. Today is our turn to send a man and we have only one son. If he dies, who will look after us in this old age?"

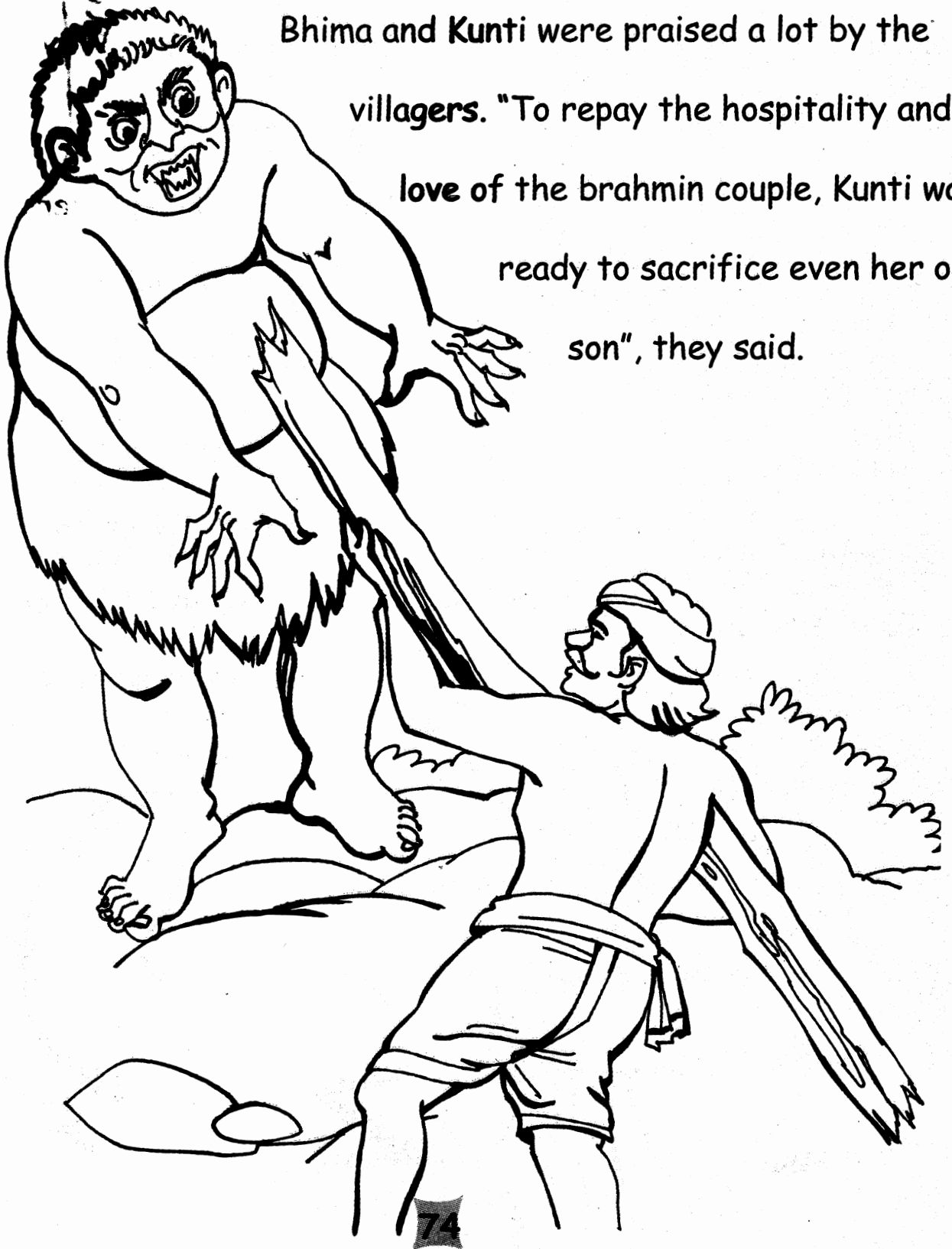


Kunti felt sorry for her and said, "Mother, you have only one son but I have five sons. Bhima will go instead of your son". The old brahmin refused the offer and said, "You are our guests. You are to be treated as Gods. How can we send your son to his death?". Kunti replied, "As we are your guests, it is our duty to share your sorrow too. Bhima is strong enough to kill Bakasura and bring relief to the whole village. Even if he is killed, I shall still be left with four sons".

At last the brahmin couple accepted the offer. Bhima went with the cart loaded with food. He was enjoying himself and said, "At last I am going to have some fun in this sleepy village". As soon as Bhima reached the hill, he started fighting with Bakasura.

The strong **Bhima** and the giant Bakasura fought furiously. At last Bhima killed **Bakasura** and returned to the village.

Bhima and Kunti were praised a lot by the villagers. "To repay the hospitality and love of the brahmin couple, Kunti was ready to sacrifice even her own son", they said.





## THE POWER OF LORD'S NAME - A PLAY

Once Narada, who constantly chanted, "Narayana, Narayana", asked Lord Vishnu a question.

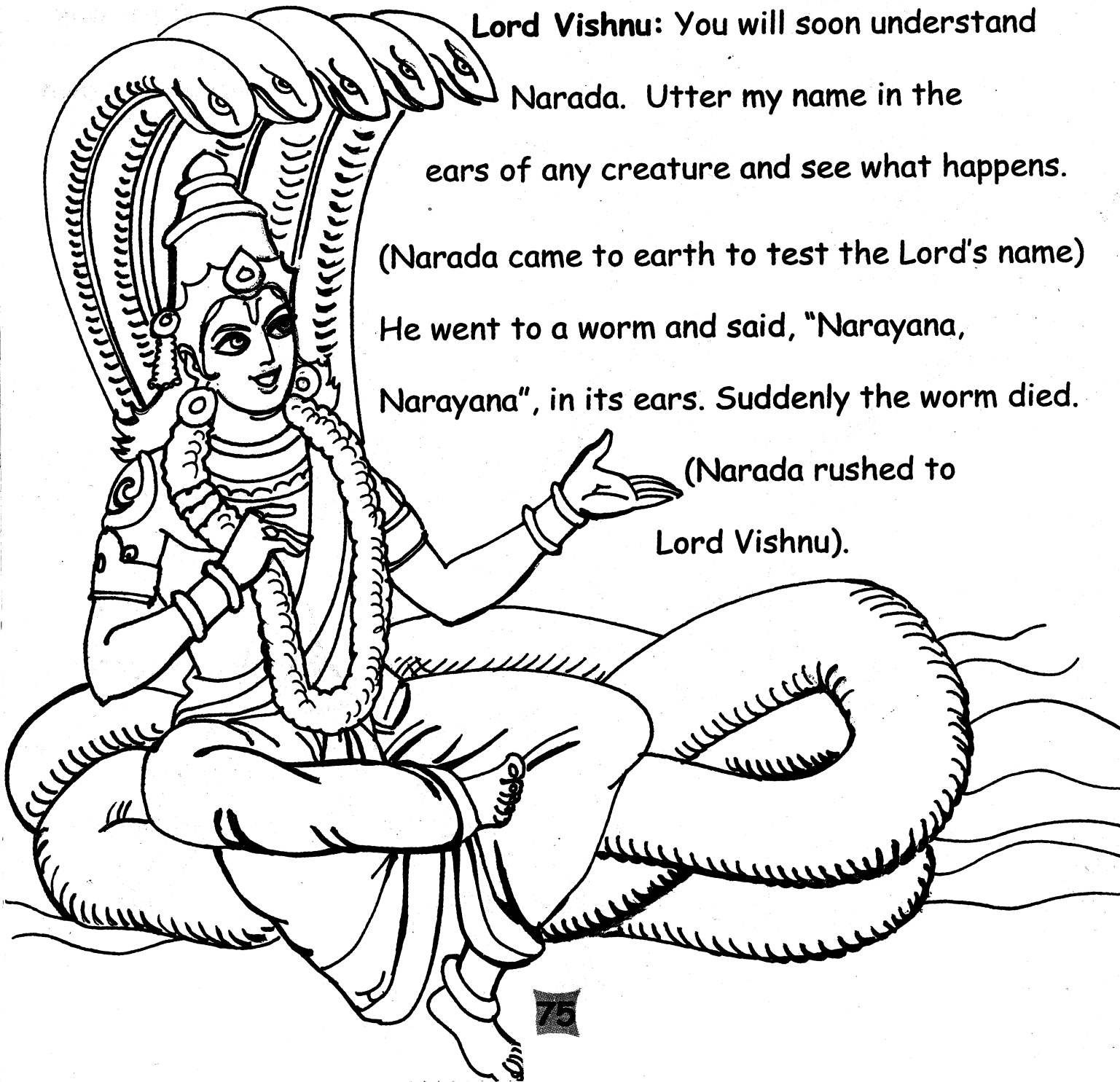
**Narada:** O Lord!, what is the greatness of your name? Why is it said that one should constantly utter your name?

**Lord Vishnu:** You will soon understand Narada. Utter my name in the ears of any creature and see what happens.

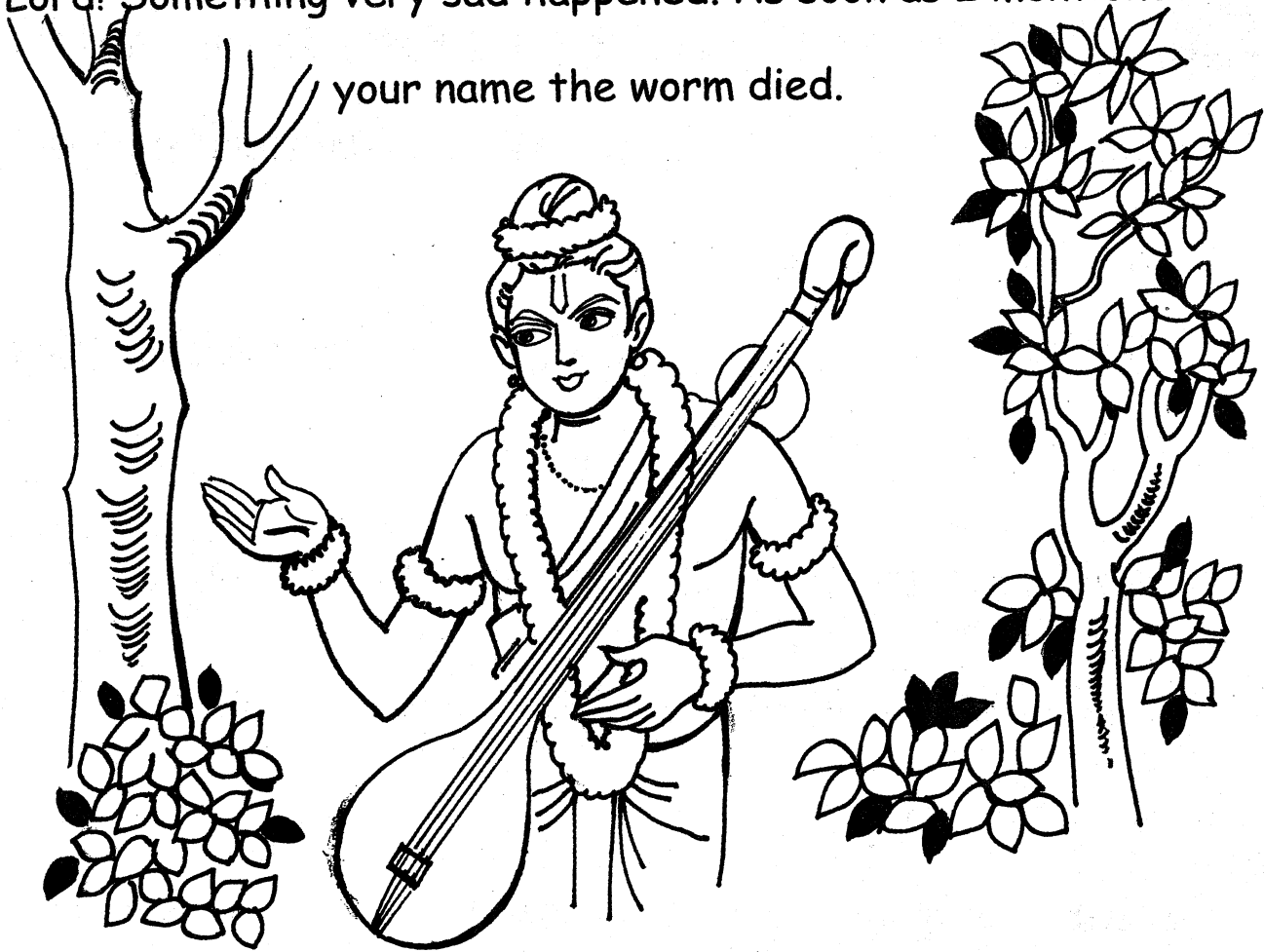
(Narada came to earth to test the Lord's name)

He went to a worm and said, "Narayana, Narayana", in its ears. Suddenly the worm died.

(Narada rushed to Lord Vishnu).



**Narada:** Lord! Something very sad happened. As soon as I mentioned your name the worm died.



**Lord Vishnu:** Is it so? Look, there is a butterfly sitting on a flower.

Whisper my name in its ears.

(Narada did as Vishnu told him.) The butterfly too died immediately.

**Narada:** Lord! The butterfly also died.

**Lord Vishnu:** Narada, try your luck with that newly born deer this time.

(Narada goes near the deer and repeats "Narayana, Narayana"). The deer

too dies. This time Narada was furious and puzzled. He was wondering

if the Lord was trying to play a trick on him.

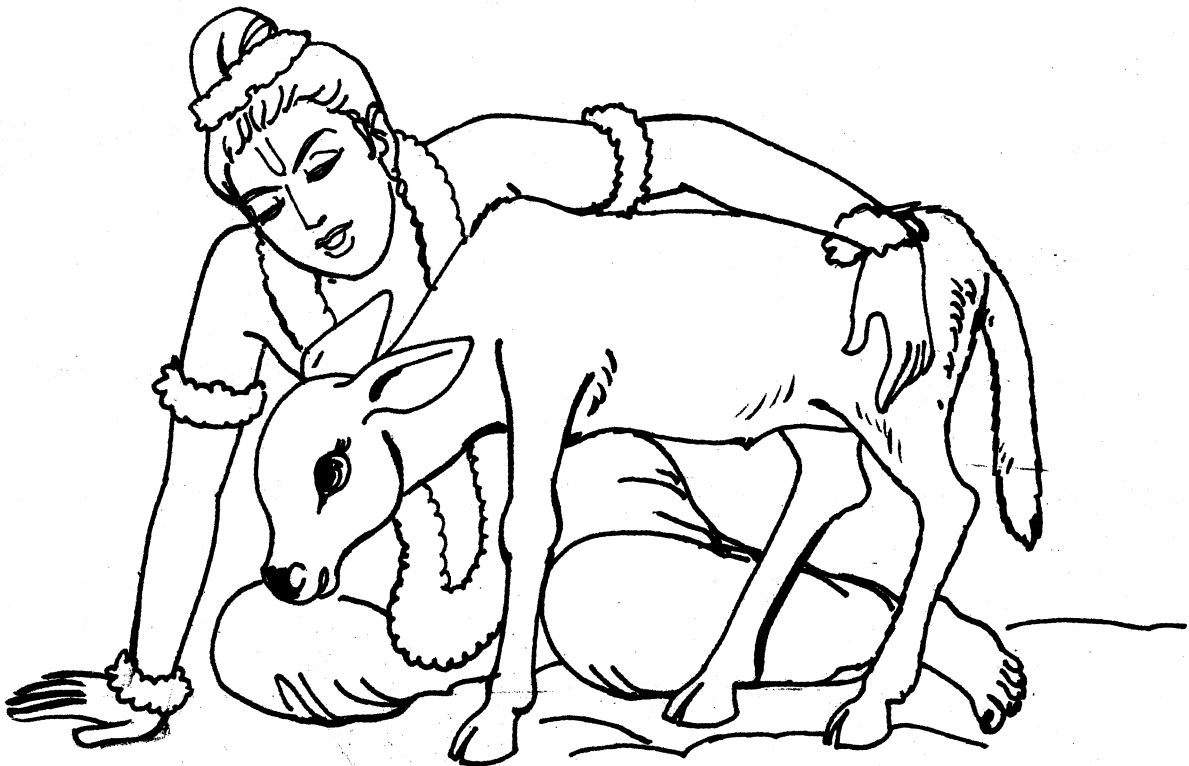
**Narada:** Oh Lord! The worm died, the butterfly died and the deer too died. Oh Narayana, I am not able to understand the mystery behind this.

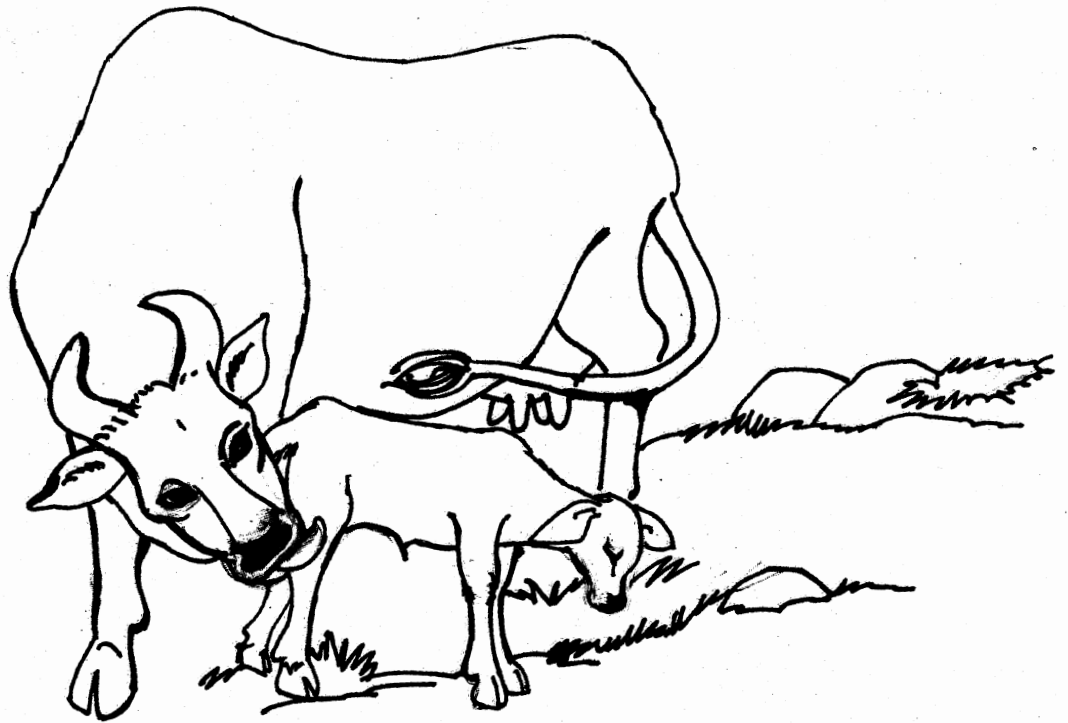
**Lord Vishnu:** Why are you dejected so quickly Narada? Look at that calf. Go and utter my name in its ears.

**Narada (Protesting):** Lord, please don't test me anymore.

(He went near the calf and said, "Narayana, Narayana". The calf too breathed its last.)

**Narada:** Lord, your name is supposed to save everyone but it is destroying them. Am I making a mistake?





**Lord Vishnu:** Narada! Why do you lose heart so fast? A child has just been born to the King of Kashi. Go and try my name on him.

**Narada:** I have already been named as a mischief-maker in the world. By my present act I shall be called a murderer too.

**Lord Vishnu:** (Smiled and said) Narada, for the last time go and repeat my name in the ears of the child.

(Narada goes to the Kingdom of Kashi. The King welcomes him with great respect).

**King:** Maharshi Narada, I am really fortunate to have you on my child's birthday. Bless him that he may become a great person.

(Narada goes near the child and says, "Narayana, Narayana". Suddenly, as if by magic, hearing the Lord's name, the child spoke).

**Child:** Maharshi, my salutations to you. Have you not understood the greatness of the Lord's name?



**Narada:** (Narada was taken aback) I don't understand my child.

Please explain in detail.

**Child:** I was a worm in the beginning.

Hearing the Lord's name I died

and became a butterfly.

When I heard the Lord's name again, I died and took

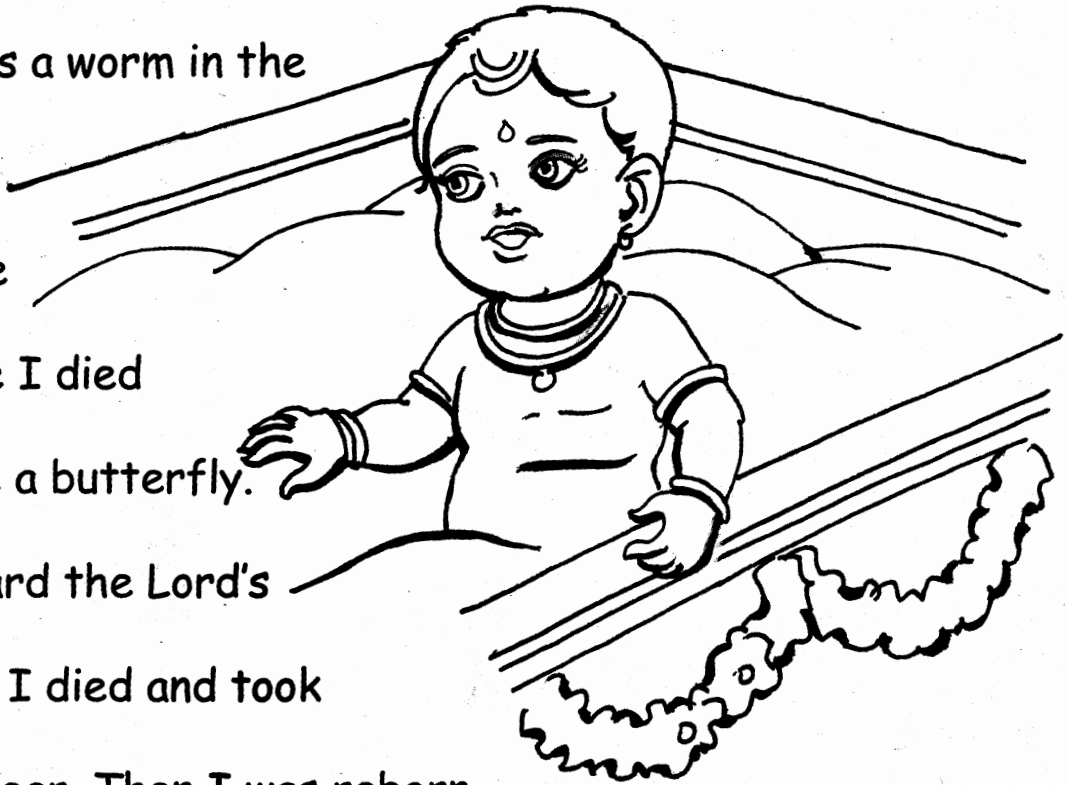
birth as a deer. Then I was reborn

as a calf. Again, by hearing the Lord's name, I got this precious human life. Glory to the Lord.

**Narada:** Now I realise. Lord Vishnu has shown me the greatness of his name. One can earn the Lord's grace by constantly uttering and listening to his name.

By doing so, each birth of ours will be better than the previous one.

Just by hearing His name, we can have a better life and ultimately get closer to God.



## The Syllabus Plan

| Session |          | The Day Plan                            | Classroom Activity | Home Assignment |
|---------|----------|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1       | Prayer 1 | <b>Lord Ganesha's Birth</b>             | Story Telling      |                 |
| 2       | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 3       | Prayer 2 | <b>Sri Krishna's Birth</b>              | Reading & Enacting |                 |
| 3       | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 5       | Prayer 3 | <b>God Resides in Everyone</b>          | Story Telling      |                 |
| 6       | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 7       | Prayer 4 | <b>Krishna Shows Himself to Yashoda</b> | Story Telling      |                 |
| 8       | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 9       | Prayer 5 | <b>A Hardworking Student</b>            | Story Telling      |                 |
| 10      | ”        | ”                                       | Enacting           | Colouring       |
| 11      | Prayer   | <b>Krishna and a Fruit Seller</b>       | Reading            |                 |
| 12      | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 13      | Prayer   | <b>Ganesha - The Wise Son</b>           | Story Telling      |                 |
| 14      | ”        | ”                                       | Colouring          |                 |
| 15      | Prayer   | <b>Sri Krishna and Sudama</b>           | Story Telling      |                 |
| 16      | ”        | ”                                       | Enacting           | Colouring       |

| Session | The Day Plan |  | Classroom Activity | Home Assignment |
|---------|--------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| 17      | Prayer       | <b>Prahlada - Lord Vishnu's Devotee</b>  | Story Telling      |                 |
| 18      | ”            | ”  | Colouring          |                 |
| 19      | Prayer       | <b>Lord Ganesha and Kubera</b>           | Story Telling      |                 |
| 20      | ”            | ”  | Colouring          |                 |
| 21      | Prayer       | <b>The Secret of Success</b>             | Story Telling      |                 |
| 22      | ”            | ”  | Colouring          |                 |
| 23      | Prayer       | <b>True Devotion</b>                     | Story Telling      |                 |
| 24      | ”            | ”  | Colouring          |                 |
| 25      | Prayer       | <b>Karna - The Great Giver</b>           | Story Telling      |                 |
| 26      | ”            | ”  | Enacting           | Colouring       |
| 27      | Prayer       | <b>Clever Hanuman</b>                    | Story Telling      |                 |
| 28      | ”            | ”  | Colouring          |                 |
| 29      | Prayer       | <b>Kunti's Sacrifice</b>                 | Story Telling      |                 |
| 30      | ”            | ”  | Enacting           | Colouring       |
| 31      | Prayer       | <b>The Power of Lord's Name - A play</b> | Story Telling      |                 |
| 32      | ”            | ”  | Enacting           | Colouring       |

Note: 1. Each session may begin with the prayer(s) that the students have learnt followed by the activity mentioned in the day plan.

2. The syllabus is designed with the assumption that the school will allocate a minimum of 32 sessions per year.