

Daśa Avatāra



Ten Incarnations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa





Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda





रामादिमूर्तिषु कलानियमेन तिष्ठन्
नानावतारमकरोद्भुवनेषु भुवनेषु किन्तु।
कृष्णः स्वयं समभवत् परमः पुमान् यो
गोविन्दमादिपुरुषं तमहं भजामि ॥३९॥



*rāmādi-mūrtiṣu kalā-niyamena tiṣṭhan
nānāvatāram akarod bhuvaneṣu kintu
kṛṣṇaḥ svayaṁ samabhavat paramaḥ pumān yo
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*



I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who manifested Himself personally as Kṛṣṇa, and the different avatāras in the world in the forms of Rāma, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, etc., as His subjective portions.

(Śrī Brahma-Saṁhitā, Text 39)

❧ Śrī Matsya-Avatāra ❧





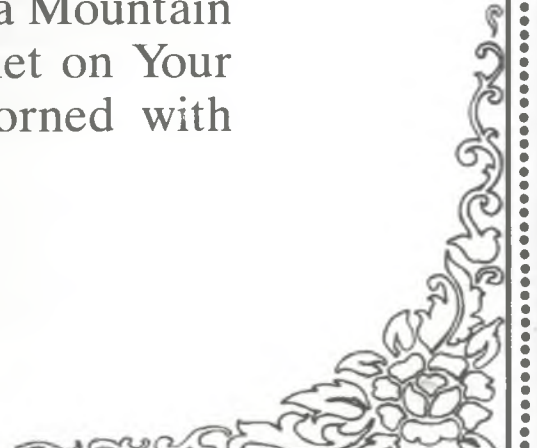
क्षितिर्हि विपुलतरे तिष्ठति तव पृष्ठे
धरणिधरणकिणचक्रगरिष्ठे ।
केशव धृतकूर्मशरीर जय जगदीश हरे ॥२॥



*kṣitir iha vipulatare tiṣṭhati tava pr̥sthe
dharani-dharaṇa-kiṇa-cakra-gariṣṭhe
keśava! dhr̥ta-kūrma-śarīra! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of a tortoise! O Jagadīśa! O You who steal Your devotees' hearts! All glories to You! In this incarnation You hold the Mandara Mountain and indeed the entire Earth planet on Your massive back, which is now adorned with many scar-like depressions.



Śrī Kūrma-Avatāra





वसति दशनशिखरे धरणी तव लग्ना
शशिनि कलङ्ककलेव निमग्ना।
केशव धृतशूकररूप जय जगदीश हरे॥३॥



*vasati daśana-śikhare dharaṇī tava lagnā
śaśini-kalaṅka-kaleva nimagnā
keśava! dhr̥ta-śūkara-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of a boar! O Jagadīśa! O You who remove Your devotees' sins! All glories to You! The Earth planet, which had become immersed in the ocean at the bottom of the universe, sits fixed to the tip of Your tusk like a spot upon the moon.

Śrī Varāha-Avatāra



तव करकमलवरे नखमद्भुतशृङ्गं
दलितहिरण्यकशिपुतनुभृङ्गम्।
केशव धृतनरहरिरूप जय जगदीश हरे॥४॥

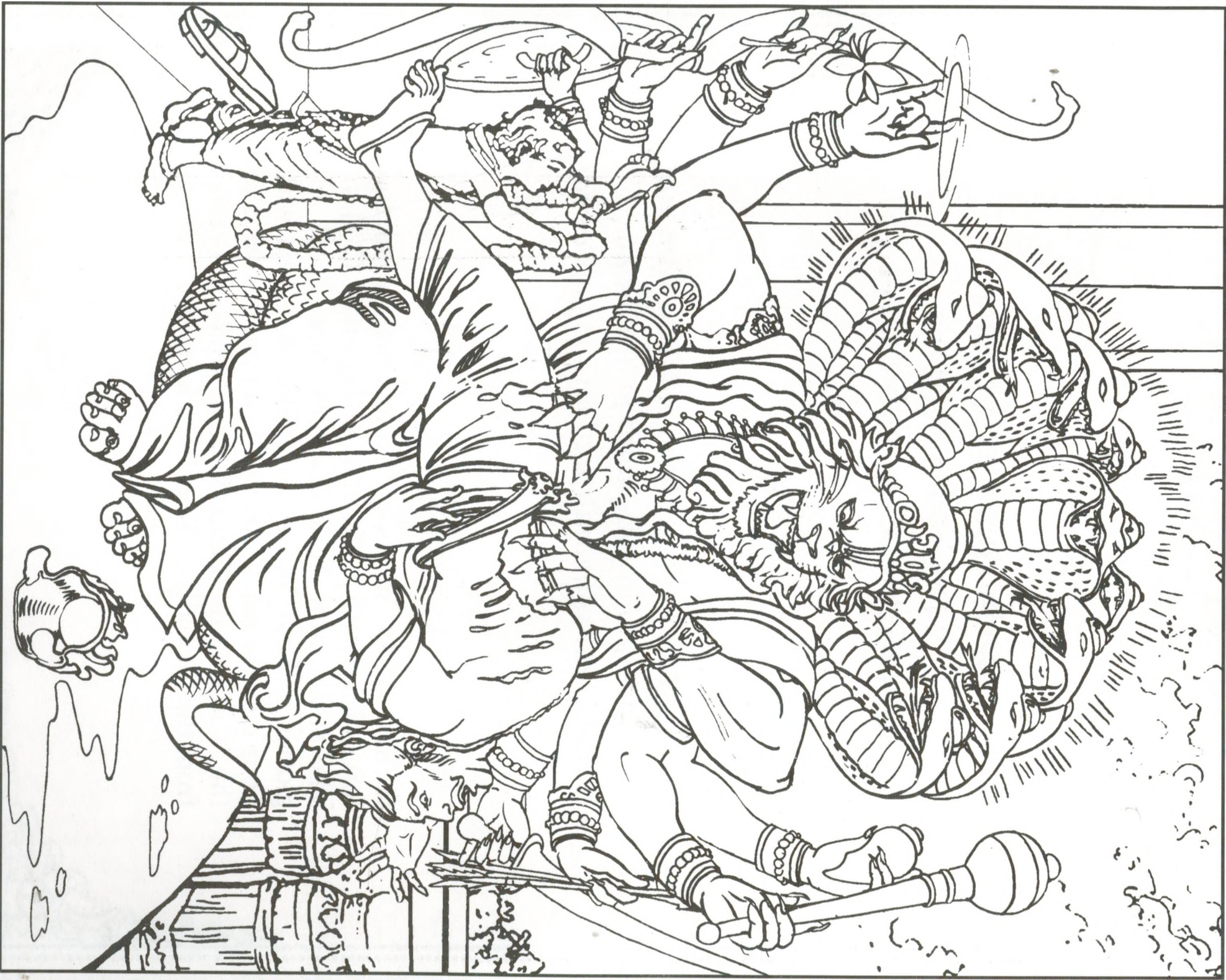


*tava kara-kamala-vare nakham adbhuta-śṛṅgam
dalita-hiraṇyakaśipu-tanu-bhr̥ṅgam
keśava! dhṛta-narahari-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of half-man, half-lion! O Jagadīśa! O You who remove Your devotees' suffering! All glories to You! With one of the wonderful, petal-like nails of Your beautiful lotus hands, You rip apart the wasp-like body of Hiraṇyakaśipu. The astonishing thing about this is that ordinarily it is the wasp that rips the petals of the lotus, but here the petal rips apart the wasp.

Śrī Nṛsimha-Avatāra





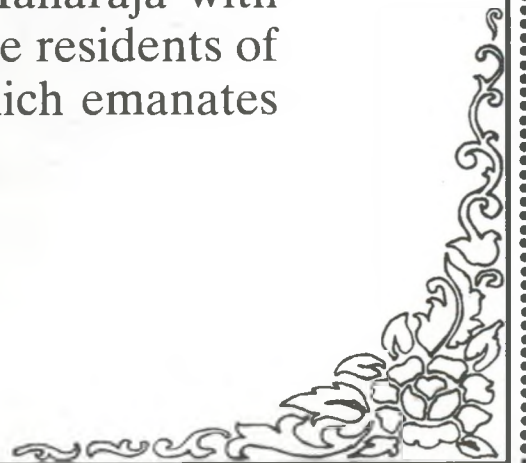
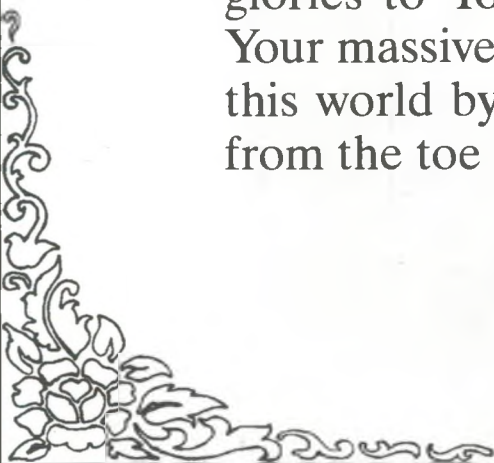
छलयसि विक्रमणे बलिमद्भुतवामन
पदनखनीरजनितजनपावन।
केशव धृतवामनरूप जय जगदीश हरे॥५॥



chalayasi vikramaṇe balim adbhuta-vāmana!
pada-nakha-nīra-janita-jana-pāvana!
keśava! dhr̥ta-vāmana-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare



O Keśava! O You who assume the wonderful form of a dwarf *brāhmaṇa*! O Jagadīśa! O Hari, who steals away Your devotees' false egos! All glories to You! You deceive Bali Mahārāja with Your massive steps. You purify all the residents of this world by the Ganges water, which emanates from the toe nails of Your lotus feet.



Śrī Vāmana-Avatāra





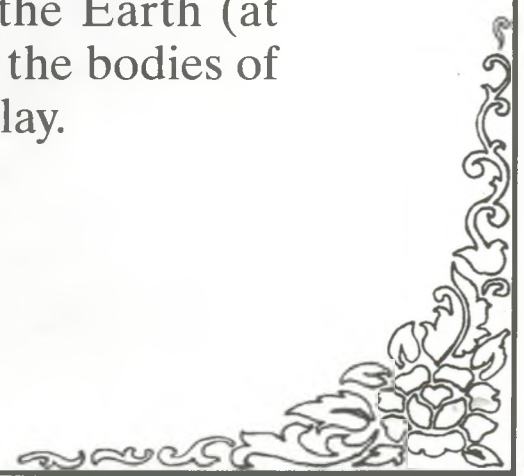
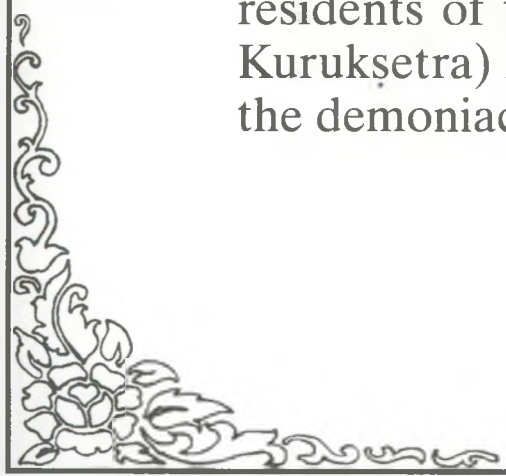
क्षत्रियरुधिरमये जगदपगतपापं
स्नपयसि पयसि शमितभवतापम्।
केशव धृतभृगुपतिरूप जय जगदीश हरे॥६॥



*kṣatriya-rudhira-maye jagad-apagata-pāpaṁ
snapayasi payasi śamita-bhava-tāpam
keśava! dhṛta-bhṛgupati-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of Paraśurāma! O Jagadīśa! All glories to You! You remove the torments, sins, and sufferings of the residents of this world by bathing the Earth (at Kurukṣetra) in rivers of blood from the bodies of the demoniac *kṣatriyas* whom You slay.



Śrī Paraśurāma-Avatāra





वितरसि दिक्षु रणे दिक्पतिकमनीयं
दशमुख—मौलिबलिं रमणीयम्।
केशव धृतरामशरीर जय जगदीश हरे॥७॥

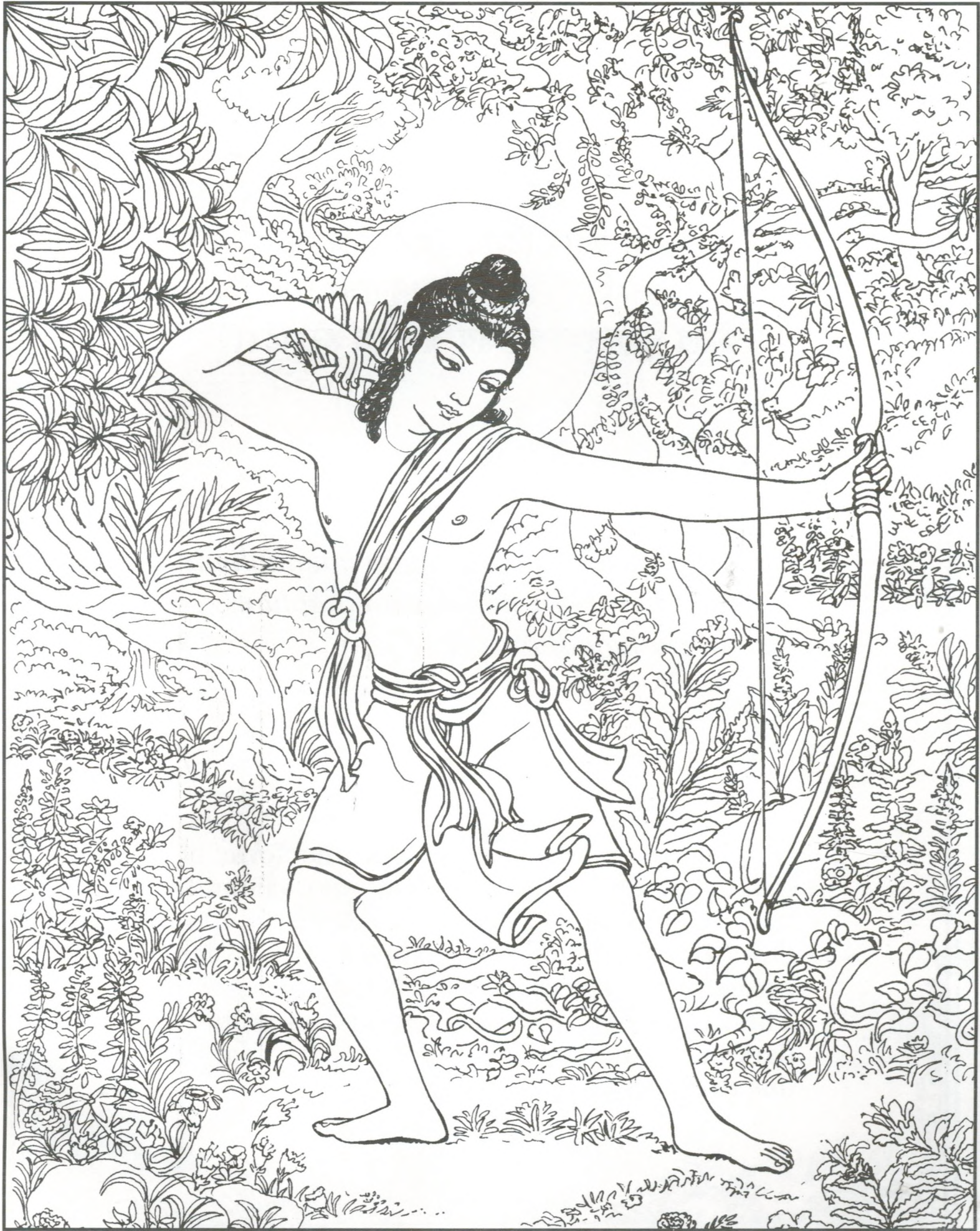


*vitarsi dikṣu raṇe dik-pati-kamanīyaṁ
daśa-mukha-mauli-baliṁ ramaṇīyam
keśava! dhṛta-rāma-śarīra! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of Rāmacandra! O Jagadīśa! O You who remove the *ṛṣis'* suffering! All glories to You! In the battle of Laṅka You destroy the demon Rāvaṇa. You distribute his heads as a pleasing offering to the presiding deities of the ten directions, who greatly desired this action due to being much harassed by this monster.

Śrī Rāmacandra-Avatāra





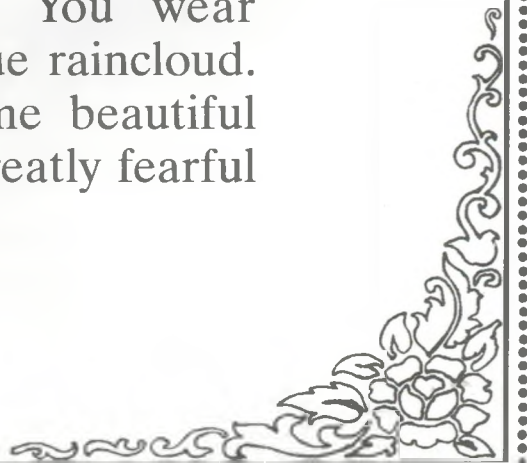
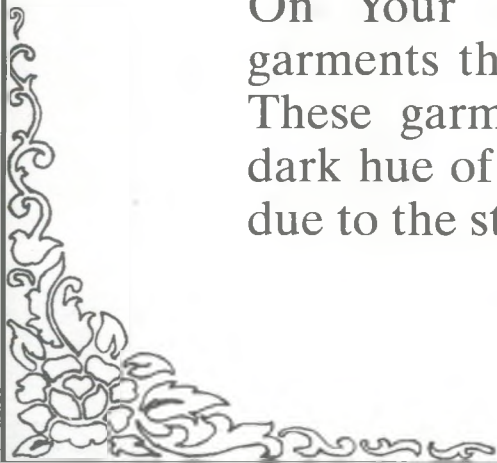
वहसि वपुषि विशदे वसनं जलदाभं
हलहतिभीतिमिलित-यमुनाभम्।
केशव धृतहलधररूप जय जगदीश हरे॥८॥



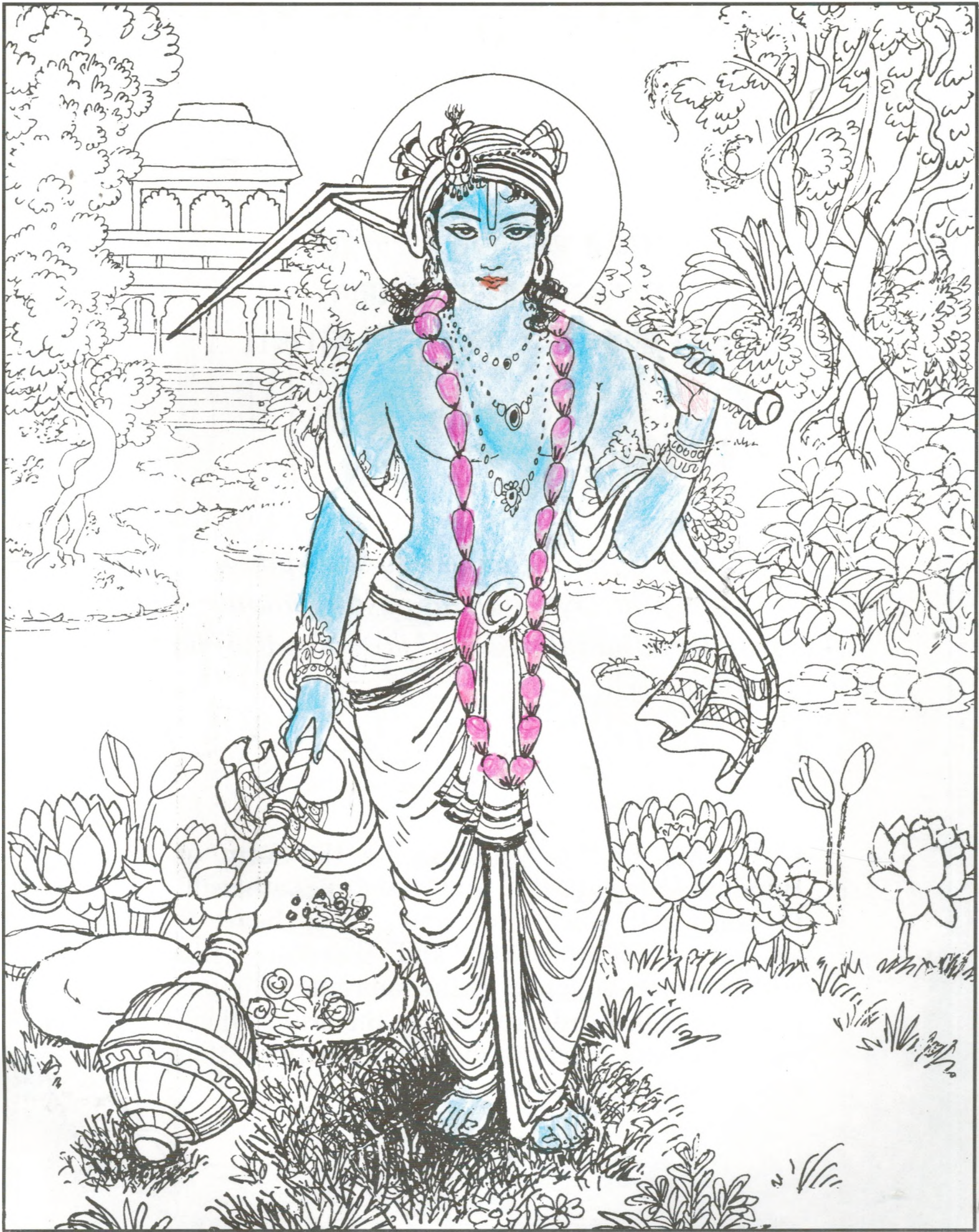
*vahasi vapuṣi viśade vasanam jaladābham
hala-hati-bhīti-milita-yamunābham
keśava! dhṛta-haladhara-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare*




O Keśava! O You who assume the form of
Balarāma! O Jagadīśa! O You who vanquish
the arrogance of the wicked! All glories to You!
On Your brilliant white body You wear
garments the colour of a fresh blue raincloud.
These garments are also the same beautiful
dark hue of the Yamunā, who is greatly fearful
due to the striking of Your plough.



Śrī Balarāma-Avatāra





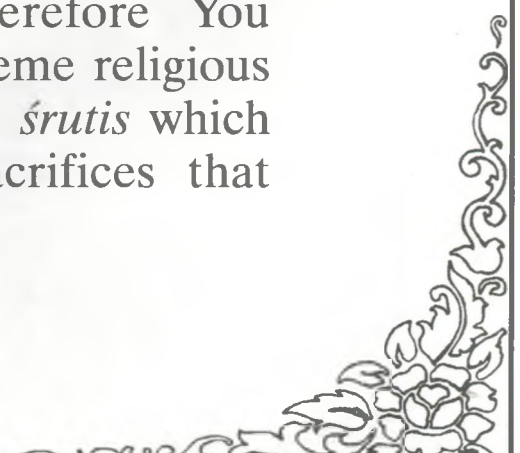
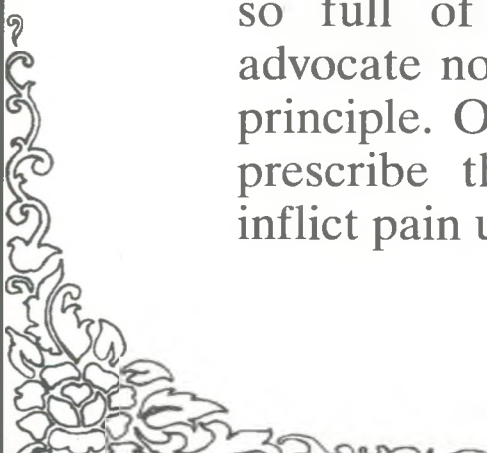
निन्दसि यज्ञ विधेरहह श्रुतिजातं
सदयहृदय! दर्शित-पशुघातम्।
केशव धृतबुद्धशरीर जय जगदीश हरे॥९॥



*nindasi yajña vidher ahaha śruti-jātaṁ
sadaya-hṛdaya! darśita-paśu-ghātaṁ
keśava! dhṛta-buddha-śarīra! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of Buddha! O Jagadīśa! O You who dispel atheism! O Hari! All glories to You! Your heart is so full of compassion, and therefore You advocate non-violence as the supreme religious principle. Oh Lord, You decry the *śrutis* which prescribe the performance of sacrifices that inflict pain upon animals.



Śrī Buddha-Avatāra





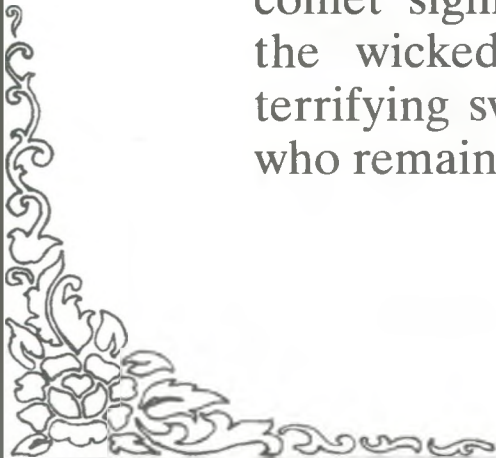
म्लेच्छनिवहनिधने कलयसि करवालं
धूमकेतुमिव किमपि करालम्।
केशव धृतकल्किशरीर जय जगदीश हरे॥१०॥



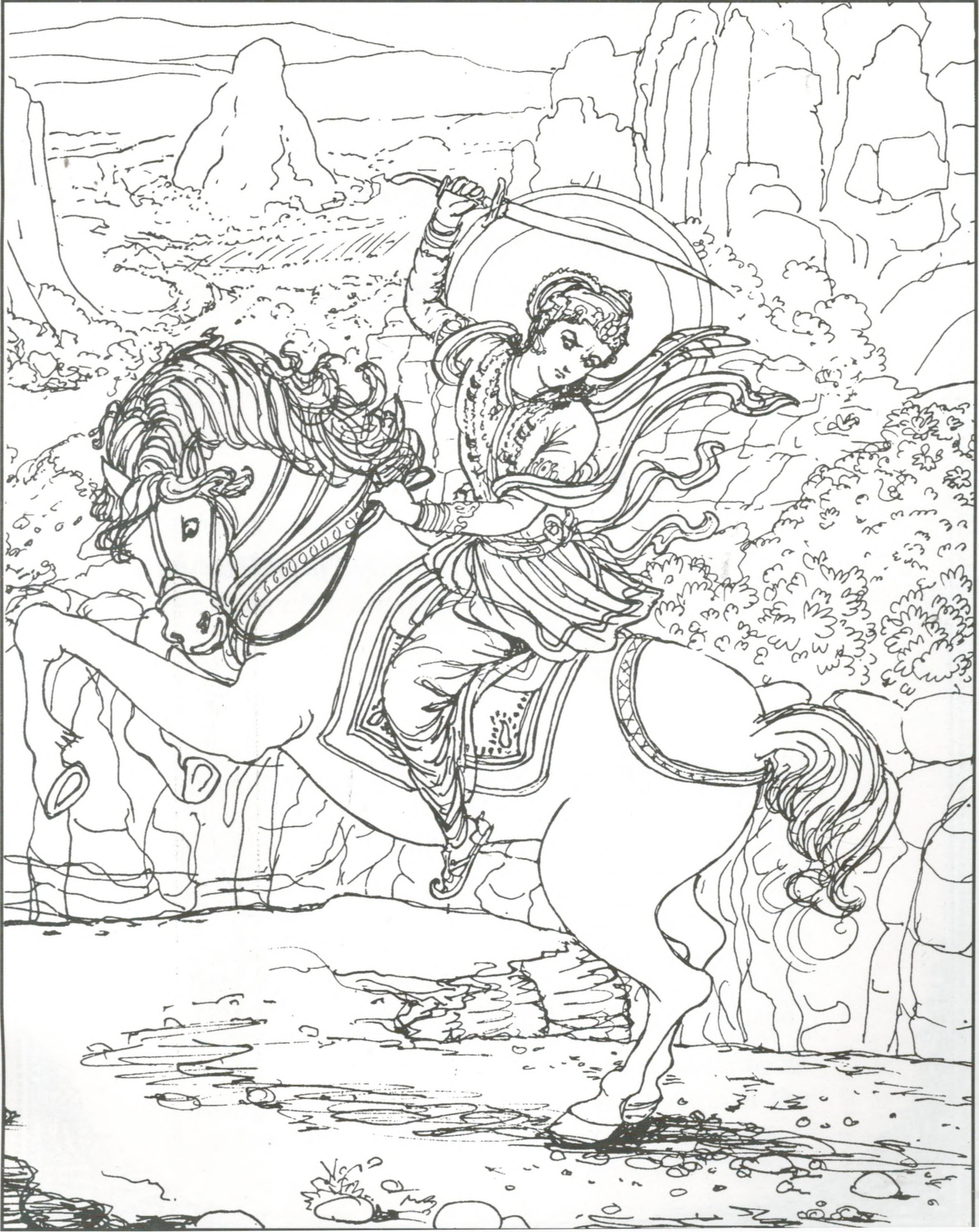
*mleccha-nivaha-nidhane kalayasi karavālam
dhūma-ketum iva kim api karālam
keśava! dhṛta-kalki-śarīra! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume the form of Kalki! O Jagadīśa! O You who remove the filth of the age of Kali! All glories to You! Like a comet signifying the eminent destruction of the wicked, You appear wielding a huge, terrifying sword to annihilate the barbarians who remain at the end of Kali-yuga.



Śrī Kalki-Avatāra





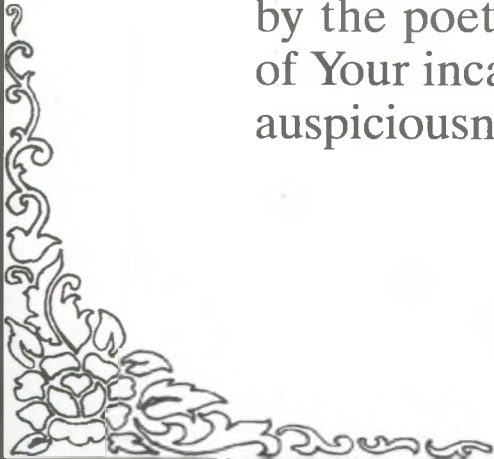
श्रीजयदेवकवेरिदमुदितमुदारं
शृणु शुभदं सुखदं भवसारम्।
केशव धृतदशविधरूप जय जगदीश हरे॥३३॥



*śrī-jayadeva-kaver idam uditam udāram
śṛṇu sukha-dam śubha-dam bhava-sāram
keśava! dhr̥ta-daśa-vidha-rūpa! jaya jagadīśa! hare*



O Keśava! O You who assume these ten forms!
O Jagadīśa! O You who remove Your devotees'
material desires! All glories to You! My
humble prayer at Your lotus feet is that You
please hear this *Daśāvatāra-Stotra* composed
by the poet Jayadeva. It describes the essence
of Your incarnations. Bestowing happiness and
auspiciousness, it is most excellent.





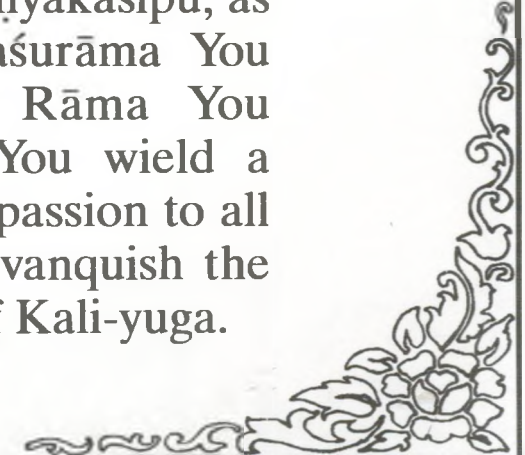
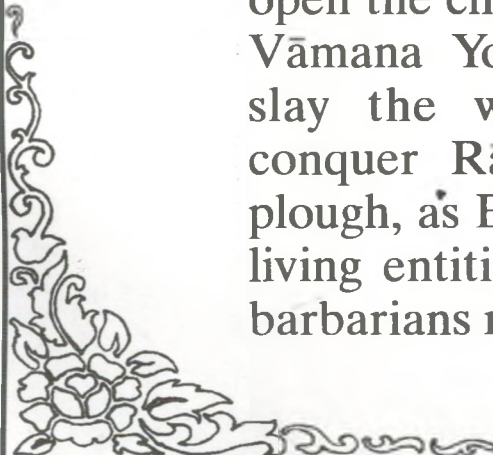
वेदानुद्धस्ते जगन्ति वहते भूगोलमुद्विभ्रते
दैत्यान् दारयते बलिं छलयते क्षत्रक्षयं कुर्वते।
पौलस्त्यं जयते हलं कलयते कारुण्यमातन्वते
म्लेच्छान् मूर्च्छयते दशाकृतिकृते कृष्णाय तुभ्यं नमः॥३२॥



*vedān uddharate jaganti vahate bhū-golam udvibhrate
daityaṁ dārayate balim chalayate kṣatra-kṣayaṁ kurvate
paulastyam jayate halaṁ kalayate kāruṇyam ātanvate
mlecchān mūrccchayate daśākṛti-kṛte kṛṣṇāya tubhyaṁ namaḥ*



O Śrī Kṛṣṇa, You descend in ten incarnations! I offer hundreds of obeisances unto You! As Matsya You rescue the *Vedas*, as Kūrma You support the Earth planet, as Varāha You lift the Earth with Your tusks, as Nṛsimha You tear open the chest of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu, as Vāmana You trick Bali, as Paraśurāma You slay the wicked *kṣatriyas*, as Rāma You conquer Rāvaṇa, as Balarāma You wield a plough, as Buddha You show compassion to all living entities, and as Kalki You vanquish the barbarians remaining at the end of Kali-yuga.



Proceeds from the sale of this coloring book go
towards the Navadvīpa Āsrāma - Temple Project in West Bengal, India.



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Line drawing of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by Acyuta Kṛṣṇa dasa, based on Venu-gita painting

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Line drawings of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja

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for their technical assistance.



Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare

Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma

Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare





Why is Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, who is so absorbed in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana pastimes, beginning his Śrī Gīta-govinda with a description of the ten prominent avatars?

If a person eats only sweets for breakfast, lunch and dinner, he will not appreciate them. However, if he first takes something bitter, salty, sour, and savoury, then, when he tastes rasamalaya he thinks, "This is the king of all preparations!"

"Keśava dhṛta daśa-vidha rūpa": Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has appeared as these ten incarnations. Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī

has glorified the astonishing pastimes of these incarnations to enhance our appreciation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Imagine, there are twenty mighty wrestlers assembled to compete. Once all the wrestlers have been defeated and only one is left standing, we are then able to appreciate his power and expertise. If we were to meet that same wrestler without his opponents, it would not be possible for us to recognize his marvelous ability.

For the sake of attracting those in different stages of spiritual development, Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī begins Śrī Gīta-govinda with the gradual evolution of the theistic conception. Not everyone will be attracted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā; one's first attraction may be to Śrī Matsya, Śrī Kūrma or Śrī Nṛsiṃha. Even Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed pastimes in many forms to attract everyone and give mercy to all.

- Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja
Janmāṣṭamī morning, 2000

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