

# **Teacher's Guide to Srila Prabhupada Founder-Acharya of ISKCON**

Hare Krishna Sunday School  
International Society for Krishna Consciousness

# Introduction

In this session, students will get a basic overview of Srila Prabhupada's life. Since some of the congregational members may not be so familiar with Prabhupada, keep it fairly simple. Better to make few points but to have the children know them well.

The main points they should learn are: Prabhupada as the founder-acharya of ISKCON, his training as a child, traveling to America to preach, the establishment and growth of ISKCON and his disappearance. The amount of details you give will be dependent upon your class's prior knowledge of Prabhupada and their interest.

In addition to hearing pastimes, the children will enjoy accomplishments such as learning to spell Prabhupada's name and learning his proper title of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. After all, those are big words and quite an achievement to master. There are suggestions for this in the teaching guides.

If you wish to have an extra project for the session, you can make a magnetic picture frame with a picture of Prabhupada. Instructions are on Worksheet 10. This can be completed in one or two weeks.



# Lesson One

## The Guru

1. Introduce the session by giving an overview of what we will be learning. Tell of the importance of examining the lives of great saints so that we can learn from them.

2. Chant the verse for the session. The verse is on Page 1 of the students' booklets.

*om ajnana-timarandhasya  
jnananjana-salakaya  
caksur unmilitam yena  
tasmai sri-gurave namah*

**Translation:** I was born in the darkest of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him.

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or chalkboard that can be seen by all the children. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse—first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. With younger children, it helps to point to each word as you chant, so they can gradually recognize the word and eventually read it on their own. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of class still chants responsively. Students then repeat the English translation after you.

3. Begin by asking the students questions, leading them to the point of accepting a teacher for learning important matters. “What would you do if you wanted to learn how to build a house? Would you read a book telling how? Would you look at pictures and decide how to do it? Would you take a house apart to see how it was done? Would you have someone who builds houses teach you how to do it? Which is the best way to learn?”

4. Explain how spiritual life is the same—we need a teacher. Go over the points mentioned in their book about a teacher being called a guru and the necessity of his not changing the message.

5. Play the children's game "Telephone." Line the children up with you at the beginning of the line. Tell them that you are going to whisper a sentence into the next person's ear. That person will whisper the same message into the next person's ear and so on until the message reaches the end of the line. They may only whisper the message once. If someone doesn't hear it well, they will just have to do their best at passing it on. The last person will tell the class what he heard.

Then whisper a message like "Radha is Krishna's favorite servant" or "Krishna and Balaram took the cows to the pasture every morning" into the next child's ear. You'll be surprised at the message that results at the end of the line!

Let them discover the point. Explain that Krishna originally speaks the scripture and if the guru changes the message of the scripture, even slightly, the end result will be very much different from the real message. That is why Krishna had to come to speak the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna.

Their game of telephone can be used to explain the disciplic succession also. As the message goes down the line, it is passed from guru to disciple. If it is very carefully handed down, the message will not change.

6. Demonstrate the definition of acharya, one who teaches by example. Ask the class how they would feel in the following situation. Step outside your class and pop a piece of bubble gum in your mouth. Reenter the class, blowing some bubbles and smacking your gum loudly. Tell them, "Good evening, children, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am your new teacher. My Number 1 rule is that no one can chew gum in class."

What do they think about that rule? What would make them take the rule more seriously?

Similarly, a guru must follow what he is teaching. He cannot simply give the rules and not bother to follow them himself. One who teaches by his example is an acharya.

7. Tell them that in this session we will look at Prabhupada's life. He was a great example of someone in Krishna consciousness. He has a special position as founder-acharya. An understandable way to define "founder" is someone who begins an organized group. It is because of him that we have temples and Sunday Schools all over the world.

8. Allow time for students to do the word puzzle on Page 4 of their booklets.

# Lesson Two

## Prabhupada's Childhood

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review last week's lesson asking the meaning of guru, acharya, founder-acharya.
3. Begin by telling of Prabhupada's early childhood:
  - \* he never ate meat, fish or eggs
  - \* he had his own Radha-Krishna Deities he worshipped at an early age
  - \* he visited the Krishna temple by his house daily
  - \* his father's devotion and respect for spiritual life
4. Tell the story of Prabhupada's childhood celebration of Ratha Yatra. The students can follow along in their books looking at the pictures or you can show pictures as you tell the story.
5. Create a bulletin board or wall display with your class.

Make 3 copies of Worksheet 1 (the Ratha cart) on card stock. Give a copy to three students to color. Copy Worksheets 2 and 3. You can cut apart the different figures and Deities and have the children color them.

After coloring, the children can cut out the pictures and you can assemble a display of Ratha Yatra. Attach the two wheels to the bottom of each ratha cart and glue Tab A to the back of the canopy top. Put 1 Deity on each cart. Attach yarn to both sides of each cart and bring the yarn down in front of the carts to resemble the pulling ropes. The other figures can be positioned as if pulling the ropes and dancing in kirtan.

If you don't have a bulletin board, put the pieces up on the wall with blue tack. You can use Worksheet 4 for a heading if you like. This also makes a nice hallway display and will draw attention to your Sunday School.

# Lesson Three

## Initiation and traveling to the West

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review last week's lesson very briefly bringing children up to the point you'll begin with today.
3. With children this age it's best to keep it pretty simple. Stick to just a few of the highpoints of Prabhupada's life. If you have a class with a lot of initiated devotees' children, you can add more details since they'll have some knowledge of the basics. Otherwise, just go over these highpoints and make sure they know them well:
  - meeting Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaj and his instruction to preach in English
  - taking sanyassa and moving to Vrindavan to write
  - traveling to America at the age of 70 to preach
4. Practice with the class repeating Prabhupada's sannyasa name of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. If that is easy for them, teach them what the A. C. stand for. See who can say his name without looking at the book.
5. Create another display with your students.

With the class you will trace Prabhupada's route and see what he accomplished in his lifetime. Using a large world map on the wall (inexpensive ones can usually be purchased at office supply stores--or use Worksheets 5 and 6) place a tack on Calcutta. Wrap yarn around it and stretch the yarn to New York, pulling it taut and wrapping it around a tack placed there. Color Worksheet 7 (the Jaladuta) and place it on the yarn "sailing" across the ocean. The students will benefit from the visual effects of this method and more will be added to the display in later lessons.
6. Students can complete the dot-to-dot drawing on Page 13 of their booklets.

# Lesson Four

## Preaching in the West

1. Chant the verse for the session.

2. Review briefly bringing students up to the point where you will begin today.

3. Generally explain Prabhupada's early days in the West. Again, you don't have to go into much detail. You can choose 2 or 3 stories to relate about the early temples ( the first initiation, chanting in the park, getting the Matchless Gifts shop, Ratha Yatra etc.)

Tell about the first few temples, the establishment of gurukula and the purpose of the farm communities.

Stress that in spite of all these duties, Prabhupada continued to write books. He wanted to manage less so he could write more.

4. Using the same display that shows the Jaladuta crossing the ocean, the students will now illustrate some of Prabhupada's preaching results.

Copy and cut apart Worksheet 8. Have enough pages so that each child gets 1 or 2 of the pictures to color. After they have completed the coloring, the pictures of temples, schools, books and farms can be placed around the United States. If you are using the world map you can place pictures in some other countries, also.

5. Have the students practice spelling Prabhupada's name. After letting them look and practice on their own for a few minutes, recite it with the whole class a few times. Here are a few other fun ways to practice:

- On index cards, write one letter of Prabhupada's name per card. Give the stack of cards to a group of students and let them put them in order. This can also be done by giving the letters to each student on smaller cards so they can arrange them and paste them to another paper.
- Randomly pass out the same index cards with the letters, one per student. Let the person with the first letter (P) come up and place his letter on the chalkboard ledge or just face the class holding his letter. Whoever has the second letter will then come up and place it next to his or stand next to him. Once all the letters have been put up, each one calls out his letter, spelling Prabhupada's name.

- On the chalkboard, print Prabhupada's name with blanks for missing letters (example: \_ \_ \_ b \_ \_ p \_ \_ \_). You point to a certain blank (not in order) and they must tell you which letter belongs there.

6. (Optional) If you think your students would benefit from watching a video about Prabhupada (or a portion of a video) by all means show it to them. You may want to have one of the videos playing while the children color. One that just has Prabhupada singing in the background while showing him in various activities would work fine, or play a cassette tape of him singing bhajans.

# Lesson Five

## Back to India

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly bringing the children up to the point where you will begin today. See who can spell Prabhupada's name.
3. Explain Prabhupada's strategy of reintroducing Krishna consciousness to India. With his Western disciples, he traveled back to India, knowing that the Indians would be more apt to listen after seeing these non-Hindus dressing and worshipping like them.

Prabhupada was successful and began building some very large temples in India. You can show picture of the Bombay, Mayapur and Vrindavan temples. Tell about the difficulties of building the centers.
4. You can tell them the analogy of the blind man and the lame man. If they work together, they both benefit.

The best way to teach the meaning of this analogy is for them to act it out. Have one child blindfolded to be the blind man. The other can have his legs tied together so he can't walk. Ask each one to get to a certain point across the room or down the hallway. It will be hard for the blind man to see where he is going and the lame man will take forever to get there. Now see if they can figure out a way that they can reach their destination by working together. If the lame man rides on the blind man's shoulders or back (the students can ride piggy-back) he can direct the blind man while taking advantage of his strong legs.

Similarly, India and America (or the Western countries) are like the blind and the lame. America is spiritually blind and India is lame in scientific advancement and modern technology. That makes it hard to "get around" in India and to get things done efficiently, just like a lame man. If India can guide America spiritually, America can use its technology properly and both places can become stronger materially and spiritually.
5. On the map, using a different color yarn, stretch the yarn back to India, signifying Prabhupada's return. Separate the pictures on Worksheet 9 and have the students color them. Place the completed pictures on India, showing what was accomplished by Prabhupada there.

6. Explain Prabhupada's travels around the world. He was traveling around to oversee different temples, installing Deities, initiating devotees, building new temples, writing and printing books. Whatever was needed to be done, Prabhupada had to teach his disciples how to do it.

But now his health was declining. Tell of his weakening condition and his disciples pleas for him to stay with them and complete his work. His health finally became very bad and he decided to return to Vrindavan to leave the world. You can read portions of the Lilamrta where his disciples are requesting him to stay and about his arrival in Vrindavan.



# Lesson Six

## The Final Lesson

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review last week's lesson briefly reminding them that Prabhupada is now in Vrindavan expecting to leave this world.
3. Again tell of Prabhupada's poor health. The final portion of "Your Ever Well-wisher" can be shown depicting Prabhupada in his last days. Then they can see the great difficulty that Prabhupada went through but he was still translating books.

The glorious way in which Prabhupada left the world should be discussed. Tell them that whatever one remembers at the time of death determines his next life. Prabhupada showed the ideal way to pass away by being in Vrindavan, hearing the Holy Name and in the company of devotees.
4. Explain why a saint is put into a samadhi after death instead of being cremated. (His body is considered spiritual since it was used for spiritual purposes.) You can show a picture of the samadhi in Vrindavan where Prabhupada's body is.
5. Explain how the saintly person is with us even after his disappearance. By his instructions (vani) we still have his association. This association is more important than his physical presence since he may not always be personally present.
6. Tell the class of ISKCON's celebration of Vyasa Puja. A guru is honored by his disciples every year on his appearance day. You can also explain why we refer to birth and death as "appearance" and "disappearance."

Explain the general schedule of a Vyasa Puja festival. Tell them that all Sunday School classes will join together next week to celebrate a Vyasa Puja for Srila Prabhupada. Let them know what your schedule will be and they can copy it in their booklets on Page 26. If you want them to bring a gift or write an offering, they should record that under "My Duties."
7. To prepare them for next week's festival, explain what written "offerings" are and read a couple of examples. Brainstorm together some of the things they would like to tell Prabhupada if they could see him. By hearing ideas from others, their ideas will start flowing and it will be easier for them to write their own offerings. Either give them time to write one now or let them do it as homework.

8. A take-home test can be given or they can be given credit for the session by completing an offering for next week. If you are planning on giving them a test in class (which is available on Pages 12 and 13), prepare them so they know what to study. No preparation is needed for a take-home test but if that's what you are doing, make sure they know what to do on the test and when you need it back.

# Lesson Seven

## Celebrating Vyasa Puja

The following are some guidelines and ideas for a Sunday School celebration of Vyasa Puja. Each temple will have different facilities and resources, so adjust, expand, or simplify these ideas as you see fit. For a more exciting festival, combine all the age groups and let them work together in different groups.

### 1. Preparation (allow 30-45 minutes)

Students can form groups to work on the following preparations:

- cut up flowers for puspanjali
- prepare an offering of fruits or other foodstuffs
- decorate an altar or table for Srila Prabhupada's picture or murti
- make garlands for the picture or murti
- prepare an arati tray

### 2. The actual festival (allow at least 1 hour)

- Any gifts that are brought can be placed by the picture or murti.
- Students can start by reading their offerings to Srila Prabhupada.
- After several students have read, puspanjali can be performed (maybe a shortened version). The children should be encouraged to loudly repeat the words.
- After puspanjali, the offering of bhoga can be brought before Prabhupada and while that is being offered, arati and kirtan can take place. One child should perform arati and if you have a good kirtan leader, let one of the kids lead. Otherwise, have an adult lead so the children will participate nicely and get involved in the kirtan. Be sure that the students offer flowers during the arati, and if you can, have extra garlands made that representatives from each class can offer.
- After the kirtan, distribute the prasadam. If you are industrious, or better yet, if you have an older student who is, the written offerings could be made into a booklet and given to the children next week.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Final Quiz

Circle the correct answers below.

1. One who teaches by his example is called an \_\_\_\_\_.

**disciple**

**acharya**

**founder**

2. Circle the two instructions Bhaktisiddhanta gave to Srila Prabhupada.

**print books**

**have Ratha Yatra**

**preach in English**

3. Prabhupada came to America on a ship named the \_\_\_\_\_.

**Janardan**

**Morarji**

**Jaladuta**

4. Circle one thing that Prabhupada began in America.

**farm communities**

**samadhis**

**rickshaws**

5. When a pure devotee disappears from this world, his body is placed in a \_\_\_\_\_.

**fire**

**samadhi**

**cemetery**

6. One service that Prabhupada never stopped doing was \_\_\_\_\_.

**cooking**

**dressing the Deities**

**writing books**

7. We celebrate the spiritual master's appearance day with a festival called \_\_\_\_\_.

**Vyasa Puja**

**Gaura Purnima**

**Ratha Yatra**

**Write the answers to the following questions.**

8. Name two ways that Prabhupada showed his attachment to Krishna when he was a young boy.

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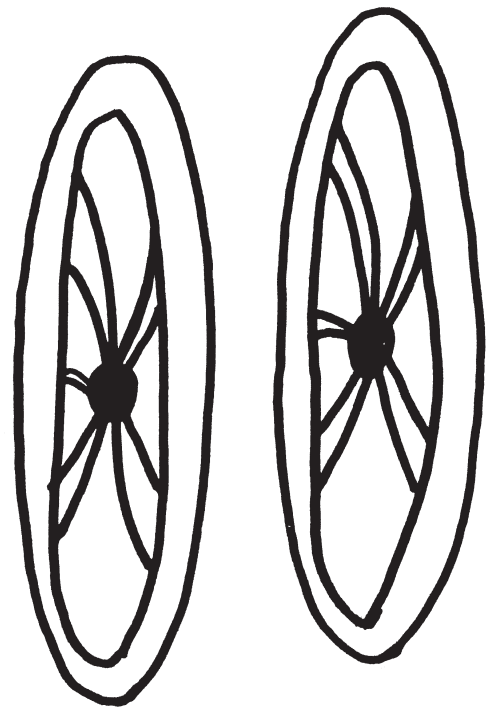
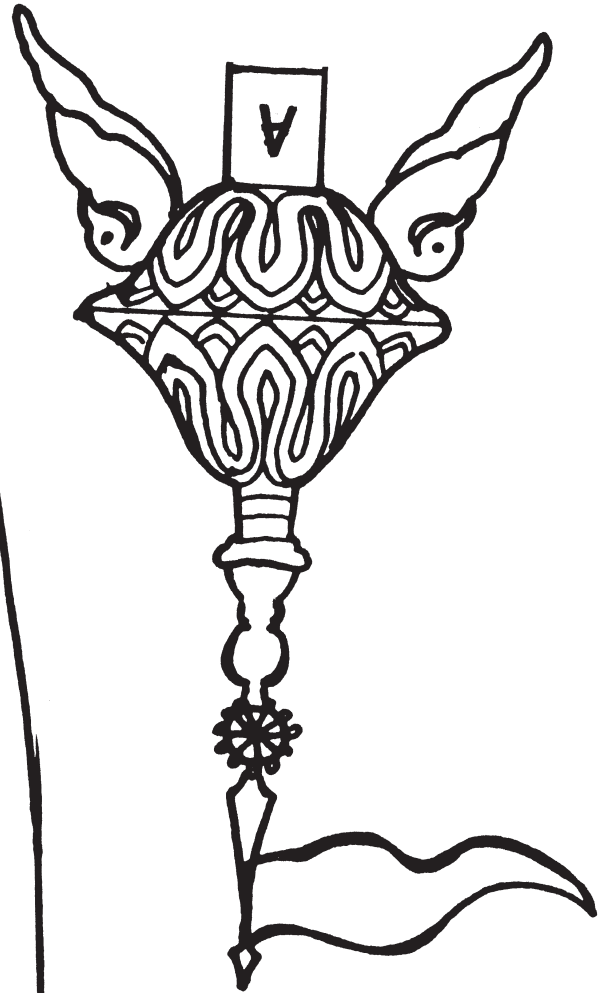
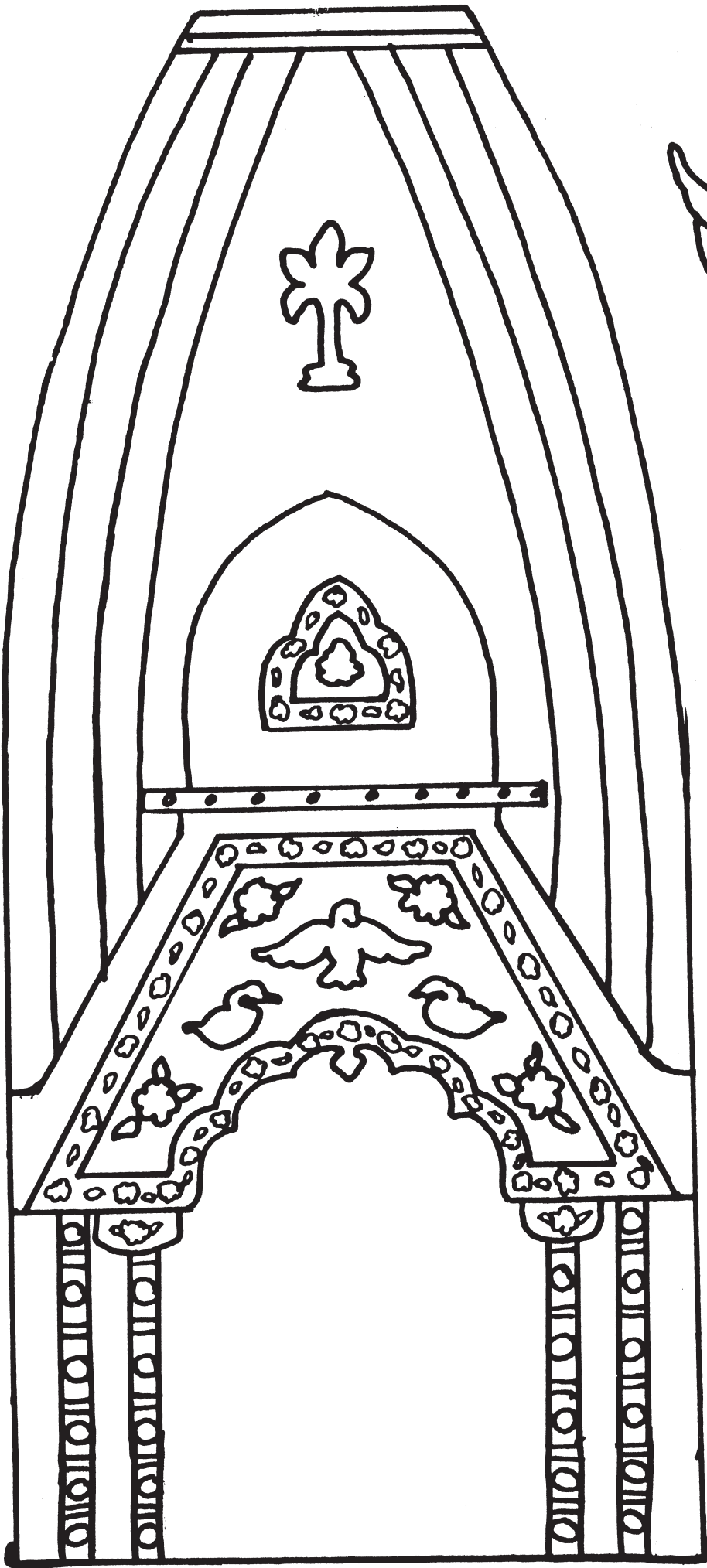
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9. What is the Sanskrit word that means “teacher?” \_\_\_\_\_

10. Prabhupada isn't with us now in person. How can we still get his association?

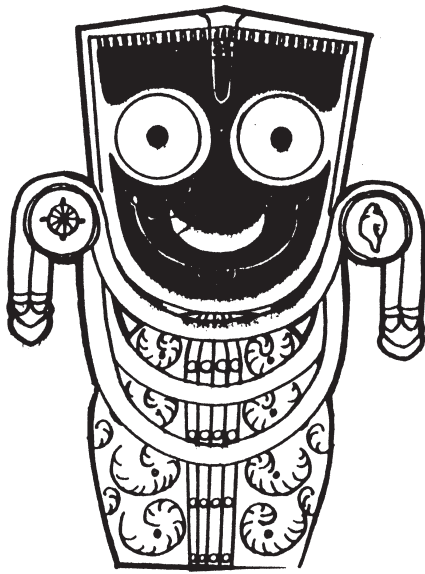
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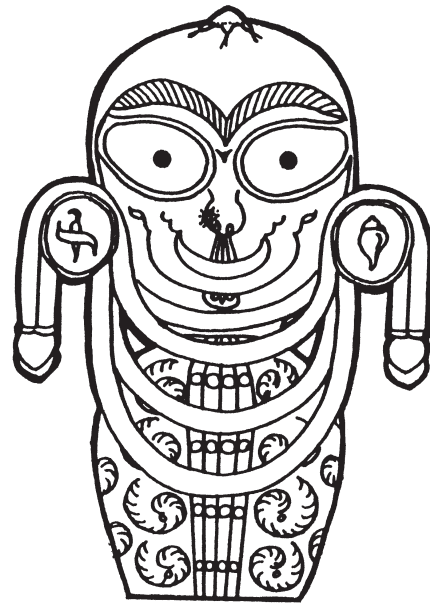


## Worksheet 2

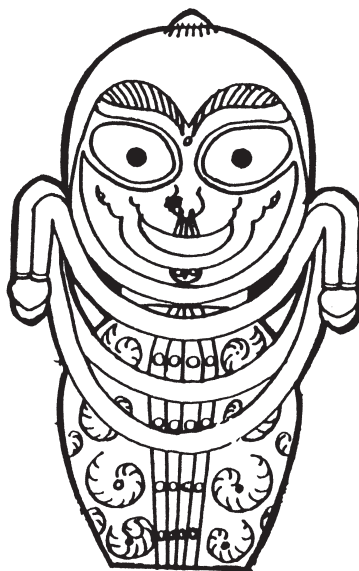
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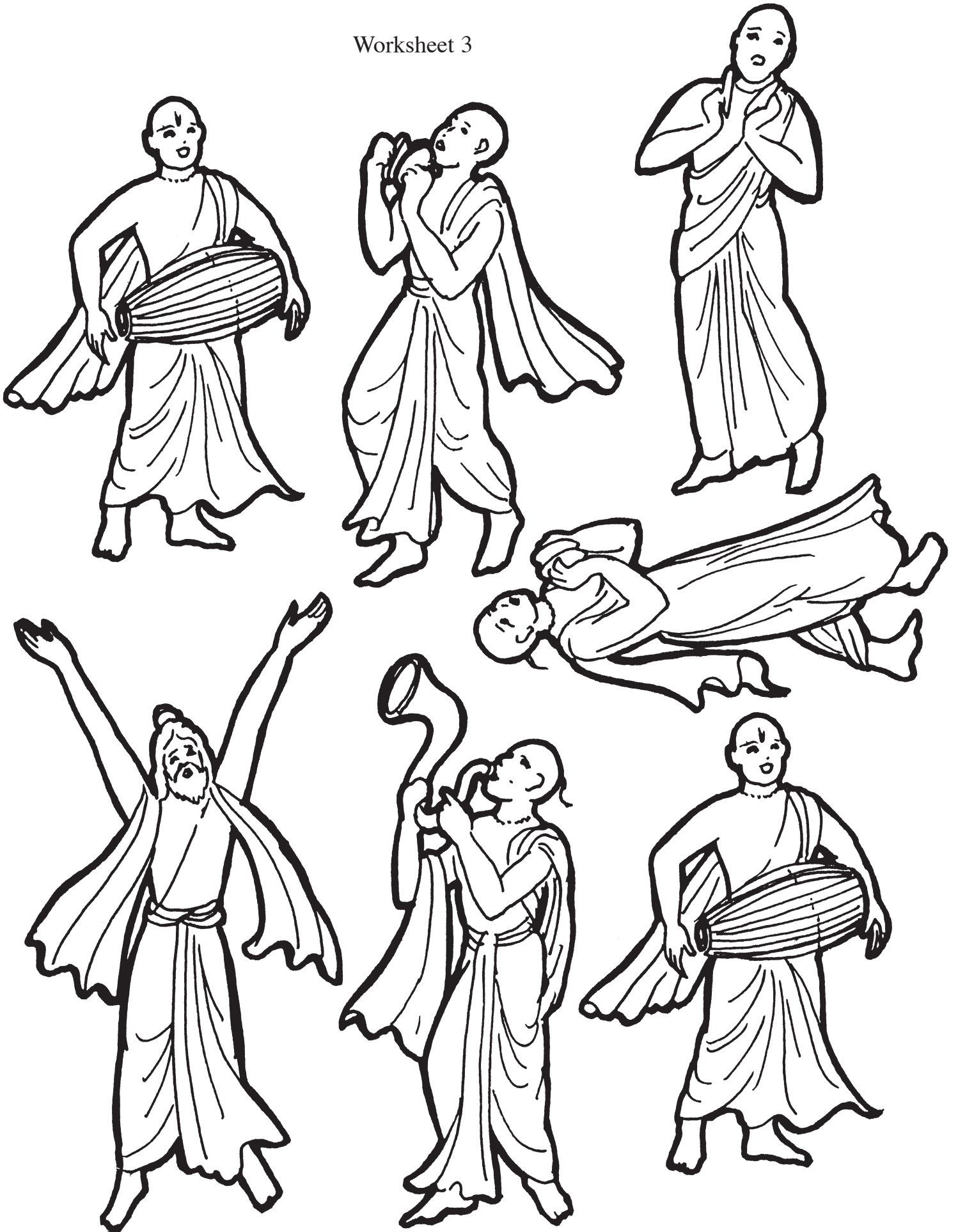
Baladeva



Lady Subhadra



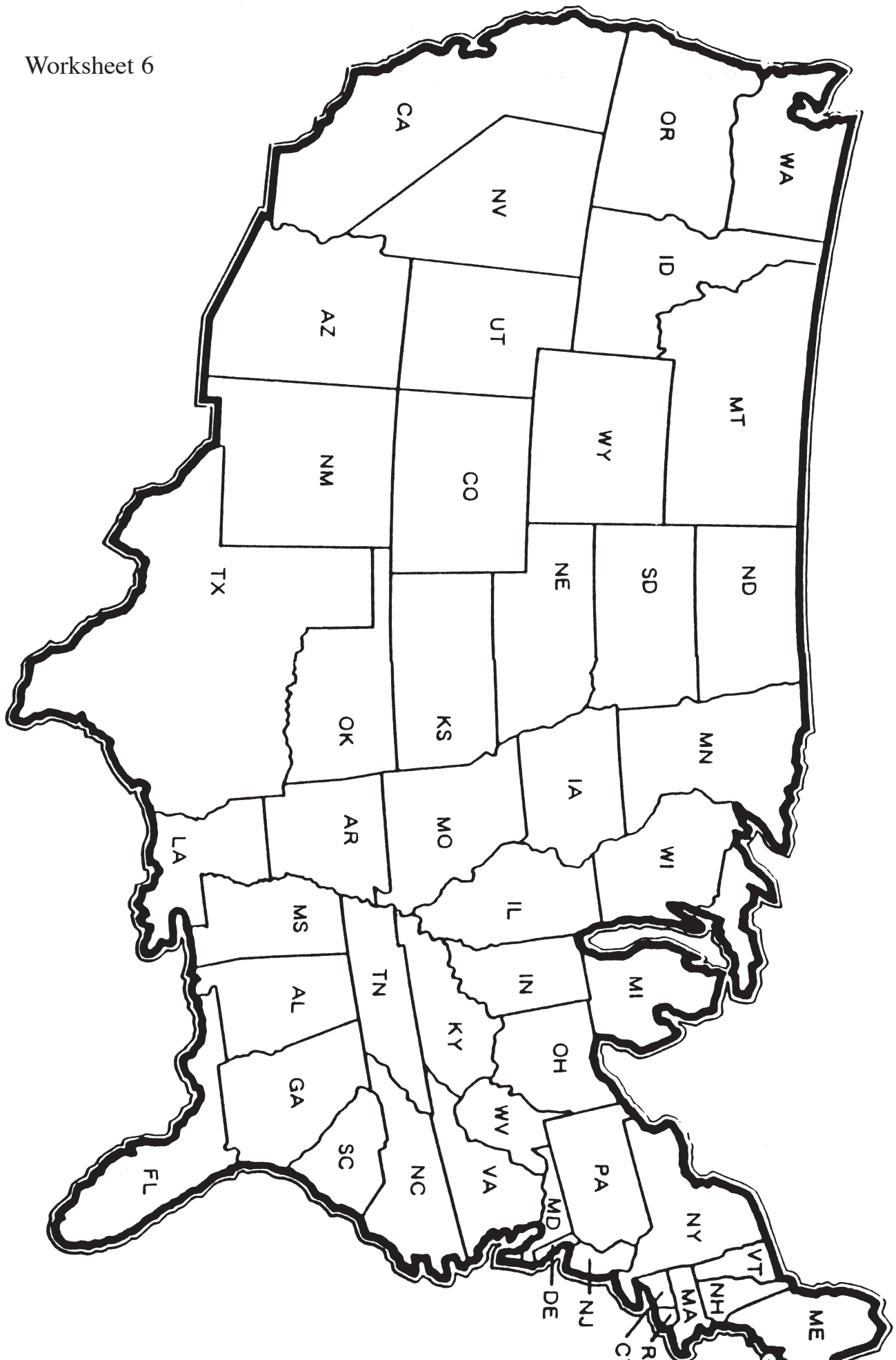
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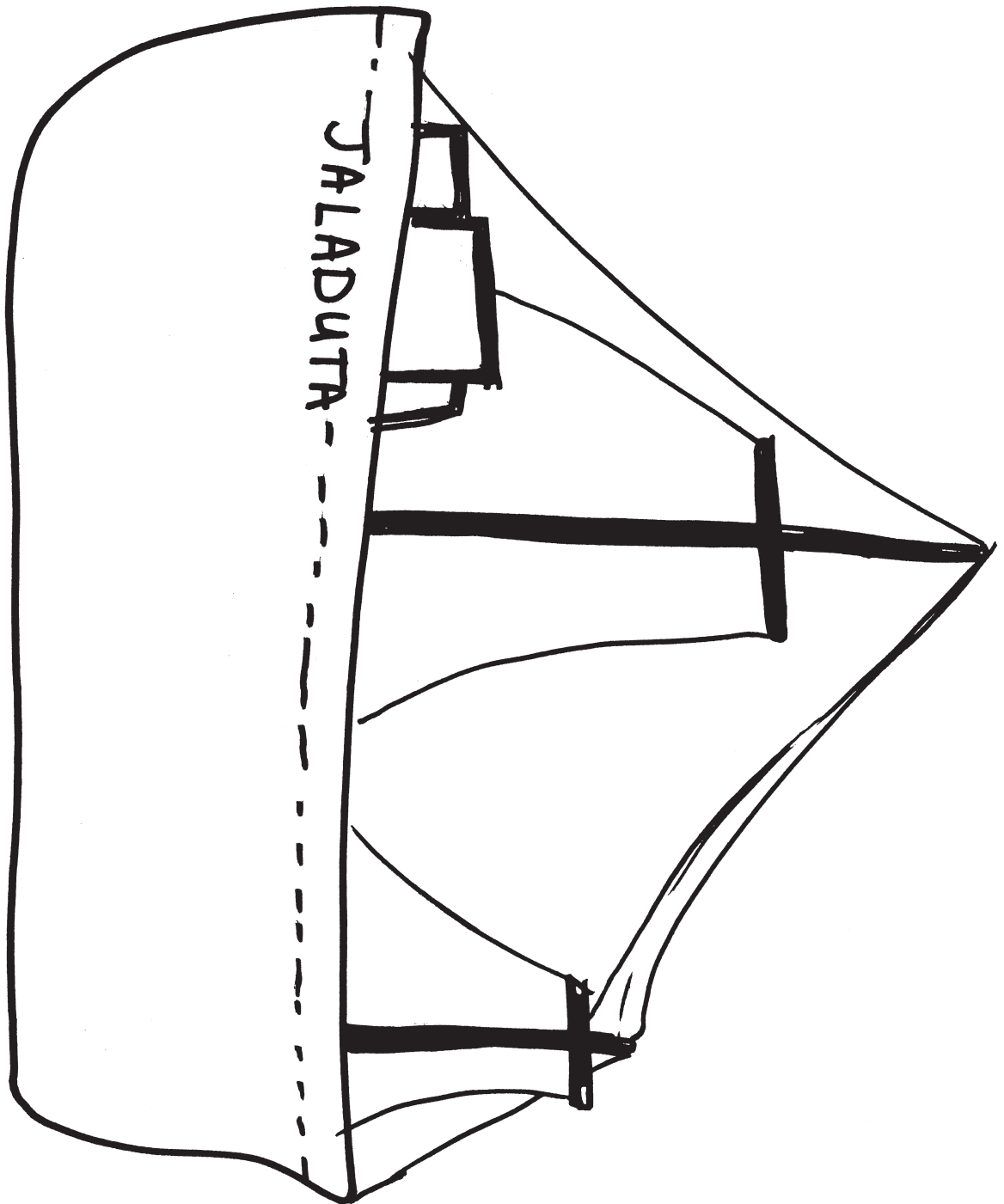




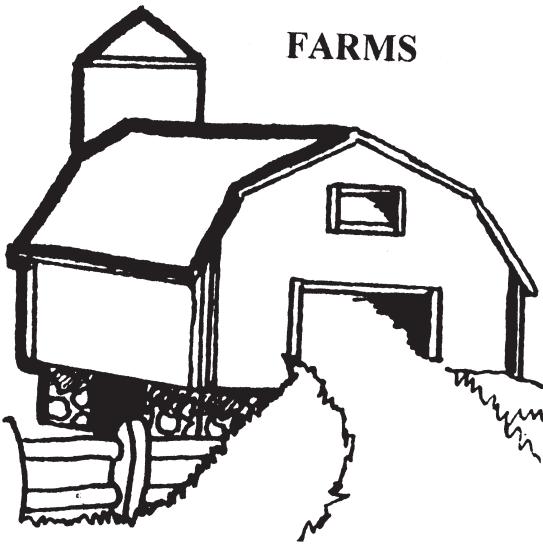
**Prabhupada  
loved  
the  
Ratha Yatra  
Parade**







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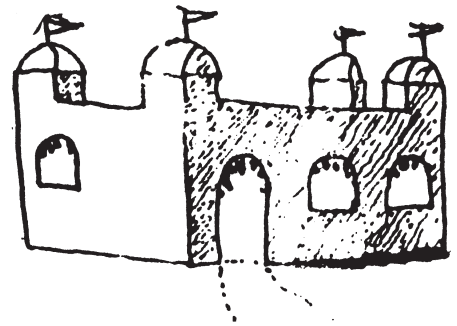
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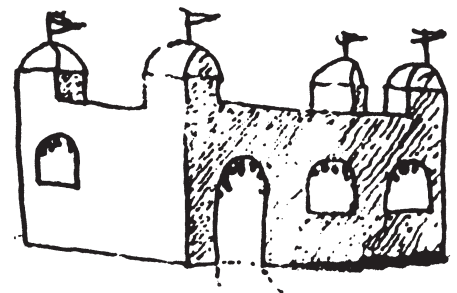
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TEMPLES



TEMPLES



BOOKS



BOOKS



## Worksheet 9

