

sweet Pastimes of Damodara



Children's Story and Activity Book

Sweet Pastimes of Lord Damodara Coloring Book

Conceived, Designed, Layout and Published by Isvara dasa

Stories Written by Yasoda devi dasi

Art Illustration by Satadhama devi dasi

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One fine day in autumn in the beautiful land of Vrindavana, Mother Yasoda saw that all her maidservants were busy with their household chores.

"Today," she said, "I will churn the butter myself. I will use sweet milk from my own special cows. If I prepare very tasty butter for my lovely child, Krishna, perhaps He will be pleased. Then He will not search the households of the other gopis to steal their butter."

Mother Yasoda began pulling the ropes of the churning rod. As she worked, her earrings shook and her bracelets jingled. Beads of perspiration appeared on her forehead, and malati flowers fell from her hair. She closed her eyes and remembered Krishna. Softly she sang songs she herself had composed about His wonderful pastimes.





While Mother Yasoda sang, she felt intense love for her child. Milk began to flow from her breasts.

A tug on the border of her saffron-yellow sari broke her meditation. Awake from His naps, baby Krishna, stood before her, rubbing His lotus eyes with His two soft hands. He then reached up and took hold of the churning rod to stop His mother's work. He wanted her to feed Him with the milk from her breast.

To fulfill her son's desire, Mother Yasoda placed Krishna on her lap and held Him gently in her arms. As she nursed Lord Krishna, she gazed into His moon-like face. "How beautiful He is!" she thought as she brushed back the curls of His soft black hair and kissed His forehead. "His cheeks and lips are as red as bimba fruits, and His teeth are a white as rows of jasmine buds."

Once again memories of Krishna's amazing childhood pastimes enchanted Mother Yasoda's mind.





A loud long hissing sound from the kitchen, "S-s-s-s-s-s.....," interrupted Mother Yasoda's meditation once more.

"The milk!" she exclaimed, "The milk on the stove is boiling over!" In haste she placed baby Krishna down and hurried off to tend to the overflowing pot of milk.

Baby Krishna sat up feeling alone and angry. "My mother has left Me," He thought, " before I was finished drinking her milk."





Lord Krishna's dark eyes then became red with anger. Hot tears rolled down His flushed pink cheeks. Biting His lower lip with His teeth, He stood up on His small lotus feet. From the corner of His eye, Krishna spotted a stone on the ground. He picked it up and hurled it with great determination at the churning pot.

"Crash!" The pot of yogurt that Mother Yasoda had been churning broke into pieces. Yogurt splattered everywhere and spilled to the ground.





The sight of the glistening white yogurt abruptly changed baby Krishna's mood.

"This yogurt looks delicious!" He thought. He then sat down and began eating creamy handfuls of His mother's preparation with great delight.

Lord Krishna's beauty increased as His cheeks, lips, and fingers became smeared with the shiny yogurt.

His dark black lotus eyes glanced quickly about. "I must find a place to hide. If My mother finds Me here, surely she will punish Me."





Meanwhile Mother Yasoda had removed the large pot of boiling milk from the stove.

Anxious about her beautiful child, she quickly returned to the churning pot.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed. "The yogurt pot is broken!" Her lovely eyes beheld yogurt splashed everywhere, but her son was nowhere to be seen. Small shiny footprints of yogurt marked a trail on the ground.

"Krishna has broken the churning pot," she reasoned, "and fearing punishment, He has run off to hide." "How naughty He is, but how clever! I shall follow His buttery footprints to find Him."





While Krishna searched the house for a place to hide, He came upon a wonderful storeroom. Inside were many large clay pots filled with fresh butter and yogurt hung from the ceiling.

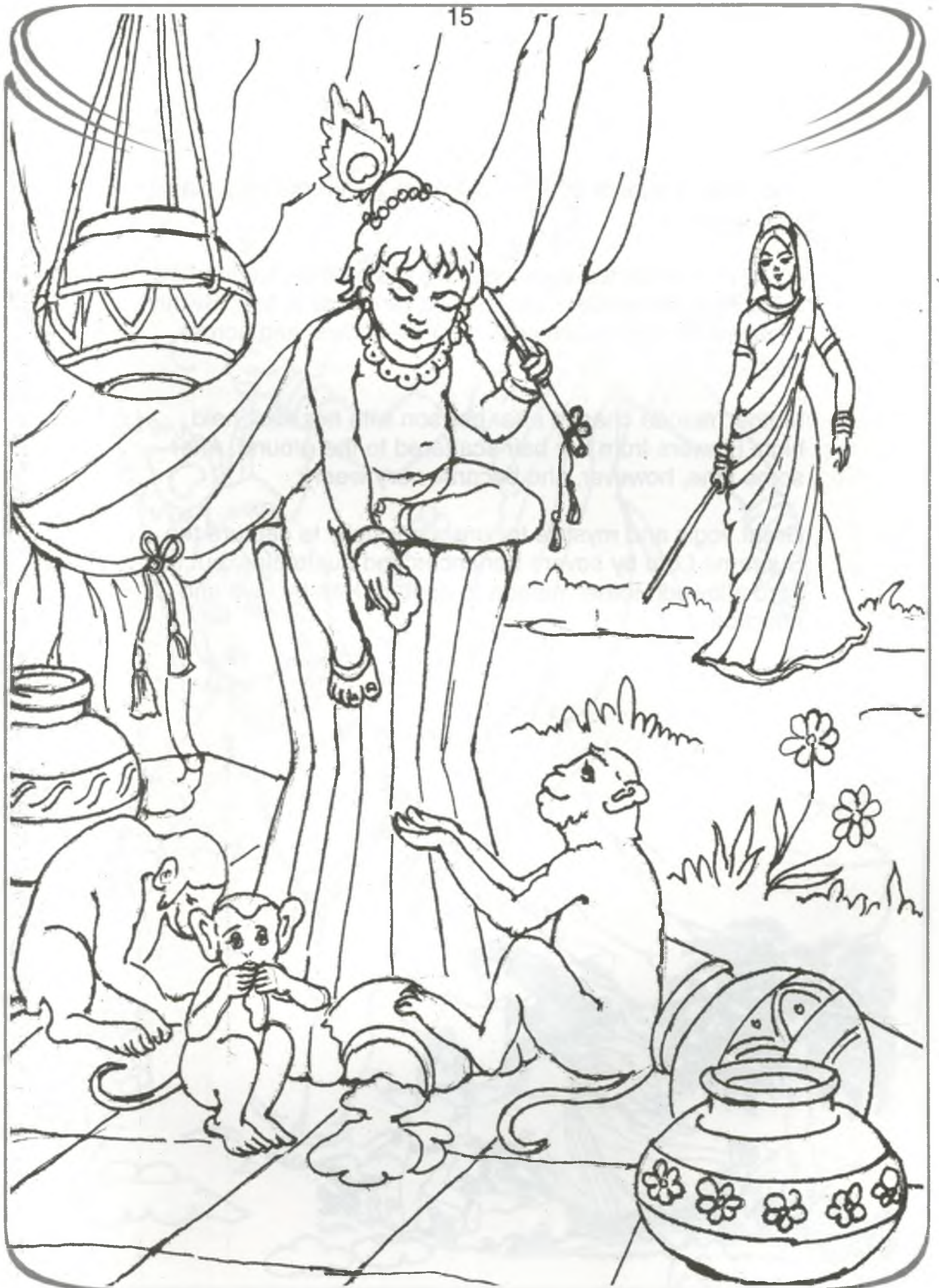
"How can I reach those delicious preparations?" Krishna wondered. His brightly dancing eyes, looked about the room.

"I will use that wooden spice grinding mortar," He thought. "If I turn it upside down, climb up onto the top, stand on My toes, and stretch My arms, surely I will reach the yogurt."

Krishna quickly carried out His plan. His tiny lotus hands pulled on the edge of the clay container and thick streams of yogurt and butter poured to the floor. Next He perched on the wooden mortar and feasted. Birds and monkeys circled and danced about the beautiful Lord, begging some food to eat.

As He tossed soft lumps of butter to the monkeys and the birds, He was unaware that His mother, with a stick in her hand, was approaching Him from behind.





Suddenly, the birds and the monkeys called out loud warnings and fled.

Lord Krishna turned about. Seeing His mother, He jumped down from the wooden mortar and ran away in fear. Swiftly He sped through courtyards, over meadows, and across fields.

Mother Yasoda chased after her son with her stick held high. Flowers from her hair scattered to the ground. After some time, however, she became very weary.

Great yogis and mystics try unsuccessfully to capture the Supreme Lord by severe penances and austerities, but the Lord allowed Mother Yasoda to capture Him by love and affection.



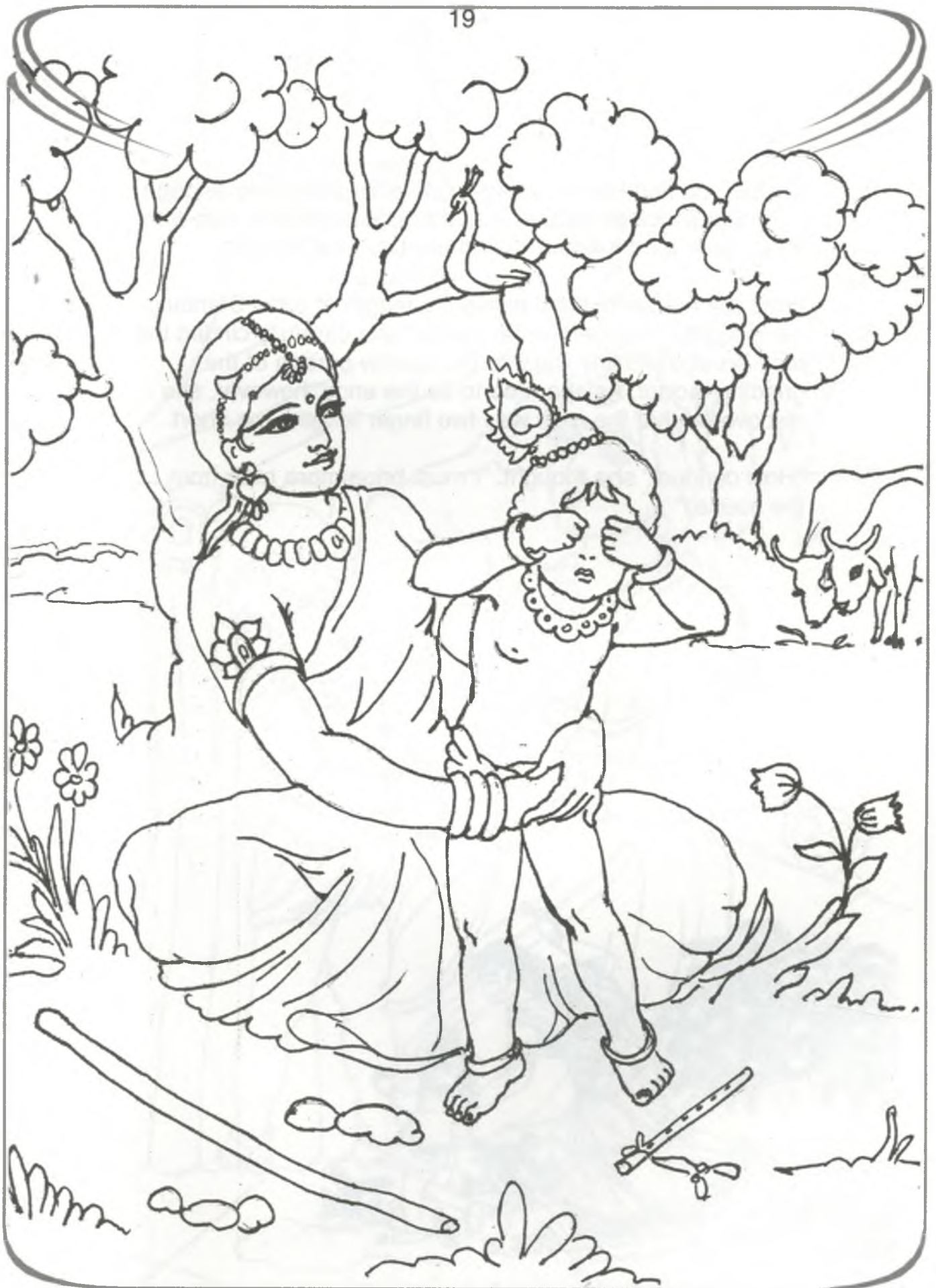


Trembling with fear, Lord Krishna began crying and rubbing His eyes with His two lotus hands. Tears smeared the beautiful black ointment from His eyes as He sobbed. His red lips trembled, and a lovely necklace of pearls shook upon His chest.

Worried that her son might become too much afraid of her, Mother Yasoda put down her stick and mildly chastised Him with words. "You naughty child," she scolded. "Why have You broken the churning pot and stolen butter?"

Because of her intense love for her child, Mother Yasoda never cared to know that Krishna was the powerful Supreme Lord.





Concerned that her child might run away again and engage in further mischief, Mother Yasoda decided to bind Him with rope. "I will bind Krishna to that mortar," she thought.

From the household she brought a length of rope. Standing her naughty child before the mortar, she carefully circled the rope around His tiny waist to the narrow portion of the grinding mortar. As she tried to tie the ends, however, she discovered that the rope was two finger lengths too short.

"How curious," she thought. "I must bring more rope from the house."





Mother Yasoda hurried back to the house to search for more rope. When at last she found a piece, she returned to the spot where Krishna was standing by the mortar.

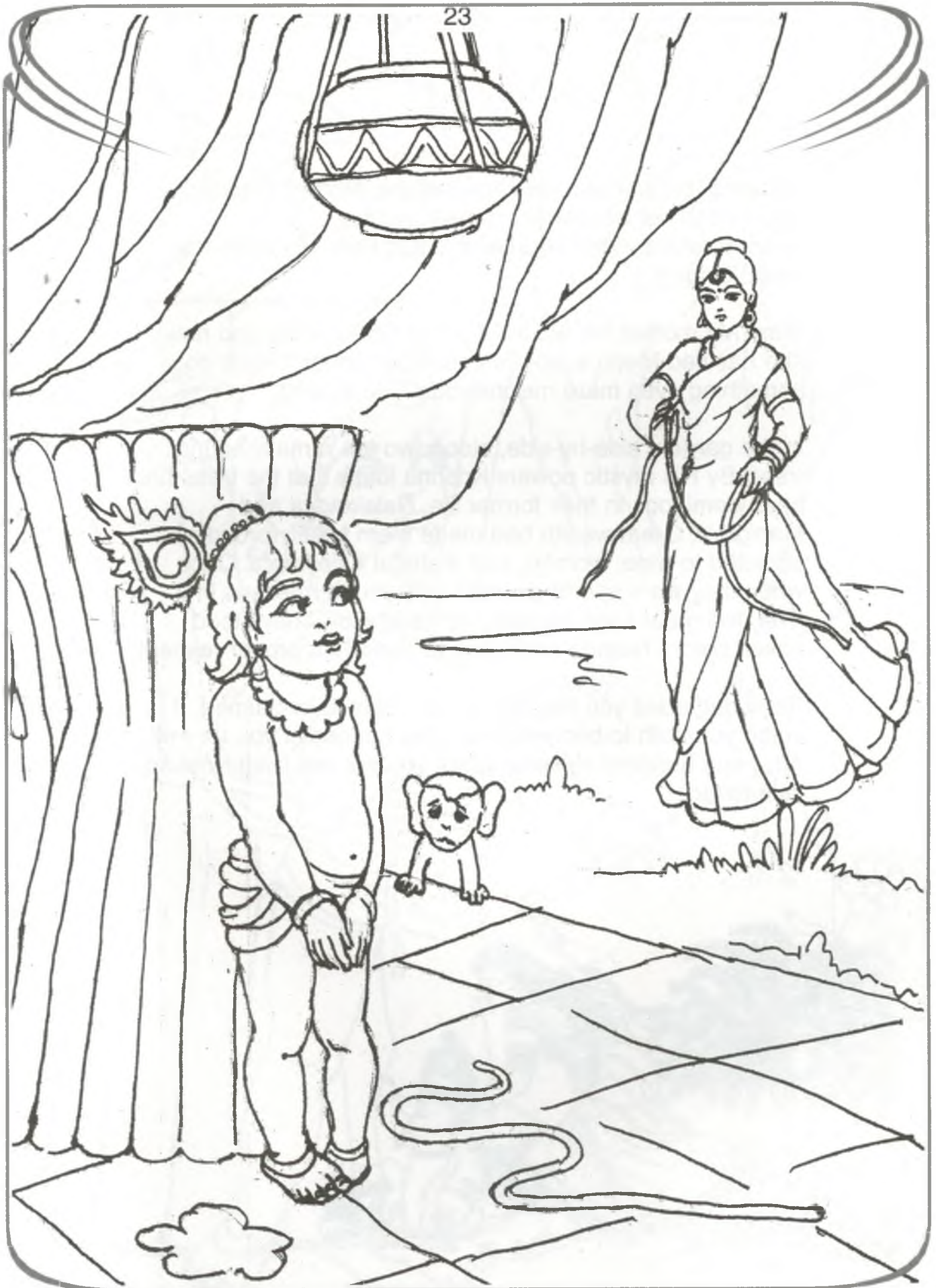
Quickly her graceful finger secured the two lengths of the rope to each other to bind her child. To her astonishment, the combined piece was also two finger lengths too short! From all parts of the house she brought more lengths of rope. No matter how many pieces she joined, the rope was always two finger lengths too short.

As she labored, beads of perspiration decorated her forehead, and flowers fell from her hair.

The elderly gopis in the neighborhood watched in amazement as Mother Yasoda tried to bind Lord Krishna. Smiles of amusement brightened their faces. Mother Yasoda, although fatigued, smiled as well.

Out of compassion for His mother's endeavor, Krishna mercifully agreed to be bound. Only by her love, not by any other material condition, was Mother Yasoda able to bind the Supreme Lord.





Knowing that her son was now secure, Mother Yasoda returned to her household chores.

Krishna, alone in the courtyard, could hear His mother's sweet singing.

"First My mother left Me for a pot of boiling milk, and now she has tied Me to a wooden grinding mortar. I must do something even more mischievous." He mused.

In the garden, side-by-side, stood two tall Yamala-Arjuna trees. By His mystic powers Krishna knew that the trees had been demigods in their former life, Nalakuvara and Manigriva. Great wealth had made them falsely proud and addicted to wine, women, and material enjoyment. Once when they were sporting naked with young maidens in a river, the great sage Narada Muni came by. They stood naked before Narada and failed to show him proper respect.

"How degraded you have become!" Narada exclaimed. "I curse you both to become trees, but I benedict you as well. After one hundred celestial years you will see Lord Krishna face to face!"





Lord Krishna meditated upon the twin Yamala-Arjuna trees. "Although Nalakuvara and Manigriva are not My devotees," He thought, "I will deliver them from their curse to fulfill the promise of my great devotee, Narada."

Crawling on His hands and knees, Krishna approached the two trees. The rope tied to His belly pulled the heavy grinding mortar behind Him. As child Krishna passed through the space between the trees, the mortar fell to its side, remaining caught in the opening.

With great strength, Lord Krishna pulled on the rope secured to His waist. The trees trembled and shook. Branches and leaves waved in the air. The trunks cracked at their roots. With a tremendous crash, both trees fell to the ground.





Suddenly two dazzling personalities appeared from the spot where the trees had stood. Their beautiful forms were as brilliant as fire. With folded hands and bowed heads they offered prayers to the Lord.

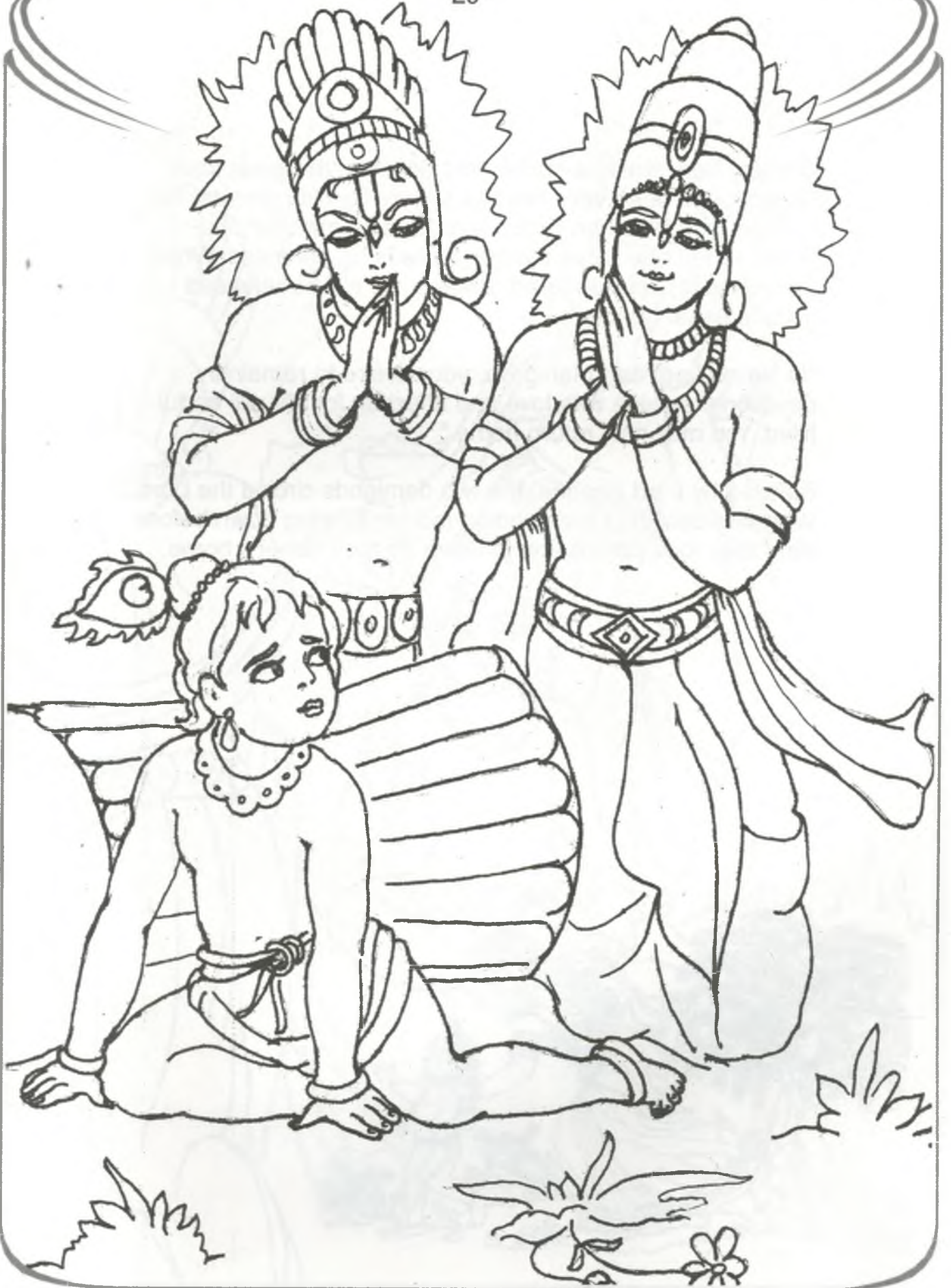
"O Lord Krishna, You are the Supreme Mystic, the Original Person. You know everything - past, present, and future. By Your wonderful plan we have been delivered from the blessing-curse of Narada Muni."

"O Krishna, You are the controller of everything. You are Time, Nature, and the Supersoul. Who trapped within a material body can understand You?"

"You appear in many wonderful forms, such as fish and tortoise, to perform wonderful activities. You have now appeared in Your full potency to benefit all living beings."

"O Lord, may we always be servants of Your servants. May all of our senses be engaged in Your service."



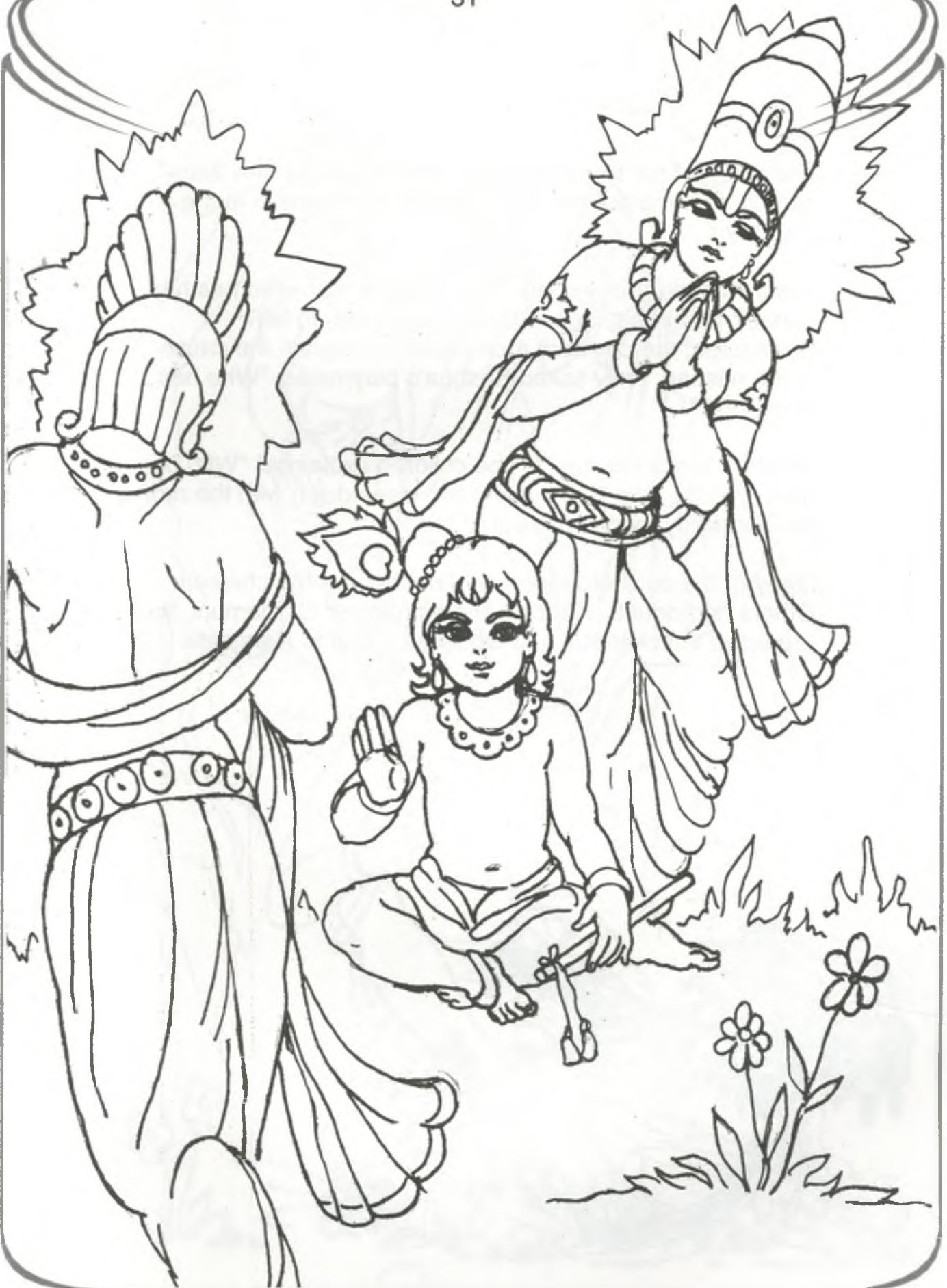


Smiling, Lord Krishna spoke. "My devotee, the great saint Narada, has been very merciful to you. By his curse he has favored you. "You had become blinded by material opulence. When one faces the sun there is no darkness. When one meets My surrendered devotee, he will be released from material bondage."

"O Nalakuvara and Manigriva, your desire to remain in devotional service with love and affection for Me will be fulfilled. You may now return home."

Blessed by Lord Krishna, the two demigods circled the Lord, Who was bound to the grinding mortar. Bowing down before Him, they took permission to leave for their father's home.





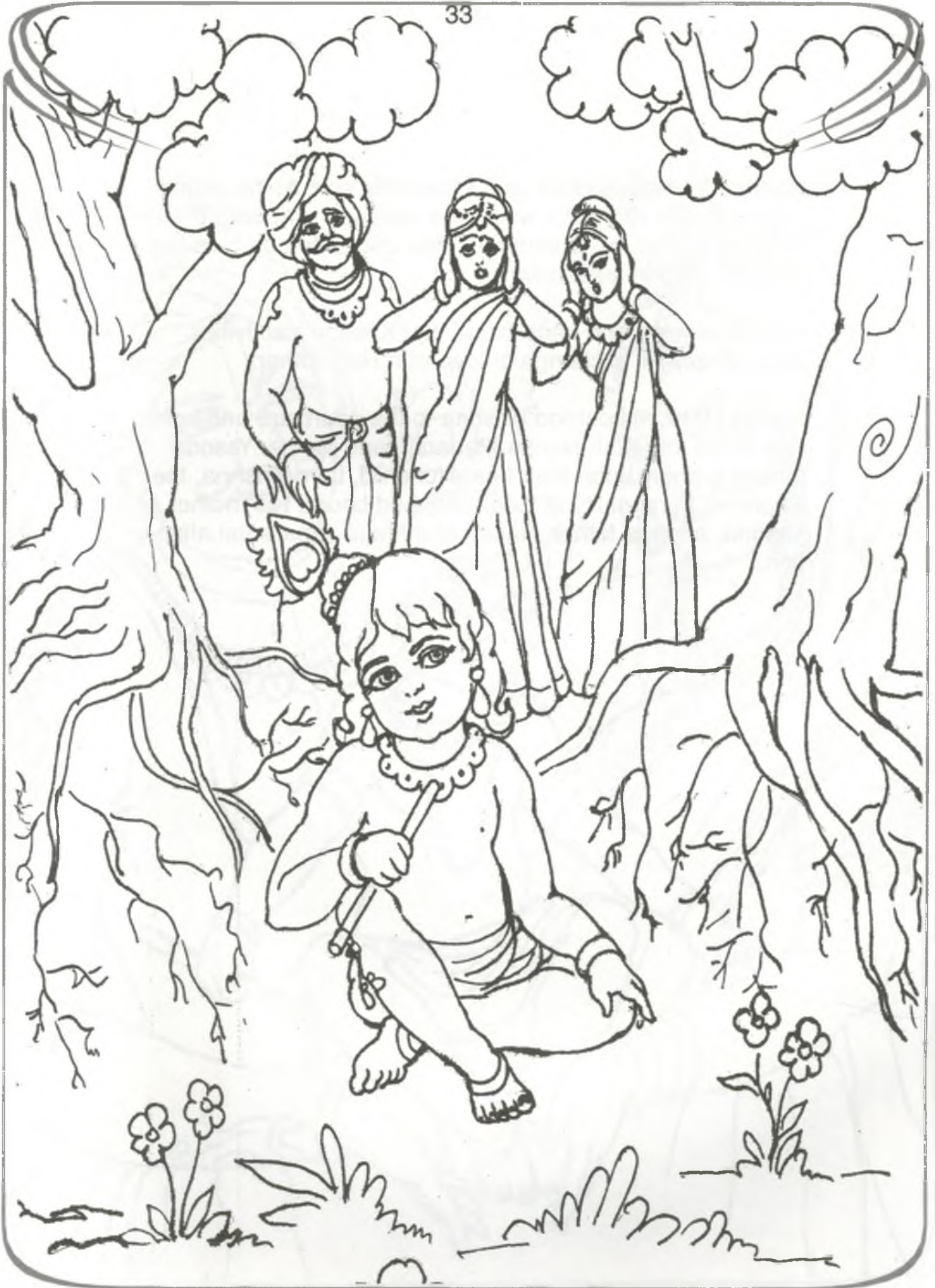
The crash of the trees had been like the sound of a thunderbolt. Fearing danger, the cowherd men hurried to the courtyard.

"Dear Krishna," they cried. "You are safe, but what has happened? What has caused these large trees to fall?" Bewildered, the cowherd men could not explain the cause of the mishap. They asked Krishna's playmates, "Who has done this?"

"Krishna broke the trees?" the children explained. "With our own eyes we saw Him pull the two trees down with the mortar. Two shiny men came out of the trees."

Many of the cowherd men could not believe the children. Others had doubts. After all, the astrologer, Gargamuni, had predicted the child Krishna would be equal to Narayana.





Nanda Maharaja picked up his beautiful son. As he untied the rope from Krishna's waist and released Him from the wooden mortar, he wondered, "How could Yasoda bind her beloved child in such a way?"

He then smiled and understood that Krishna's activities were simply an exchange of love with His mother.

Nanda Maharaja carried Krishna to the courtyard and held Him in his lap. Both Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yasoda looked lovingly upon their beautiful child. Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, had bound His mother, Yasoda, and His father, Nanda Maharaja, in parental affection.





Sri Damodarastaka

"In the month of Kartika one should worship Lord Damodara and daily recite the prayer known as Damodarastaka, which has been spoken by the sage Satyavrata and which attracts Lord Damodara. (*Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa* 2.16.198)

1
namamisvaram sac-cid-ananda-rupam
lasat-kundalam gokule bhrajanam
yasoda-bhiyolukhalad dhavamanam
paramstam atyantato drutya gopya

2
rudantam muhur netra-yugmam mrjantam
karambhoja-yugmena satanka-netram
muhuh svasa-kampa-trirekhanka-kantha-
sthita-graivam damodararm bhakti-bad-
dham

3
itidrk sva-lilabhir ananda-kunde
sva-ghosam nimajjantam akkyapayantam
tadiyesita-jnesu bhaktair jitatvam
punah prematas tam satavrtti vande

4
varam deva moksam na moksavadhim va
na canyam vrne 'ham varesad apiha
idam te vapur natha gopala-balam
sada me manasy avirastam kim anyaih

5
idam te mukhambhojam atyanta-nilair
vrtam kuntalaih snigdha-raktais' ca gopya
muhus cumbitam bimba-raktadharam me
manasy avirastam alam laksa-labhaih

6
namo deva damodarananta visno
prasida prabho duhkha jalabdh-magnam
krpa-drsti-vrsyati-dinam batanu-
grhanesa mam ajnam edhy aksi-drsyah

7
kuveratmajau baddha-murtyaiva yadvat
tvaya mocitau bhakti-bhajau krtau ca
tatha prema-bhaktim svakam me prayac-
cha
na mokse graho me 'sti damodareha

8
names te 'stu damne sphurad-diptid-
hamne
tvadiyodarayatha visvasya dhamne
namo radhikayai tvadiya-priyayai
namo 'nanta-lilaya devaya tubhyam





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