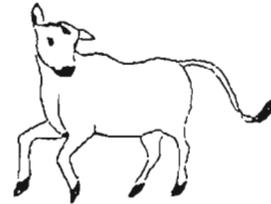
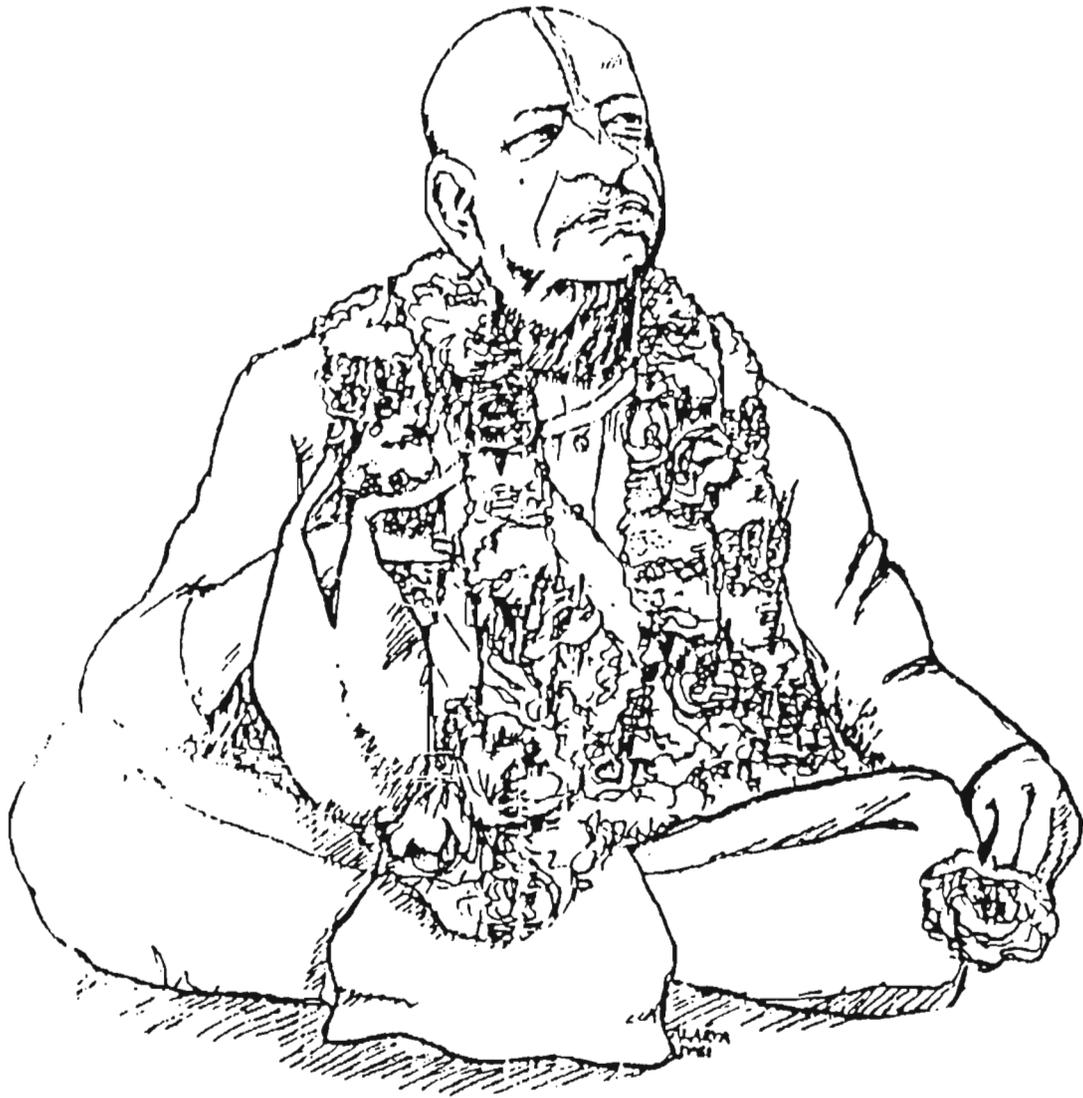


Animals In the Vedas

(Madhava Class)



Hare Krishna Sunday School
International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-*acarya* A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



This book is dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada who taught us countless pastimes of Lord Krishna and His associates for our purification and spiritual advancement.

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Animals in the Vedas

Introduction

Many of you may have a pet in your home such as a cat, dog or turtle. Animals often play an important part in our lives either as pets, or as guards, such as trained watchdogs, or as “workers” on farms and ranches, such as bulls and horses.

But, did you know that the Vedas tell many stories about animals that we can learn from? Many of you may already be familiar with some of them. Hanuman, a monkey warrior, is famous for his heroic service to Lord Rama and Jatayu, the vulture-servant of the Lord, gave up his life trying to defend Sita from the evil Ravana, King of Lanka.

In this session we will read about these stories and some others you may not be familiar with. Each personality we will read about exemplifies a quality we should strive for as devotees, such as determination, compassion and loyalty. Each personality was involved in a pastime of the Lord in order to teach us something.

Now, let us begin the session called, “Animals in the Vedas.”

Session Verse

*sarva-yonisu kaunteya
murtayah sambhavanti yah
tasam brahma mahad yonir
aham bija-pradah pita*

Translation:

It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father.

(*Bhagavad-gita*, Chapter 14, Text 4)



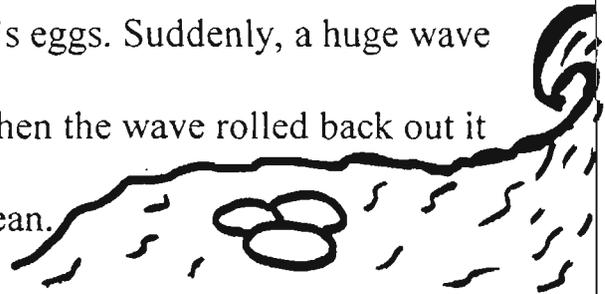
Lesson One



Garuda and the Sparrow

One day a mother sparrow looked for a safe place to lay her first eggs. The beach looked pretty with the sunshine glistening on the sand. The young mother laid her eggs in the warm, soft sand near where the small waves rolled in and out.

Later, the wind got stronger and made bigger waves. The water washed up closer and closer to Mother Sparrow's eggs. Suddenly, a huge wave swooped in and rolled over her eggs. When the wave rolled back out it carried the eggs with it into the deep ocean.



“Peep! Peep! Peep!” screamed Mother Sparrow. She was frantic! She flew around and around over the place in the sand where her eggs had been.

“Oh, Mother Ocean,” she cried. “Please, please give me back my eggs. I beg you to please return my eggs.”

Again and again the waves rolled in and the waves rolled back out. The ocean did not answer Mother Sparrow.

“I must have my eggs back,” she cried. “Please help me, Krishna. I am going to empty all the water from the ocean so I can find my eggs.”

With determination, Mother Sparrow filled her tiny beak with salty ocean water. She took it across the sand. Back and forth she went. Back and forth, drop by drop.

A dolphin swam to the shore and watched her as she carried a small beakful of water again and again across the sand.

“Foolish sparrow,” the dolphin said, laughing. “You can never move enough water to find your eggs.”

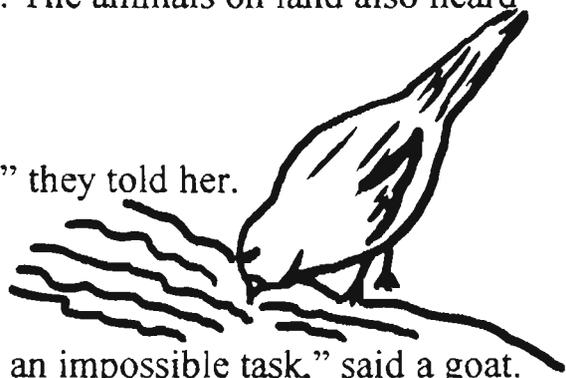
Soon other fish in the water came. The animals on land also heard about what Mother Sparrow was doing.

“You will never empty the ocean,” they told her.

All of them laughed at her.

“You are working so hard at such an impossible task,” said a goat.

Then, Garuda, the huge bird who carries Lord Visnu, heard the animals talking and snickering. Garuda flew down to see Mother Sparrow.



When he saw her working so hard to empty the ocean, he understood how much she wanted to find her eggs.

“Mother Sparrow,” he said. “You are a hard worker. You have great **determination**. I will help you.”

“Mother Ocean!” shouted Garuda. “Hear me! Return the eggs to Mother Sparrow unless you want me to help her find them.”

The ocean was frightened when she heard Garuda because such a great bird as Garuda might swallow up the whole ocean in two or three gulps. Quickly she returned Mother Sparrow’s eggs on the next wave that rolled into shore.

“Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!” Mother Sparrow sang a joyful song when her eggs were safely returned. She made a nest far from where the waves washed in.

“Thank you, Mother Ocean. Thank you, Garuda,” she said.

“Thank you, Lord Krishna.”



Check for Understanding

Fill in the blanks using the words listed below:

- * ocean
- * Garuda
- * laughed
- * determination
- * Lord Krishna

1. When Mother Sparrow discovered that her eggs were gone, she begged the _____ to return them.
2. Mother Sparrow prayed to _____ _____ to give her the ability to empty the ocean so she could find her eggs.
3. The fish in the ocean and the animals on the land _____ at Mother Sparrow for wanting to empty the ocean with her beak.
4. The bird-carrier of Lord Visnu, named _____, came to see what the sparrow was doing.
5. Seeing Mother Sparrow's _____, Garuda decided to help her get her eggs back by threatening the ocean.

Something to think about and discuss...

- *Have you ever wanted to get something done, but found it very difficult?
- *Did you pray to the Lord to help you?
- *In the *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* Srila Prabhupada states, "God helps those who help themselves." What do you think this means?

Lesson Two

A Change of Heart

Once upon a time, there was a very poisonous snake. He was not at all nice and everyone was afraid of him. But, by good fortune, he met the holy sage Narada Muni who can travel anywhere in the three worlds.

The snake was lucky to get the mercy of such a great sage as Narada Muni because he was a pure devotee of the Lord. He could transform even the snake's dark and evil heart. By receiving instruction from Narada Muni about Lord Krishna, the snake became a devotee of the Lord, and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



Usually, snakes bite and sometimes kill others. But, the snake had become a devotee of Lord Krishna and did not behave like that anymore. He was now very humble and sorry for his past misdeeds.

Unfortunately, many people were taking advantage of the snake's humility. Now that he had become peaceful and harmless, people started to treat him badly. Even children were throwing stones at him, but the snake did not bite them. His only desire was to follow the instructions of his beloved spiritual master, Narada Muni, who had told him that a devotee is always kind to everyone.

However, the people continued to throw stones and hurt him. After a while, the snake again desired to meet with his spiritual master.



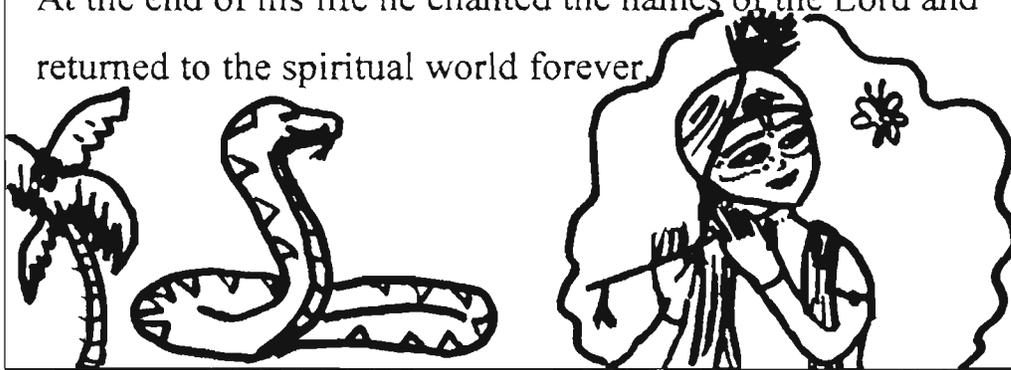
“My Dear Gurudeva,” the snake said to Narada Muni.
“I gave up biting innocent living beings, but what happened!
Now, they are treating me badly by throwing stones at me.”

The great sage patiently listened.

“Do not bite anyone, but do not forget to raise your head as if you were going to bite them,” Narada Muni instructed. “Then those who disturb you will disappear without your ever having to hurt them, for a devotee never causes harm to any living being.”

The snake followed the advice of his guru. In this way he tricked the rascals who were throwing stones at him, but never bit anyone again. The snake passed his days chanting the Hare Krishna mantra and meditating on the pastimes of Lord Krishna.

At the end of his life he chanted the names of the Lord and returned to the spiritual world forever.



Check for Understanding

Match by drawing lines:

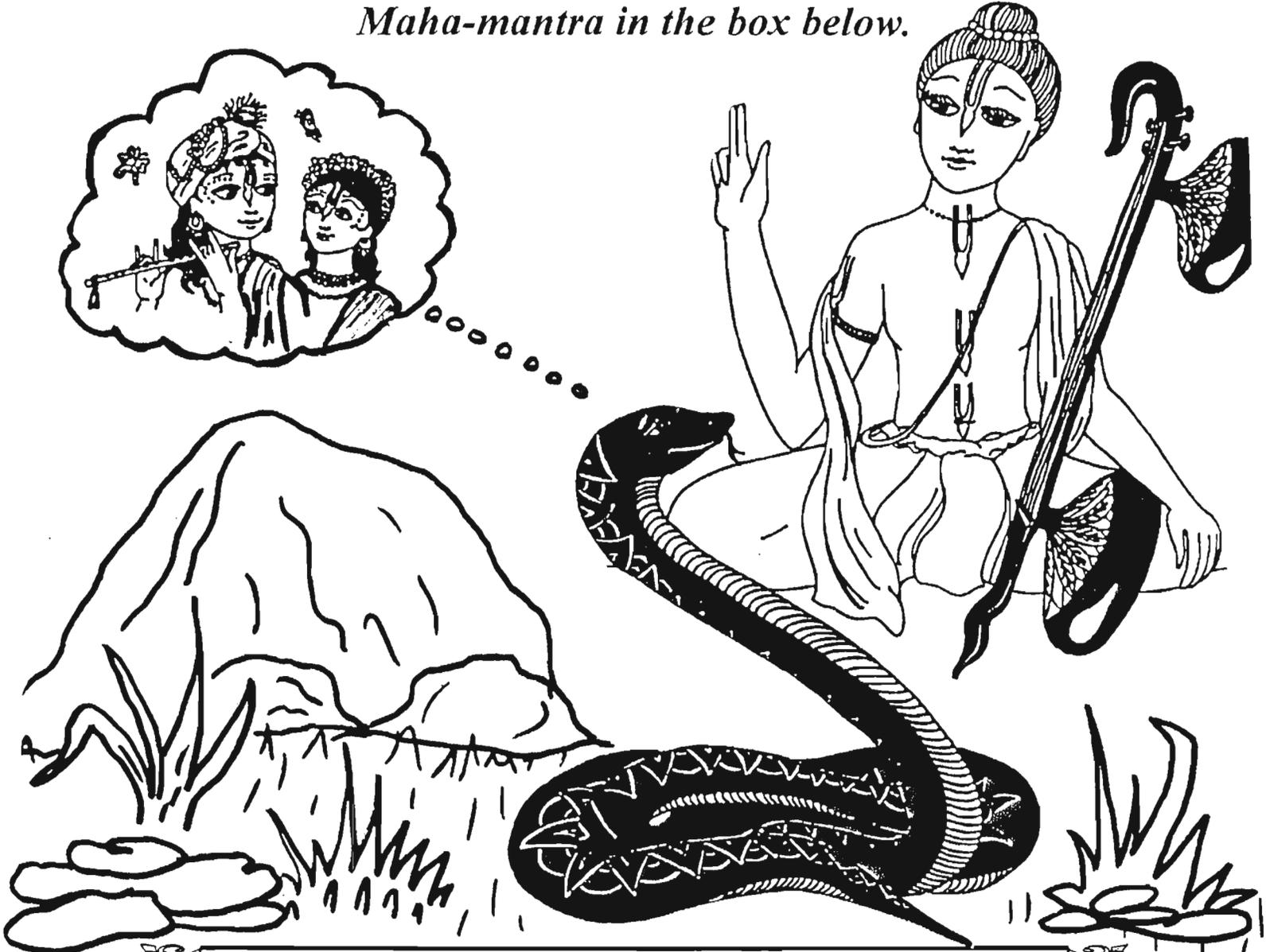


- | | |
|------------------|---|
| * humble | The snake's spiritual master |
| * Narada Muni | Became a devotee of the Lord |
| * Lord Krishna | Went here after leaving his body |
| * snake | The snake acted in this way when he became purified |
| *Back to Godhead | The snake received His mercy |

Something to think about and discuss:

- * Why do you think this story is called "A Change of Heart"?
- * Can you think of something you once did to hurt someone? (Even hurt feelings count!) Do you feel sorry that you did that?
- * How can Krishna consciousness help us to be "kind to everyone"?

The great sage Narada Muni instructed the snake to chant the Holy Names of Lord Krishna. Color the picture of Narada Muni teaching the snake. Write the Maha-mantra in the box below.



Lesson 3

Nimai's Puppy

When Lord Caitanya was a small boy, everyone called Him Nimai. One day, little Nimai was playing outside with His friends. All of a sudden, four puppies appeared. When Nimai saw them he pointed at one of the dogs and said, "Look, what a sweet little puppy! He is going to be My new pet."

Nimai immediately wanted to play with him. The other boys were tired and hungry, so they decided to go home for dinner. They left Nimai alone, but He did not care. He continued to play with the puppy, laughing and rolling on the ground.

Later, He found a piece of twine to tie around the neck of His pet, so He could bring him home. After a while, they reached His home and Nimai tied the puppy in front of His house. As Nimai entered the house, His mother, Sachi, was leaving with her servants.

"I am glad You came, Nimai. I am going down to the Ganges to take a bath. Stay here and I will be right back."

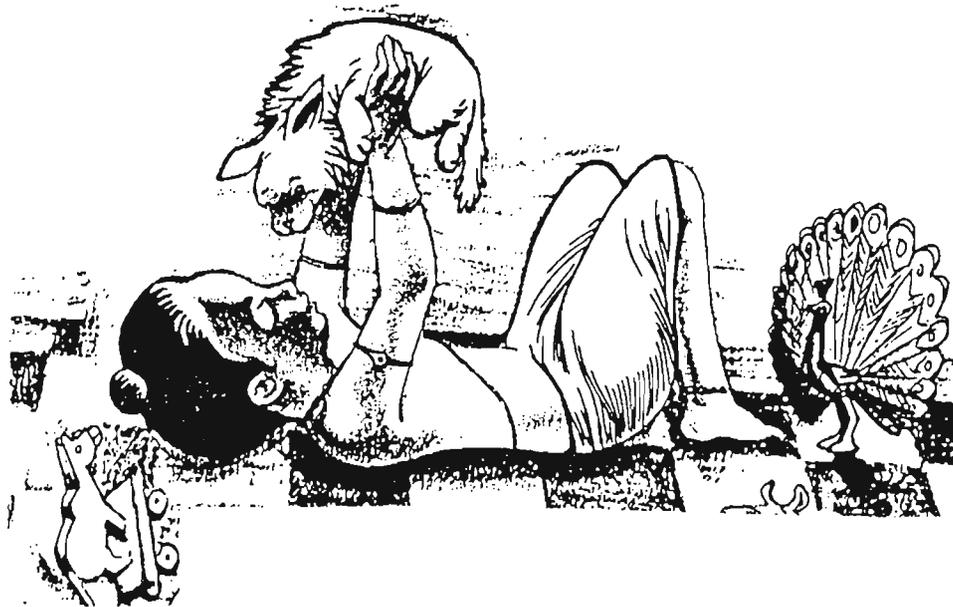


Nimai now had the whole house to Himself. He ran out, untied the puppy and brought him inside. He was running and jumping with the dog like a whirlwind, and doing all kinds of funny tricks.

They were having so much fun when suddenly, Mother Sachi returned home.

“Eeeeeech! A dirty dog!” Mother Sachi said. “What is he doing here? Can’t you see that he is completely covered with dust? You are a Brahmana boy and You are not supposed to play with dogs!”

“But he is My new pet,” Nimai said. “What is wrong with that?”



“This is unheard of!” Mother Sachi said. “Dogs are unclean. They eat dead animals and all kinds of things that we would not even touch. You must get rid of him immediately.”

“If he wants to, he can leave,” Nimai said. “Do you want to leave?”
Nimai asked the puppy.

The dog looked from one to another with his eyes wide open.

“You see, Mother?” Nimai said. “He does not want to go away. He wants to stay with Me.”

Nimai begged His mother to let Him keep the little puppy.

“Well, then, we will let him stay,” Mother Sachi said. “But, You will have to tie him up outside the house.”

Nimai did as His mother said and took the puppy outside. He tied him up at the bottom of the steps.



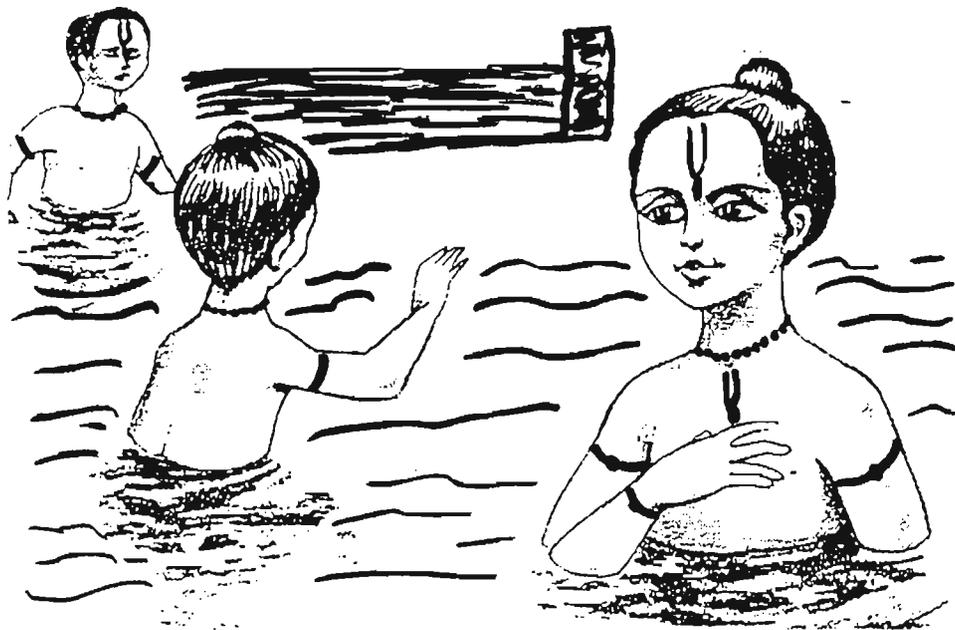
“Mother, I am going down to the river to take a bath,”

Nimai called from outside.

“That is a good idea, but first please come here,” Mother Sachi said.

Mother Sachi smeared Nimai’s body with sacred oils to purify Him. Nimai lovingly embraced His mother and ran swiftly out of the door.

Down by the Ganges River, Nimai found all of His friends. He jumped into the water to play with them. Splish! Splash! They were frolicking and splashing in the water, just like little elephants.



Meanwhile at home, Mother Sachi was thinking of ways to get rid of the dog. Just then, the mother of the puppies walked past. Mother Sachi untied Nimai's pet and set him free. The little puppy was very happy to see his mother and quickly disappeared with her and his brothers and sisters.



One of the boys from the neighborhood saw what happened and ran down to the Ganges to tell Nimai the terrible news.

“Nimai! Nimai! Mother Sachi has just let Your pet loose!”

“What?!” Nimai jumped up onto the bank and ran home as fast as His little legs could carry Him.

Nimai could not find His pet anywhere. He looked and looked, but the puppy was nowhere to be found.

“Someone has stolen my puppy,” Nimai cried.

Mother Sachi held Him and tried to comfort Him.

“Do not cry, my little Nimai,” Mother Sachi said. “Please do not cry. You do not have any reason to be unhappy.”

“Somebody took My puppy!” Nimai said. “I cannot find him anywhere. He is gone.”

“Oh, that is why you are crying,” Mother Sachi said. “Never mind, Nimai. Everything is going to be alright.”

“But, I want my puppy back!” cried Nimai.



Nimai just cried and cried. Mother Sachi took Him on her lap and tried to calm Him.

“Look, we will try to find him tomorrow, so please do not cry anymore, my sweet little Nimai. With your eyes filled with tears, You do not have Your usual moon-like face,” Mother Sachi said.

Mother Sachi comforted Nimai with her gentle voice. She gave Him some tasty prasadam and He was soon very happy again.



In the meantime, the puppy had reached the other end of the town. Because Nimai had touched and embraced the dog, he was now ecstatic.

“Radha-Krishna, Radha-Krishna, Gauranga, Gauranga!” the puppy started to sing. “Radha-Krishna, Radha-Krishna, Gauranga, Gauranga!”

The puppy called out at the top of his voice. People looked at each other with amazement when they saw how the puppy was dancing.

“What happened to this dog?” someone asked. “He is dancing and singing and rolling on the ground!”

“Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare,” the puppy chanted.



People began to gather around the dancing dog. They had never seen such an event in their whole lives and they could not understand what was going on. They did not know that Nimai had touched the dog and given him love of Krishna.

This went on for a few days. The puppy continued to sing and dance in ecstasy.

“Gauranga, Gauranga, Gauranga, Gau ...!” when all of a sudden the puppy fell down dead on the ground.

The people who were standing around the dog suddenly heard a whizzing sound and the pounding of drums. A dazzling light illuminated the entire sky. Everybody looked up and wondered what was happening. The light was so intense that they had to step back. After a while, they figured out what it was. A self-effulgent flowered airplane, decorated with thousands of jewels and a beautiful satin seat, came down from the sky. The airplane stopped and Gandharvas began to sing and blow conchshells. From everywhere, one could hear the sound of “Hari, Hari!”



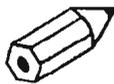
Suddenly, a brilliant light came out of the body of the dog. An effulgent personality, dressed in divine clothes appeared and climbed onto the flowered airplane. It was the spirit soul who had just left the dog's body. Now liberated, he was sitting on the airplane ready to go back to the spiritual world to be with Lord Krishna eternally. The demigods showered flowers, offered prayers and bid farewell.

All glories to Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu! He saves those who do not have any hope of becoming liberated, simply by touching them. Let us pray that Lord Caitanya will touch us with His mercy!



Check for Understanding

Answer the following questions:



1. Where did Nimai find the puppy? _____
2. Why did Mother Sachi tell Nimai that He could not keep the puppy?

3. What did Nimai do when He found out that the puppy was gone from His house? _____
4. When spirit soul left the dog's body, where did he go and why?

Something to think about and discuss:

- * How did Lord Caitanya make it easy for us to go back to Godhead in this age of Kali?
- * Why do you suppose Lord Caitanya is called "The most merciful incarnation of Lord Krishna?"
- * Can you think of some of the reasons why Lord Caitanya performed this pastime as a boy with the puppy?
- * How has Lord Caitanya bestowed His mercy upon you?



Unscramble the Words

U P P P Y ➡ -----

I M N A I ➡ -----

C R E M Y ➡ -----

H S C A I ➡ -----

Recite the Following Poem: 🐶

When Nimai was in the woods one day,
A small puppy came along to play.

Nimai brought him to His home,
And tied him so he would not roam.

Mother Sachi said, “Oh, no!”
Then untied the dog to let him go.

The people they did crowd around,
As the dog chanted and rolled on the ground.

Back to Godhead went the soul of the pet,
For Nimai’s mercy he did get.

Lesson 4

Jatayu, the Most Loyal Friend

Long ago, the kingdom of Kosala was ruled by a most excellent king named Dasaratha. The kingdom's capital city, Ayodhya, was a place of unbelievable splendor. Magnificent palaces made of coral and jewels lined its well-paved roads. The beautiful gardens were full of scented flowers, fruit-bearing trees and crystal clear lakes. Grand buildings towered over the houses which were decorated with flags. Surrounded by huge walls and protected by a mighty army, no enemy could attack this wonderful city.

The people were all happy and content under the rule of their king, Dasaratha. He was an ideal ruler who was so valiant that the Devas themselves sought his help to fight their enemies. He was as firm as he was gracious. He was fair, brave and learned.

The queens of King Dasaratha bore him four good sons. The eldest was Rama, the incarnation of Lord Krishna, Himself, who was loved by everyone. When Dasaratha became too old to rule the

kingdom, all the citizens welcomed Rama as their new king. All that is, except an evil, hunched-back palace maid named Manthara and Dasaratha's favorite queen, Kaikeyi, who had long before saved the life of her husband. When King Dasaratha had recovered, he promised Kaikeyi two wishes to be fulfilled at any time.

"Now is the time to remind Dasaratha of his promise," Manthara told Kaikeyi. "He must banish Rama to the forest and make your son, Bharata, the King instead."

As a result of their evil plotting, King Dasaratha was forced to exile Rama to the forest for 14 years so Kaikeyi's son, Bharata, could be crowned King. Obeying His father, Rama left for the forest with His wife, Sita, and His brother Laksmana. The citizen's became grief-stricken to lose their beloved Rama and soon Dasaratha became so distressed that he died.

Arriving in the forest, Rama, Sita and Laksmana decided to travel South. On Their way, They came across an enormous eagle. Rama took him to be demon.

"Laksmana, take care!" Rama said. "Demon, beware of the power of My invincible bow!"

"My dear child," the eagle said. "Do not kill me, for I am an aged friend of your father, Dasaratha. I am Jatayu, born of Aruna. Sampati is my elder brother. I am your well-wisher. Please allow me to help you in your stay in the forest."

While You are staying in Pancavati, I shall be close at hand, keeping a protective eye on You. Perhaps I can protect Sita whenever you must leave her alone.”

Rama remembered that His father used to mention the name of Jatayu. He was pleased to meet His father’s friend in such a faraway place.

“Dear Jatayu,” Rama said. “I thank you for your offer and look forward to a long and lasting friendship with you. Come now to the place where we will build our new home. You can live in a tree nearby.”

“Thank you, Rama. Thank you,” Jatayu said.



Pancavati proved to be truly beautiful and Rama, Sita and Laksmana were pleased to make Their new home there.

One day, while gathering flowers, Sita spotted a beautiful golden deer dancing through the forest. It was actually the magician, Mareecha, who had plotted with the wicked ten-headed demon, Ravana, King of Lanka, to steal Sita away from Rama. Leaving Laksmana to guard Sita, Rama went into the forest to capture the deer for His wife, Sita. Suddenly, Laksmana and Sita heard a voice which sounded like Rama.

“Laksmana, help me,” the voice yelled. “Please, help me.”

Sita became anxious and requested Laksmana to go and find Rama. Against his better judgement, Laksmana did as he was told by Sita. Before he left, however, he drew a magical circle in the dirt which would protect Sita as long as she stayed within the circle.

While she was alone, Ravana, dressed as a holy man, approached the cottage. Sita, out of respect, offered to get him some food and water. When she returned, Ravana, pretending to be old and weak, coaxed her to bring the refreshments to him. She crossed the circle. Now she was unprotected at the hands of the King of Demons!

“My dear beautiful lady, why are you living in the forest?” Ravana asked. “You belong in a palace filled with thousands of maidservants. Do not stay with this Rama. Come with me, Ravana. Come with me and be my bride.”

As much as Sita resisted, she could not fight off Ravana. He forced her into his chariot and flew into the air. Sita screamed for Rama's help.

Jatayu, Rama's old eagle friend, heard Sita's cry. He soared toward Ravana's chariot and attacked the demon king. His sharp talons cut Ravana's back. The furious demon shot arrows at Jatayu and pierced his whole body. Although badly wounded, Jatayu attacked Ravana again and again. Smashing the chariot into a thousand pieces, Jatayu made the demon fall to the ground. This was too much for Ravana. With a piercing cry he chopped off Jatayu's wings and talons. Sita cried as she watched her old friend fall injured on the ground. By his powers, Ravana lifted both himself and Sita into the air and flew toward his palace in Lanka.



Meanwhile, Rama discovered that the golden deer was simply a trick of the demons. Rushing back to the cottage, Rama met Laksmana who told Him he had left Sita alone within a magical circle to protect her. Fearing the worst, They ran to find Sita. The cottage was empty. The two brothers ran in all directions searching for Sita, but she was nowhere to be found. They came upon some pieces of Ravana's smashed chariot and saw that a tremendous fight had taken place. Then they saw the dying Jatayu crying out in distress.

"Jatayu, who has done this to you?" Rama asked.

"It was the wicked demon, Ravana, King of Lanka," Jatayu slowly said. "He flew South, taking Sita with him. She was screaming for your help. Do not worry, Rama. You will find her and be happy once again. Now I beg your leave. Now I will depart...Rama."

Jatayu gave up his life uttering the Holy Name of Rama. It was by the assistance of His loyal friend, Jatayu, that Lord Rama later found His beloved Sita in Lanka. Being a great devotee of Lord Rama, Jatayu returned to the spiritual world, having taken part in a wonderful pastime of the Lord.



Check for Understanding

Circle the statements below that are true:



1. Rama, Bharata and Sita were banished to the forest for 14 years.
2. Jatayu was an old eagle friend of Rama's father, Dasaratha.
3. Laksmana played a trick on Rama by sending the golden deer.
4. Ravana disguised himself as the golden deer.
5. Jatayu attacked Ravana after he carried away Sita.
6. Jatayu gave up his life in the service of Lord Rama.

Something to think about and discuss: ☺

- * **What does it mean to be a “loyal friend?”**
- * **Jatayu was not only a loyal friend, but brave. In what way did he exhibit each of these qualities?**
- * **How is Krishna our dearest and loyal friend?**



Jatayu was a loyal friend to Lord Rama. 🐦

Can You Rhyme With the Words
Listed Below?

(Hint: The spelling of your words can be different
as long as they rhyme.)

LOYAL

FRIEND

Lesson 5

A Bridge for Lord Rama

Introduction:

In Lesson 4 we read about some of the pastimes of Lord Ramacandra and how His friend and servant, Jatayu, gave up his life trying to save Sita. In this lesson we will read about a squirrel-devotee who also served Lord Rama. This story takes place after Jatayu lost the fight with the ten-headed demon, Ravana.



In order to rescue Sita from the evil Ravana, Rama had to cross the ocean to the city of Lanka. Lord Rama called for the monkey, Nila, to build a bridge for Him. Millions of monkeys came to help. Some were so strong that they uprooted giant trees. Others dragged them to the shore and threw the tree trunks into the water. Because of their strength, they were able to hurl huge boulders and mountain tops into the ocean to help form the bridge.



Hanuman, the son of the windgod, led a group of other monkeys who also lifted huge rocks the size of mountains. They pushed and pulled and shoved them into the water.

A small squirrel watched Hanuman and Nila and the other monkeys as they worked very hard for Lord Rama.

“I love Lord Rama,” the squirrel said. “I want to help build this bridge for Him, too.”

The squirrel was not able to pull up a big tree by its roots. He was not able to push huge rocks into the ocean. He looked at the tiny pebbles and small stones at the water’s edge. He then looked at his short legs.



"I know what I will do!" the squirrel said.

He picked up countless pebbles and small stones and dropped them into the ocean to help build up the pile of logs and rocks. Hanuman almost stepped on the tiny squirrel.

"Get out of our way, please," Hanuman said. "You will get hurt. We cannot take time to watch out for you while we do important work for Lord Rama. Besides, what you are doing is worthless."



When Lord Rama heard what Hanuman had said He instantly appeared before him.

“Do not speak disrespectfully to this squirrel,” Lord Rama said. “Do not belittle his work. You and he each do the most you can. And you each do it with love and devotion. To Me, your service is equal.”

When he heard this, Hanuman understood that if he truly loved the Lord, he must treat the squirrel and his work with respect.

For five days, Nila and Hanuman and all the monkeys worked hard. They were careful to watch out for the tiny squirrel and to not hurt him. For these five days, the squirrel worked hard, too.

On the fifth day they completed the last part of the bridge. It went right up to Mount Suvela on Sri Lanka. The monkeys formed a line to cross the bridge.



Just behind them, Lord Rama rode on the back of Hanuman.

“Hanuman, may I sit there, too?” the squirrel asked.

Hanuman reached down and set the squirrel on his shoulder where he could see everything. There were so many monkeys they could not all squeeze onto the bridge. Some jumped into the ocean and swam across.

From the sky, the demigods showered brightly colored, fragrant flowers onto the crowd below.

“Victory to Lord Rama,” they sang. “Victory to Lord Rama.”



Check for Understanding

Use the words in the box to fill in the blanks:

Lanka	ocean	Ravana
Hanuman	squirrel	respect
trees	Sita	bridge

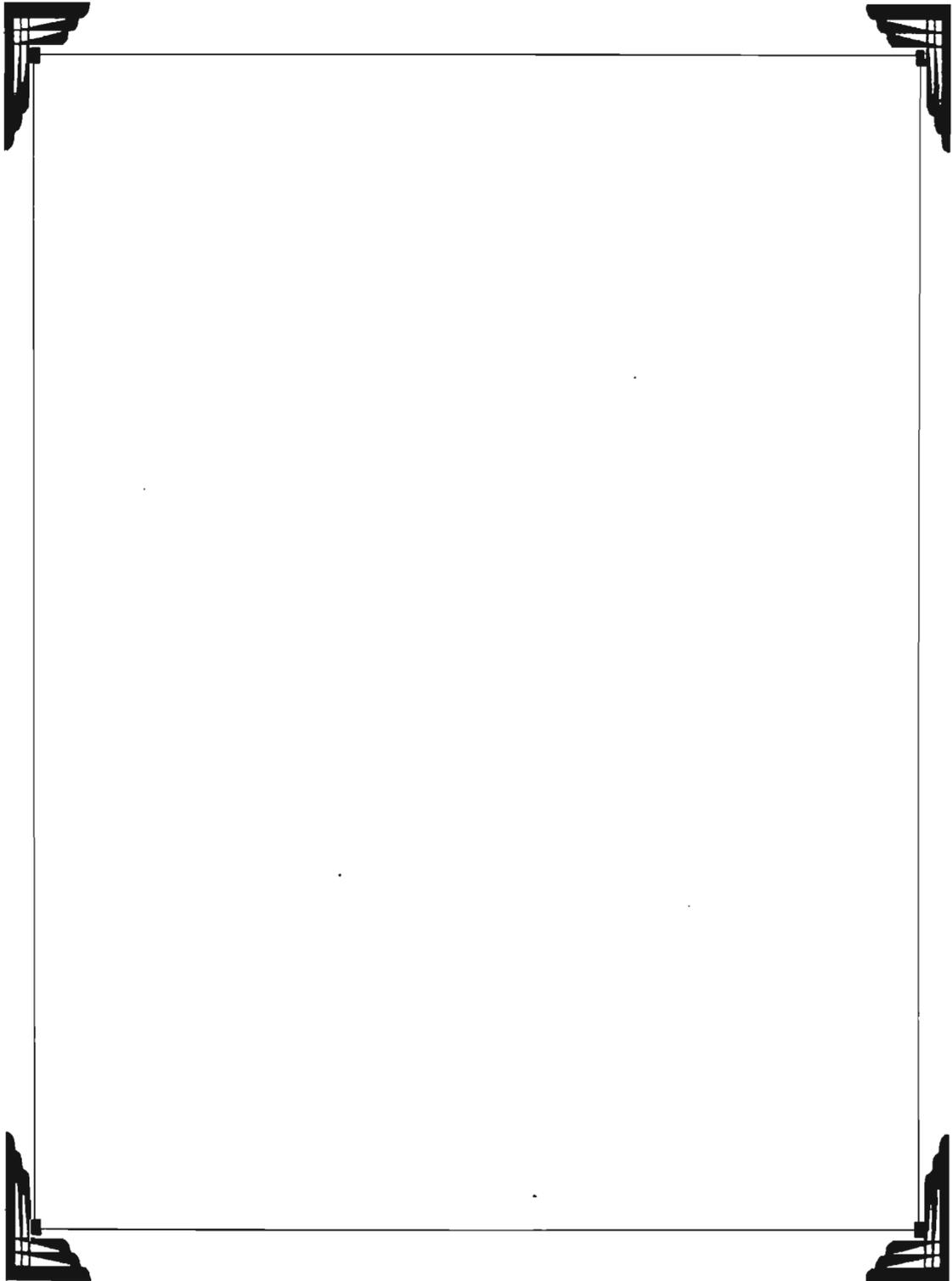
1. Lord Rama wanted to rescue _____ from the evil _____.
2. The Lord had to cross the _____ to get to the city of _____.
3. The monkey soldiers uprooted _____ to build a _____.
4. The tiny _____ loved Lord Rama and did his best to help build the bridge.
5. Lord Rama taught _____ to treat the squirrel with _____.

Something to think about and discuss:

- * Lord Rama told Hanuman that his devotional service was equal to the squirrel's devotional service. What did the Lord mean by this?
- * Can you think of a service that you do for Krishna? While you are doing your service, do you try hard to do your best? How is this pleasing to the Lord?

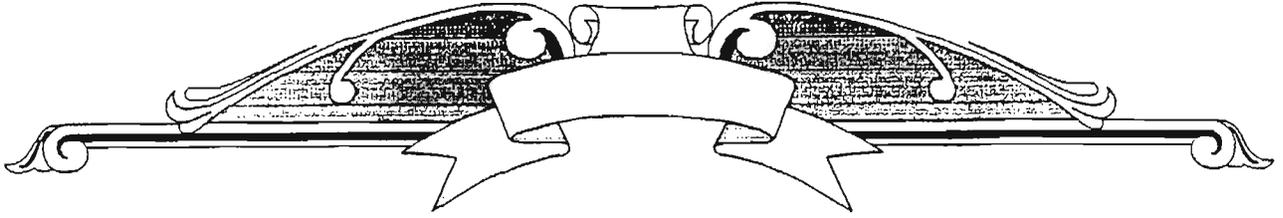


In the picture frame below
draw a picture of the squirrel
helping to build a bridge for Lord Rama.

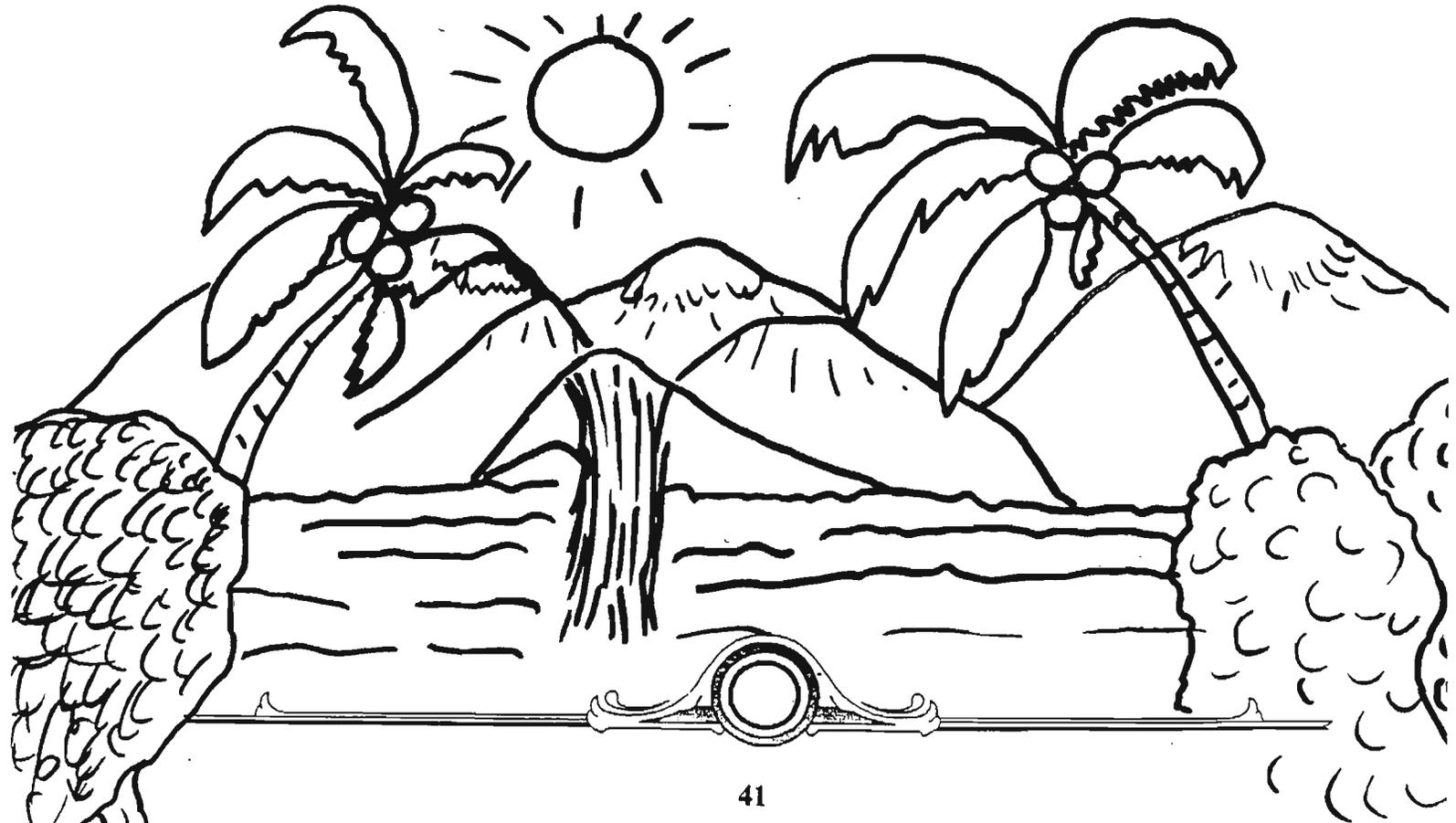


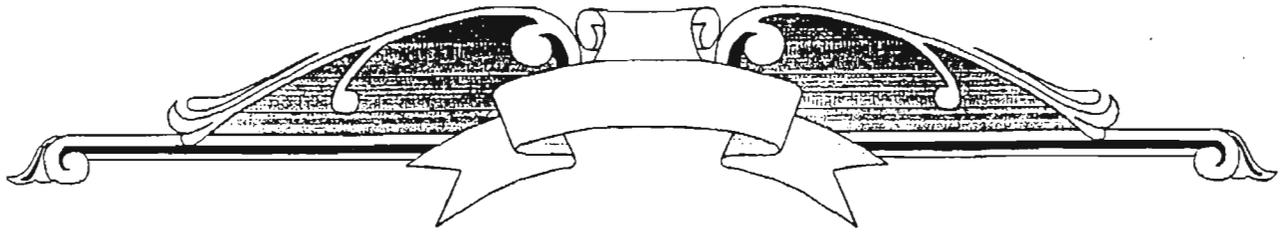
Lesson 6

Gajendra, The King of the Elephants



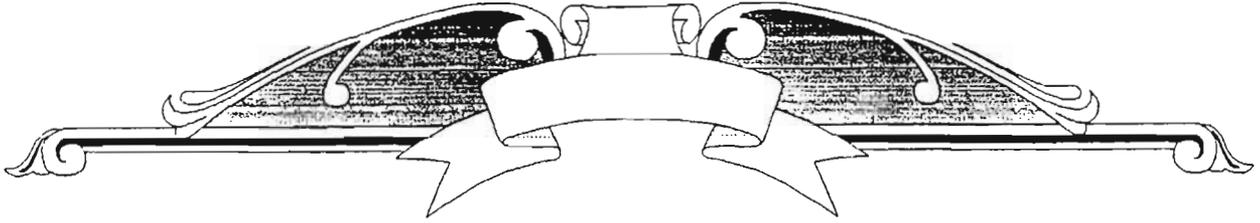
The material world has many heavenly planets where the demigods live for a very long time. On one of the heavenly planets there is a huge mountain named Trikuta. This mountain is eighty thousand miles high and surrounded by a great ocean of milk. The mountain of Trikuta has three main mountain tops made of gold, silver and iron. The mountain has other peaks, which are full of jewels and minerals and are decorated with trees, creepers and shrubs. Bright green emeralds glitter on the shores of the milky ocean. The beautiful sounds of the waterfalls on the mountain can be heard from far away.



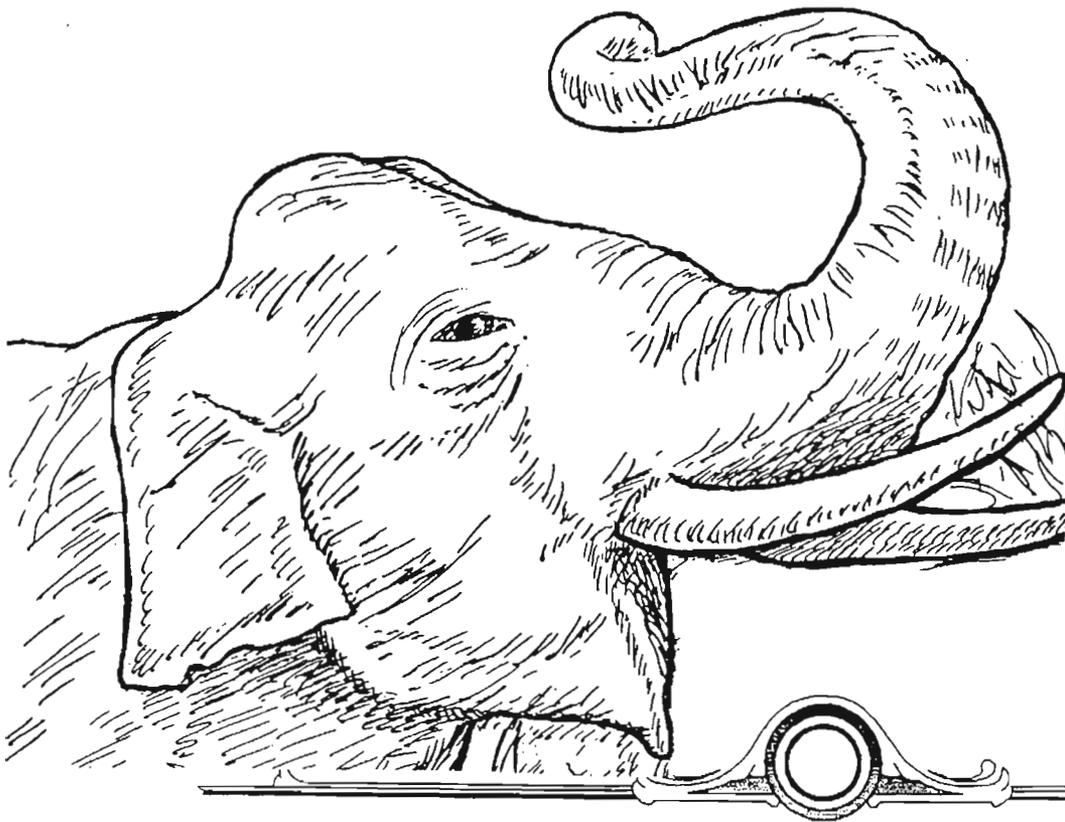


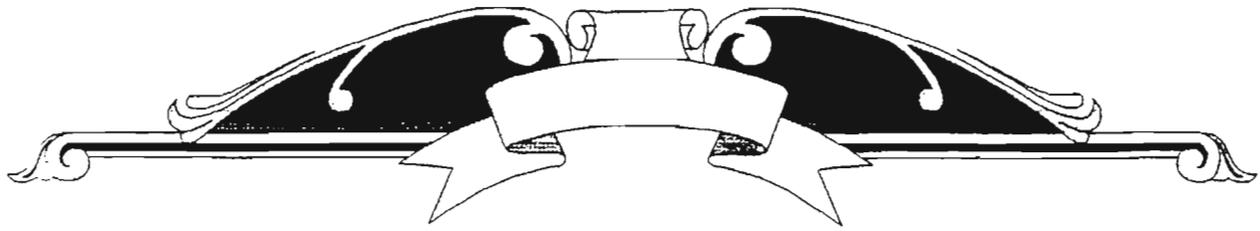
The valleys beneath Trikuta Mountain are inhabited by many varieties of jungle animals. With sweet voices, the beautiful birds chirp in the trees which stand in gardens maintained by the demigods. There are monkeys, lions, rabbits, deer and other animals, large and small, wandering in the woods. Trikuta Mountain has many lakes and rivers, with beaches covered by small gems resembling grains of sand. The demigods bathe in the water which is fragrant and crystal clear.





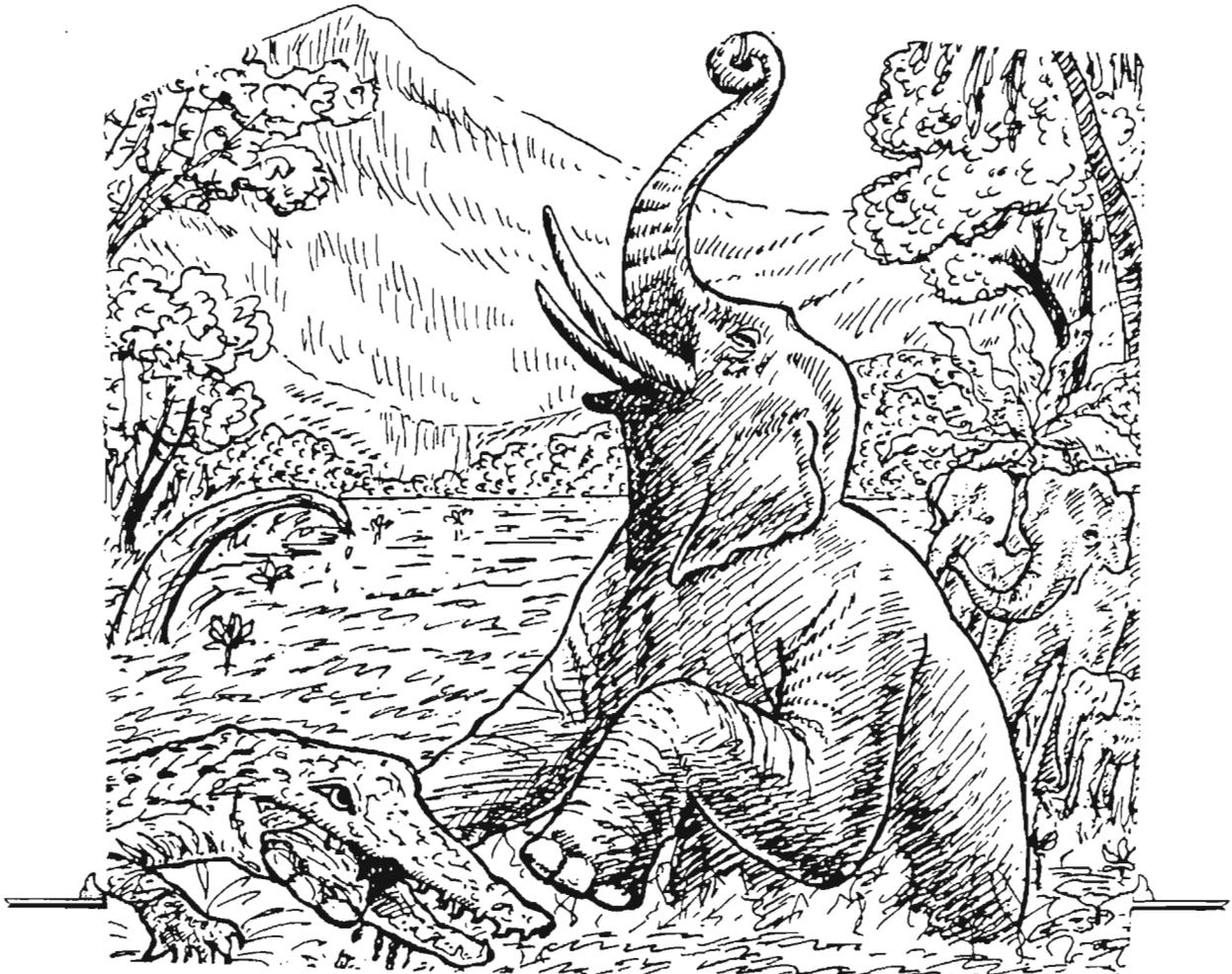
The leader of the elephants, Gajendra, lived in the forest of the mountain Trikuta. One day, Gajendra, along with the other elephants, wandered from the forest toward the lake. On their way, they broke many plants, creepers, thickets and trees. They were so strong that the piercing thorns did not bother them. By Gajendra's mercy, the smaller animals like the foxes, wolves, deer, monkeys and rabbits stepped aside, unafraid. They knew that the King of the Elephants would never harm them. But, the more ferocious animals, such as the tigers, lions, serpents and rhinoceroses, fled in fear.

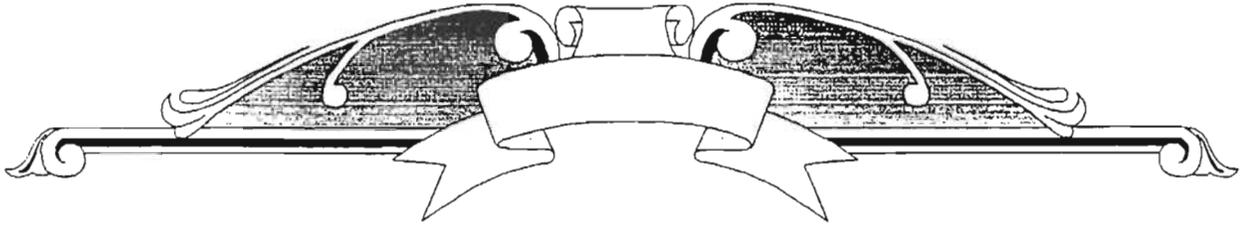




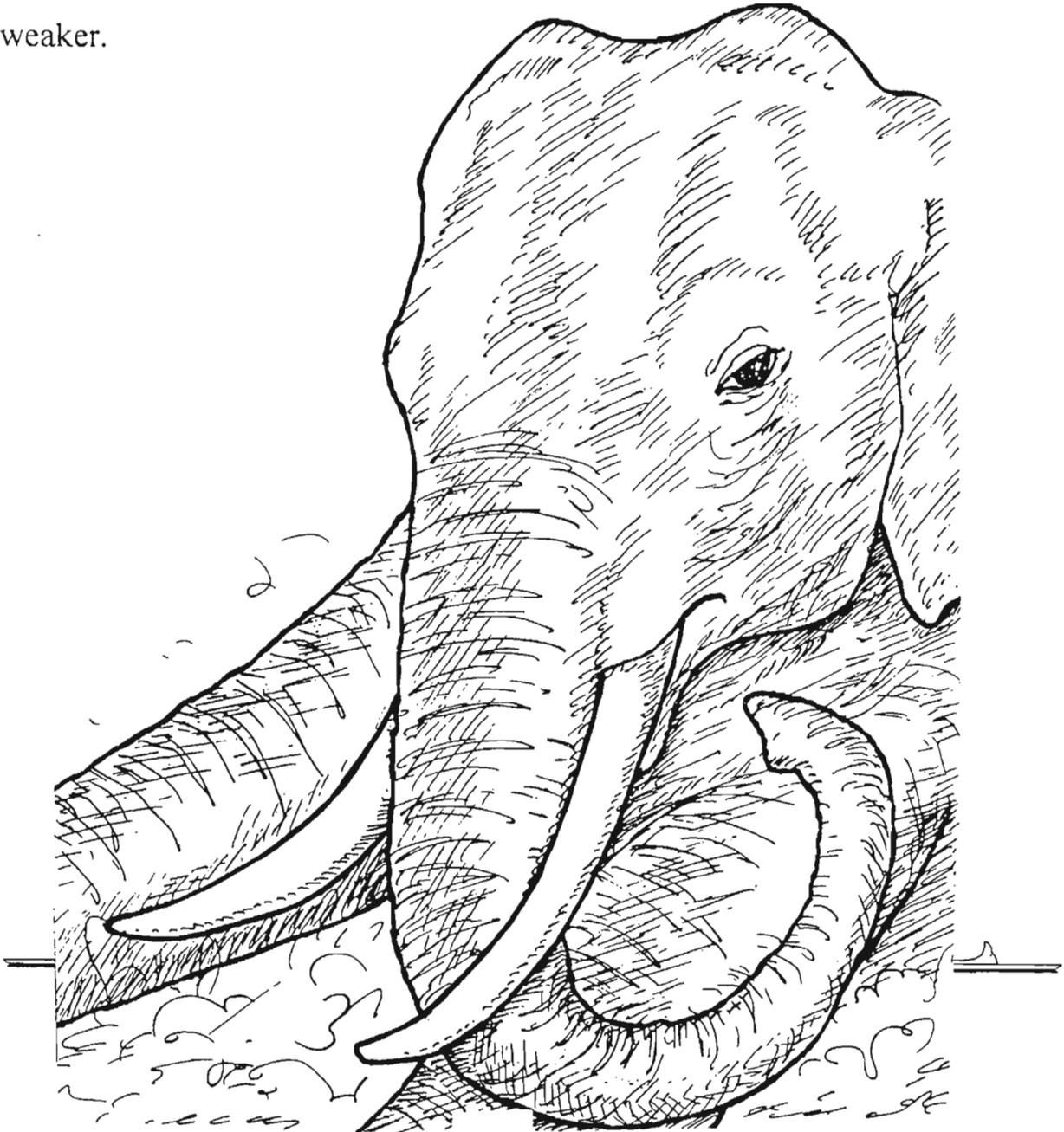
Gajendra and the other elephants soon arrived at the lake. They were tired from their journey so they quickly entered the lake and bathed in the cool, clear water. They felt very refreshed and were having fun spraying each other.

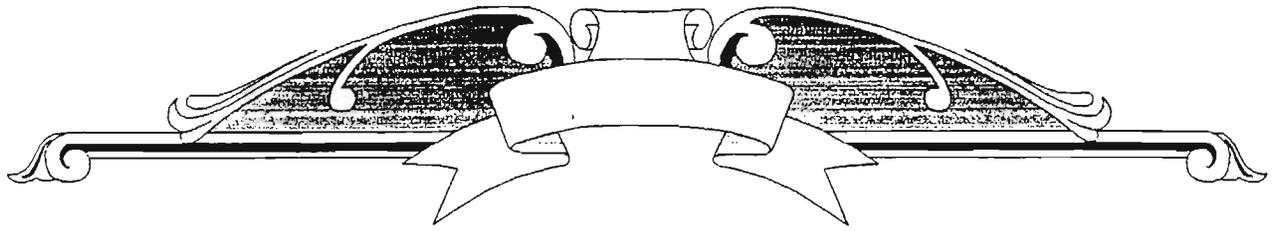
Suddenly, a strong crocodile attacked Gajendra's leg in the water. The other elephants began to cry and tried unsuccessfully to rescue their king from the jaws of the crocodile. Gajendra and the crocodile pulled one another in and out of the water. The fight lasted for one thousand years!





During the thousand-year fight, Gajendra could not eat because he was not meant to live so long in the water. His home was in the jungle. But, the crocodile had plenty of food to eat because his home had always been in the lake. Therefore, the crocodile stayed strong, but Gajendra grew weaker and weaker.

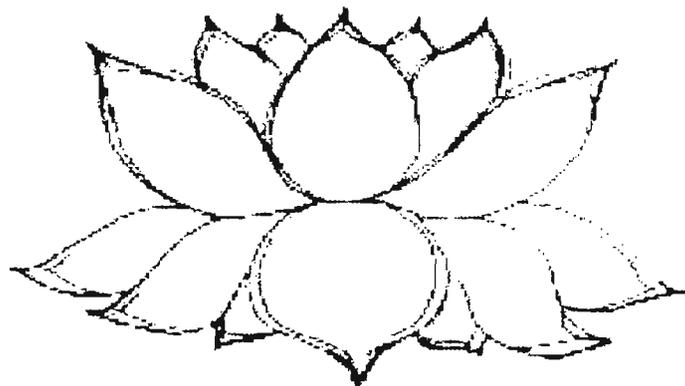


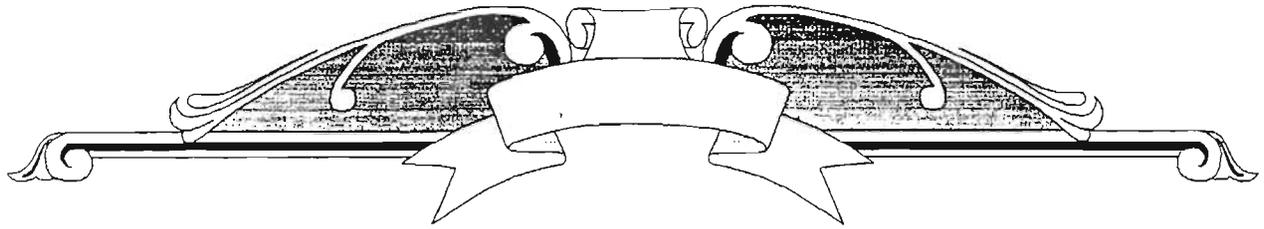


Finally, it appeared that the crocodile was going to win the fight. Gajendra knew that the end of his life was near. Being helpless and seeing that no one else could save him, Gajendra began to pray to the lotus feet of Lord Visnu.

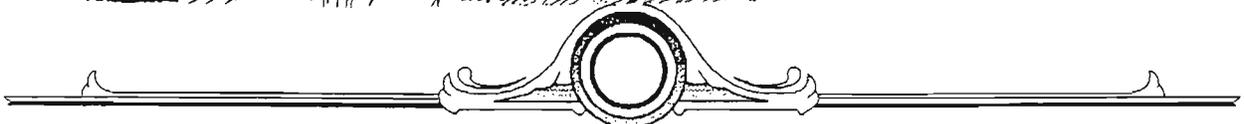
“I offer my respectful obeisances unto You,” Gajendra prayed. “I do not wish to live anymore after I am released from the attack of the crocodile. What is the use of an elephant’s body covered by ignorance. Please release me from material life.”

Gajendra reached out his trunk, picked a lotus flower, and offered it to the Lord.





Hearing the sincere prayers of the King of the Elephants, Lord Visnu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, pulled Gajendra and the crocodile out of the water. In this way, the Lord saved Gajendra. Because he was directly touched by the hands of the Lord, Gajendra was immediately freed from his material body and assumed his spiritual form. By turning to God for help, Gajendra returned home to the spiritual world.



Check for Understanding

Match by Drawing Lines:



King of the Elephants

Lord Visnu

Heavenly Planet

crocodile

Lake

Trikuta Mountain is here

Fought with the elephant

Heard Gajendra's prayers

Gajendra

Where the elephants bathed

Something to think about and discuss:

* After fighting for one thousand years, why did Gajendra finally surrender to Lord Visnu?

* Have you ever been in a situation that frightened you? Did you pray to Krishna to protect you? In what way did the Lord save you?

* How does it make you feel when you pray to the Lord?



Many elephants followed Gajendra to bathe in the lake.

Finish drawing the elephant below then color with crayons or markers.

