

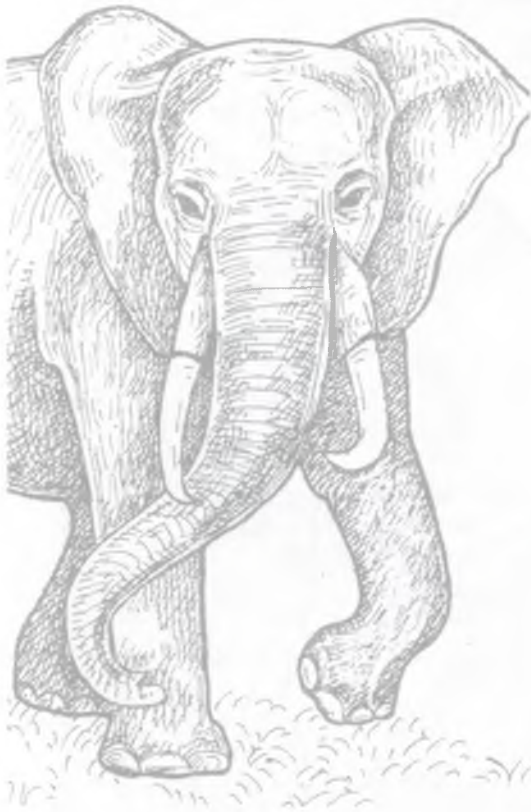
1 Gajendra



In the middle of the milk ocean there is a very high and beautiful mountain named Trikuta. It is eighty thousand miles high and eighty thousand miles broad. It has three main peaks made of iron, silver and gold. There are other peaks which are full of jewels and minerals and also trees, creepers and shrubs. There are many waterfalls and caves too.

The foot of the mountain is always washed by waves of milk that produce emeralds. The inhabitants of the higher planets love to spend their time here. The valleys beneath Trikuta mountain are covered by forests with different varieties of jungle animals and birds.

Trikuta mountain has many lakes and rivers with crystal clear water and beaches with small gems looking like grains of sand. In one of the valleys there was a garden called Ritumat belonging to Varuna. This garden was full of flowers and fruit trees. There were also many kinds of birds and honey bees. In the middle of the garden was a beautiful lake filled with shining golden lotuses.



Once the leader of the elephants, Gajendra came there with his family members and friends. Gajendra was so powerful that all the other animals respected and feared him. Gajendra broke many creepers and branches as he moved forward. He was perspiring and intoxicated. Entering the lake he bathed and felt relieved drinking the cool water. He called the elephants to come into the water and playfully sprayed them with water from his trunk. In this way they were having a lot of fun.

Suddenly, a strong crocodile came and gripped Gajendra's leg. Gajendra tried his best to get free but could not. The other elephants tried to help Gajendra but could not rescue him from the crocodile's grip. Seeing Gajendra in this helpless condition, his wives began to cry.

The elephant and the crocodile fought in this way pulling one another in and out of the water. This fight went on for one thousand years. Gradually, the elephant started losing his strength and sense of determination. On the other hand, the crocodile being an animal of the water, increased in physical strength and enthusiasm.

Soon Gajendra realised that he was in the clutches of the crocodile by the will of the Lord. He understood that he could not save himself. He thought "No one can save me now and therefore I shall seek the shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

In his previous life Gajendra was a Vaishnava king named Indradyumna. When Indradyumna retired from family life, he went to the Malaya Hills and started living in a small cottage. He lived a simple life and observed a vow of silence. Once it so happened that Agastya Muni came there. The muni was very angry when king Indradyumna remained silent without greeting him. Agastya Muni cursed him to become a dull, dumb elephant in his next life.

The elephant, Gajendra could remember the prayers he had learned in his previous life.

He prayed "I offer my respectful obeisances to the Supreme Person, Vasudeva. You are extremely difficult to attain for those like me who are too attached to home, relatives, friends, money, servants and assistants. May the Supreme Personality of Godhead who is so merciful bestow upon me the benediction of liberation from the present danger and from the materialistic way of life."

The Lord always answers the sincere prayers of His loving devotees.

The Supreme Personality of Godhead appeared there on the back of His carrier, Garuda. In His hands were the disc and other weapons.

Gajendra was in great pain, yet he took a lotus flower in his trunk and offered it lovingly to the Lord.

Out of His causeless mercy, the Lord cut off the head of the crocodile. The crocodile immediately assumed the beautiful form of a Gandharva. King Huthu was a Gandharva who had been cursed by Devala Muni and had therefore become a crocodile. Now, he had been delivered by the Lord and thus he returned to Gandharvaloka.

Gajendra, the king of elephants had been touched directly by the hands of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He was immediately freed of all material ignorance and bondage and received a beautiful spiritual form. The sages, saints and demigods all showered flowers. There was joyful music, singing and dancing in the heavenly planets. Everyone glorified these wonderful activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.





Activity Time

Discussion:

EVEN IN AN ANIMAL'S BODY ONE CAN PERFECT HIS LIFE STORY OF THE LITTLE MOUSE

One day a little mouse was running around looking for food. While scurrying here and there he reached the altar of Lord Vishnu in a temple. The altar was a little dark and the wick of the lamp was almost burnt out. While looking around in the darkness, the little mouse happened to see a bowl of food lying on the altar. Yum! Quickly, he ran towards it. But while running he passed the lamp. His whiskers pushed the wick straight up and it started to burn brightly.

Krishna was very pleased with his service and so at the end of his life he got a spiritual body.



Tug of War

- i) Make two teams of children.
- ii) Each team stands in a straight line and each child holds the waist of the child in front of him.
- iii) The two teams stand facing each other with a line in between.
- iv) The two children heading the teams then hold each other's hands and try to pull each other across the line. Both teams pull in opposite directions.

Whoever gets pulled across the line has to join the other team.

You can play the game for a fixed amount of time. At the end, the team which pulls more people across, is declared the winner. This game is great fun to play! After playing the game try and answer the following questions.

- * How did you feel when playing the game?
- * How did you feel when you pulled someone across the line?
- * How did you feel when you were pulled across the line?

This tug-of-war game goes on for all of us. Gajendra had to struggle with the crocodile. In the same way there are many things like crocodiles which will pull us, for instance, when we want too many things for enjoying or when we want the best for ourselves. Sometimes we may not feel like going to visit the temple. All these things are like crocodiles which affect our spiritual life.

Just like Gajendra offered a lotus and his heartfelt prayers, we too should offer prayers to please the Lord and the most simple prayer for all of us is the

Maha Mantra - Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama,
Rama Rama, Hare Hare.



Most of us know about the Olympic Games. This is a very important international sports event which is held once every four years. Thousands of people come from all over the world to watch these games. It is a great honour to win a medal at these games; especially a gold medal. Do you know that for a single race all the sportsmen practice for four years? They put in so much hard work in order to win a medal.

In the same way, we saw that the elephant Gajendra could remember the prayers of the Lord because he had practiced them his whole life as King Indradyumna.

We too must practice chanting regularly the Holy Name so that at the time of difficulty we can immediately turn towards the Lord and remember Him.



Prayer Book



1. Make your own little prayer book.
2. On the coloured page you'll find a picture of Gajendra. This will be the cover. Stick this on a piece of thin cardboard.
3. Take sheets of pastel coloured or white writing paper. Cut them according to the size of the cover. You can have as many pages as you want.
4. Place the cover page on top and a piece of thin cardboard below as the backcover.
5. Punch holes on one side.
6. Use fancy ribbons, wool or string to tie all the pages together in order to make a little book.
7. Decorate the cover and the pages.

On the first page write the 'Hare Krishna maha mantra.'

As you learn new prayers, you can write them on the following pages.

Your prayer book is ready. You can carry this with you to remember Krishna at all times.

