

Name: _____ Date: _____

Kurma Avatar

The second incarnation of Lord Krishna

Kurma was Krishna's incarnation as a tortoise. He chose this form to assist the demigods and demons in the churning of the ocean.

The powerful sage Durvasa Muni once cursed the demigods to lose their power. The curse took effect immediately and the demigods became weak while the demons became stronger. This worried the demigods and they went to Lord Vishnu to ask for His help.



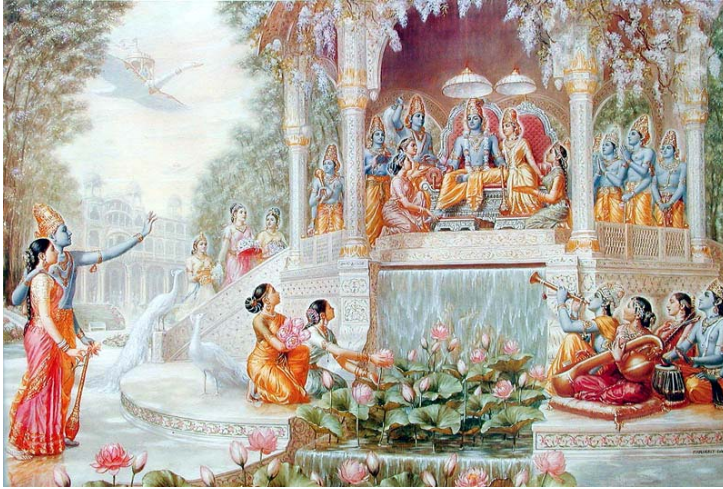
The Lord gave them some advice. He said, "Since the demons are stronger than you now, do not try to fight with them. Make friends with them and ask their help in churning the Milk Ocean. When you churn this ocean, nectar will come out. Anyone who drinks this nectar will become immortal.

"Throw all the plants, herbs and creepers into the ocean. Mandara Mountain will become your churning rod and Vāsuki, the king of the serpents, will be your churning-rope. A deadly poison will arise from the churning, but don't be afraid. I shall come to help you."

The demons agreed to the plans for churning the ocean. Together the demigods and demons went to Mandara Mountain and uprooted the golden mountain, carrying it to the ocean. Vāsuki, king of the serpents, agreed to be the rope if he also got a share of the nectar.

Finally they began churning the ocean. The demigods caught the serpent's head and the demons caught his tail. But then the demons thinking that they were being cheated by the demigods, insisted on taking the mouth end of the snake.

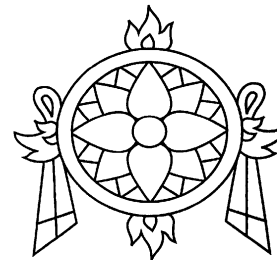
Because the churning rod, Mandara Mountain, was very heavy and was not held by any support in the water, it sank to the bottom of the ocean. Everyone felt helpless and didn't know what to do.



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The supreme Lord then appeared in the form of a tortoise and swam under the mountain and raised the mountain up on His back. The demons and demigods then began churning again. When the mountain moved back and forth over Kurma's back, it felt as if it was scratching His back.

From the churning, a large amount of poison was produced. It threatened to destroy the whole universe, it was so deadly! The demons and demigods approached Lord Shiva and begged him to drink the poison in order to save everyone. Lord Shiva then took the ocean of poison in his hand and drank it. As the poison spread down his throat, his neck became bluish. Some of the poison and it is because of this that there are poisonous snakes, scorpions and poisonous plants in the world.



Parent's sign: _____