

The Gita



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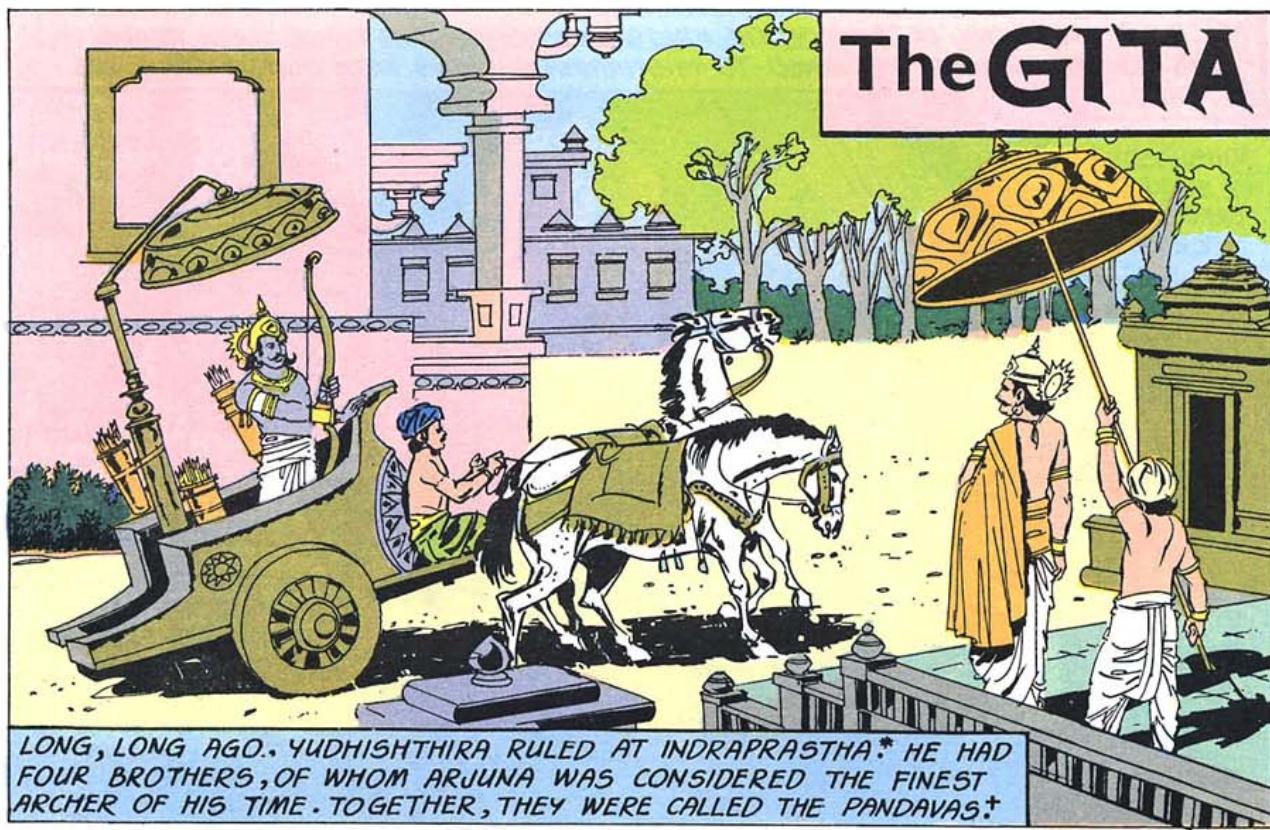
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The GITA



LONG, LONG AGO. YUDHISHTHIRA RULED AT INDRAPRASTHA.* HE HAD FOUR BROTHERS, OF WHOM ARJUNA WAS CONSIDERED THE FINEST ARCHER OF HIS TIME. TOGETHER, THEY WERE CALLED THE PANDAVAS.†

ONCE, YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE, TO WHICH KINGS AND PRINCES CAME FROM FAR AND NEAR. IT MEANT THAT THEY ACKNOWLEDGED HIM AS THE SUZERAIN OVER THEM ALL. THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE HELP GIVEN BY KRISHNA, THEIR MATERNAL COUSIN.



THE LONE PRINCE WHO FELT JEALOUS OF THE PANDAVA BROTHERS' TRIUMPH WAS DURYODHANA, THEIR COUSIN.

* NEAR MODERN DELHI.

+ PATRONYMIC FROM PANDU, THEIR FATHER.

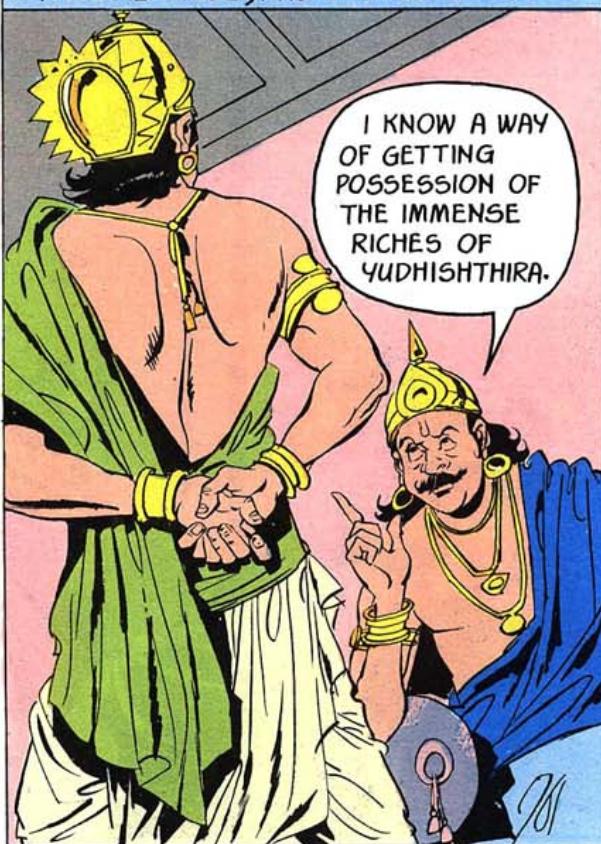
AFTER THE SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY, THE KINGS AND PRINCES LEFT FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE KINGDOMS. DURYODHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA ALONG WITH DUHSHASANA, HIS BROTHER.



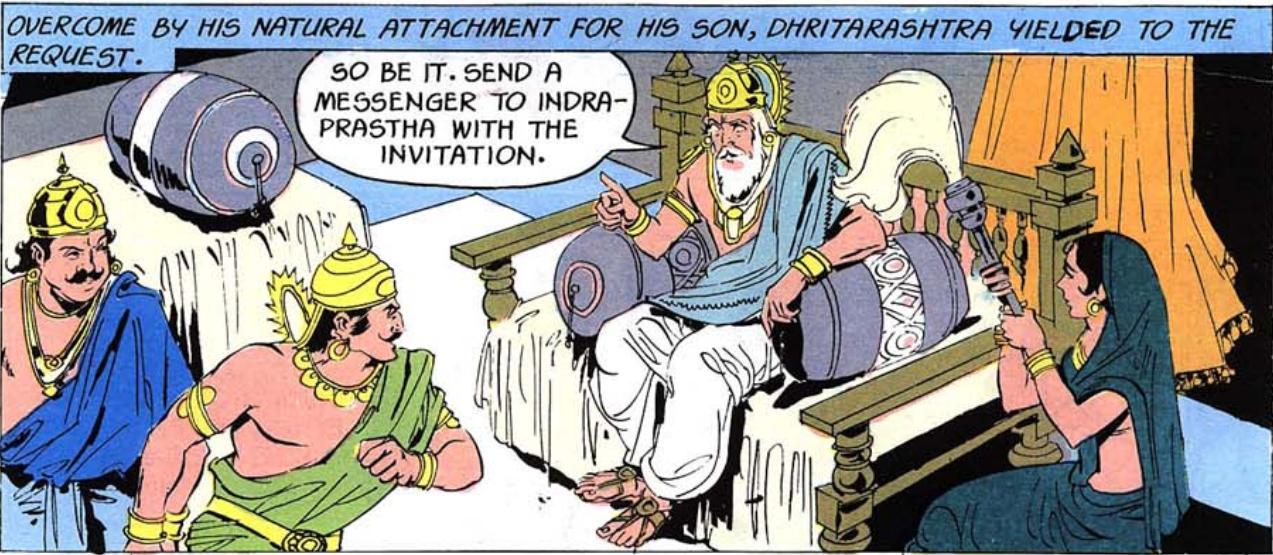
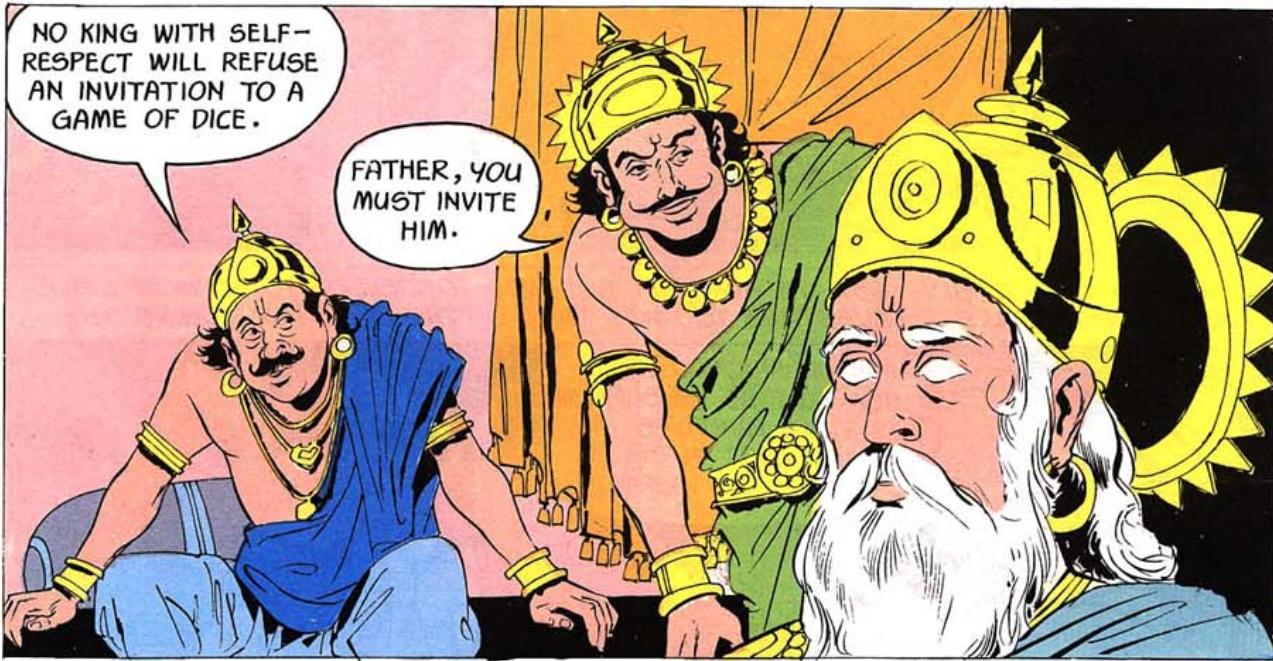
AFTER REACHING HIS CAPITAL, DURYODHANA WENT STRAIGHT TO HIS FATHER, DHRITA-RASHTRA, THE BLIND KING OF THE KAURAVAS.*



THE EVIL-MINDED SHAKUNI, DURYODHANA'S MATERNAL UNCLE, HAD A SUGGESTION.



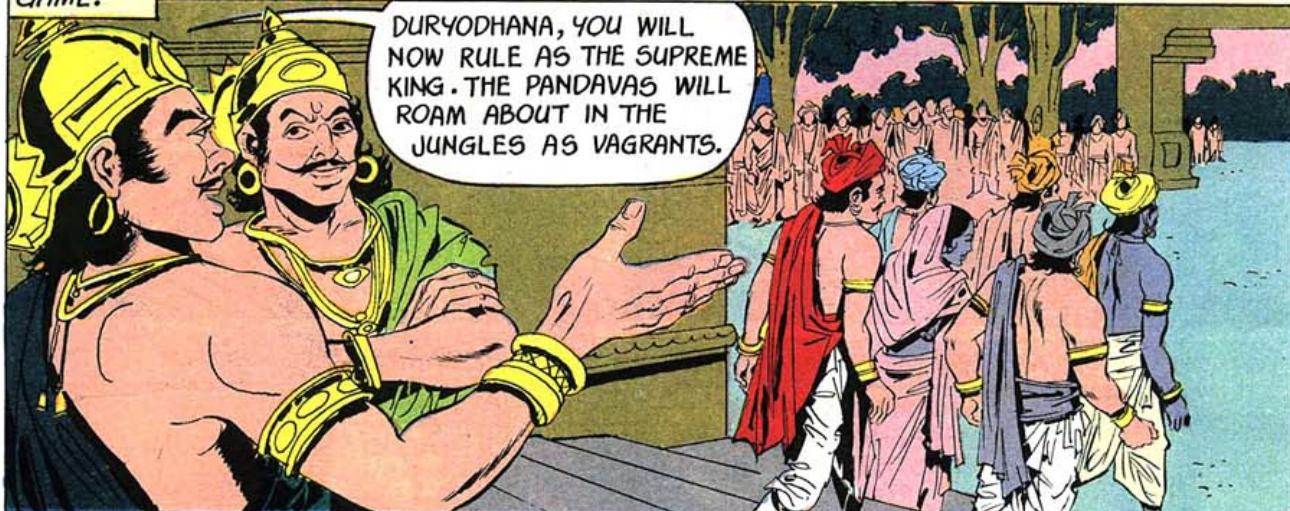
* PATRONYMIC FROM KURU, AN ANCESTOR.



AT THE INVITATION OF DHRITARASHTRA, YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS BROTHERS CAME TO HASTINAPURA, AND THE GAME BEGAN. THE STAKES WERE HEAVY. AFTER A LONG SESSION —



YUDHISHTHIRA NOT ONLY LOST THE KINGDOM, BUT WAS COMPELLED TO GO INTO EXILE FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, BECAUSE THIS TOO WAS PART OF THE PRICE FOR LOSING THE GAME.



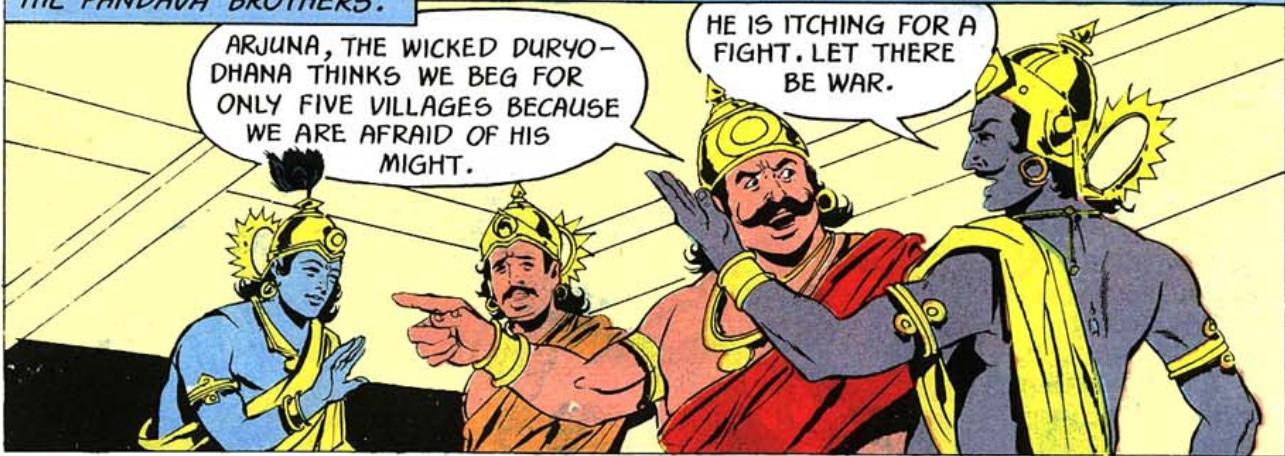
AFTER COMPLETING THEIR PERIOD OF EXILE, THE PANDAVAS REACHED UPAPLAYA.



KINGS AND PRINCES FROM MANY PARTS OF INDIA CAME TO UPAPLAVYA WITH THEIR ARMIES. KRISHNA TOO CAME.



DURYODHANA SPURNED THE PEACE OFFER. THIS INFURIATED BHEEMA, THE SECOND AMONG THE PANDAVA BROTHERS.



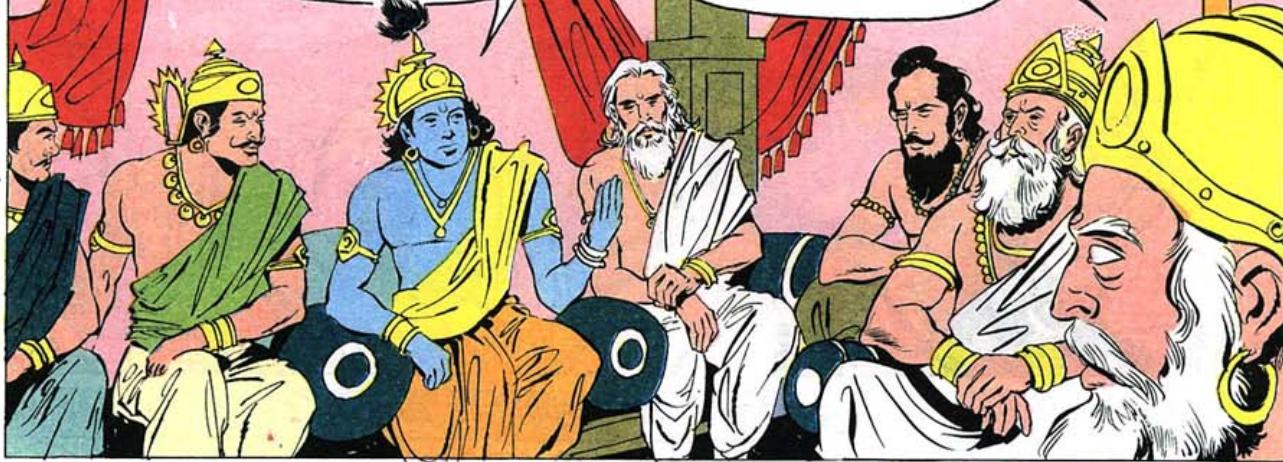
KRISHNA INTERVENED.



KRISHNA WAS RECEIVED WITH DUE RESPECT AT THE COURT OF DHRITARASHTRA.

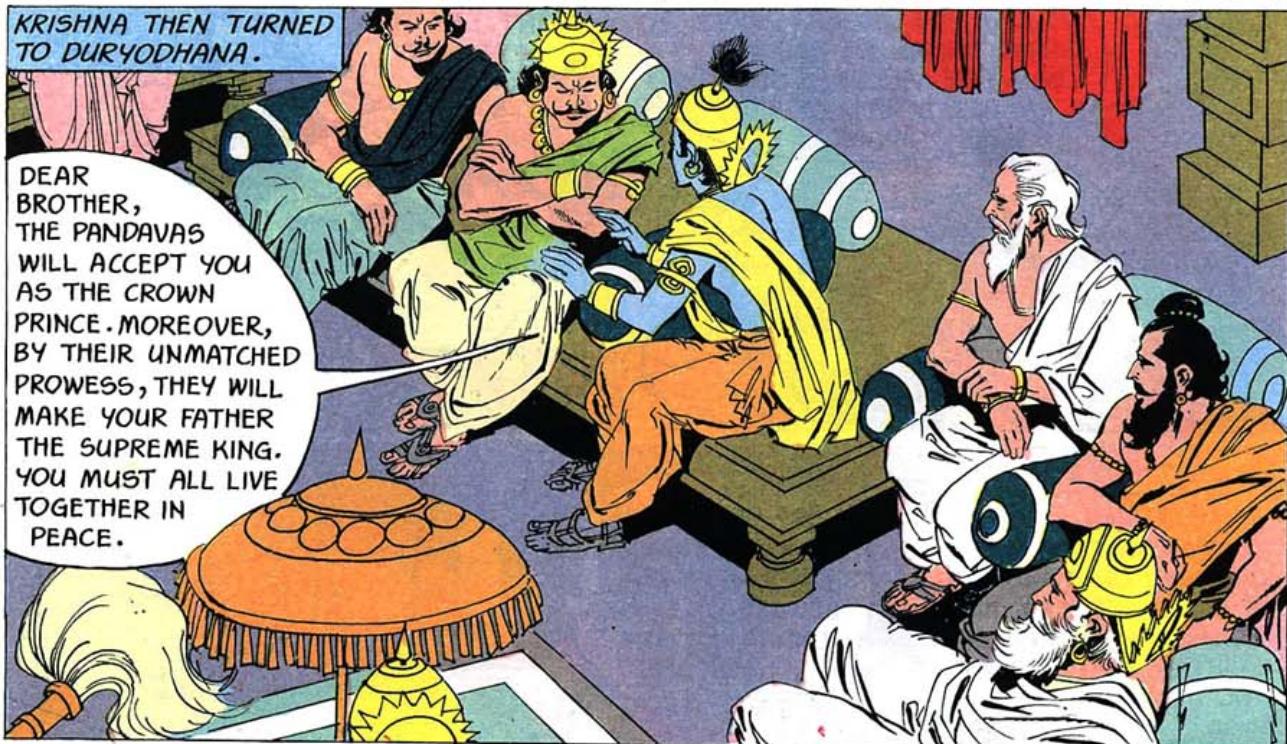
O KING! GIVE THE KINGDOM OF THE PANDAVAS BACK TO THEM. LET THERE BE PEACE.

KRISHNA, I AGREE WITH YOU. BUT DURYODHANA IS BENT ON WAR.. TRY AND CONVINCE HIM.



KRISHNA THEN TURNED TO DURYODHANA.

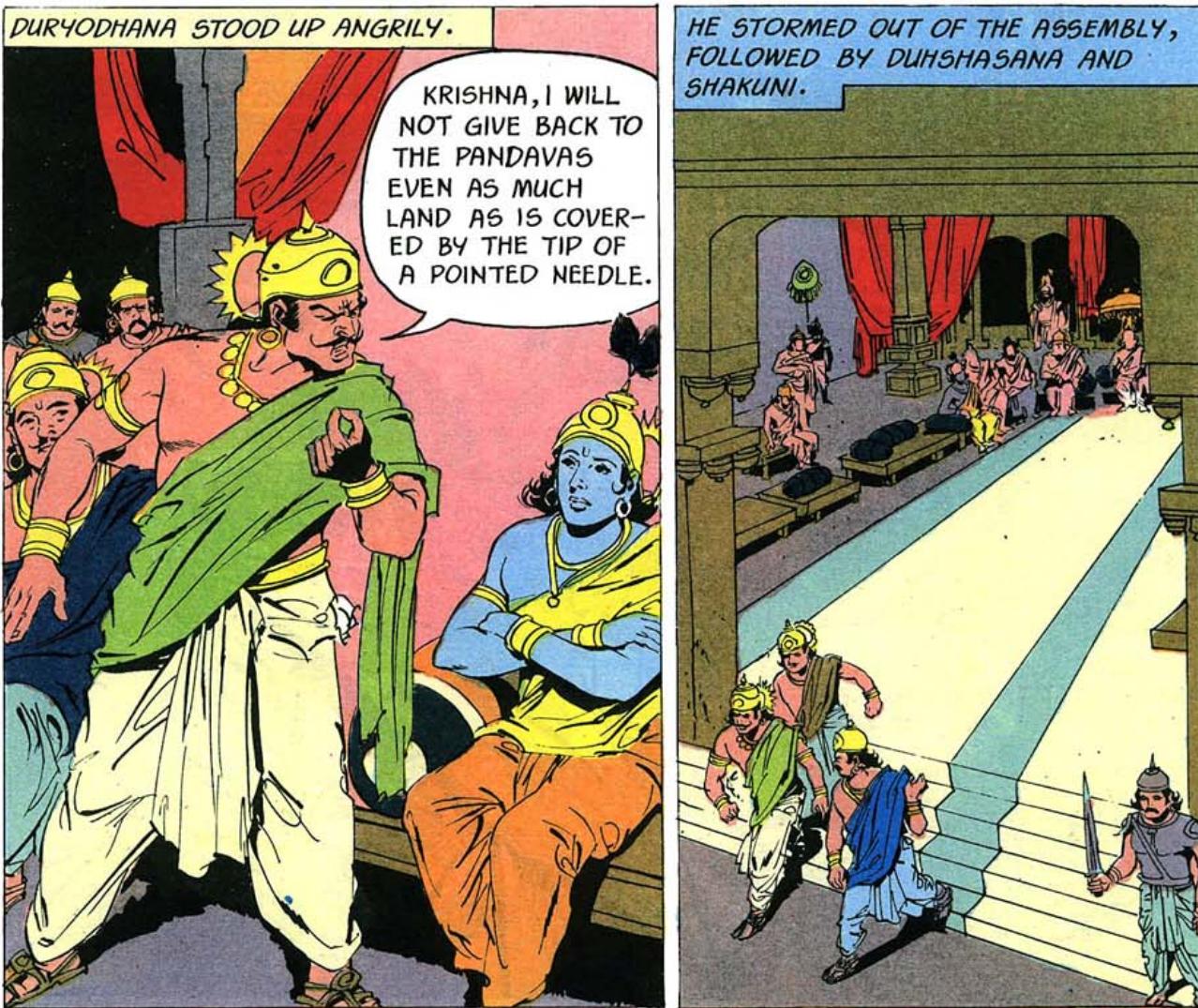
DEAR BROTHER,
THE PANDAVAS WILL ACCEPT YOU AS THE CROWN PRINCE. MOREOVER, BY THEIR UNMATCHED PROWESS, THEY WILL MAKE YOUR FATHER THE SUPREME KING. YOU MUST ALL LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE.



BHEESHMA, THE GRAND OLD MAN OF THE KURU FAMILY, TRIED TO PERSUADE DURYODHANA TO ACCEPT THE PEACE OFFER.

KRISHNA HAS SPOKEN WISELY. ACT ACCORDING TO HIS ADVICE.

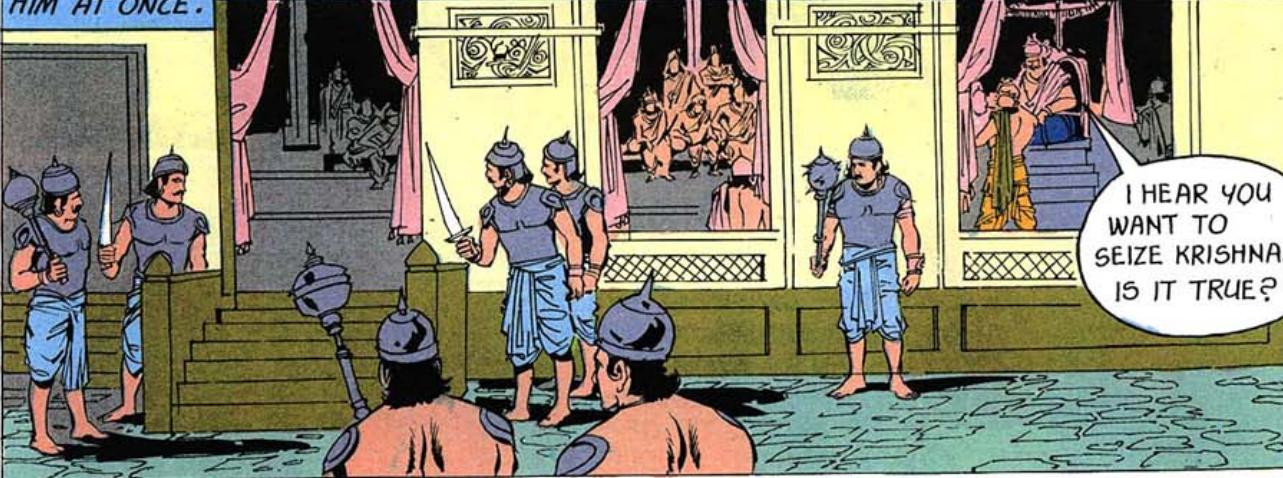
THEN DRONA, THE TEACHER OF BOTH, THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS, ADDRESSED DURYODHANA.



IN A SECLUDED SPOT, HE HELD HURRIED DISCUSSIONS WITH HIS UNCLE, SHAKUNI.



WHEN KING DHRITARASHTRA CAME TO KNOW OF HIS SON'S WICKED PLANS, HE SUMMONED HIM AT ONCE.



KRISHNA IMMEDIATELY ASSUMED A TERRIBLE FORM. FLASHERS OF LIGHTNING BLAZED OUT OF HIM, AS HE LAUGHED.



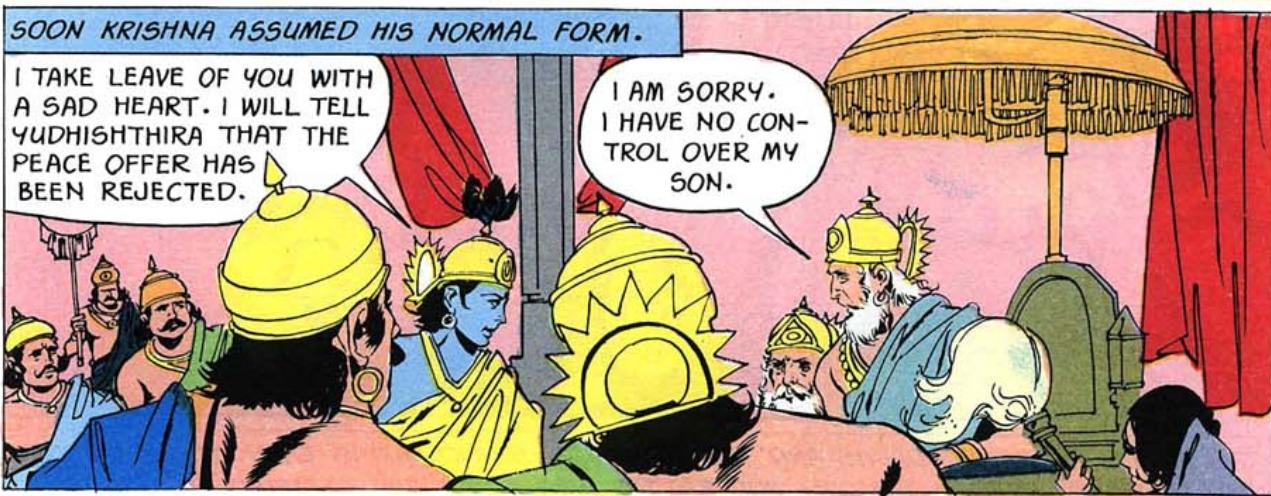
THE KINGS AND COUNSELLORS IN THE ASSEMBLY ALL SHUT THEIR EYES. BOWING THEIR HEADS, THEY STOOD WITH FOLDED HANDS.



SOON KRISHNA ASSUMED HIS NORMAL FORM.

I TAKE LEAVE OF YOU WITH A SAD HEART. I WILL TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT THE PEACE OFFER HAS BEEN REJECTED.

I AM SORRY.
I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER MY SON.



BACK AT UPAPLAVYA, KRISHNA TOLD THE PANDAVA BROTHERS ABOUT THE WILFULNESS AND PERVERSITY OF DURYODHANA.



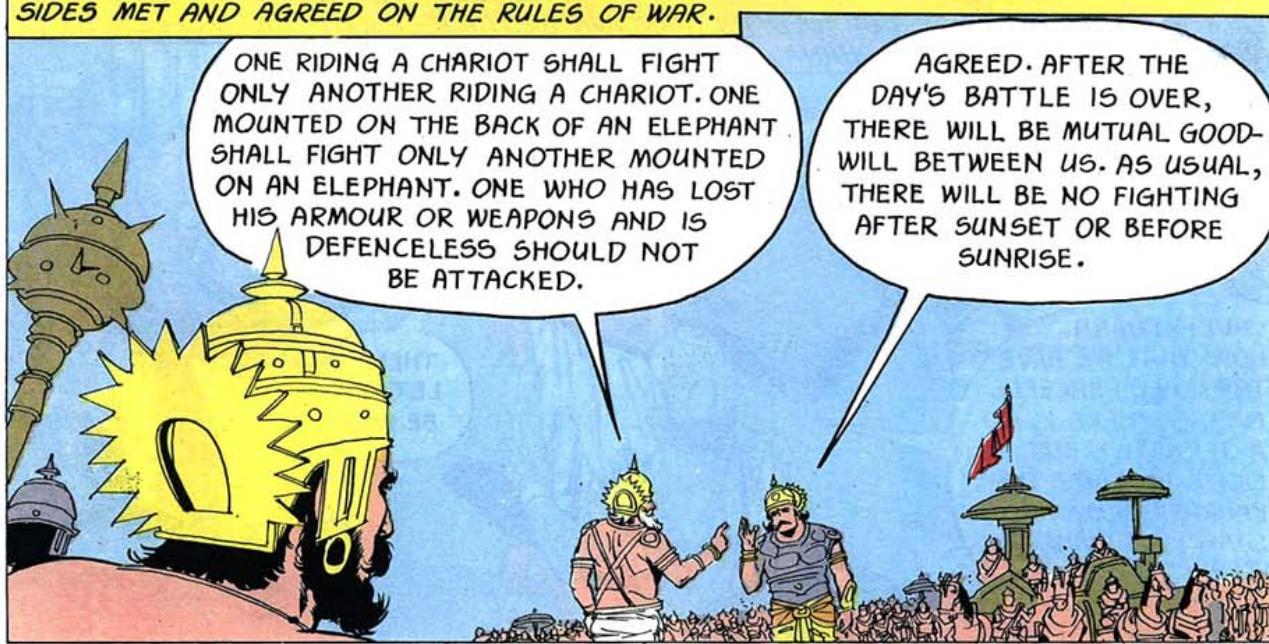
YUDHISHTHIRA,
NOW THAT WE HAVE
TRIED ALL PEACEFUL
MEANS, THERE IS NO
ALTERNATIVE BUT TO
FIGHT. ALREADY THE
KAURAVA ARMY HAS
STARTED MOVING
TOWARDS THE
PLAINS OF
KURUKSHETRA.

THEN
LET IT
BE WAR.

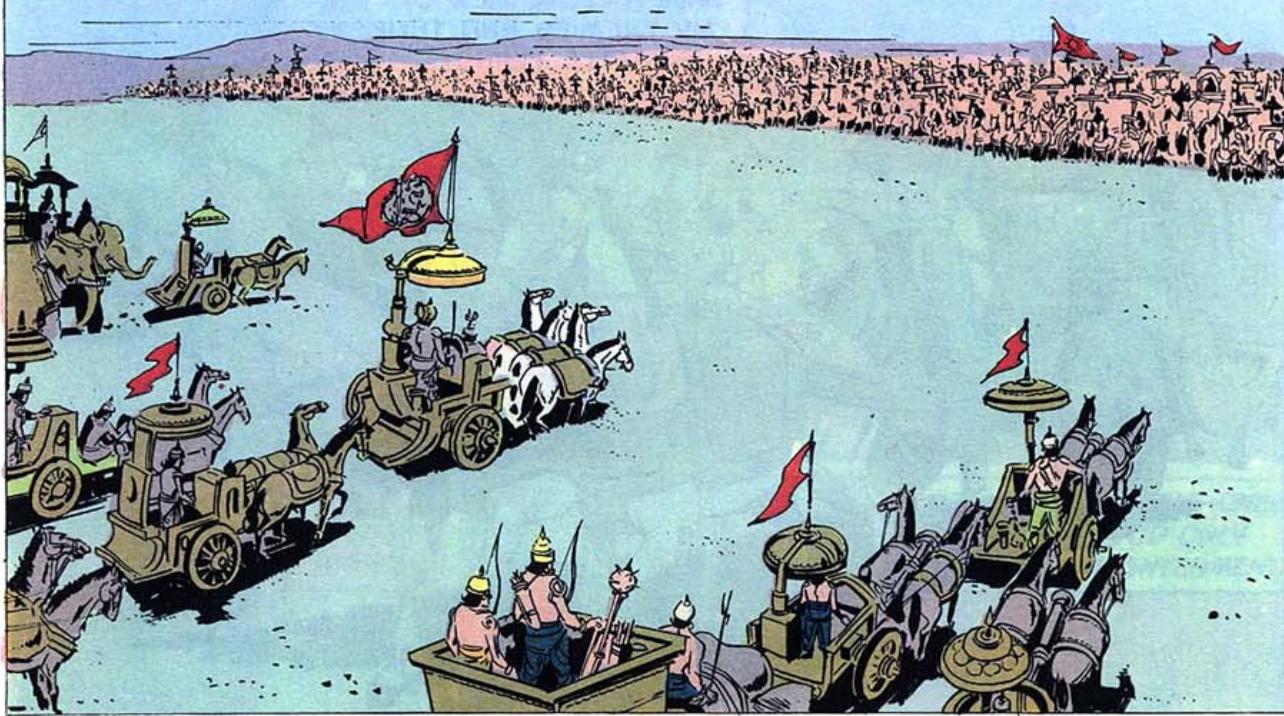
THE PANDAVA ARMY HAD SEVEN DIVISIONS. THERE WAS GREAT TUMULT AS THEY MOVED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD OF KURUKSHETRA.



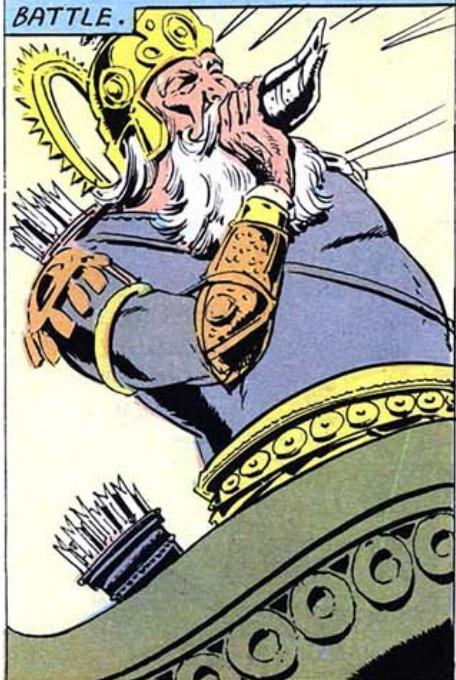
THE ARMIES OF THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS STOOD FACING EACH OTHER ON THE BATTLEFIELD. BEFORE THE CALL FOR BATTLE WAS GIVEN, THE LEADERS OF THE TWO SIDES MET AND AGREED ON THE RULES OF WAR.



THE KAURAVA ARMY HAD ELEVEN DIVISIONS AND WAS THUS NUMERICALLY FAR SUPERIOR TO THE PANDAVA ARMY. TO WITHSTAND THE ENEMY ONSLAUGHT, THE PANDAVA ARMY HAD BEEN ARRAYED IN NEEDLE-LIKE FORMATION. ARJUNA WAS IN THE CENTRE IN HIS CHARIOT, TO WHICH HAD BEEN YOKED FOUR WHITE HORSES. KRISHNA WAS HIS CHARIOTEER.

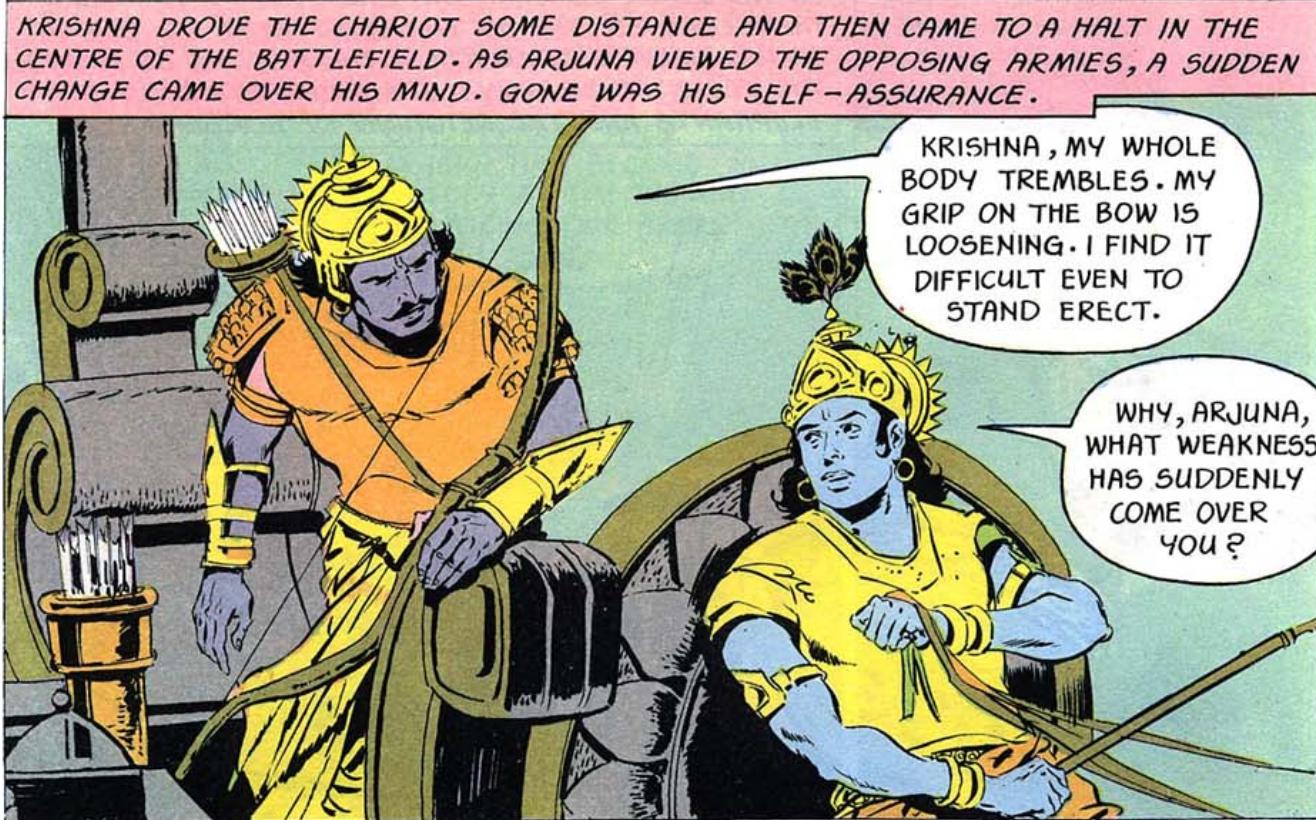
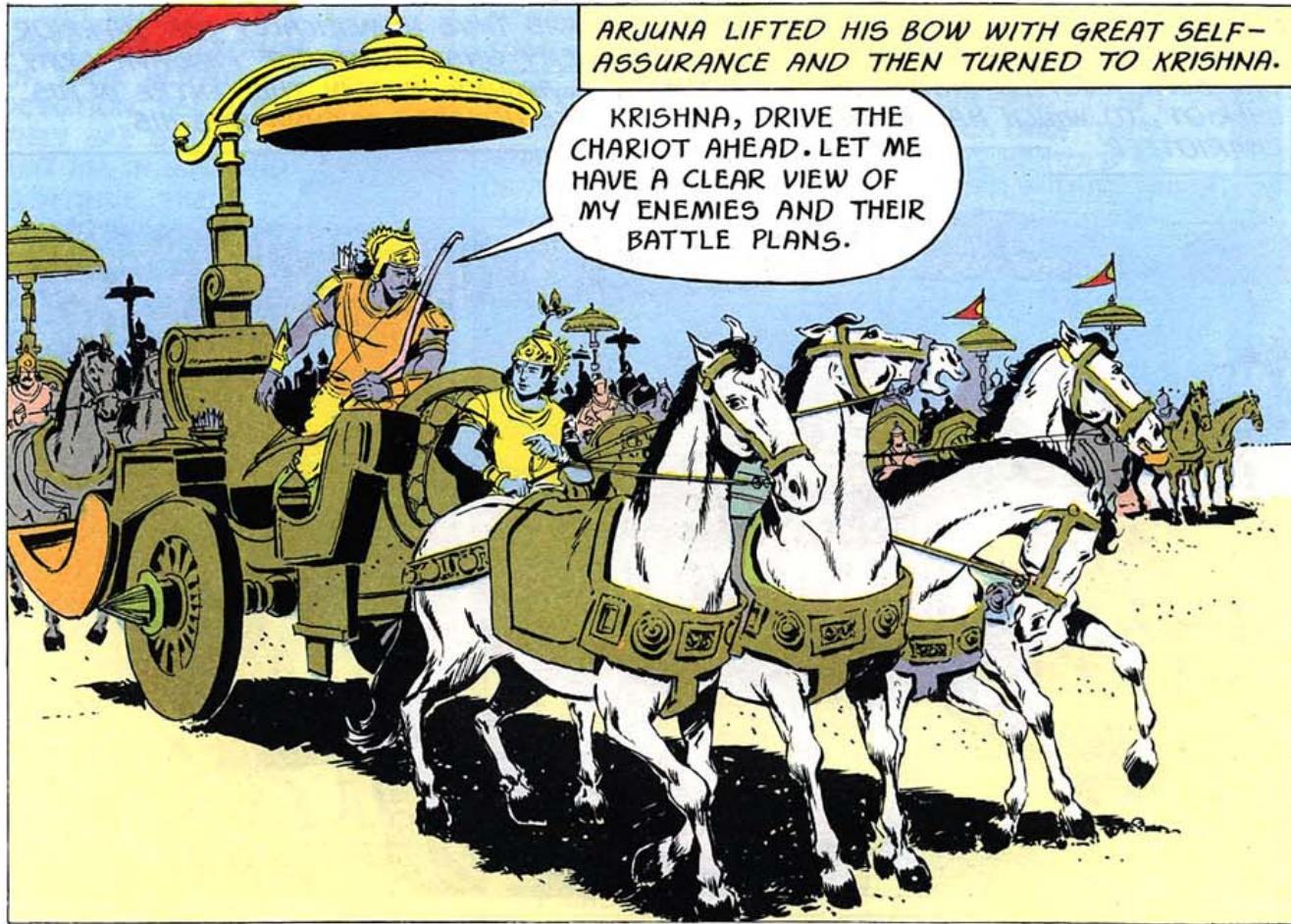


BHEESHMA WAS THE COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVA ARMY. HE BLEW HIS CONCH. THIS WAS A CALL TO HIS WARRIORS TO READY THEMSELVES FOR THE BATTLE.



ON THE OTHER SIDE, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA TOO BLEW THEIR CONCHES. THE AIR WAS RENT WITH THE SOUND OF THE BLOWING OF CONCHES, THE BEATING OF DRUMS, THE CLANK OF WEAPONS, THE TRUMPETING OF ELEPHANTS AND THE NEIGHING OF HORSES.





THE GITA

THE BOW SLIPPED FROM ARJUNA'S HANDS AND HE SAT DEJECTEDLY IN THE CHARIOT, HIS EYES FILLED WITH TEARS.

NO! I CANNOT SLAY MY OWN KINSMEN— NOT EVEN FOR ALL THE THREE WORLDS, MUCH LESS A KINGDOM.

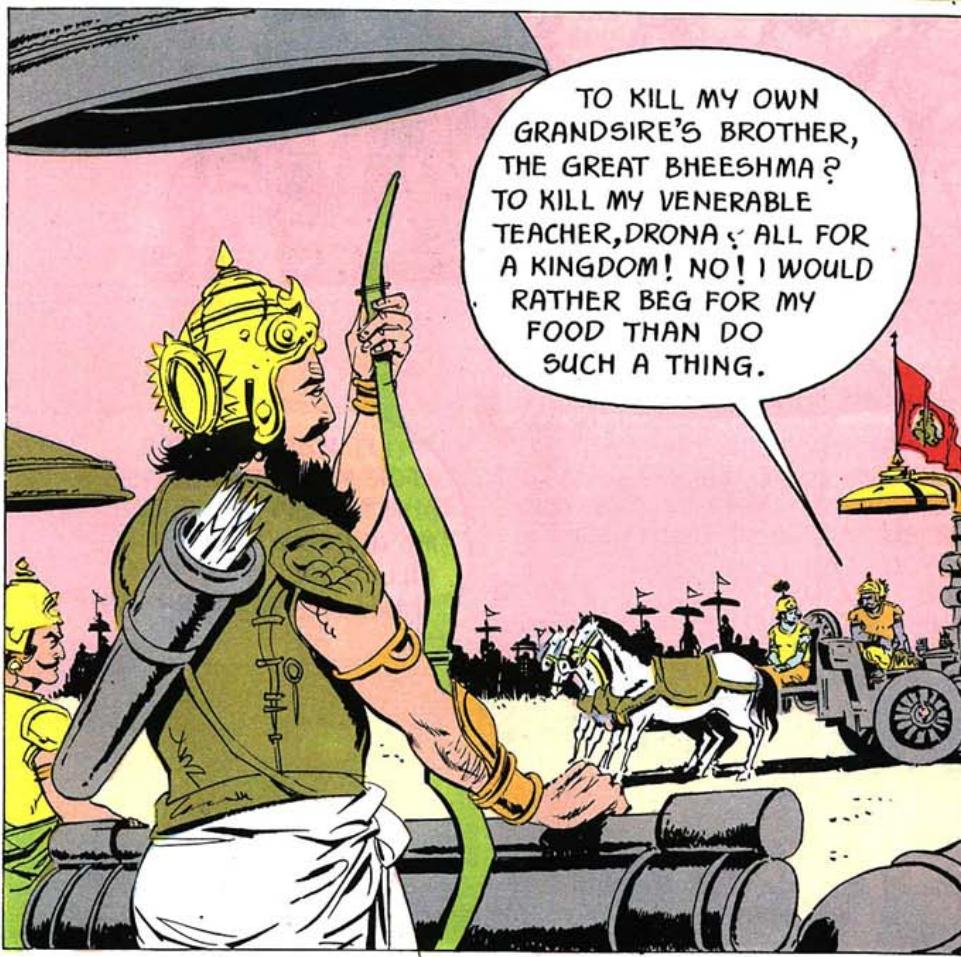


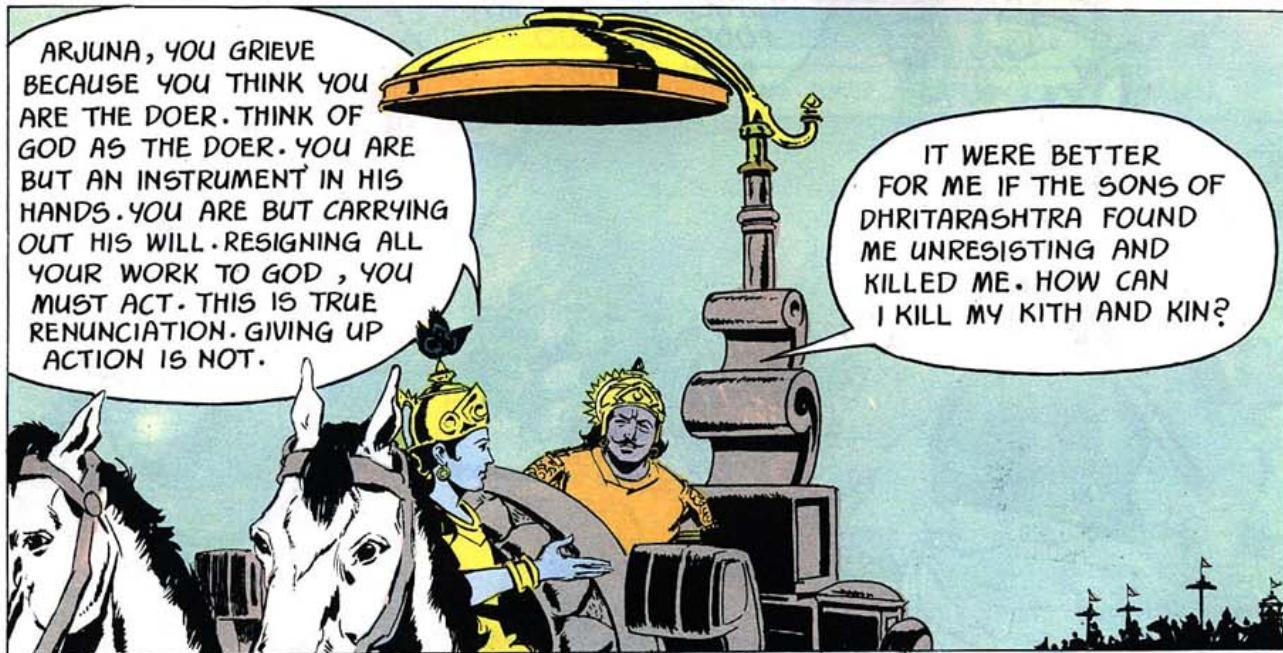
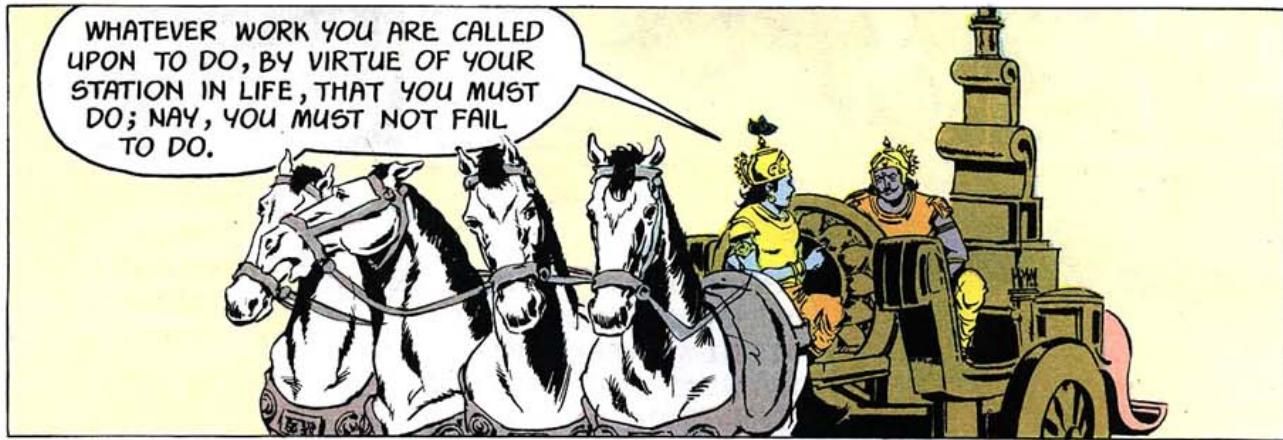
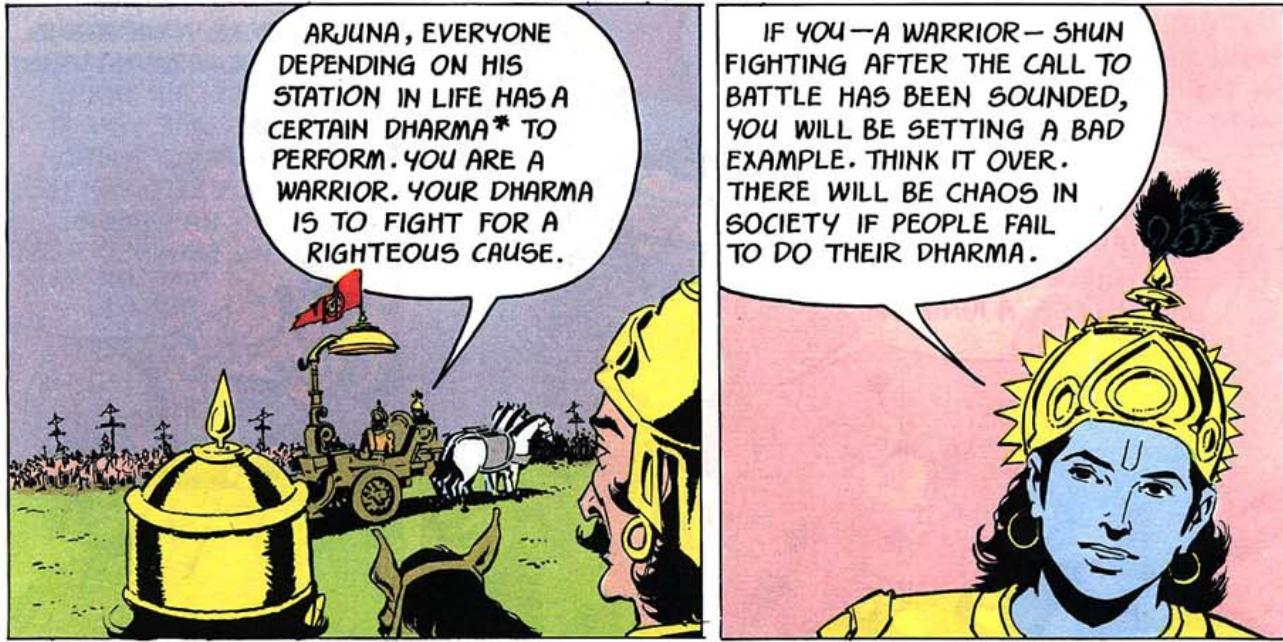
THIS IS YOUR HOUR OF TRIAL, ARJUNA! SUCH BASE DESPAIR DOES NOT BECOME YOU. IT IS INAPPROPRIATE.

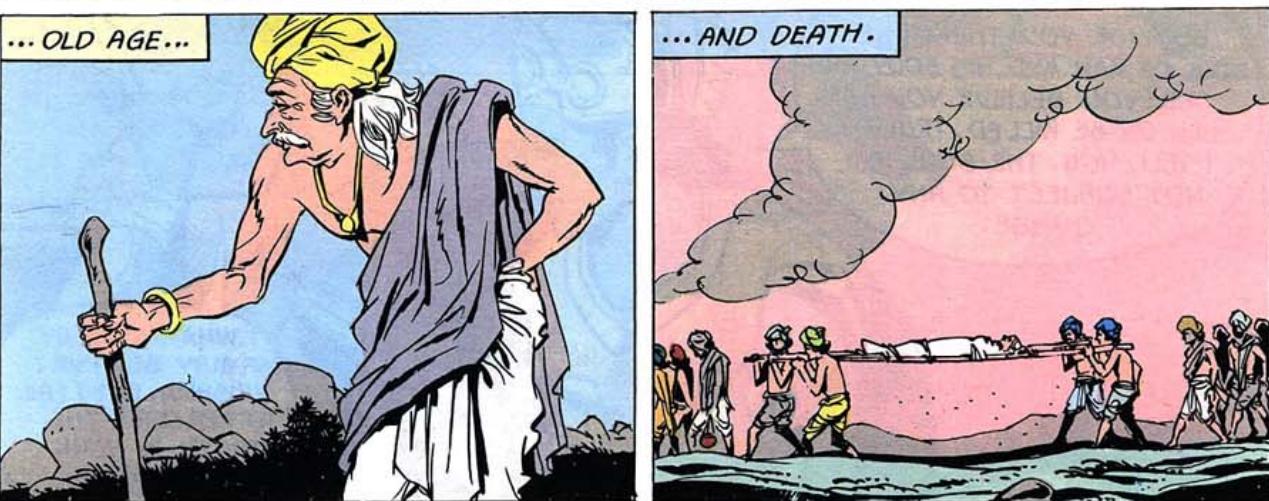
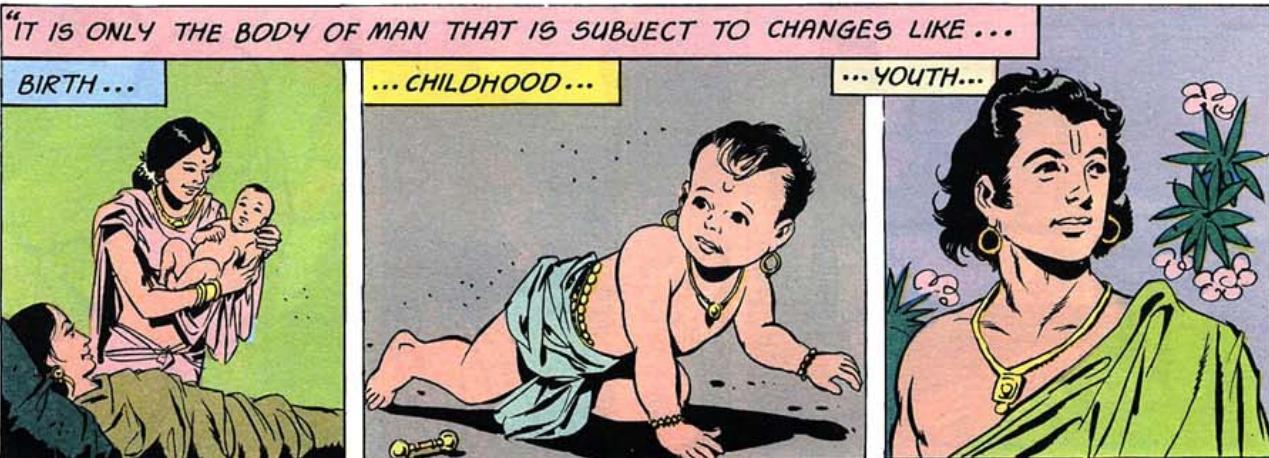
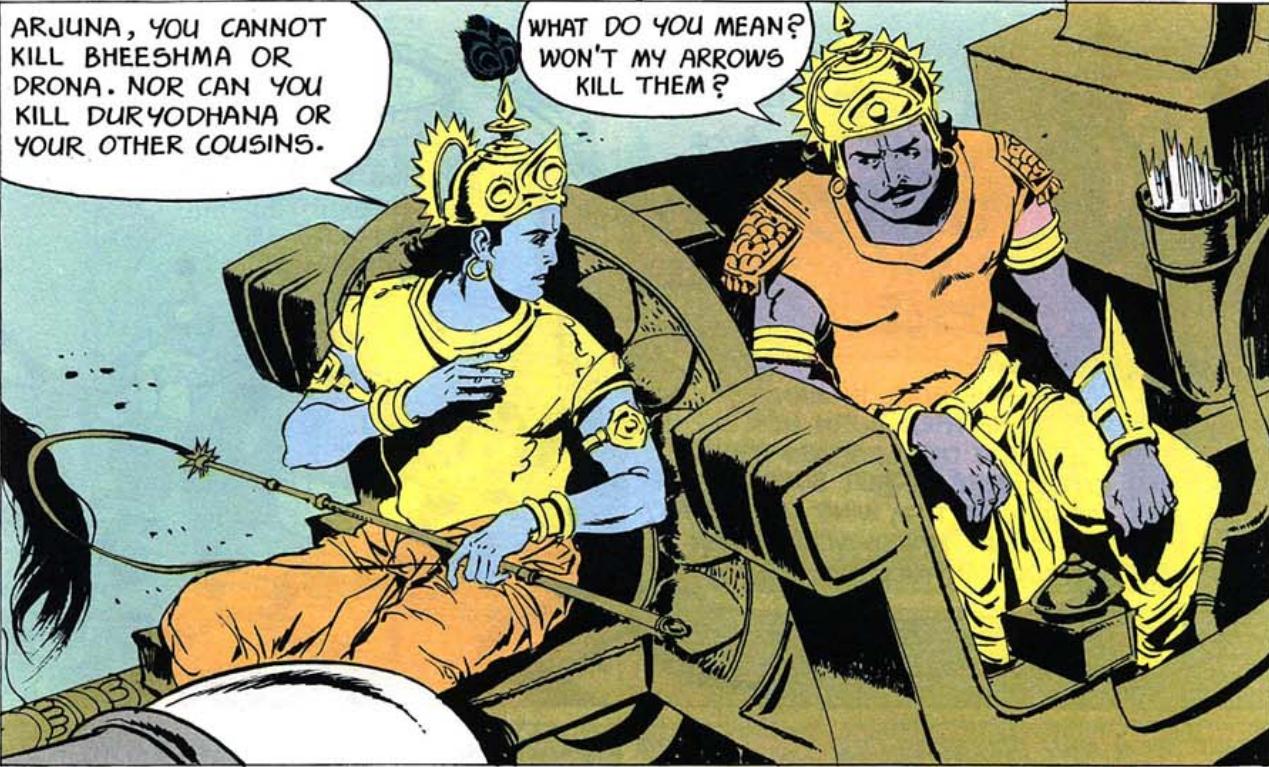
THE CALL TO BATTLE HAS BEEN SOUNDED. ARISE! TAKE UP YOUR ARMS!

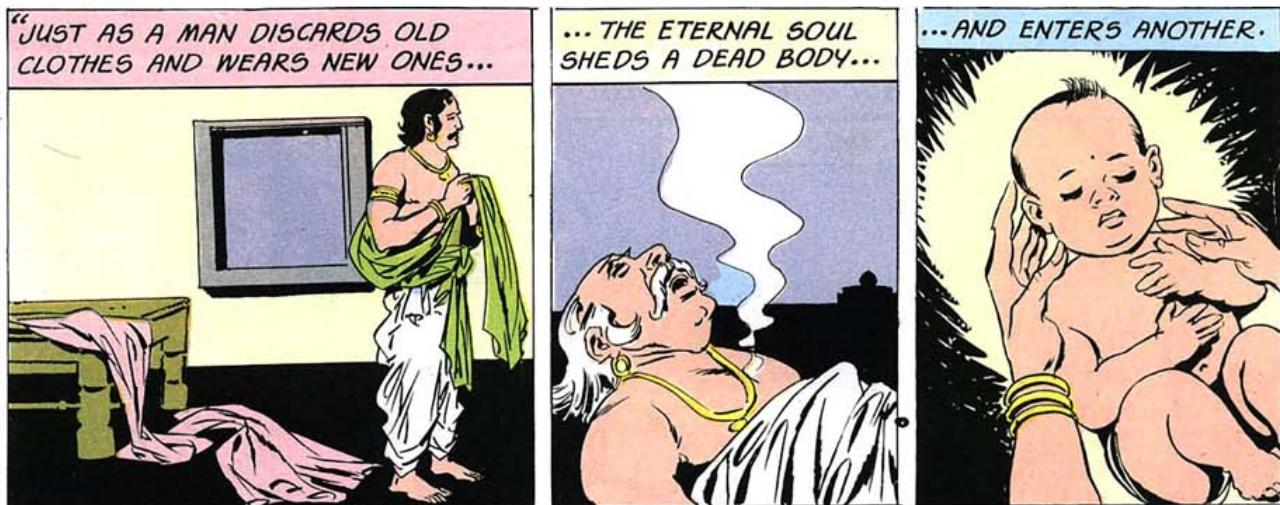
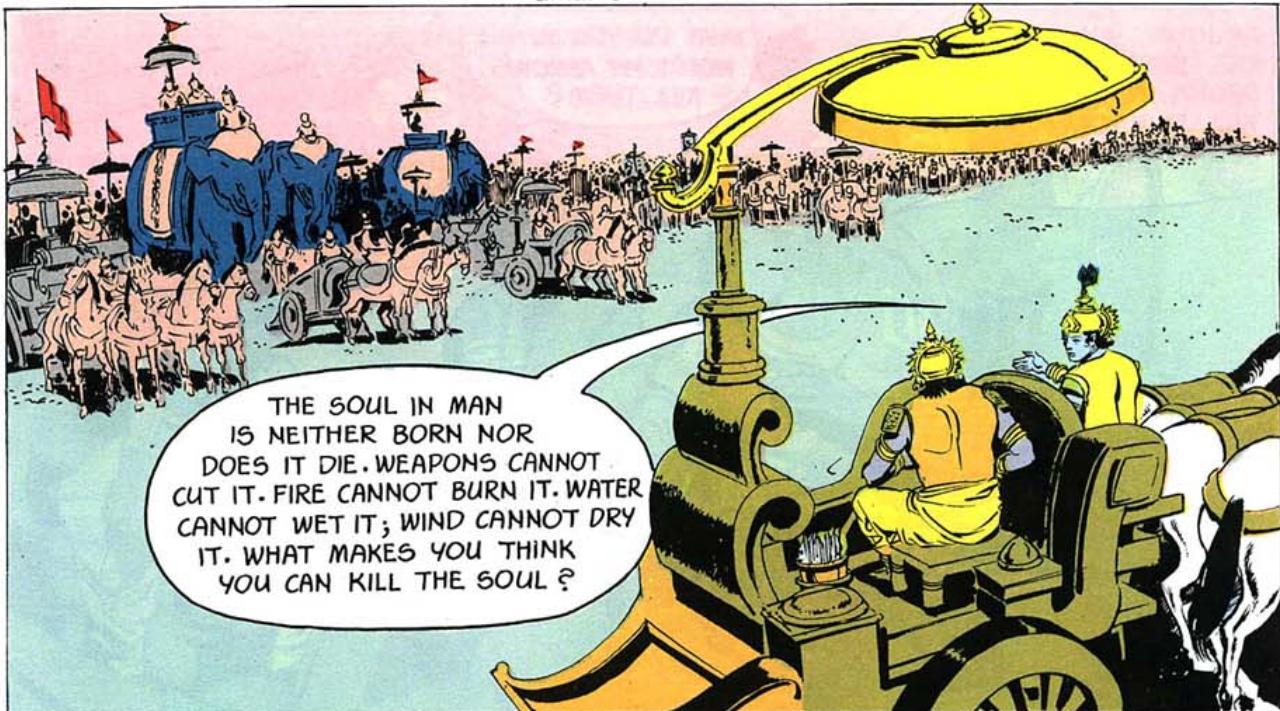


TO KILL MY OWN GRANDSIRE'S BROTHER, THE GREAT BHEESHMA? TO KILL MY VENERABLE TEACHER, DRONA? ALL FOR A KINGDOM! NO! I WOULD RATHER BEG FOR MY FOOD THAN DO SUCH A THING.



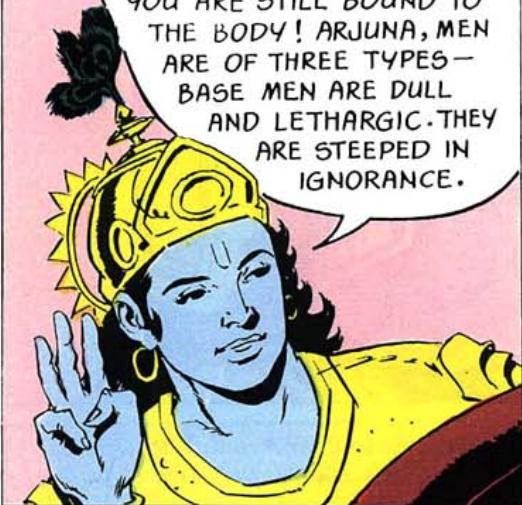






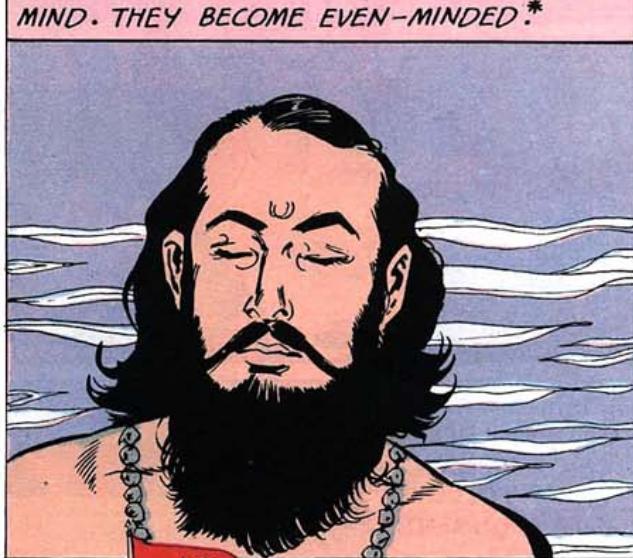
THAT IS BECAUSE, EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NOBLE, YOU ARE STILL BOUND TO THE BODY ! ARJUNA, MEN ARE OF THREE TYPES— BASE MEN ARE DULL AND LETHARGIC. THEY ARE STEEPED IN IGNORANCE.

"THE GREEDY ONES ARE EVER ACTIVE, TRYING TO SATISFY THEIR CRAVINGS. THEY ARE PASSIONATE AND RESTLESS.



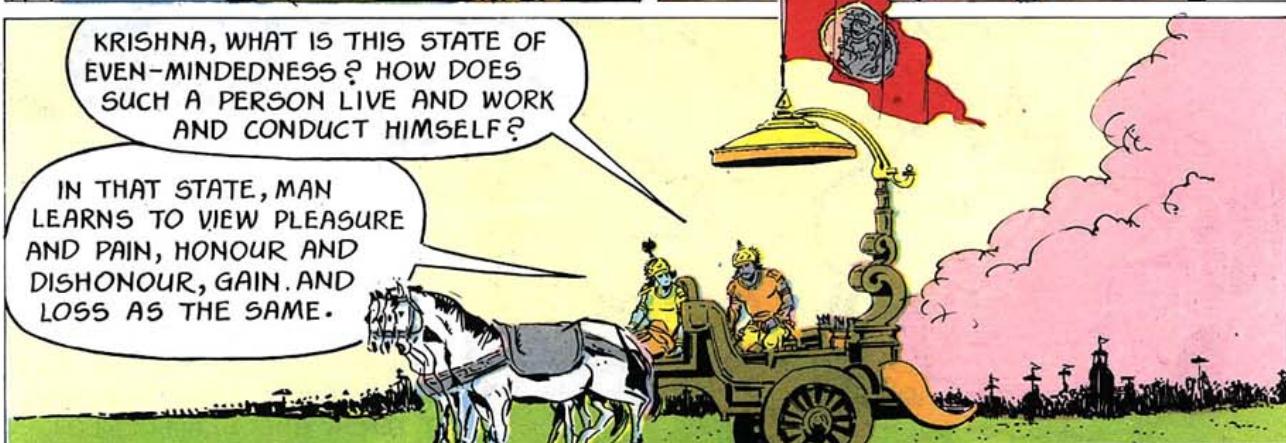
"THEN THERE ARE THE NOBLE ONES WHO SEEK ENLIGHTENMENT. THEY ARE EVER ENGAGED IN DOING GOOD DEEDS. BUT EVEN THEY ARE BOUND TO THE BODY. YOU ARE NO EXCEPTION.

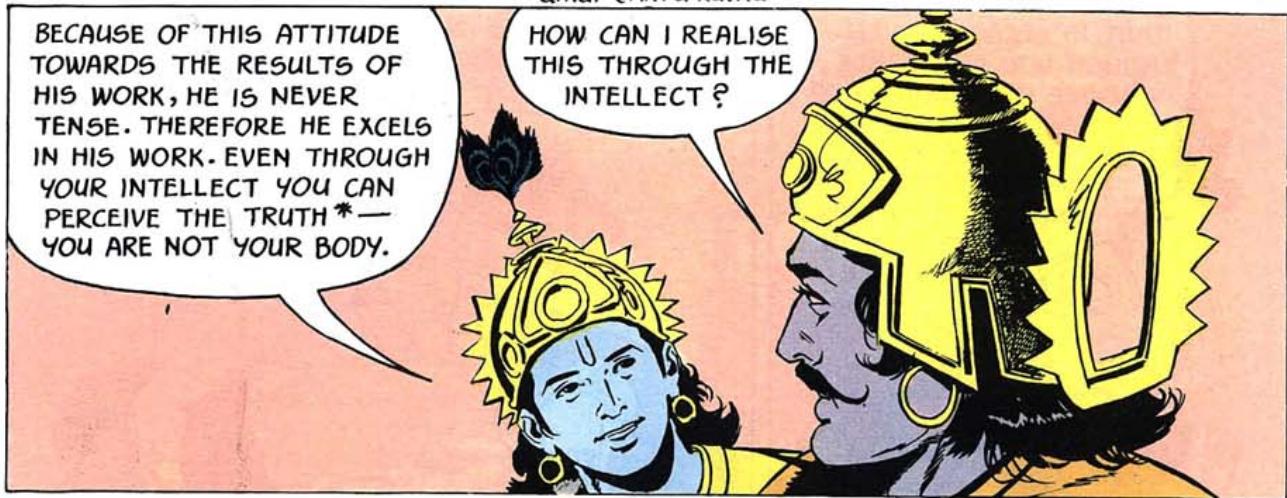
"IT IS ONLY WHEN THE NOBLE ONES RECEIVE ENLIGHTENMENT THAT THE BONDS THAT TIE THE SOUL TO THE BODY ARE CUT AND THEY ATTAIN PERFECT EQUANIMITY OF MIND. THEY BECOME EVEN-MINDED.*



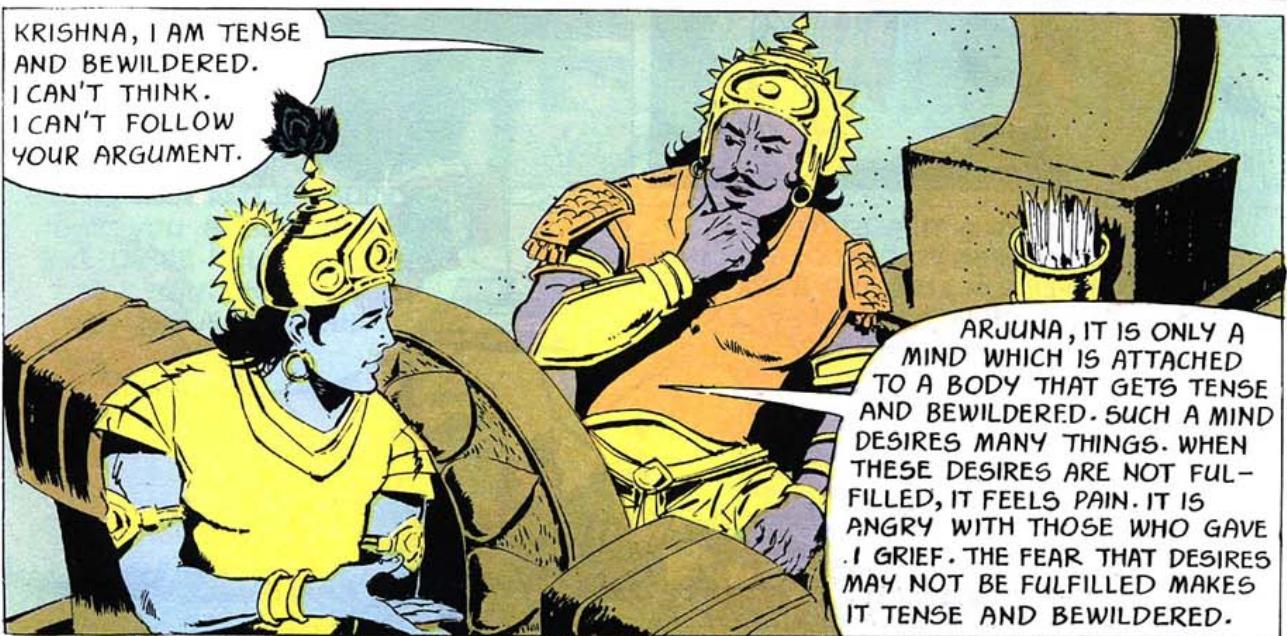
KRISHNA, WHAT IS THIS STATE OF EVEN-MINDEDNESS ? HOW DOES SUCH A PERSON LIVE AND WORK AND CONDUCT HIMSELF ?

IN THAT STATE, MAN LEARNS TO VIEW PLEASURE AND PAIN, HONOUR AND DISHONOUR, GAIN AND LOSS AS THE SAME.

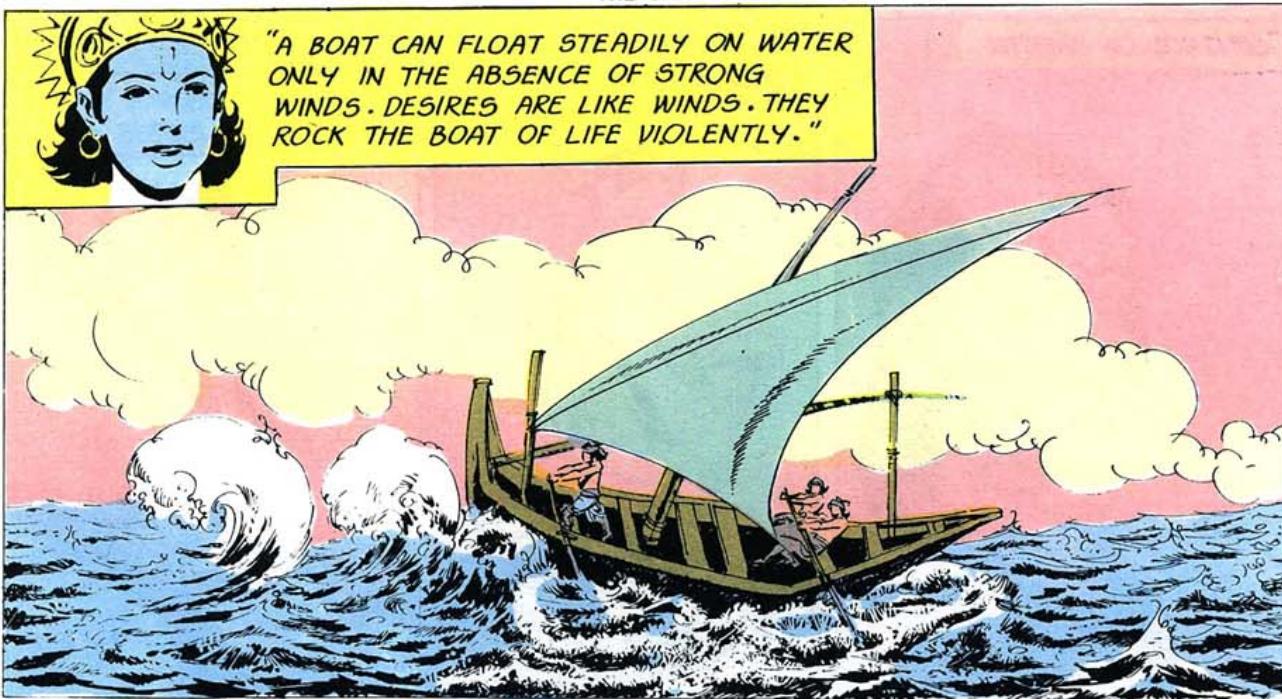




"KNOWLEDGE IS LIKE FIRE. ANYTHING THAT ENTERS FIRE WILL NEVER REMAIN THE SAME. JUST AS FIRE TURNS ITS FUEL INTO ASHES, KNOWLEDGE BURNS AWAY ALL THE BONDS THAT TIE THE IMMORTAL SOUL TO THE MORTAL BODY."



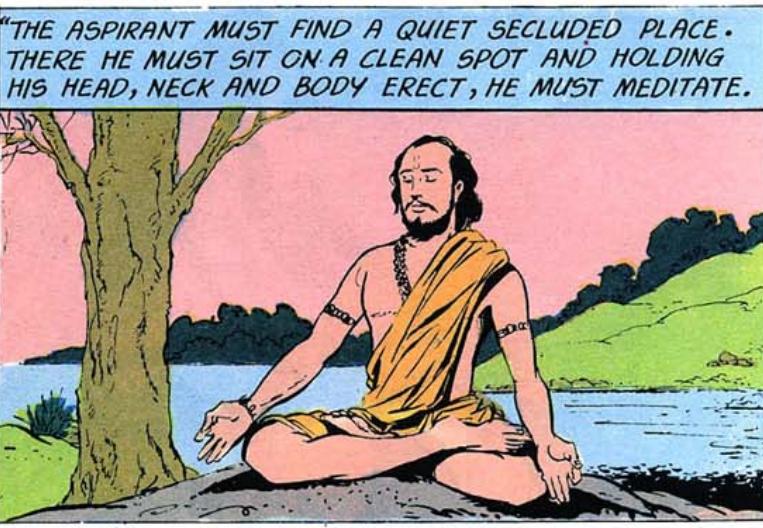
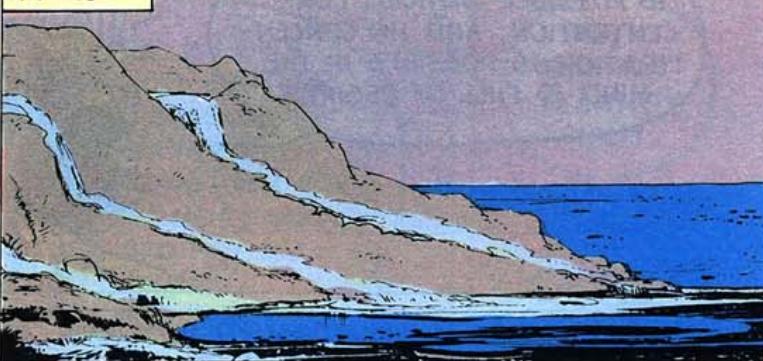
* THIS IS REFERRED TO AS JNANA YOGA. YOGA LITERALLY MEANS UNION AND IS USED TO CONNOTE THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH THE SUPREME SPIRIT.



"IT IS ONLY WHEN ALL THE DESIRES OF THE HEART ARE ABANDONED THAT THE INTELLECT CAN PERCEIVE REALITY. AND IT IS ONLY AFTER PERCEIVING REALITY THAT A MAN CAN BECOME EVEN-MINDED."

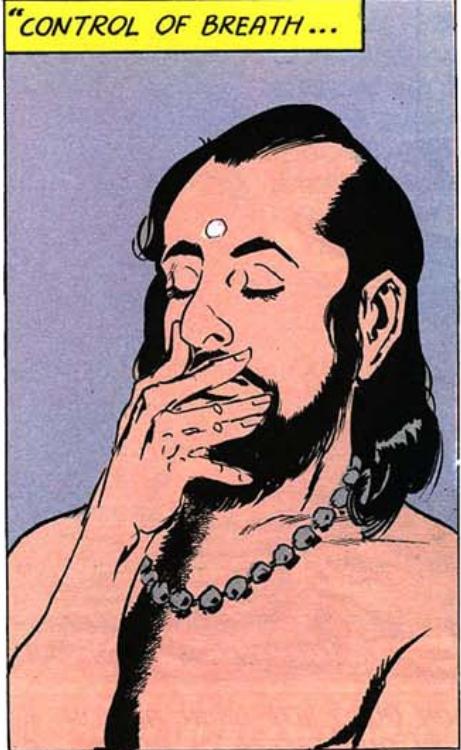


"AN EVEN-MINDED PERSON DOES NOT SHUN ACTION. BUT HE IS NOT MOVED BY THE EFFECTS OF ACTION. HE IS LIKE THE OCEAN WHICH REMAINS UNAFFECTED BY THE POURING IN OF THE WATERS OF MIGHTY RIVERS."



* DHYANA YOGA.

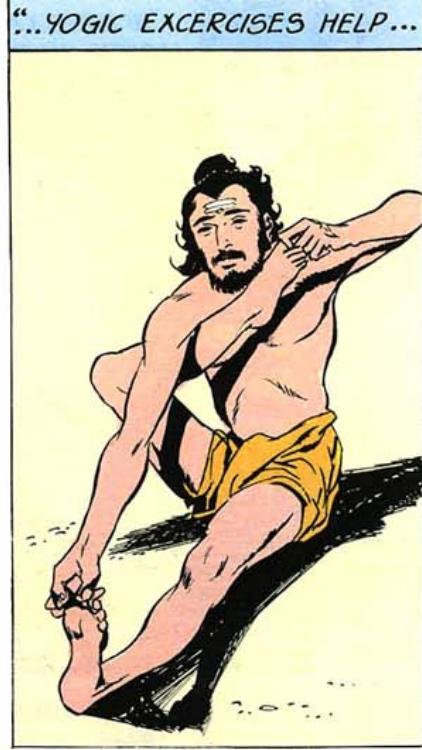
"CONTROL OF BREATH..."



"...EATING OF THE RIGHT FOOD AND..."



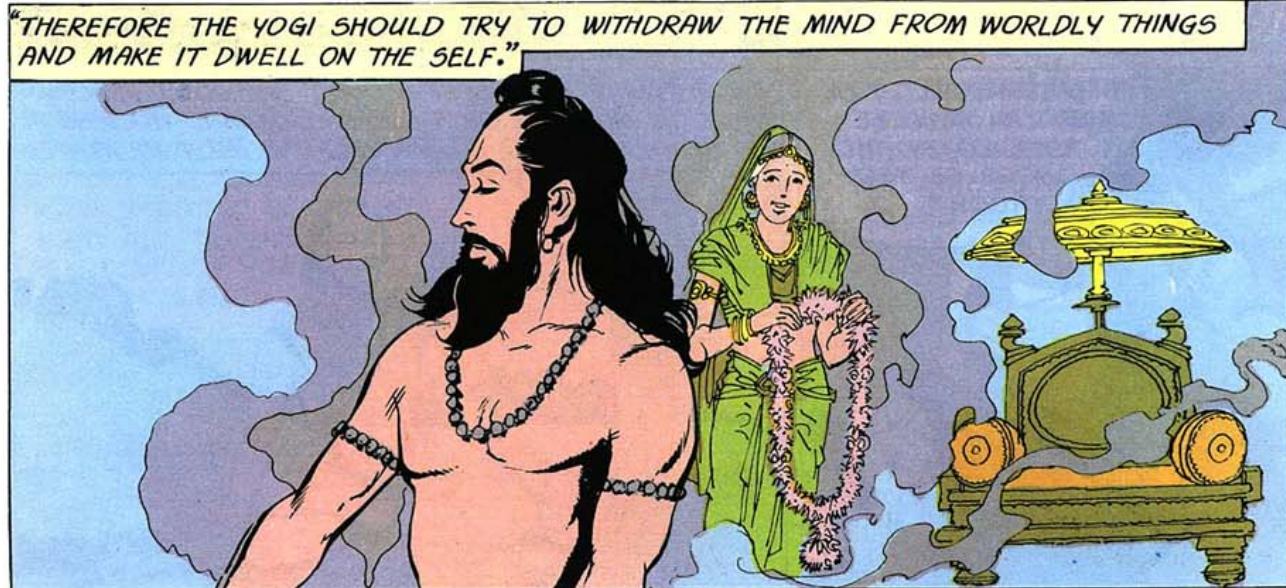
"...YOGIC EXERCISES HELP..."



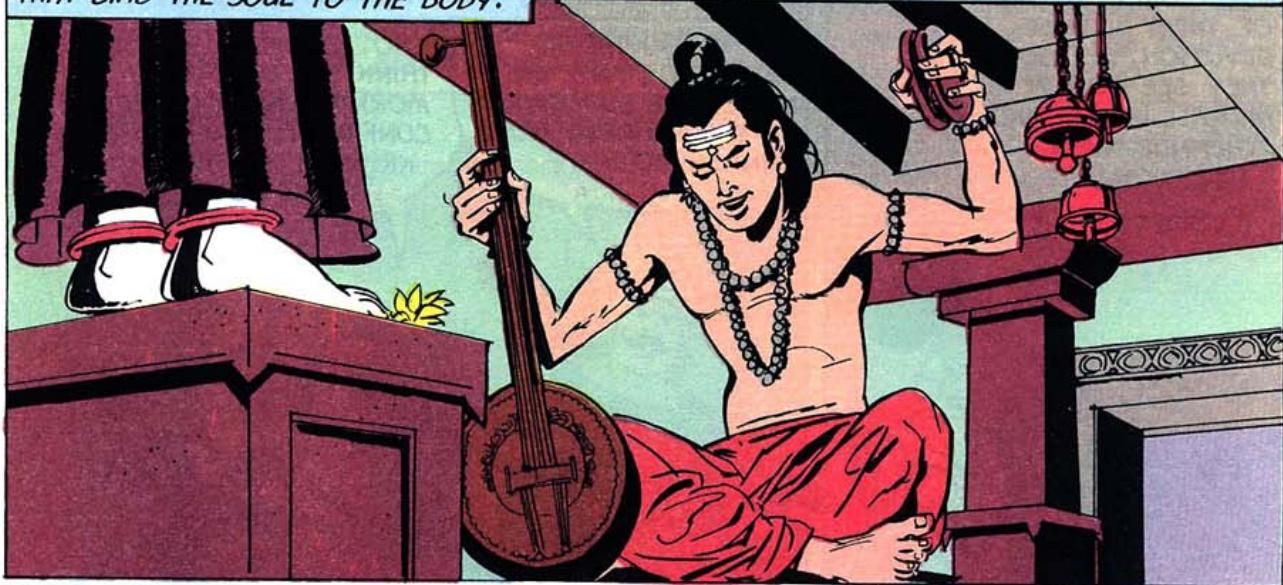
... BUT NO MEDITATION
IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT CON-
CENTRATION, AND NO CONCEN-
TRATION IS POSSIBLE IF THE
MIND IS FULL OF DESIRES.



"THEREFORE THE YOGI SHOULD TRY TO WITHDRAW THE MIND FROM WORLDLY THINGS
AND MAKE IT DWELL ON THE SELF."



"TO PERCEIVE THE TRUTH THROUGH THE INTELLECT IS DIFFICULT. THE YOGA OF MEDITATION IS ALSO DIFFICULT. THE YOGA OF DEVOTION—WORSHIP, ADORATION, PRAYER, SURRENDERING YOURSELF TO THE WILL OF GOD—is the simplest way by which you can cut the ties that bind the soul to the body.



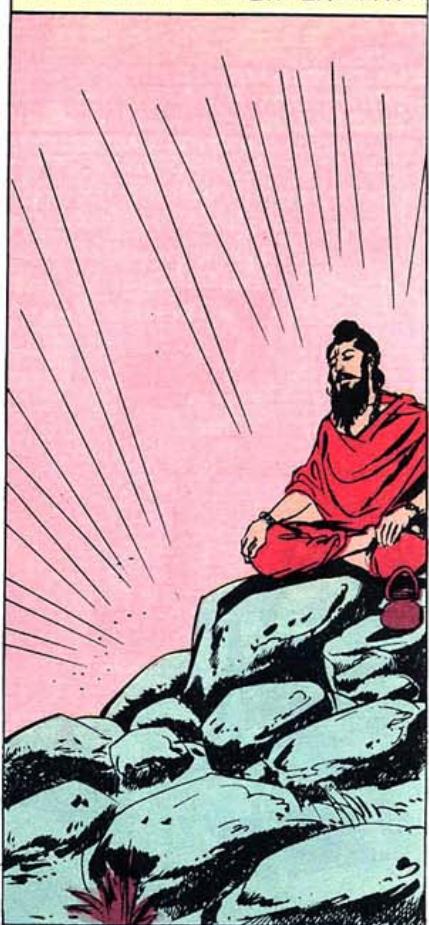
"THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF DEVOTEES. THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORSHIP GOD WHEN IN DISTRESS.



"THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORSHIP GOD FOR THE SAKE OF MATERIAL GAIN.



"THERE ARE THE NOBLE ONES WHO WORSHIP GOD ONLY TO RECEIVE ENLIGHTENMENT...



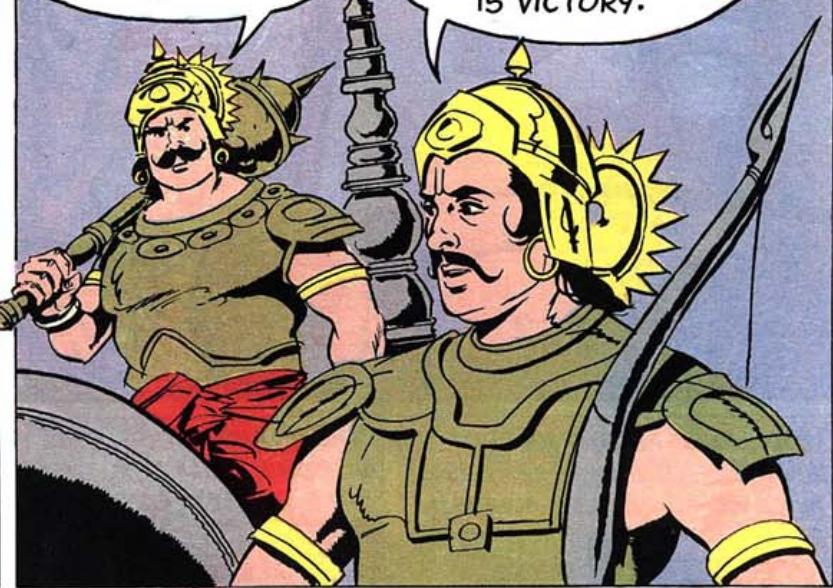
* BHAKTI YOGA. ANYONE WHO HAS PERCEIVED THE SELF THROUGH THE INTELLECT CANNOT HELP ADORING THE SELF. THEREFORE THE YOGA OF BHAKTI OR DEVOTION IS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE YOGA OF INTELLECT.

...AND FINALLY A FEW NOBLE ONES, BECAUSE OF THEIR INTENSE DEVOTION, SEE GOD. THEY SEE GOD IN ALL AND ALL IN GOD AND CONTINUE THEIR DEVOTION.

MEANWHILE, ARJUNA'S APATHY AND DESPAIR HAD CAST A GLOOM ON THE PANDAVA ARMY.

WHY IS ARJUNA SO DEJECTED? HAS THE NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE KAURAVA ARMY UNNERVED HIM?

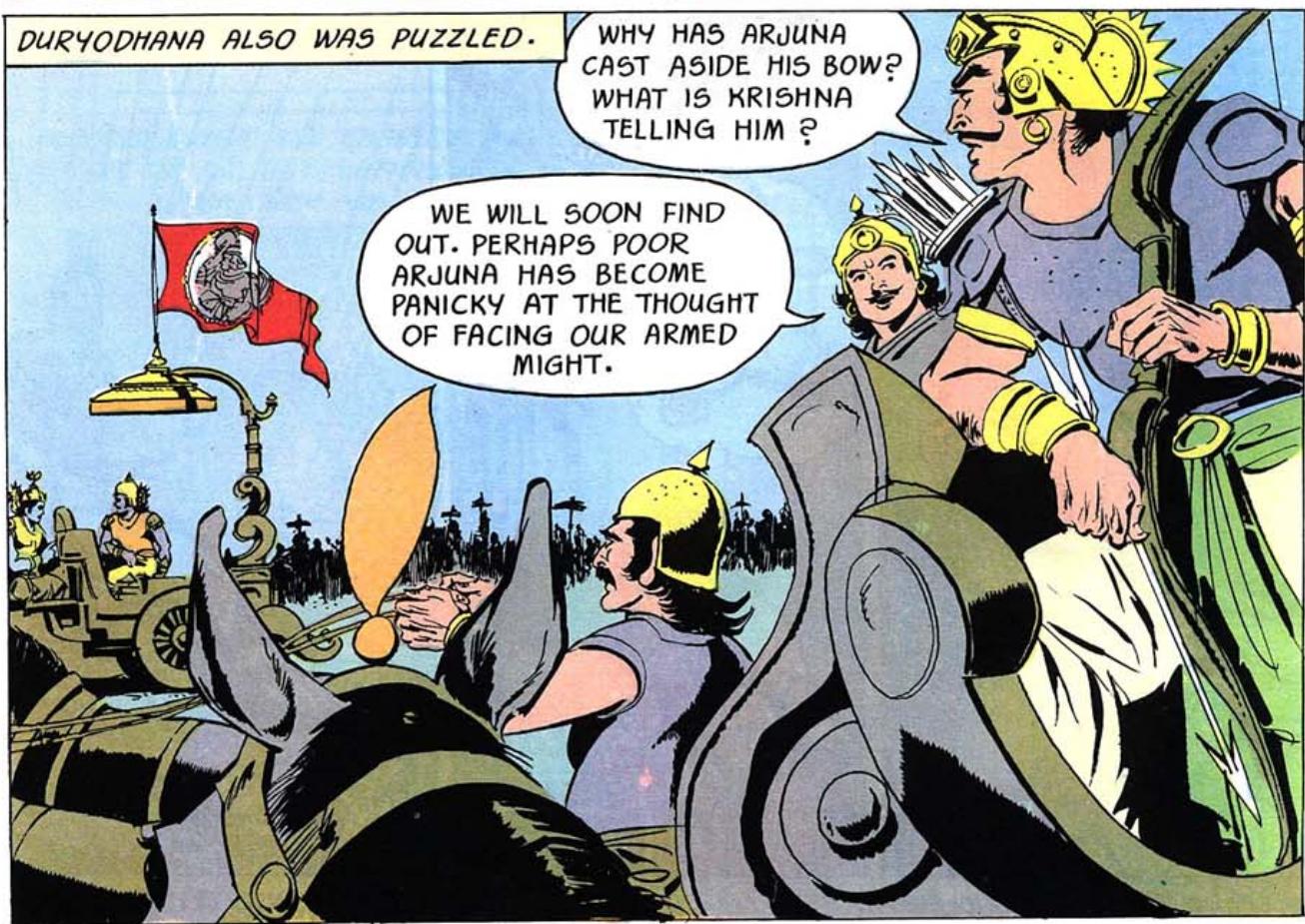
NO, BHEEMA. I DON'T THINK SO. ONLY THIS MORNING HE TOLD ME CONFIDENTLY THAT WHERE KRISHNA IS, THERE IS VICTORY.



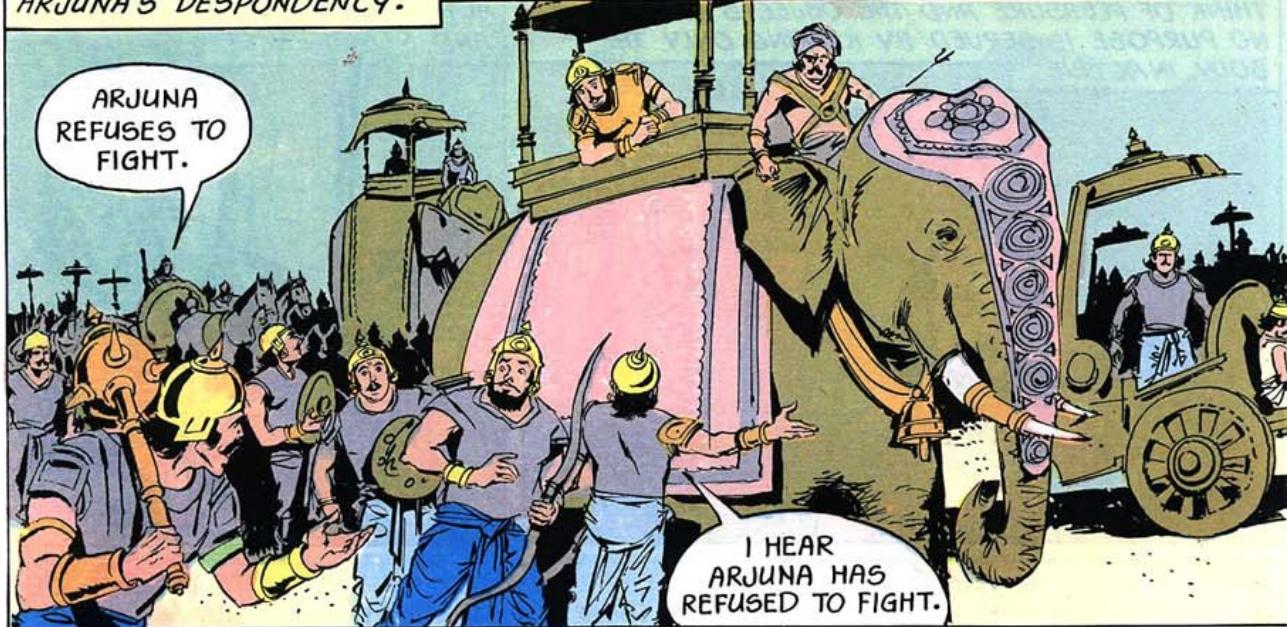
DURYODHANA ALSO WAS PUZZLED.

WHY HAS ARJUNA CAST ASIDE HIS BOW? WHAT IS KRISHNA TELLING HIM?

WE WILL SOON FIND OUT. PERHAPS POOR ARJUNA HAS BECOME PANICKY AT THE THOUGHT OF FACING OUR ARMED MIGHT.



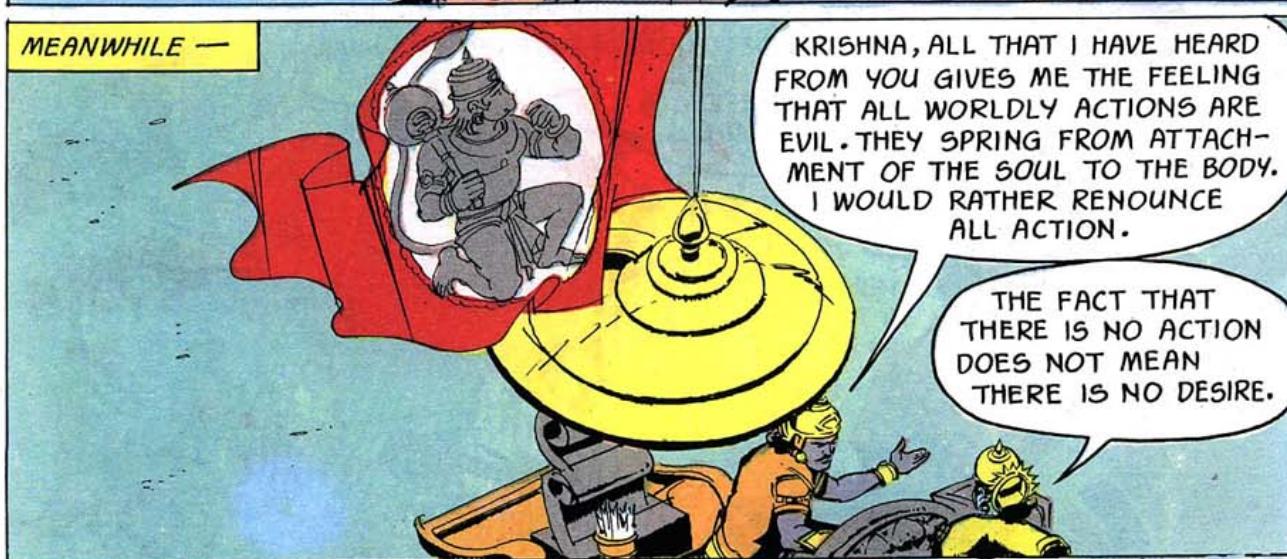
THE KAURAVAS SOON LEARNT THROUGH ONE OF THEIR MESSENGERS ABOUT ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY.



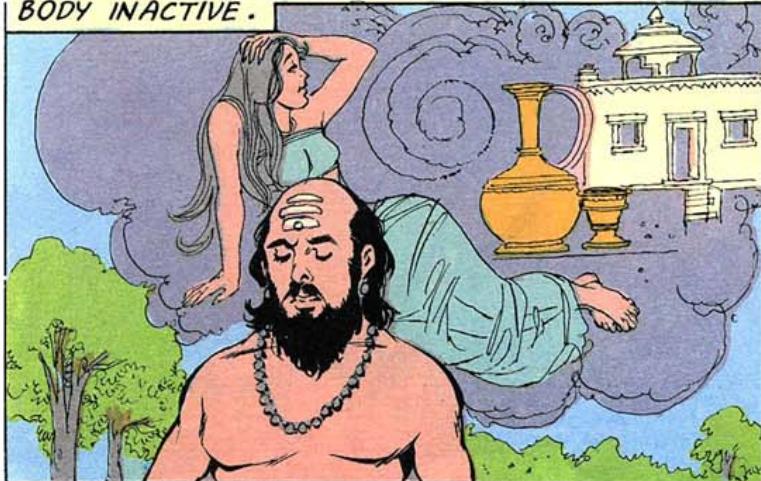
DURYODHANA WAS ELATED.



MEANWHILE —



"A MAN SITTING IN SOLITUDE MAY CONTINUE TO THINK OF PLEASURE AND THE OBJECTS OF PLEASURE. NO PURPOSE IS SERVED BY KEEPING ONLY THE BODY INACTIVE."

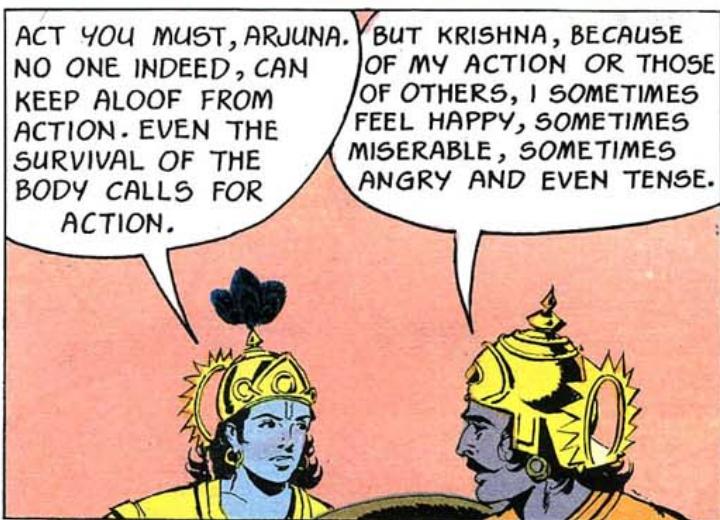


"BESIDES, MEN OFTEN SHUN ACTION BECAUSE OF LETHARGY AND NEGLIGENCE."



ACT YOU MUST, ARJUNA. NO ONE INDEED, CAN KEEP ALOOF FROM ACTION. EVEN THE SURVIVAL OF THE BODY CALLS FOR ACTION.

BUT KRISHNA, BECAUSE OF MY ACTION OR THOSE OF OTHERS, I SOMETIMES FEEL HAPPY, SOMETIMES MISERABLE, SOMETIMES ANGRY AND EVEN TENSE.



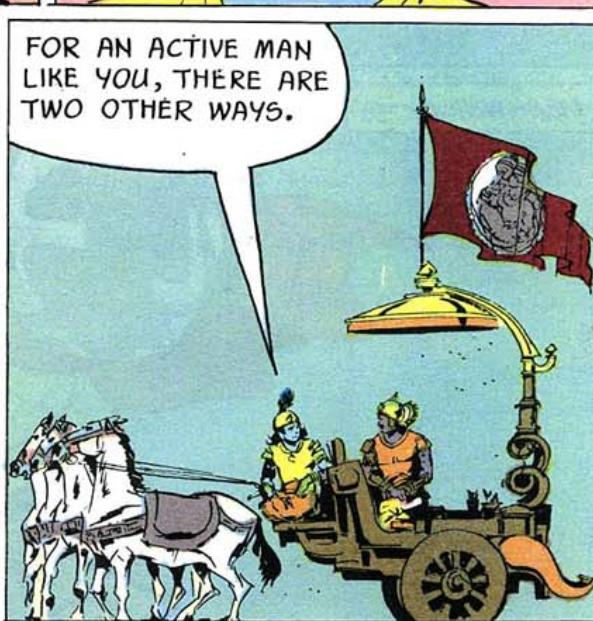
THESE ARE THE USUAL EFFECTS OF ACTION. BUT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS BY WHICH YOU CAN ACT AND YET BE FREE.

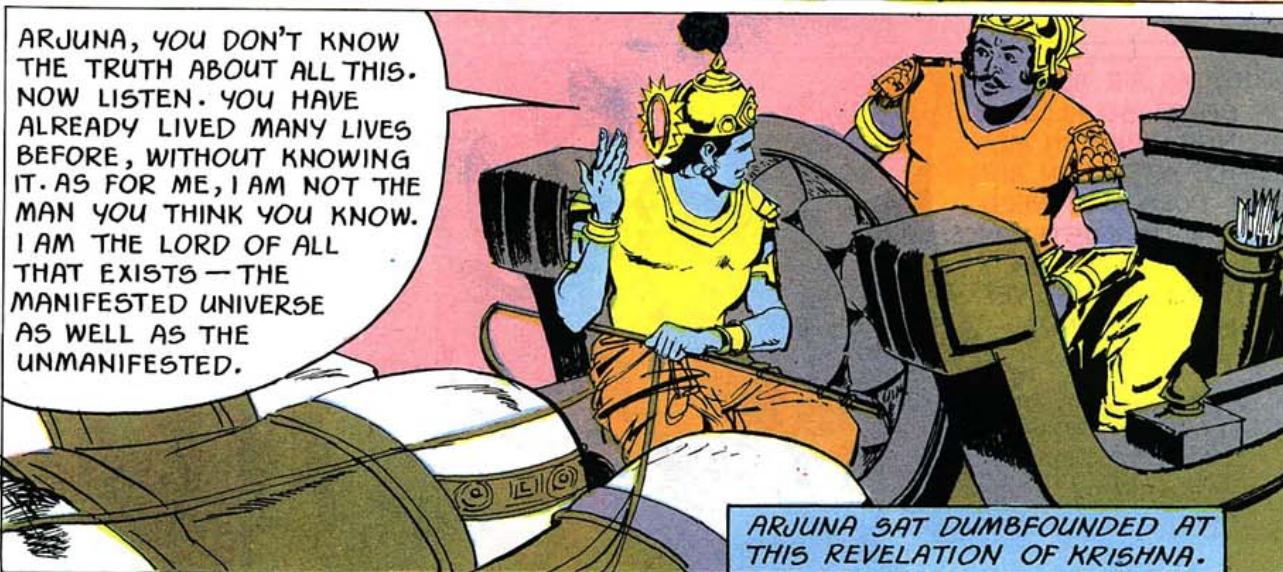
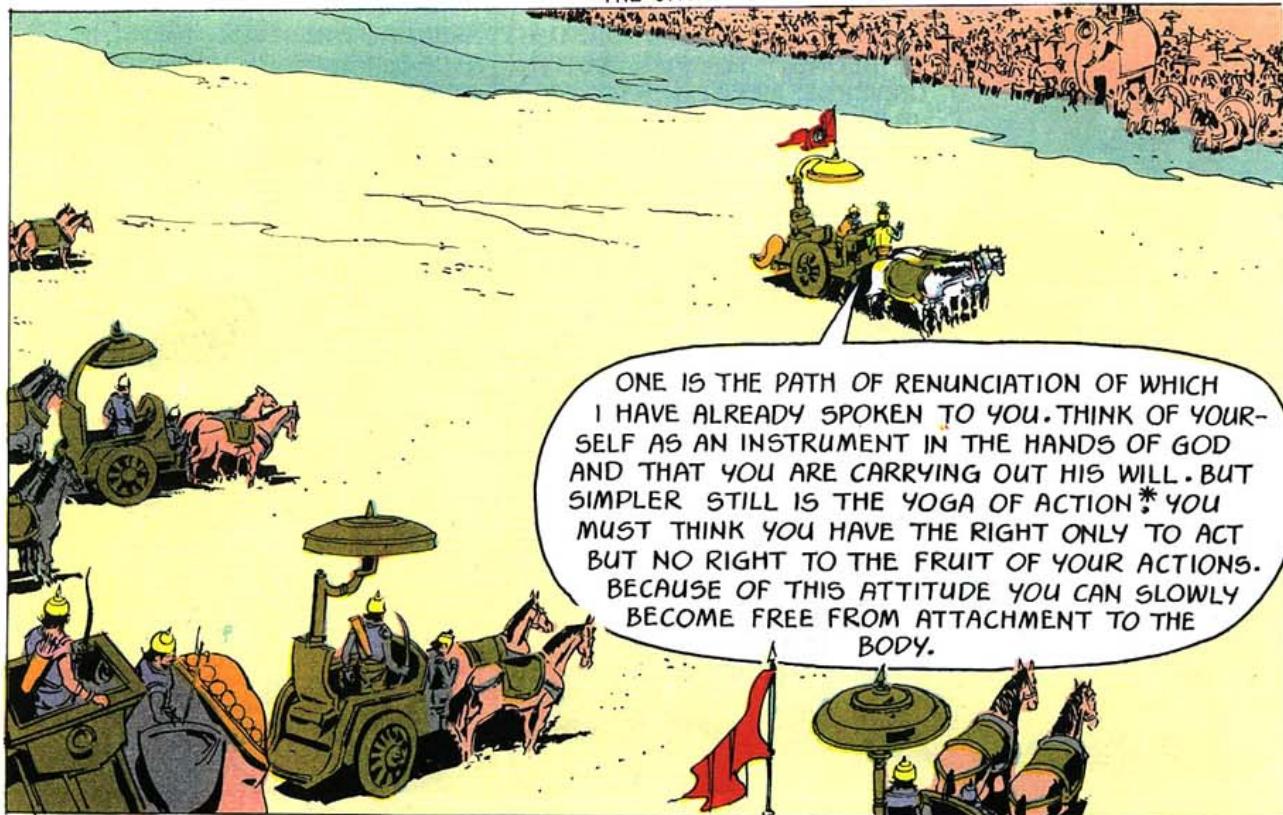


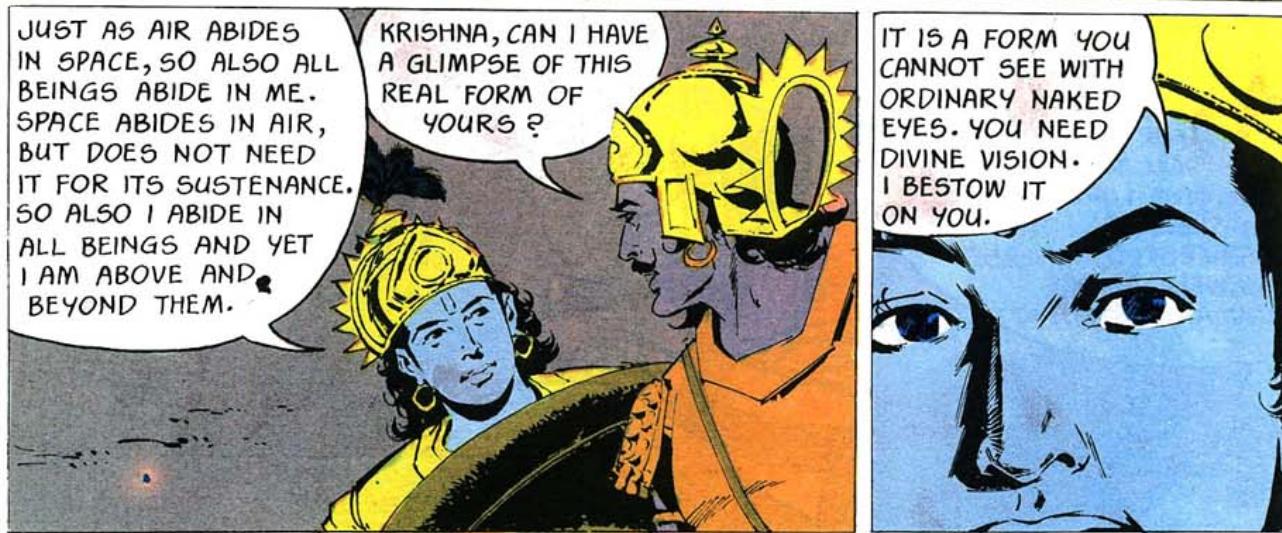
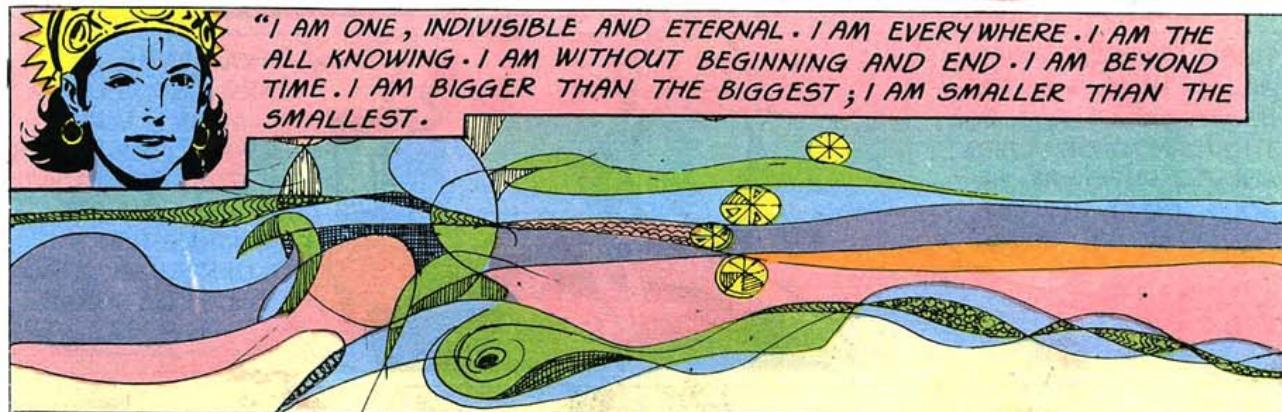
BY YOGA OF INTELLECT, MEDITATION AND DEVOTION, YOU CAN BE FREE FROM THE EFFECTS OF ACTION.



FOR AN ACTIVE MAN LIKE YOU, THERE ARE TWO OTHER WAYS.







AS ARJUNA LOOKED UP, THE LIGHT DAZZLED HIM. HE SAW IN IT ALL BEINGS. IT SEEMED TO HIM AS IF HE WERE LOOKING AT CREATION; THE WHOLE OF CREATION; EVERYTHING IN CREATION; LOOKING AT THE WHOLE OF THE PAST; THE WHOLE OF THE PRESENT AND THE WHOLE OF THE FUTURE - ALL AT ONCE. IT WAS A SIGHT NO MAN HAD SEEN BEFORE. IT STAGGERED AND STUPEFIED HIM. HE WAS AS IF THE OBSERVER OF THE WHOLE DRAMA OF LIFE.



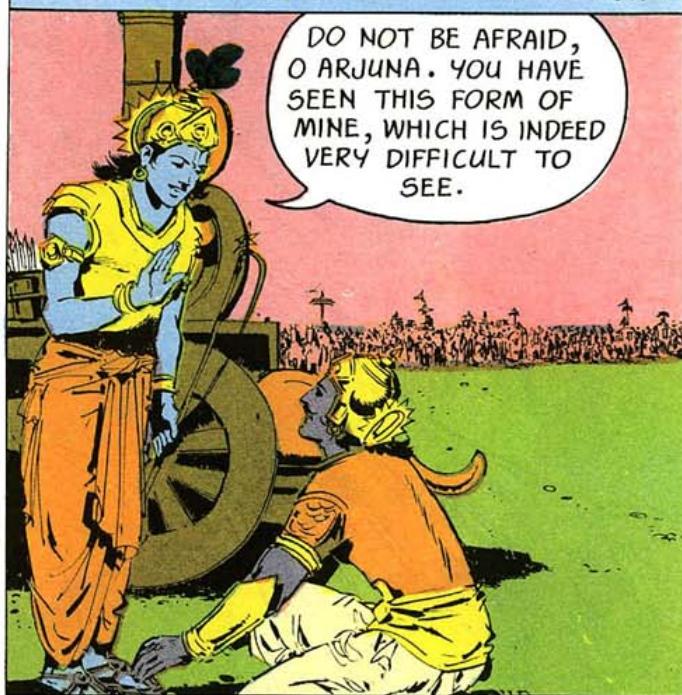
HE ALSO SAW THE TWELVE SUNS, THE MOON AND THE STARS. IT WAS AN ENDLESS PANORAMA. IF THERE WERE ANY LIMITATIONS, THEY WERE NOT IN THE FORM THAT HE BEHELD, BUT IN THE VIEWER —IN HIMSELF. HE SAW ALL CREATURES ON HEAVEN AND ON EARTH IN THAT FORM.



ARJUNA, STRUCK WITH AMAZEMENT, BOWED BEFORE THE LORD.



THE LORD THEN ASSUMED HIS NORMAL FORM.



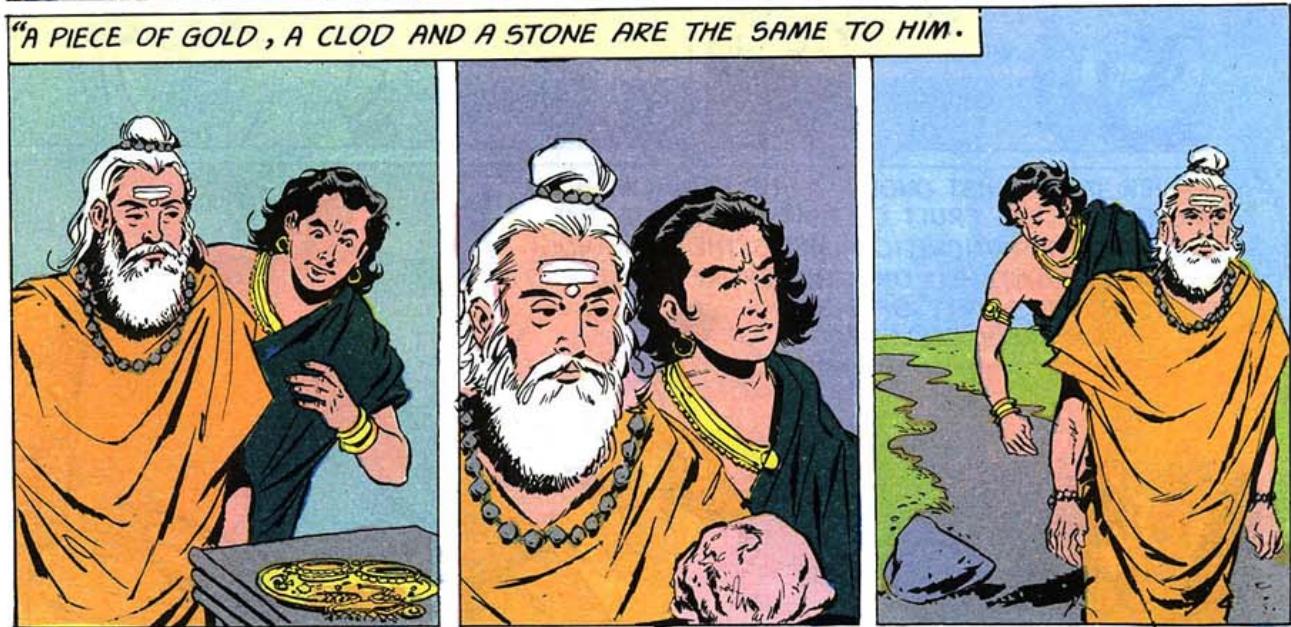
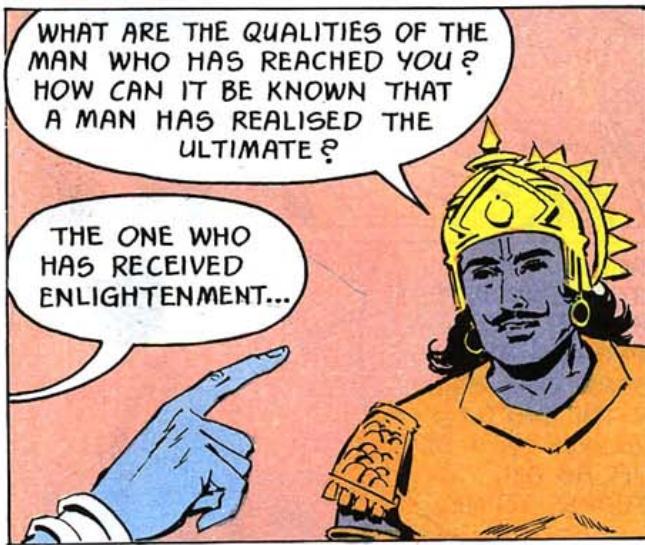
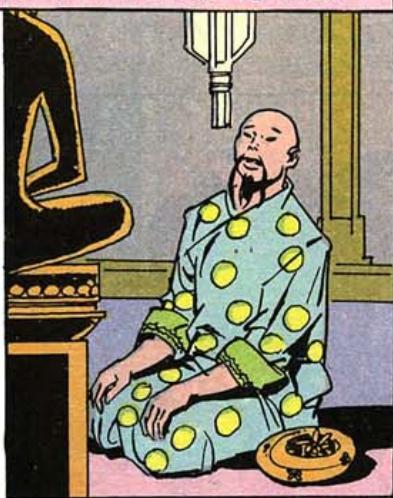
IF YOU ARE PERPLEXED BY THE MANY CONFLICTING THEORIES THAT YOU HAVE HEARD, ABANDONING ALL, SEEK REFUGE IN ME.



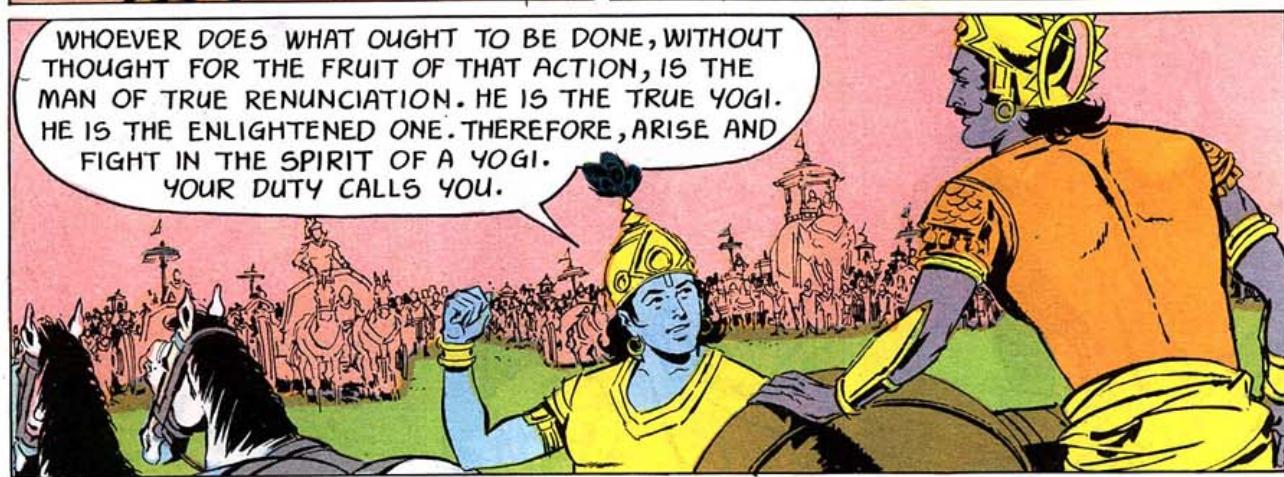
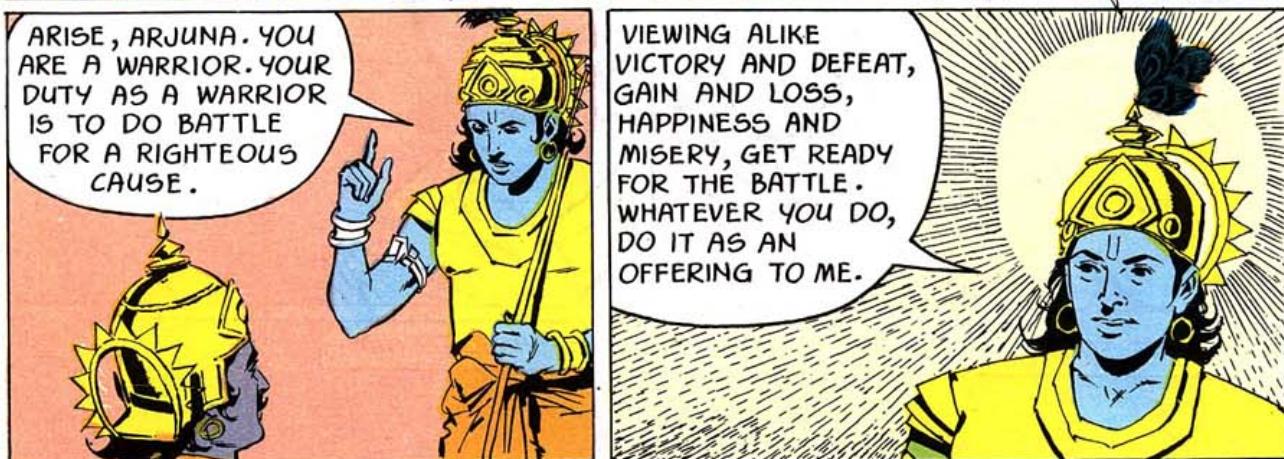
HE WHO WORKS FOR ME, HE WHO LOOKS UPON ME AS HIS GOAL, AND HE WHO WORSHIPS ME, SOON BECOMES FREE FROM ATTACHMENT TO THE BODY AND COMES TO ME.



"MEN OF DIFFERENT FAITHS WORSHIP ME IN DIFFERENT FORMS FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THEIR DESIRES. ULTIMATELY, THEY ALL COME TO ME."



"EVEN SUCH A MAN CONTINUES TO PERFORM HIS ACTIONS. BEHOLD, ARJUNA, I HAVE NOTHING TO SEEK IN THIS WORLD. YET I ENGAGE MYSELF IN CEASELESS ACTIVITY. IF I DON'T, OTHERS, FOLLOWING MY EXAMPLE, MAY SINK INTO INDOLENCE AND BECOME INACTIVE.



ARJUNA NOW SAW CLEARLY WHERE HIS DUTY LAY.

LORD, I STAND HERE WITH ALL MY DOUBTS CLEARED. I WILL DO AS YOU BID.



ARJUNA LIFTED THE GANDIVA BOW...



...AND ITS TWANG WAS HEARD AS FAR AS WHERE YUDHISHTHIRA STOOD.

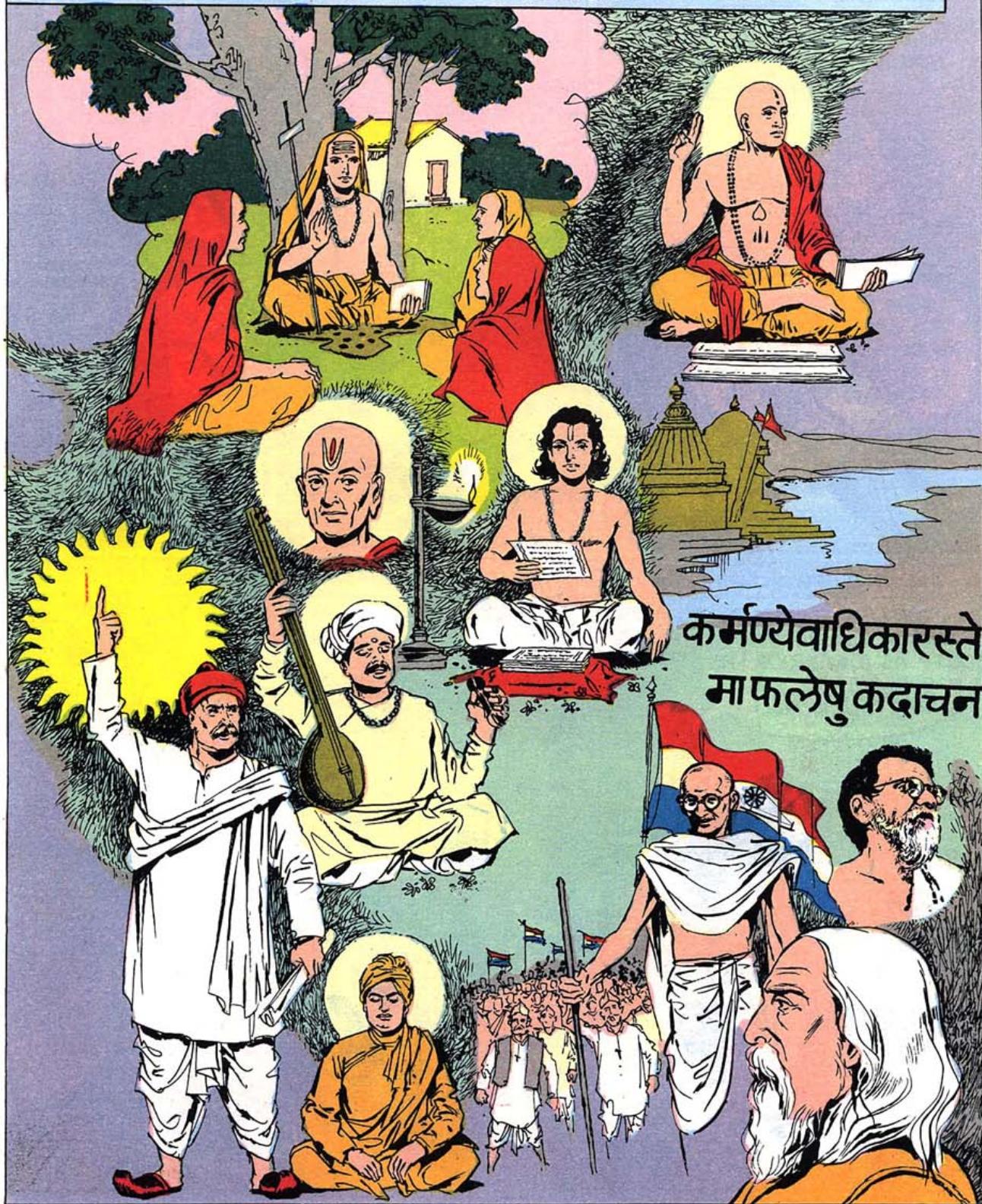
VICTORY BE TO KRISHNA! ARJUNA WILL DO HIS DUTY AS A WARRIOR! HE HAS RESOLVED TO FIGHT! ALL IS WELL.

ARJUNA HAS TAKEN UP ARMS!

ARJUNA HAS RISEN TO FIGHT!



GREAT WAS THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, IN WHICH THE KAURAVAS WERE TOTALLY ANNIHILATED. THE INCIDENTS OF THE KURUKSHETRA BATTLE ARE RECOUNTED IN ALL THEIR GLORIOUS DETAIL TO THIS DAY. BUT MORE MEMORABLE STILL WAS THE DISCOURSE THAT LORD KRISHNA GAVE TO ARJUNA, WHICH HAS INSTRUCTED, ENLIGHTENED AND INSPIRED INDIANS DOWN THE AGES.





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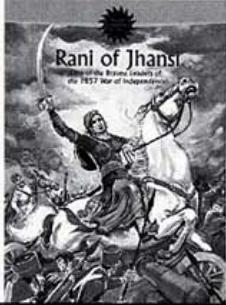
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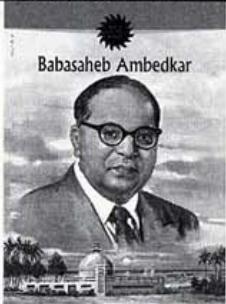
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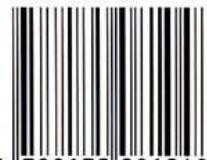
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