



Lion Sage



Merging with Siva for Kids

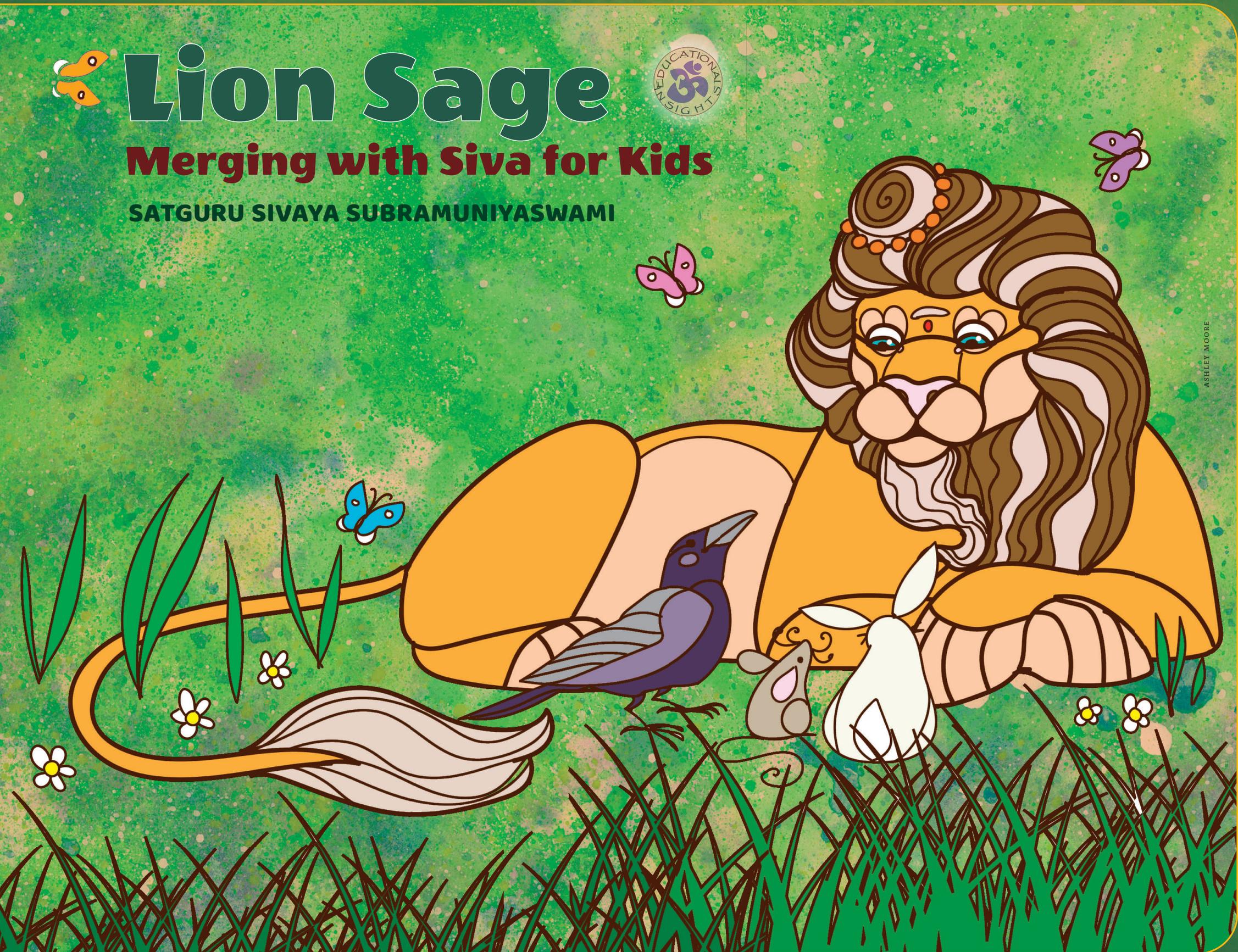
SATGURU SIVAYA SUBRAMUNIASWAMI



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EDUCATIONAL INSIGHT

Excerpts from a magical book for young children about yoga & the mind

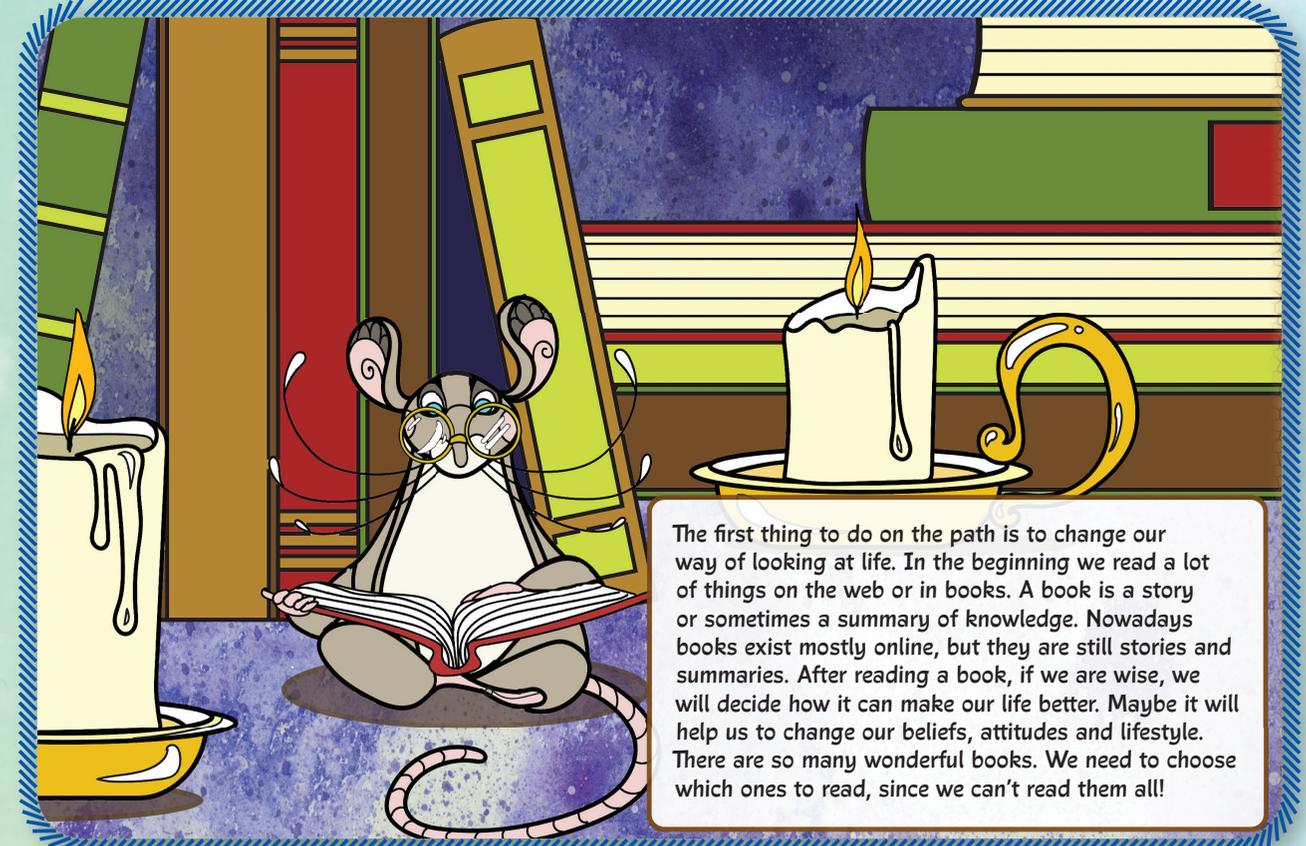
WELCOME TO *LION SAGE*, A SPIRITUAL adventure for children. Adapting an earlier work by Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, called *Mystic Mouse*, the editors of *HINDUISM TODAY* magazine enlisted Ashley Moore in California to redraw all of the art, adding color and her creative ability to tell stories with graphics. Ashley spent many months conceiving the ideas and executing them in the style you will soon discover. The cover (of this magazine and the book) is by Kerala muralist Manikandan Punnakkal. *Lion Sage* is a child's version of the metaphysical masterpiece *Merging with Siva*. It teaches children how to face life's challenges, but most importantly informs them of their true identity. They are not the body which suffers now and then. They are not the emotions that well up in good times and not so good times. They are not the thinking mind. They are light and love; they are an immortal soul on a path of self-discovery. Knowing this one truth can alter a young life forever.

As you take your children through these pages, you are providing a deep comprehension of life and values that few people have. You are teaching them to live in the now and not dwell on the past or worry about the future. You are strengthening their self-esteem, their ability to solve problems and cope with relationships. You are giving them tools to create a happier, less stressful childhood. You are erasing much of the negativity that the outside world rushes to burden them with. And you are endowing them with the basic wisdom of Saiva Siddhanta, the profound spiritual path of South India that the author embraced and lived. And, who knows, maybe you are inspiring yourself a little in the process.

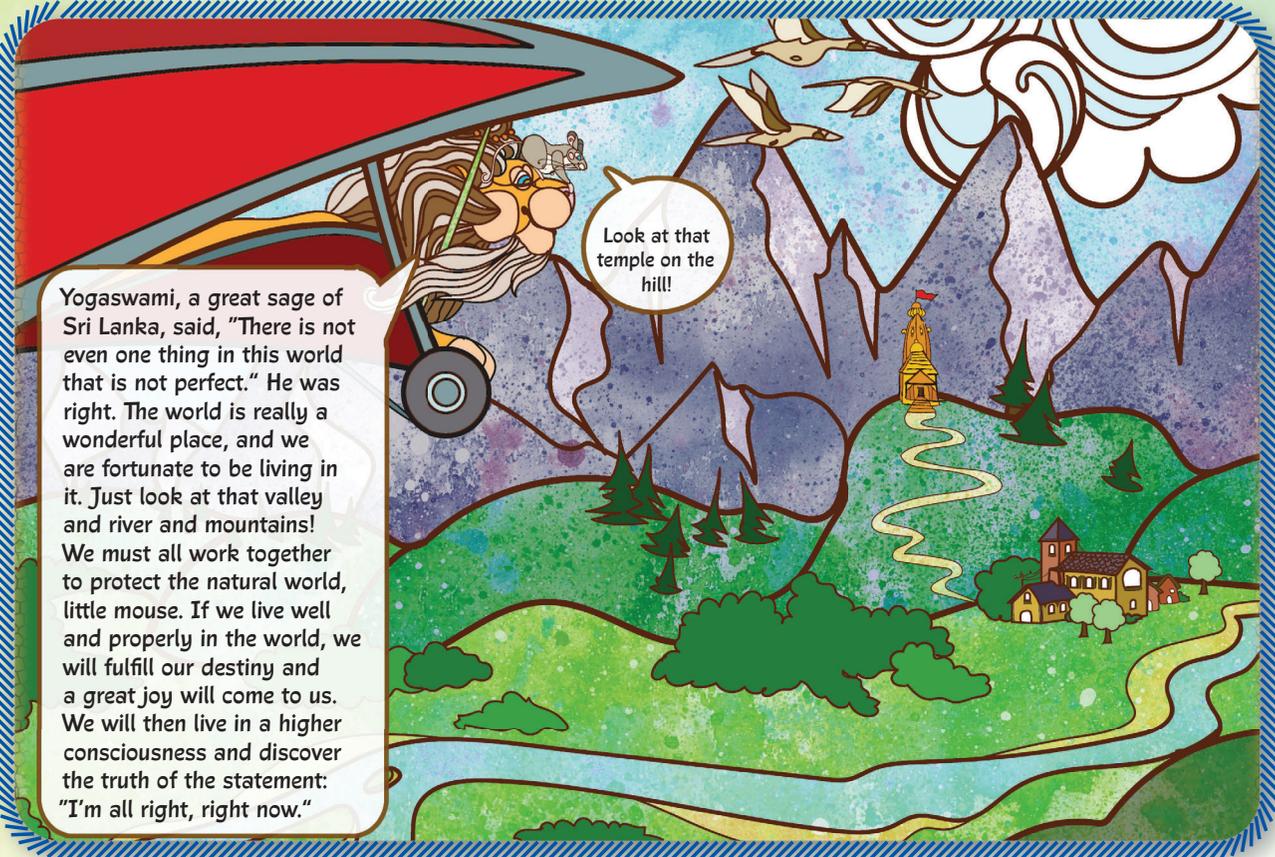
No doubt you, as parent or teacher, will be called upon to answer many questions, to elucidate some of the more obscure concepts. You can also add your own insights and stories for the child. Your anecdotes about the eternal now, or about the importance of letting go will be an essential part of the story of the mouse and the lion. Be the lion when called upon to bring clarity to the adventure. As *Lion Sage* might say, "Are you ready?" These pages contain two of the nineteen chapters of *Lion Sage*. The full book can be downloaded for free at: bit.ly/LionSageBook

I'm All Right, Right Now

Chapter 16, in which Lion Sage teaches our mouse how to be peaceful and unafraid no matter what challenges life may bring

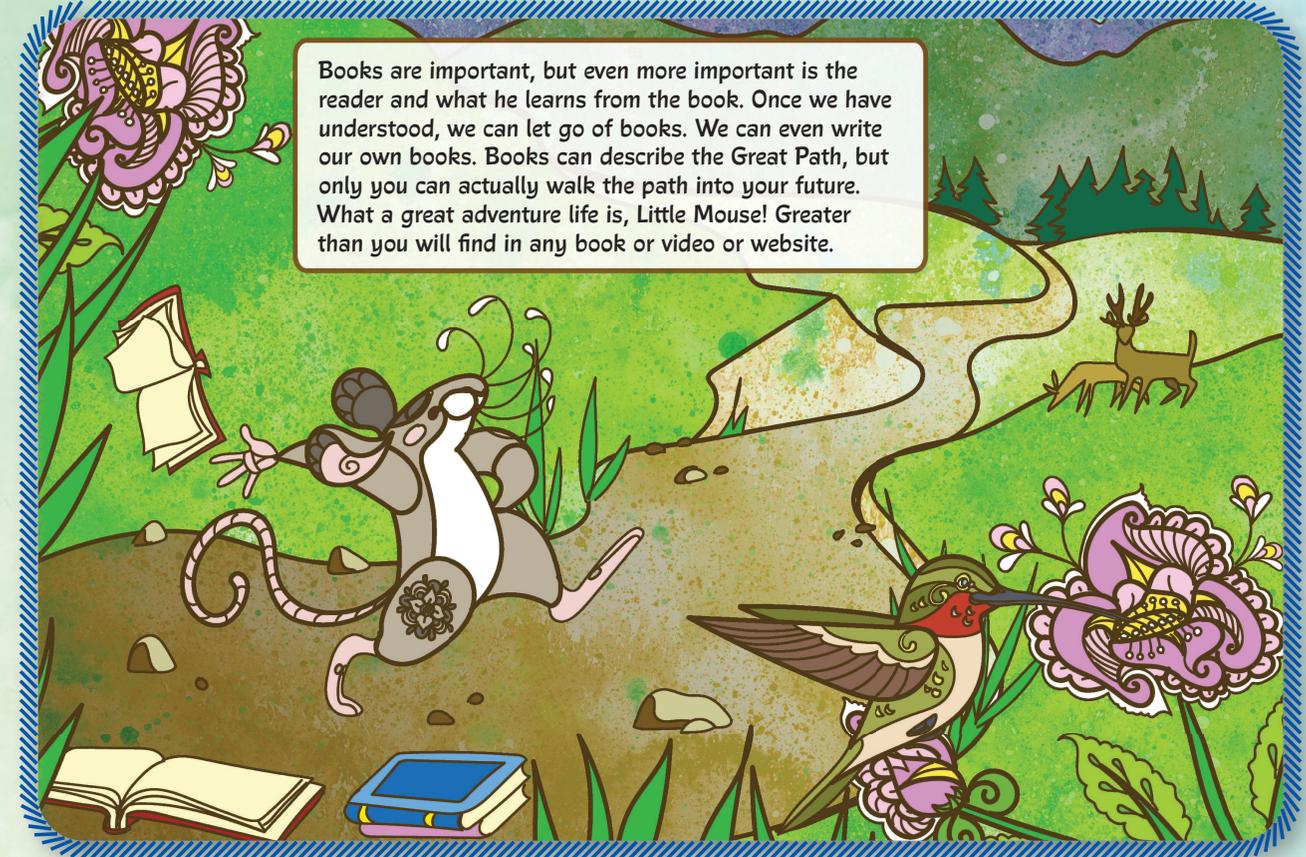


The first thing to do on the path is to change our way of looking at life. In the beginning we read a lot of things on the web or in books. A book is a story or sometimes a summary of knowledge. Nowadays books exist mostly online, but they are still stories and summaries. After reading a book, if we are wise, we will decide how it can make our life better. Maybe it will help us to change our beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle. There are so many wonderful books. We need to choose which ones to read, since we can't read them all!



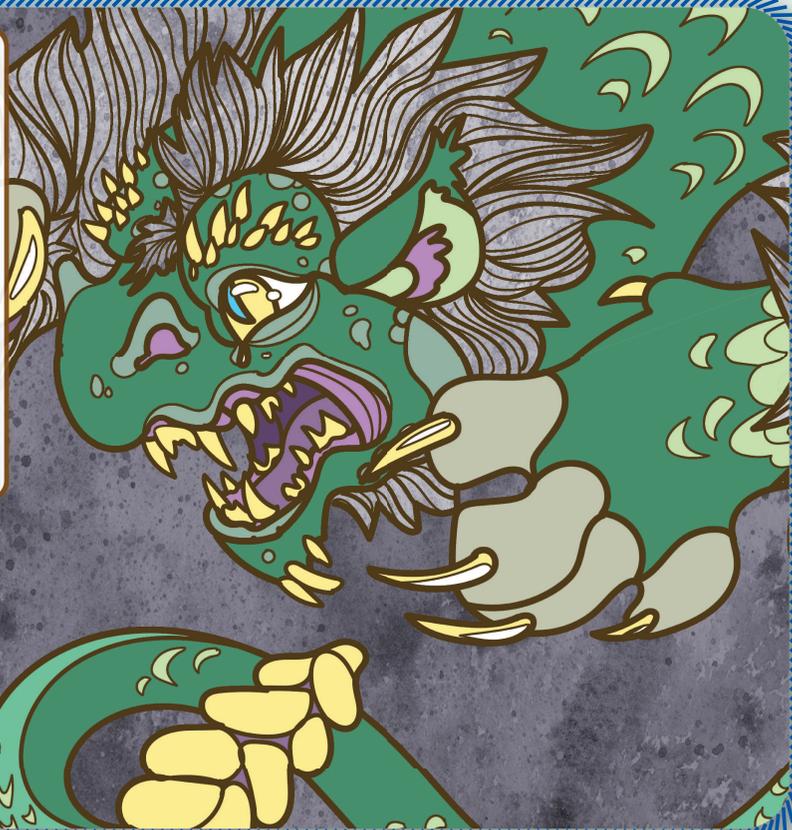
Look at that temple on the hill!

Yogaswami, a great sage of Sri Lanka, said, "There is not even one thing in this world that is not perfect." He was right. The world is really a wonderful place, and we are fortunate to be living in it. Just look at that valley and river and mountains! We must all work together to protect the natural world, little mouse. If we live well and properly in the world, we will fulfill our destiny and a great joy will come to us. We will then live in a higher consciousness and discover the truth of the statement: "I'm all right, right now."

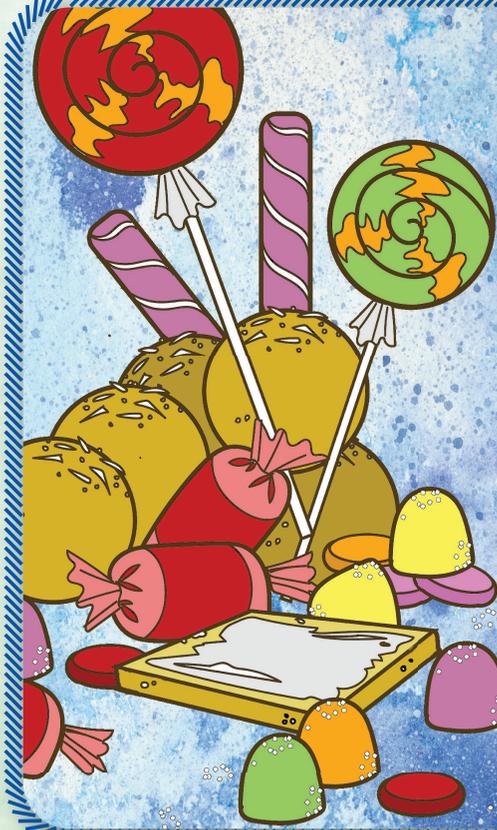


Books are important, but even more important is the reader and what he learns from the book. Once we have understood, we can let go of books. We can even write our own books. Books can describe the Great Path, but only you can actually walk the path into your future. What a great adventure life is, Little Mouse! Greater than you will find in any book or video or website.

Learn to lean on your own spine, little mouse, to be the source of your own strength. Everyone wants to lean on someone else. We lean on our families and teachers. We lean on our friends. For true peace of mind, you must learn to lean on your own spine. This means depending on your own strengths and intelligence to get through experiences. You can start doing this by feeling: "I'm all right, right now," especially in difficult or challenging times. No matter how big the challenge, even this fierce dragon, you are not afraid. You can face anything.



Most people on the path say they want to get rid of their desires. It's an impossible battle. Have you ever tried to get rid of a desire? It's better to adopt new and better desires. The old ones will then go away on their own. So, if you love to eat sugary candy but know that is not healthy, you can desire instead to eat dark chocolate, which is good for you. After a while, your love of pure chocolate replaces the desire for sugary goodies. Learning to use desire positively is an advanced lesson on the path.



Let's look closer at the practice of leaning on our own spine. As we learned earlier, it means depending on yourself. You are strong when you depend on yourself for support. You are wise if you depend on yourself to solve problems and face challenges. You are peaceful if you depend on the life force, or energy, in the spine for security. So you can see it is a valuable thing to learn. Sit for a moment, little mouse. Meditate on the spine and the life force flowing through it to reach every cell of your body. That energy is who you really are!

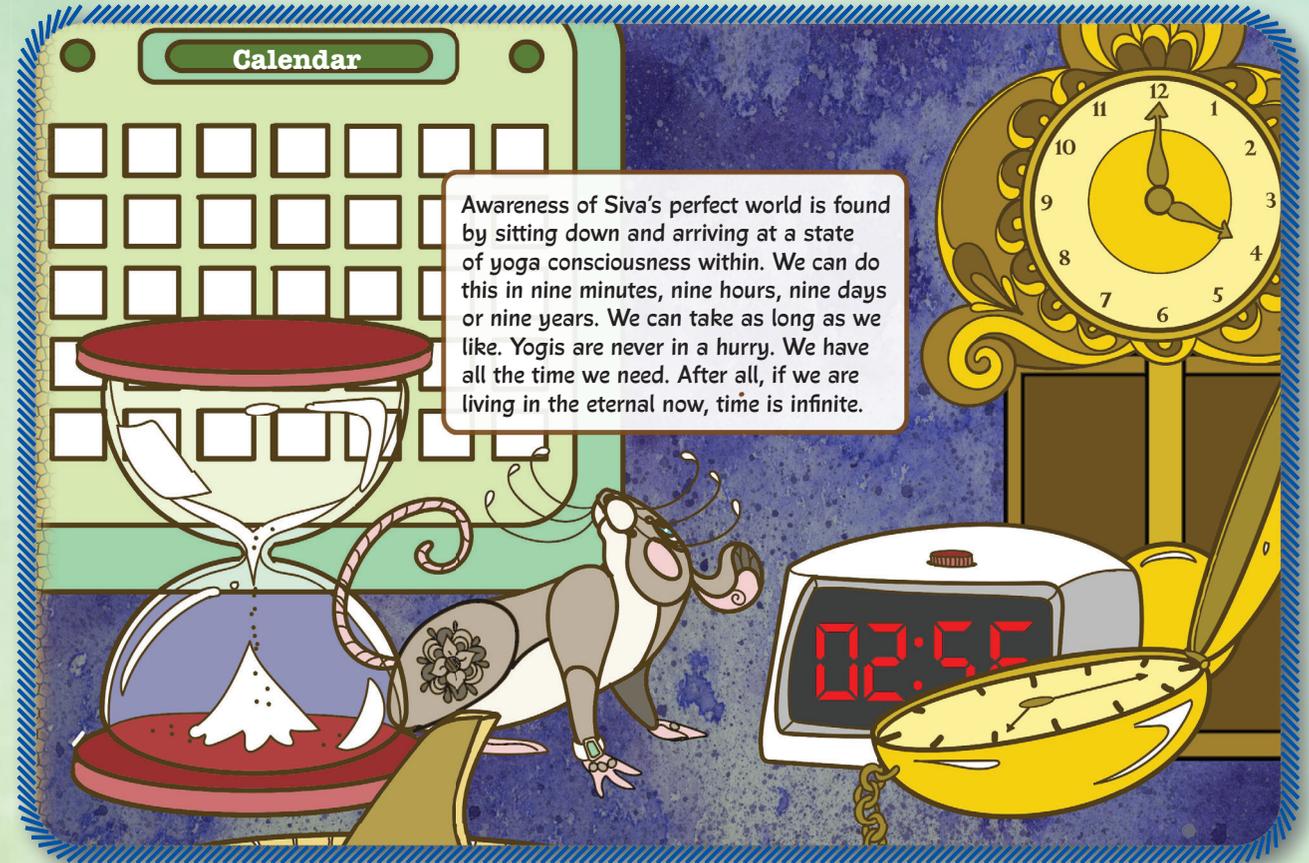


Feeling all right inside oneself and adopting positive desires leads naturally to meditation. When we begin meditation, we must find a happy place and be among good people. Meditation takes us to that quiet and safe place inside. When we meditate, there is no worry, no fear, no confusion. It is helpful to practice the yoga postures for a few minutes before we meditate. This quiets the mind and relaxes us, gets us ready to sit without moving. When we meditate, the body should be oh-so-still. The room should be clean and undisturbed.

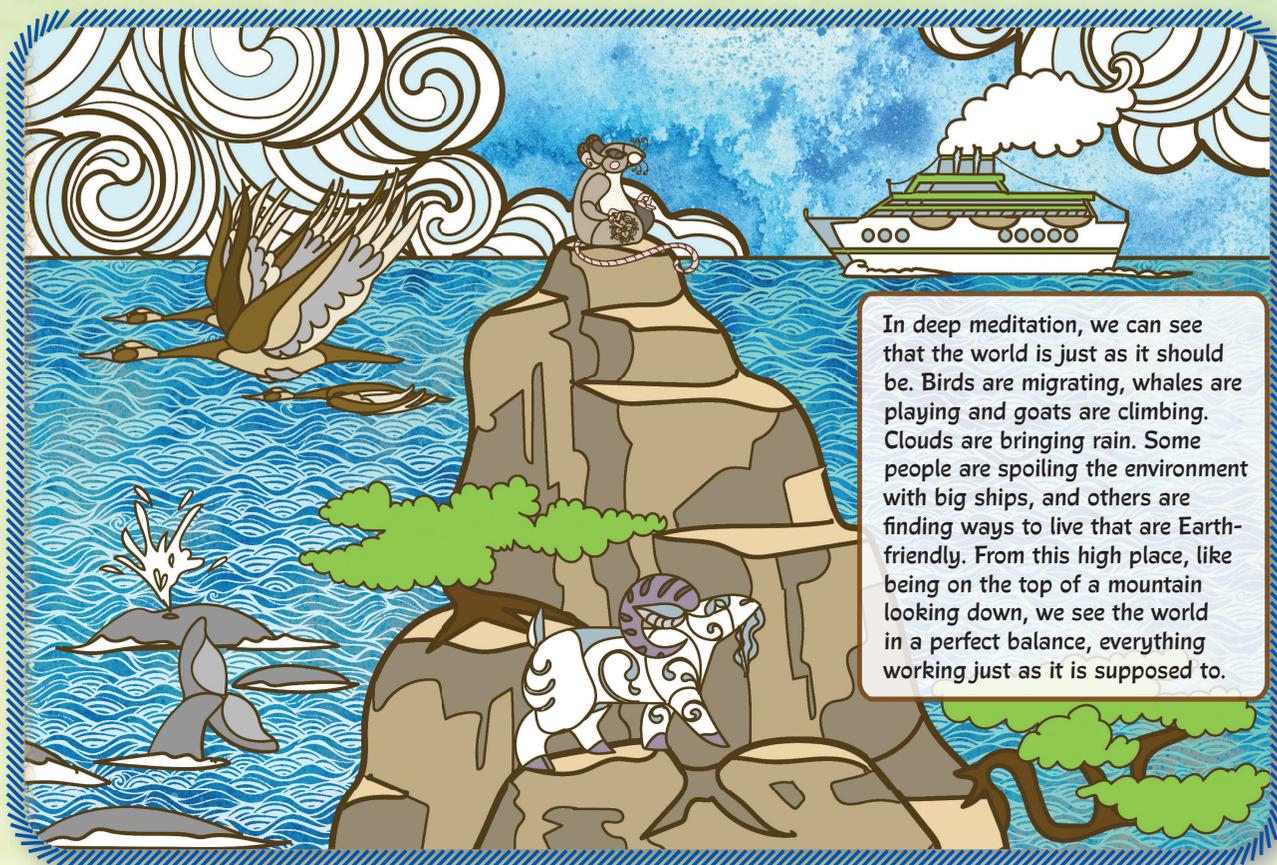




The magical thing is, little mouse, when we meditate, the outside part of our life also becomes better and better and better. The happier we feel inside, the more we experience good things around us. When you come out of your Meditation Station you will see things with new eyes, see things you never saw before. That is one of the powers of meditation, to let us appreciate Siva's perfect world. It turns out that if we find the perfection inside our self, we realize that same perfection is all around us.



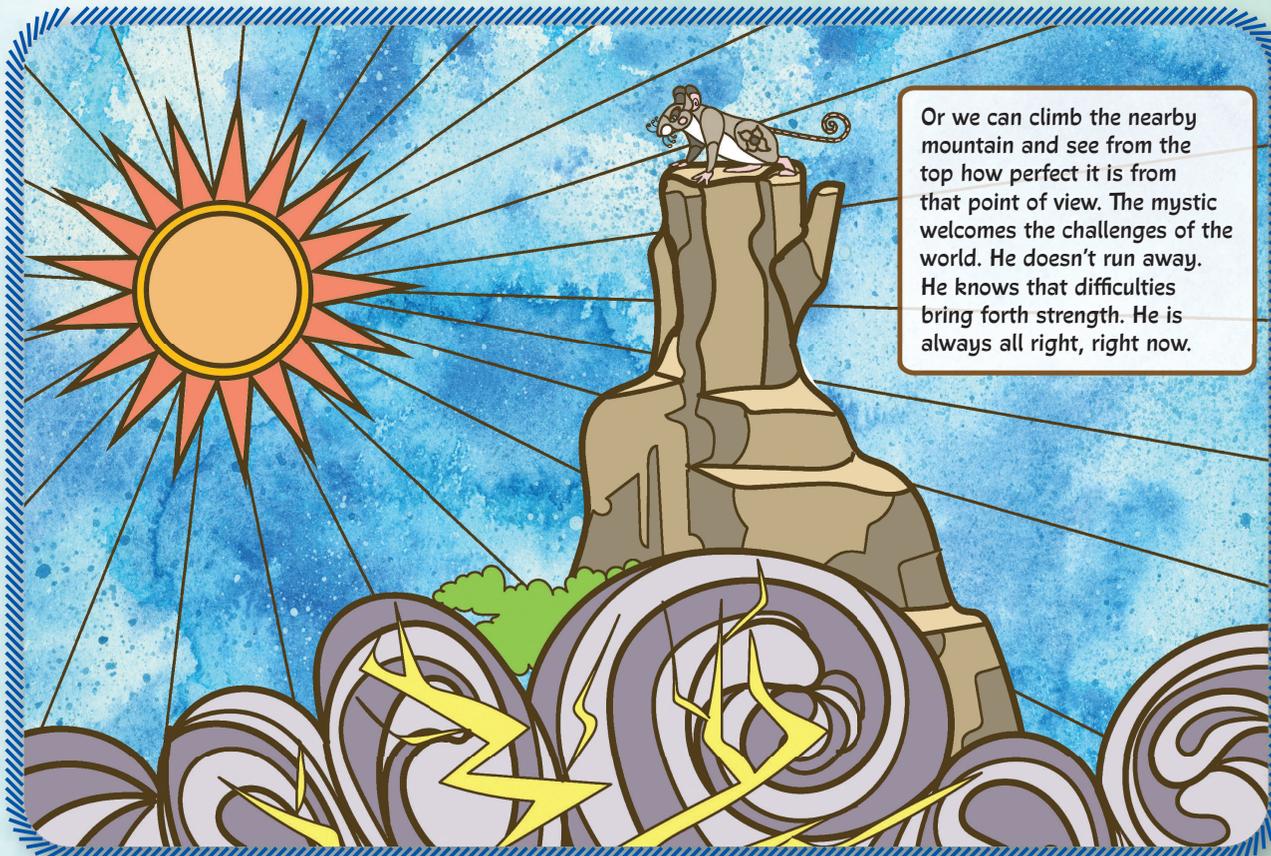
Awareness of Siva's perfect world is found by sitting down and arriving at a state of yoga consciousness within. We can do this in nine minutes, nine hours, nine days or nine years. We can take as long as we like. Yogis are never in a hurry. We have all the time we need. After all, if we are living in the eternal now, time is infinite.



In deep meditation, we can see that the world is just as it should be. Birds are migrating, whales are playing and goats are climbing. Clouds are bringing rain. Some people are spoiling the environment with big ships, and others are finding ways to live that are Earth-friendly. From this high place, like being on the top of a mountain looking down, we see the world in a perfect balance, everything working just as it is supposed to.



A lot of mice live in fear each day. Fear of storms. Fear of failure. Fear of bullies. Fear of the unknown. But yogis know how to control their mind, and they are not afraid of life. In fact, they welcome everything that happens. They know that Siva will protect them, day and night.

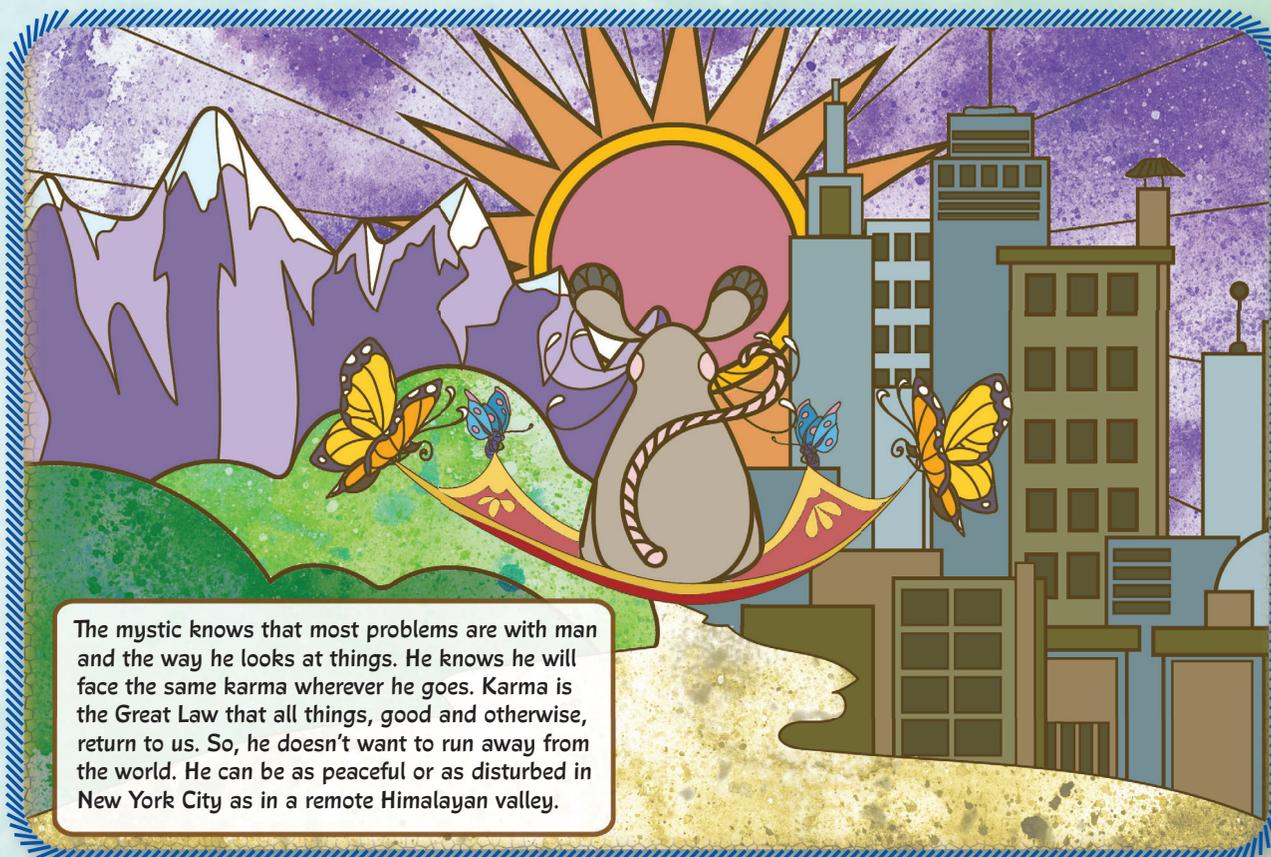


Or we can climb the nearby mountain and see from the top how perfect it is from that point of view. The mystic welcomes the challenges of the world. He doesn't run away. He knows that difficulties bring forth strength. He is always all right, right now.

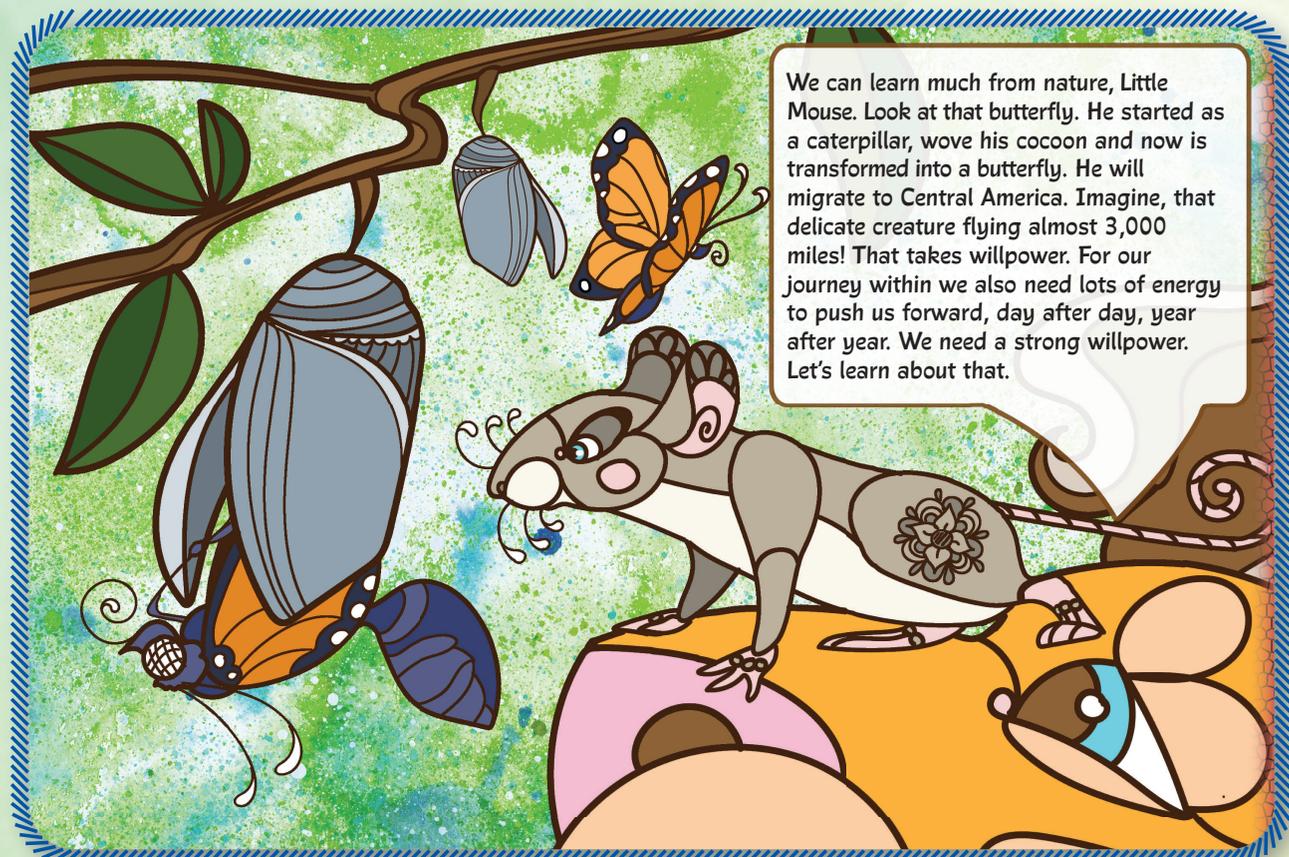
Willpower

Chapter 7, in which Mystic Mouse learns how to use his will, how to breathe properly and how to quiet his mind

SHUTTERSTOCK



The mystic knows that most problems are with man and the way he looks at things. He knows he will face the same karma wherever he goes. Karma is the Great Law that all things, good and otherwise, return to us. So, he doesn't want to run away from the world. He can be as peaceful or as disturbed in New York City as in a remote Himalayan valley.



We can learn much from nature, Little Mouse. Look at that butterfly. He started as a caterpillar, wove his cocoon and now is transformed into a butterfly. He will migrate to Central America. Imagine, that delicate creature flying almost 3,000 miles! That takes willpower. For our journey within we also need lots of energy to push us forward, day after day, year after year. We need a strong willpower. Let's learn about that.

Look at that mother bird in the tree. Day and night she looks after the needs of her chick. That's not an easy job, but she has the determination to do it. That is called willpower. It's what allows us in meditation to concentrate, to focus our energies and not be distracted. This means that if you decide to do something, you do it. You finish everything you begin. Always do a little more than you think you can. If you face a challenge, find a way to overcome it. This strengthens your will. Discover the will within you. It is very important.



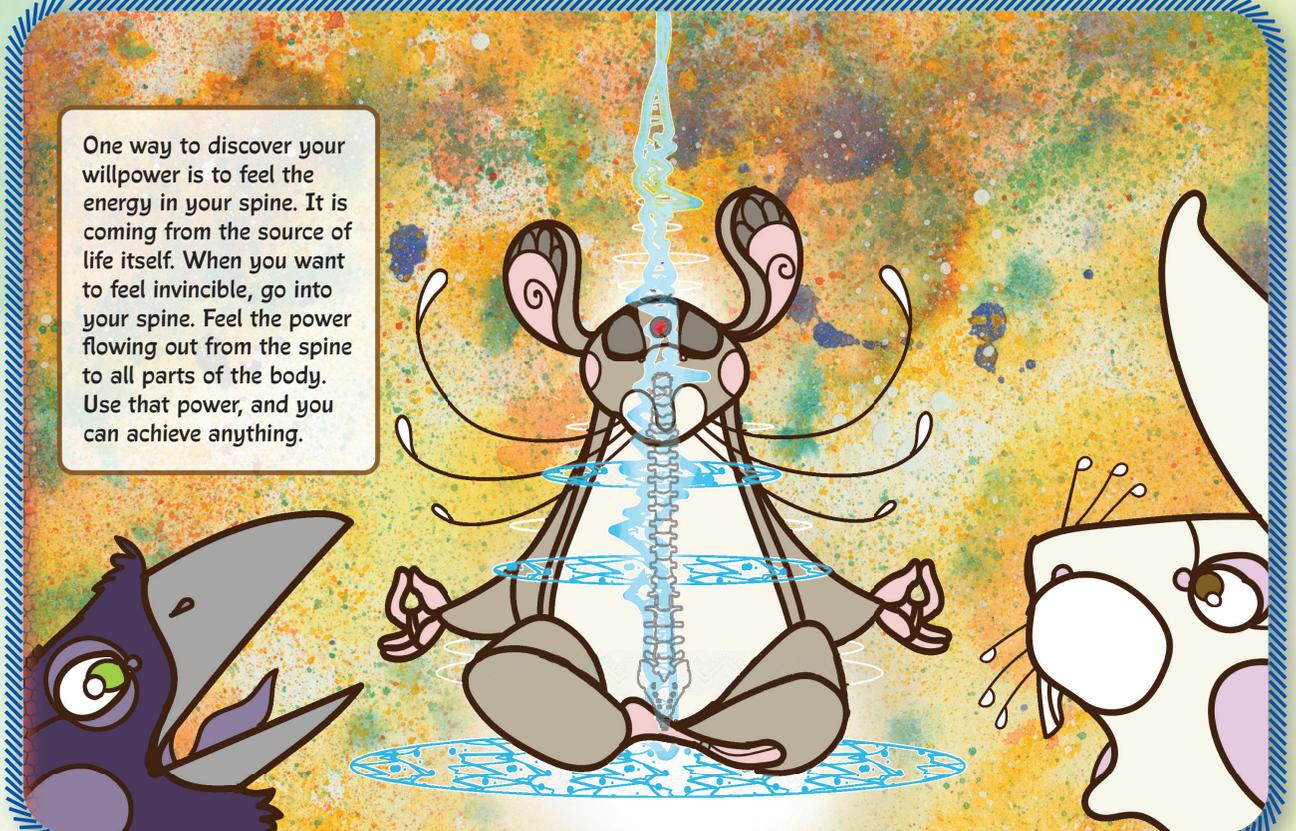
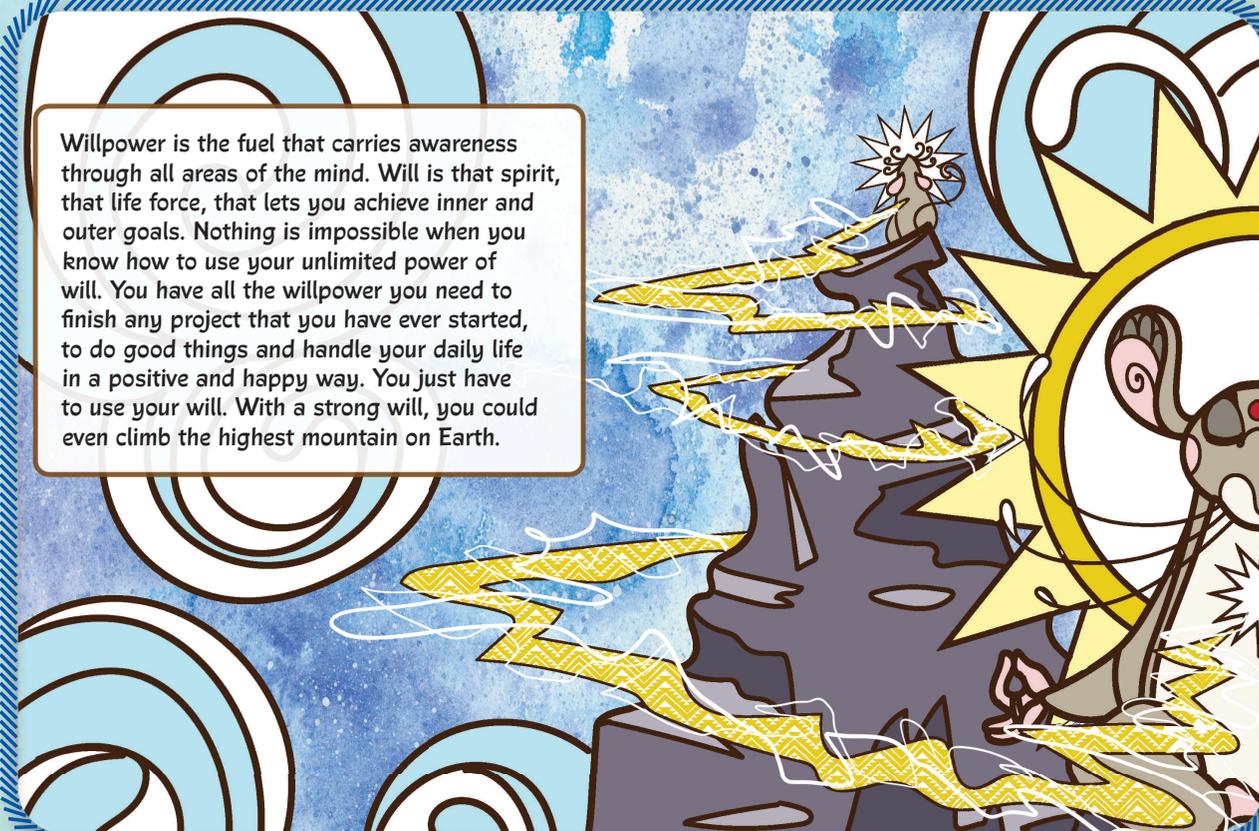
Willpower is like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it gets. If you are collecting sunflower seeds all day, the body gets tired. You want to quit and go home. But if you quit, you and your friends will go hungry, so you keep working until you have enough for dinner.

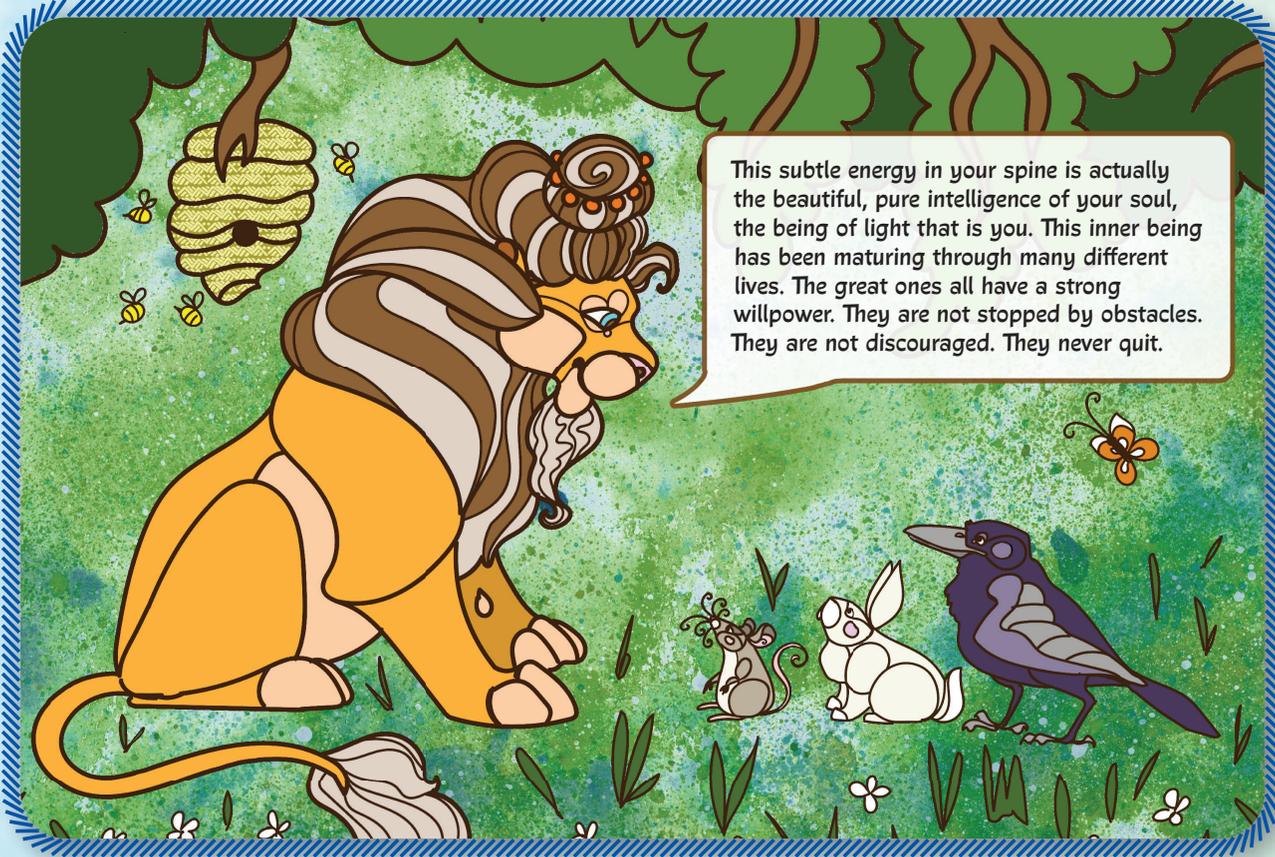
That mouse has a strong will to get things done.



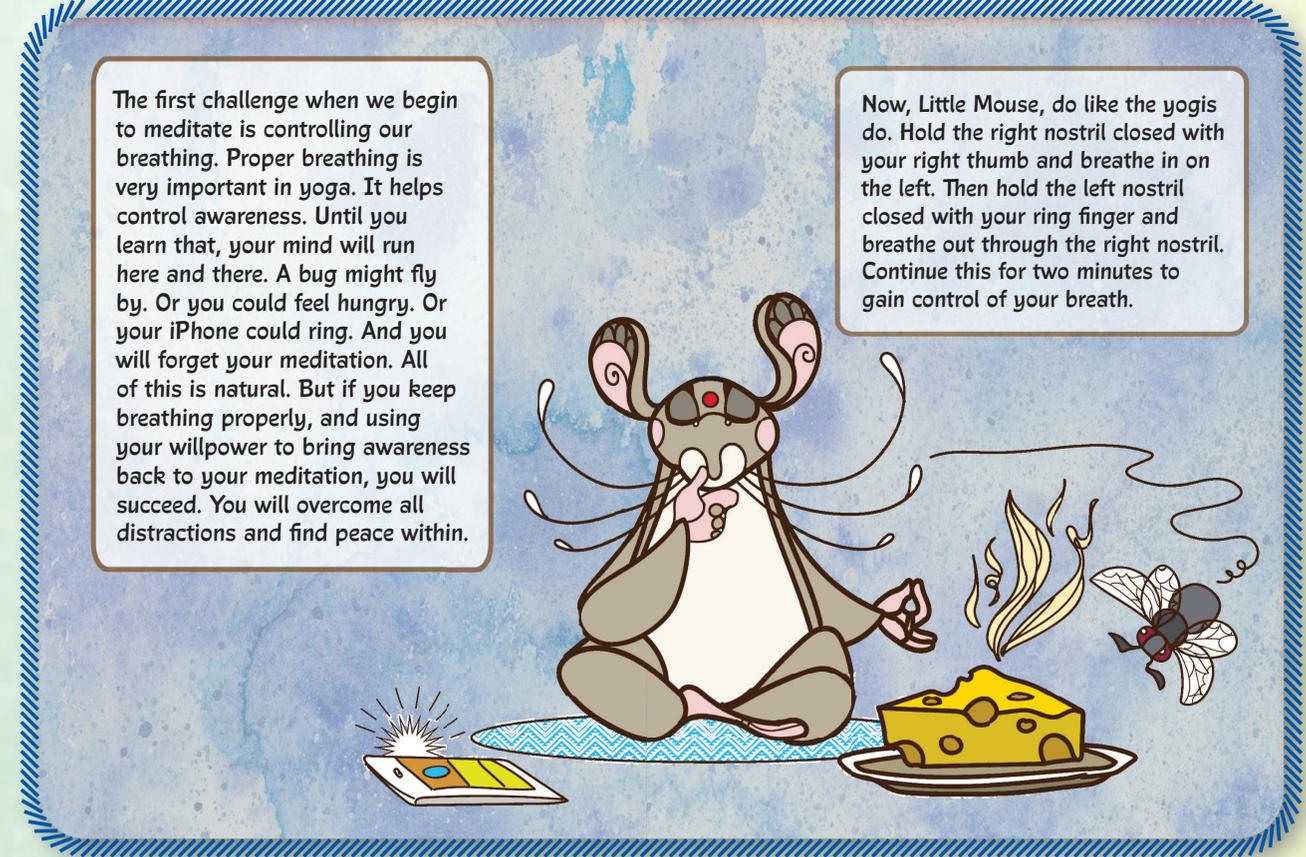
Willpower is the fuel that carries awareness through all areas of the mind. Will is that spirit, that life force, that lets you achieve inner and outer goals. Nothing is impossible when you know how to use your unlimited power of will. You have all the willpower you need to finish any project that you have ever started, to do good things and handle your daily life in a positive and happy way. You just have to use your will. With a strong will, you could even climb the highest mountain on Earth.

One way to discover your willpower is to feel the energy in your spine. It is coming from the source of life itself. When you want to feel invincible, go into your spine. Feel the power flowing out from the spine to all parts of the body. Use that power, and you can achieve anything.





This subtle energy in your spine is actually the beautiful, pure intelligence of your soul, the being of light that is you. This inner being has been maturing through many different lives. The great ones all have a strong willpower. They are not stopped by obstacles. They are not discouraged. They never quit.

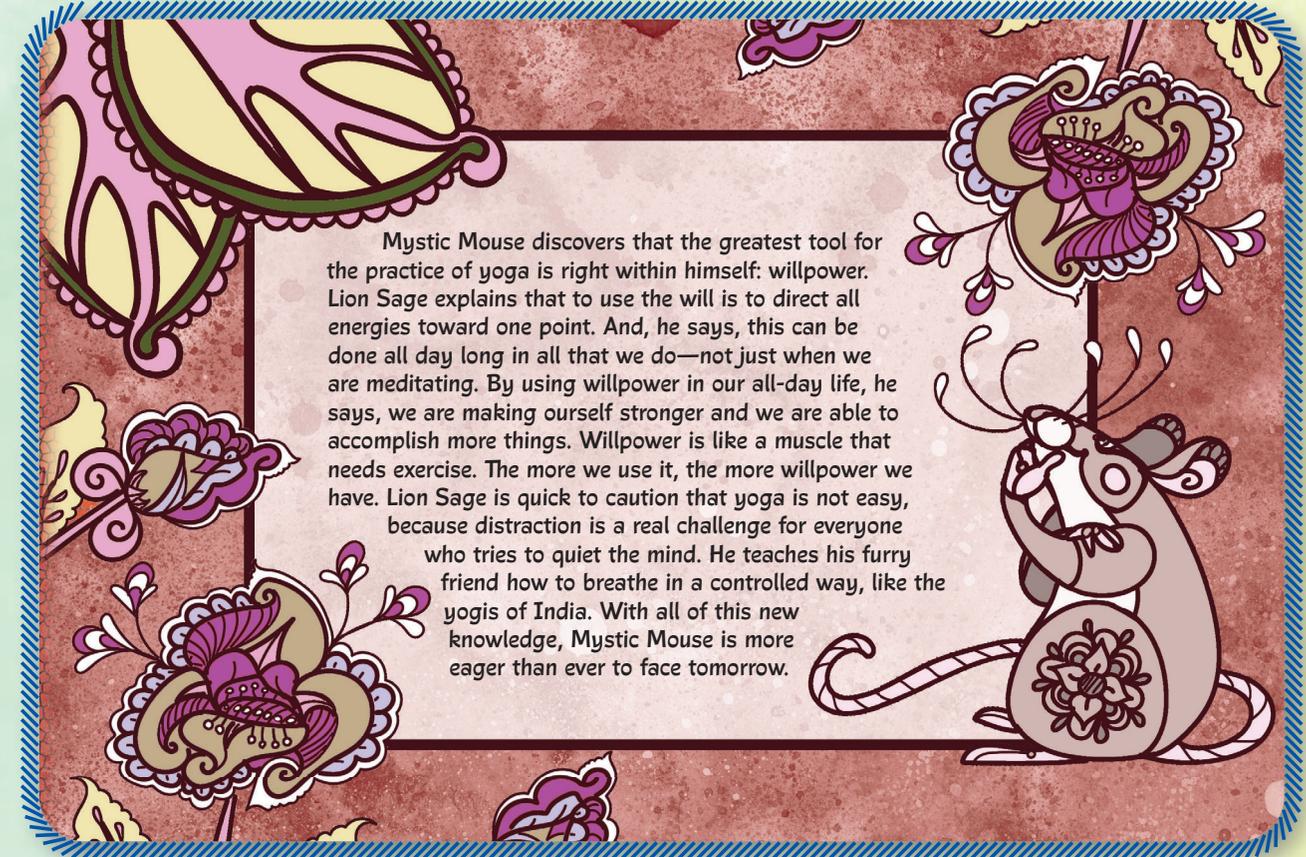


The first challenge when we begin to meditate is controlling our breathing. Proper breathing is very important in yoga. It helps control awareness. Until you learn that, your mind will run here and there. A bug might fly by. Or you could feel hungry. Or your iPhone could ring. And you will forget your meditation. All of this is natural. But if you keep breathing properly, and using your willpower to bring awareness back to your meditation, you will succeed. You will overcome all distractions and find peace within.

Now, Little Mouse, do like the yogis do. Hold the right nostril closed with your right thumb and breathe in on the left. Then hold the left nostril closed with your ring finger and breathe out through the right nostril. Continue this for two minutes to gain control of your breath.



I can see you understand the importance of willpower, Little Mouse. If you want to climb a mountain or reach the guru's grace, you have to be strong. Great things in life require effort, and effort is another way to say willpower.



Mystic Mouse discovers that the greatest tool for the practice of yoga is right within himself: willpower. Lion Sage explains that to use the will is to direct all energies toward one point. And, he says, this can be done all day long in all that we do—not just when we are meditating. By using willpower in our all-day life, he says, we are making ourselves stronger and we are able to accomplish more things. Willpower is like a muscle that needs exercise. The more we use it, the more willpower we have. Lion Sage is quick to caution that yoga is not easy, because distraction is a real challenge for everyone who tries to quiet the mind. He teaches his furry friend how to breathe in a controlled way, like the yogis of India. With all of this new knowledge, Mystic Mouse is more eager than ever to face tomorrow.