

KING NAHUSHA'S CURSE

Once there lived a very kind and generous king named Nahusha. He was so good that, once, when the king of the gods, Indra went on a vacation, the gods asked Nahusha to be their king. Nahusha humbly agreed. The gods were happy. They took him to heaven to be their king.

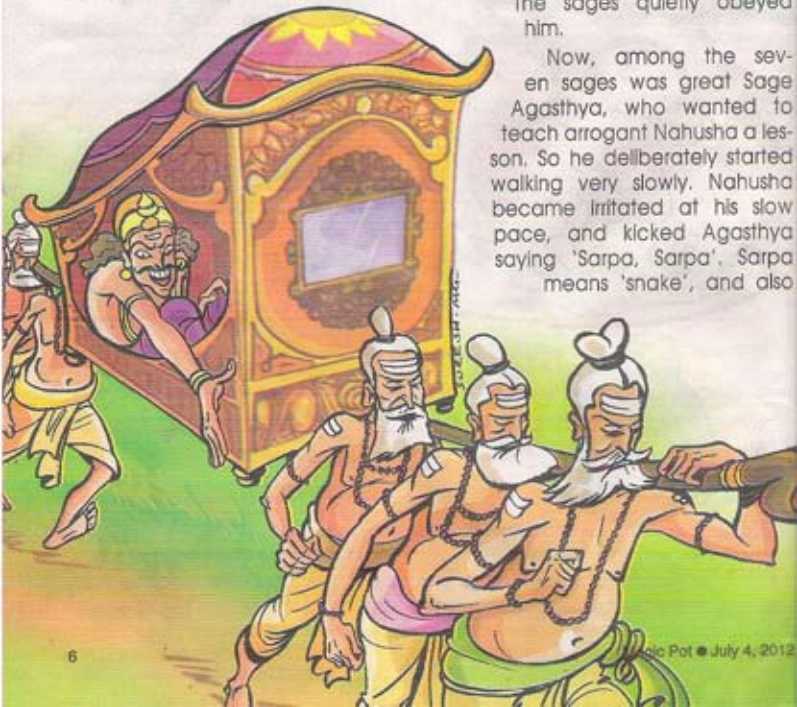


Dear Parents and Teachers, Children should be made familiar with tales from the Puranas and legends. This is a famous story from our mythology. The story has been edited keeping in mind the age of the readers.

At first, Nahusha ruled heaven very justly. But as the days passed, he became very arrogant and proud. He insulted the gods and sages residing in heaven. He became so arrogant that one day, he asked the seven great sages, living in heaven, to carry him on a palanquin to the garden.

The sages quietly obeyed him.

Now, among the seven sages was great Sage Agasthya, who wanted to teach arrogant Nahusha a lesson. So he deliberately started walking very slowly. Nahusha became irritated at his slow pace, and kicked Agasthya saying 'Sarpa, Sarpa'. Sarpa means 'snake', and also



'speed'. Sage Agasthya was angry. He cursed Nahusha that he would become a huge python and live in the forest on earth.

King Nahusha realized how foolish he had been. He asked Sage Agasthya to forgive him. Sage Agasthya replied that Nahusha would be freed from his curse by Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas. Years passed, and King Nahusha, in the form of a snake, waited for Yudhishtira.

Then one day, Bheema, the second of the Pandavas, came to the forest, and got caught by Nahusha. Bheema was very strong, but could not escape from the snake. After a while, Yudhishtira, Bheema's brother, came looking for him in the forest. He saw the snake and asked "Oh, great snake, what do you want? If you are hungry, eat me and release my brother."

Then Nahusha, in his snake's form, said, "Yudhishtira, tell me the meaning of Dharma. If you answer correctly, I will free your brother". Yudhishtira answered, "Being good, kind, truthful and caring is Dharma". Nahusha became human again, as Yudhishtira answered his question. He thanked Yudhishtira, and went back to heaven.

● ROHINI CHINTHA

