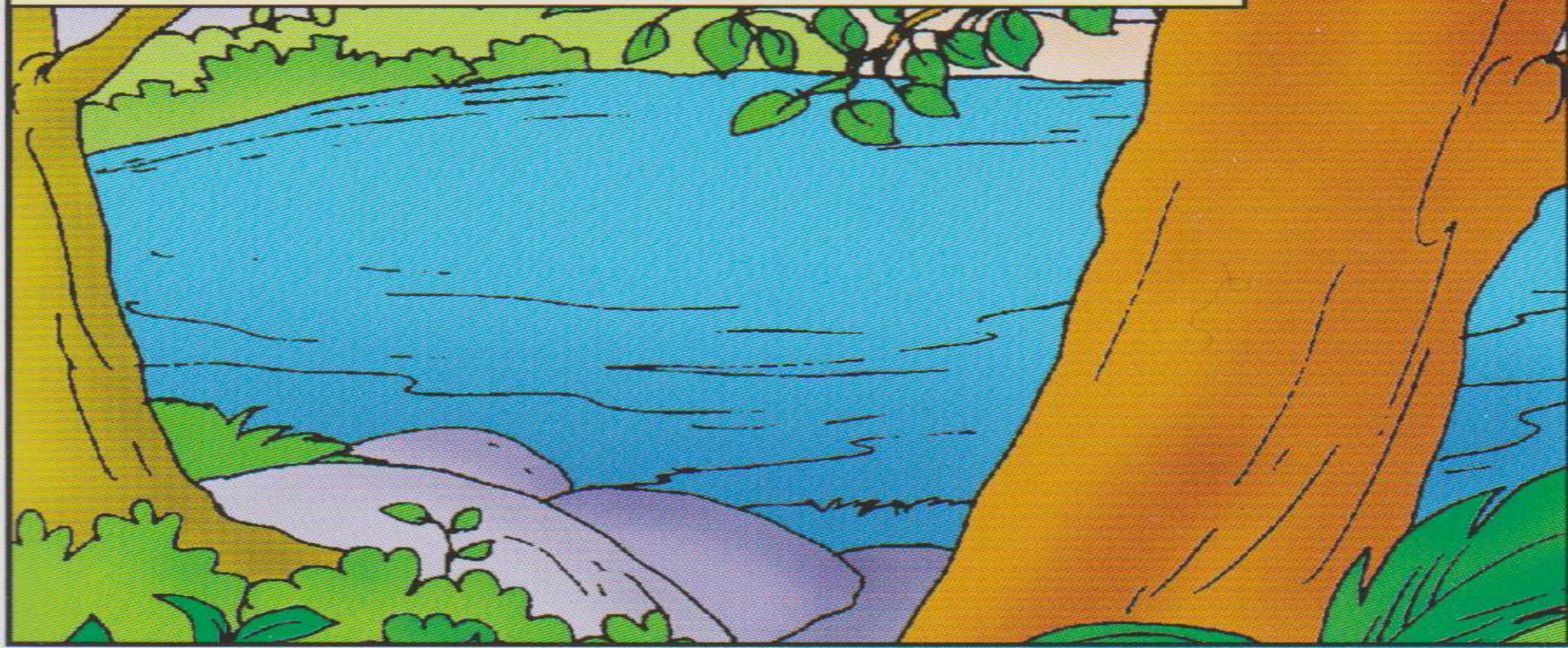
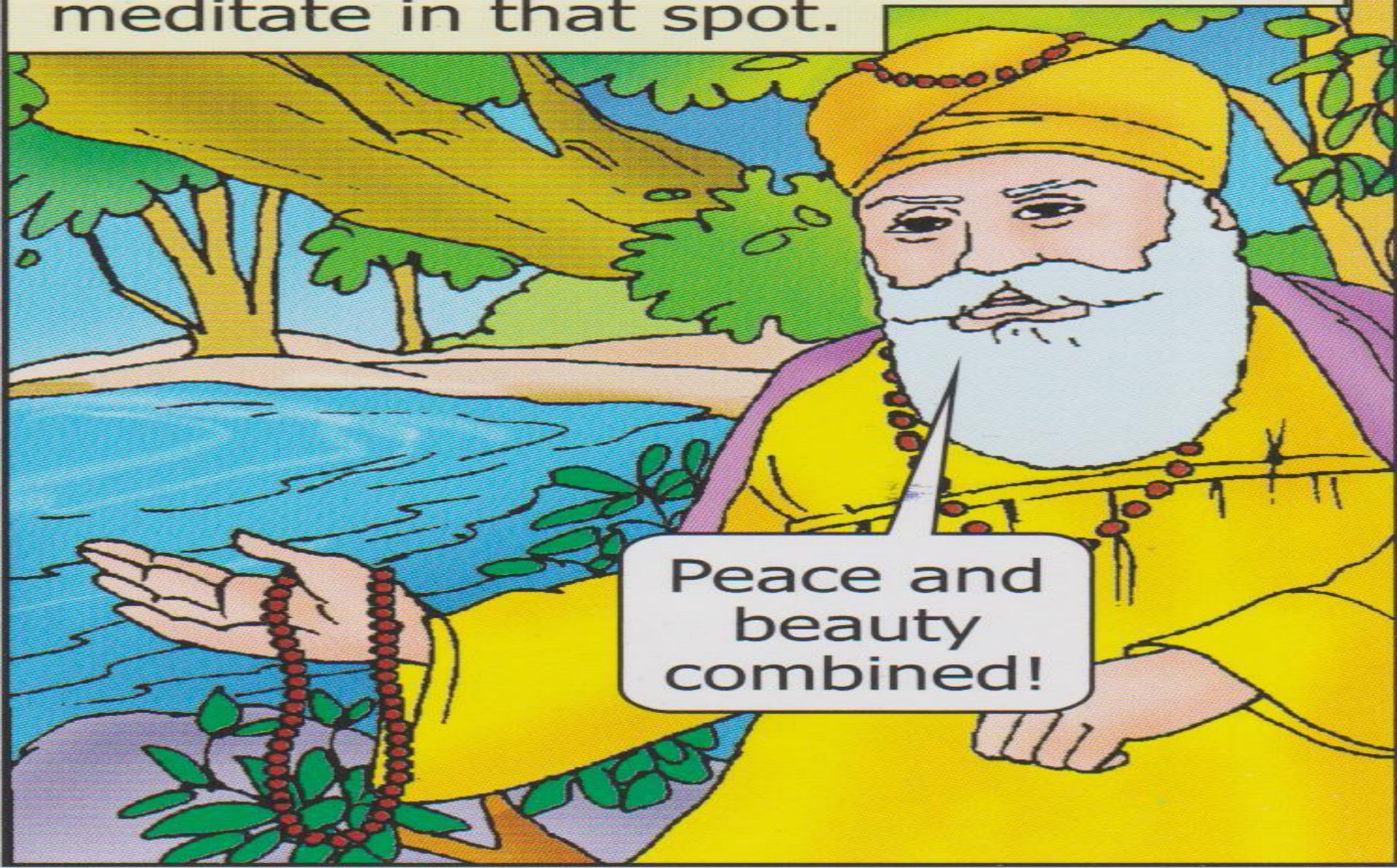


GOLDEN TEMPLE

It all started at a quiet lake surrounded by beautiful trees. A place for meditation and peace, where Buddha himself is said to have spent time in contemplation.

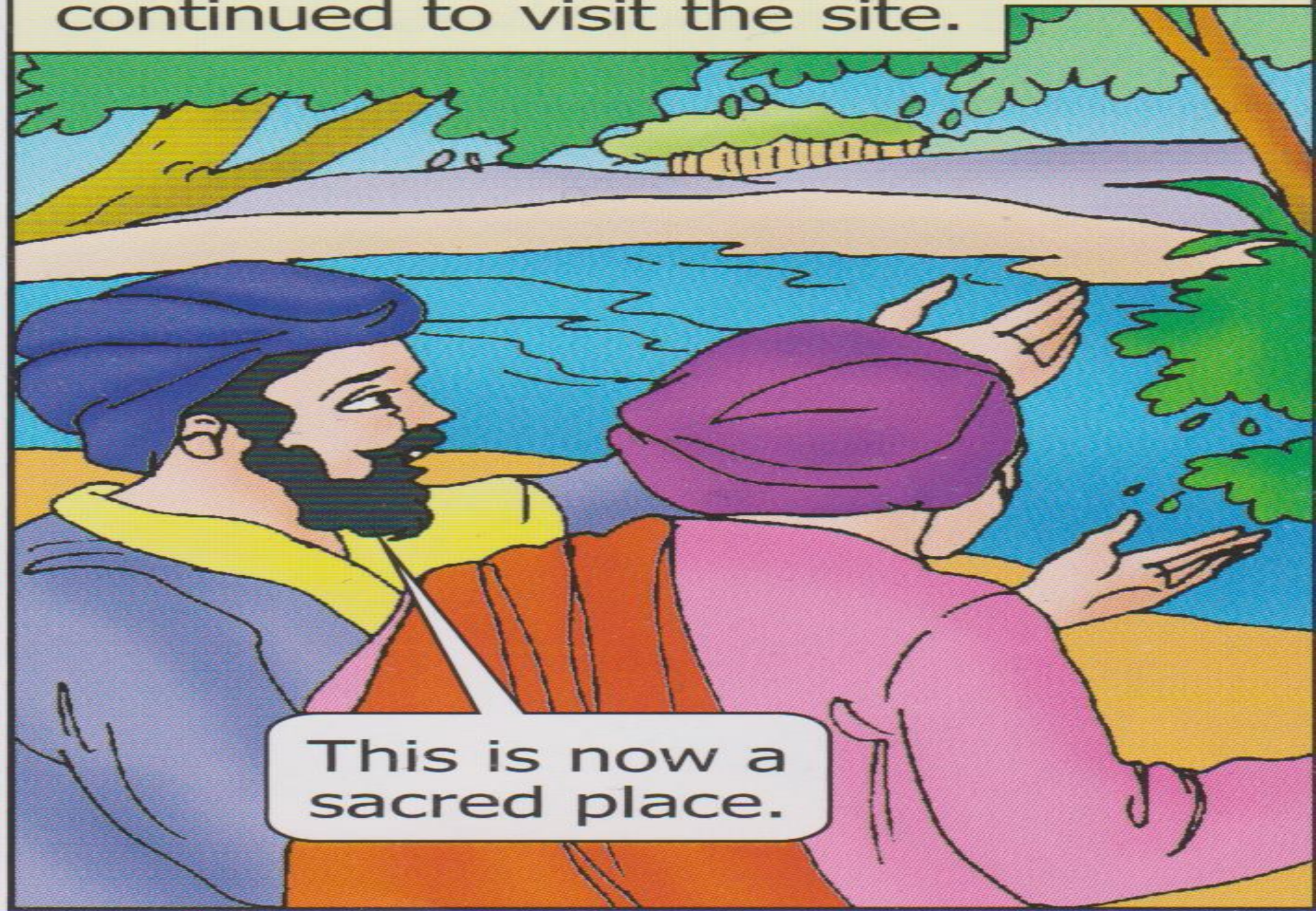


Two thousand years later, another saint, Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, came to live and meditate in that spot.



Peace and
beauty
combined!

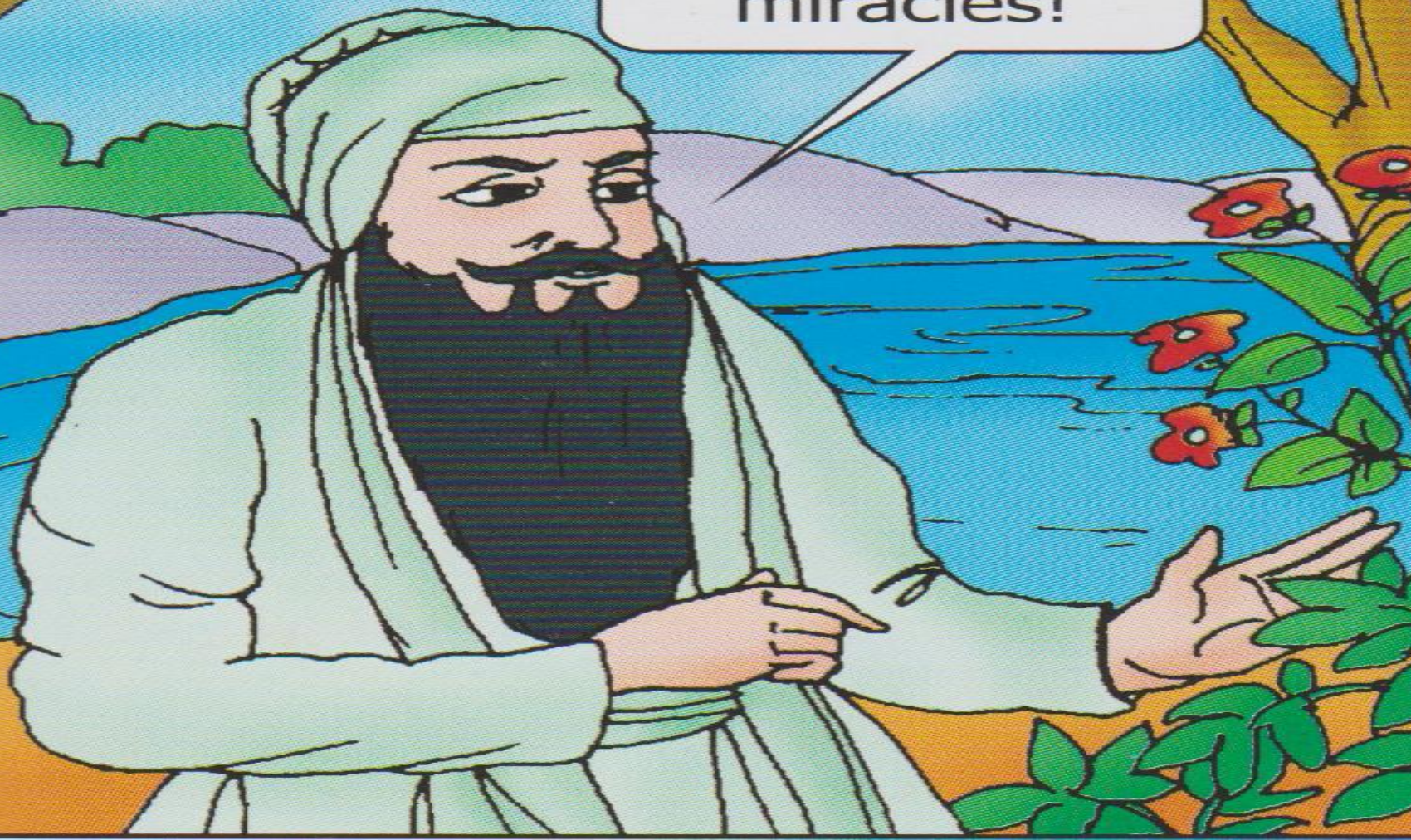
After his passing away, his disciples continued to visit the site.



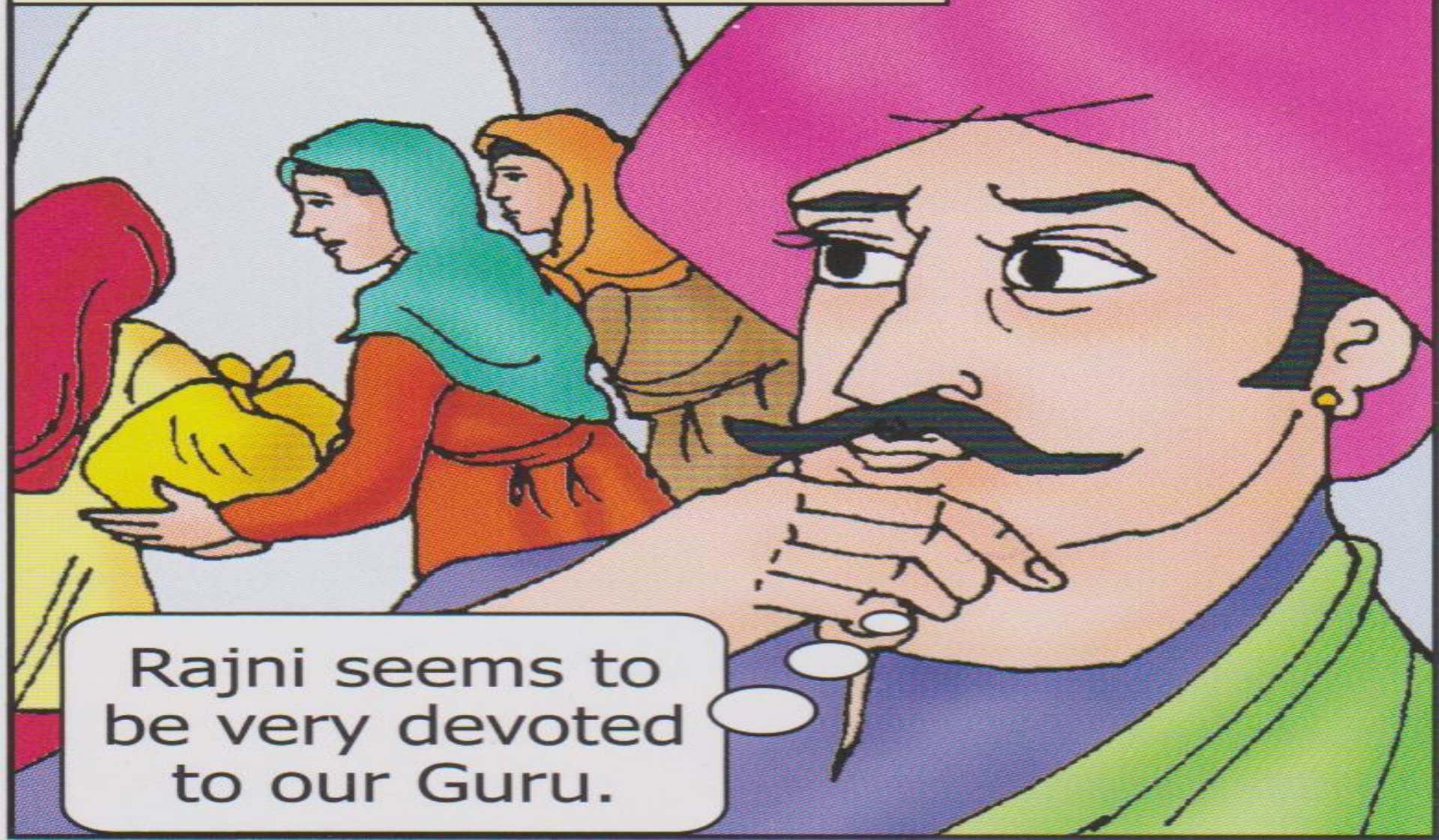
This is now a sacred place.

The lake was enlarged by the fourth Sikh Guru, Ram Das Sahib.

It appears to be a place of miracles!

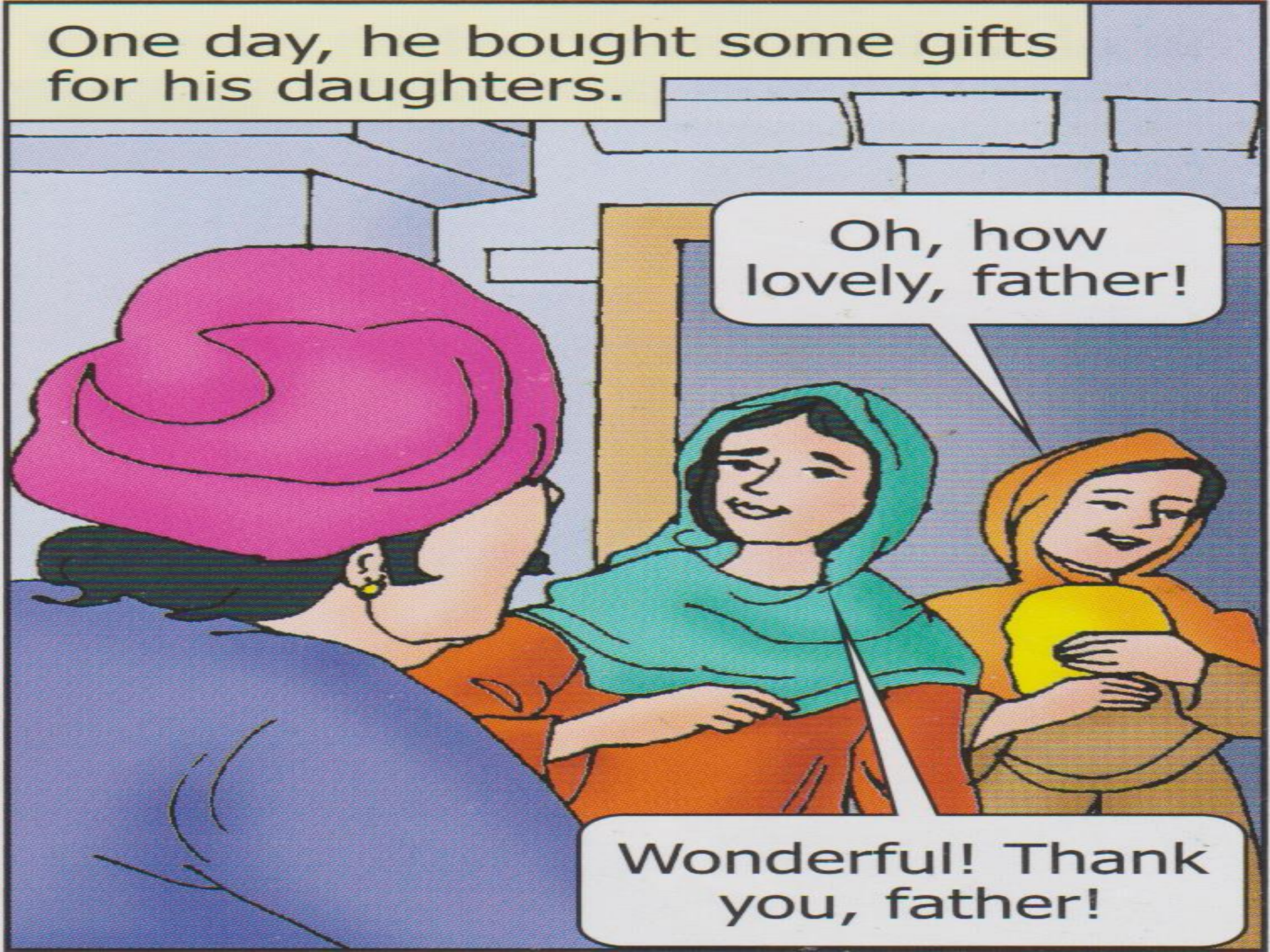


a young woman named Rajni, daughter of a revenue collector named Rai Duni Chand. She was one of three daughters.



Rajni seems to be very devoted to our Guru.


One day, he bought some gifts for his daughters.



Oh, how lovely, father!

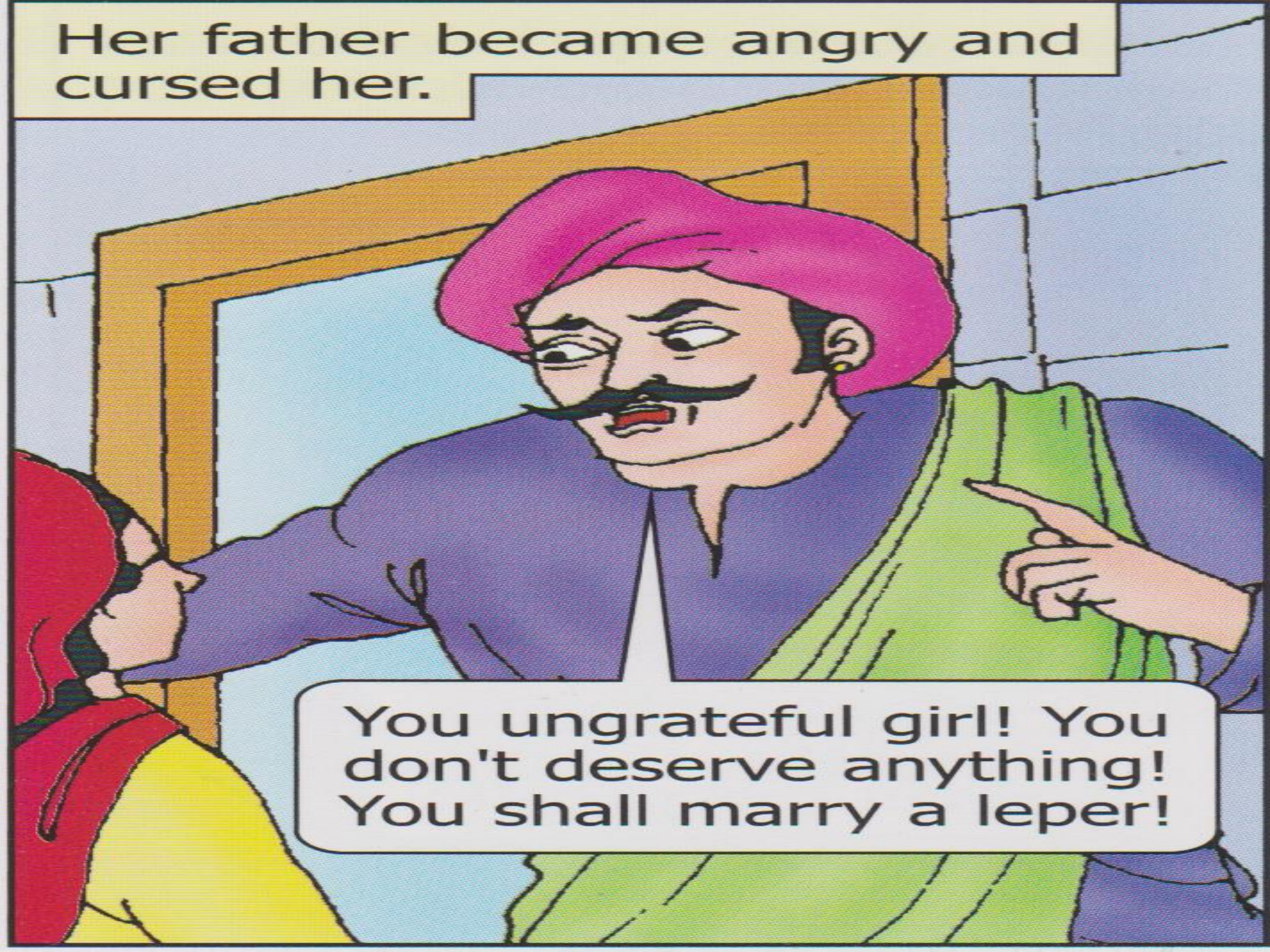
Wonderful! Thank you, father!

But, Rajni had a different view.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a red headscarf and a yellow top, is shown from the chest up. Her hands are clasped together in a prayer gesture, with fingers pointing upwards. She has a slight smile and is looking towards the right. The background is a light blue wall with a grid pattern.

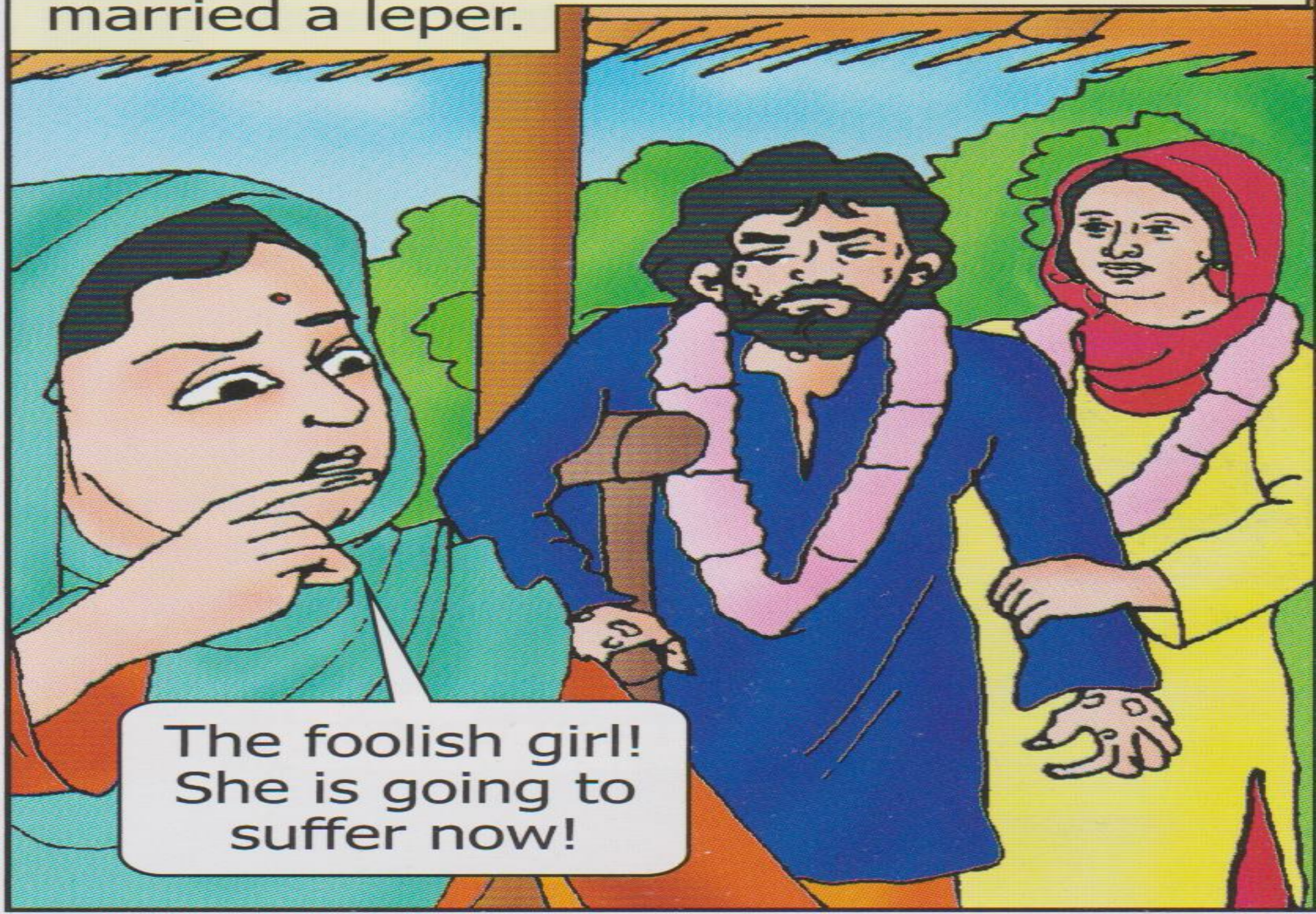
The gifts are lovely, Father, but we should thank God for giving them to us! You are only a medium to deliver them!

Her father became angry and
cursed her.

A man with a thick black mustache, wearing a pink turban and a purple shirt with a green shawl draped over his shoulder, is pointing his right index finger towards a girl. The girl is wearing a red sari with a yellow border. The man has a stern, angry expression. The background shows a simple room with a light blue wall and a wooden door frame.

You ungrateful girl! You
don't deserve anything!
You shall marry a leper!

Rajni obeyed her father's command and married a leper.

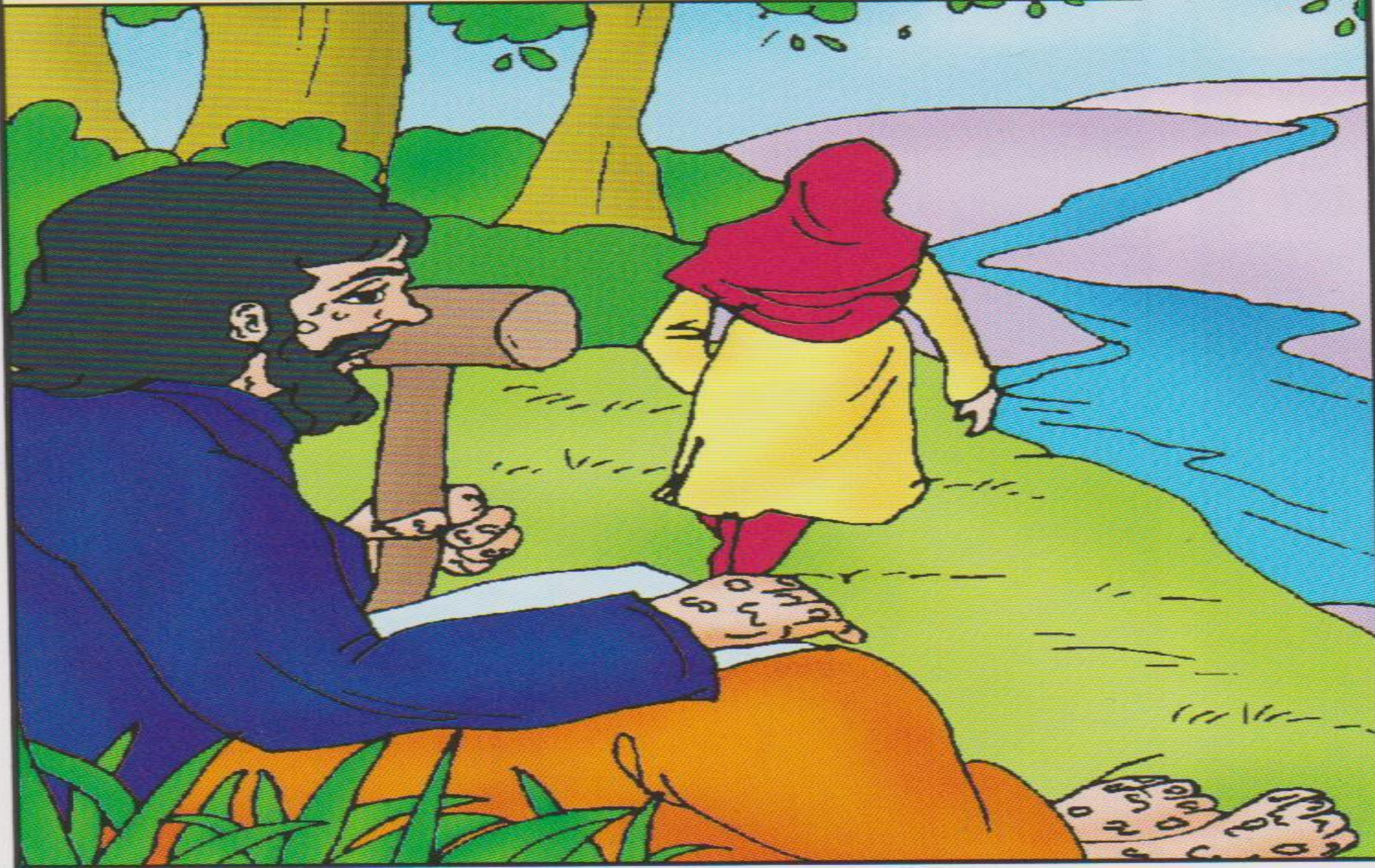


The foolish girl!
She is going to
suffer now!

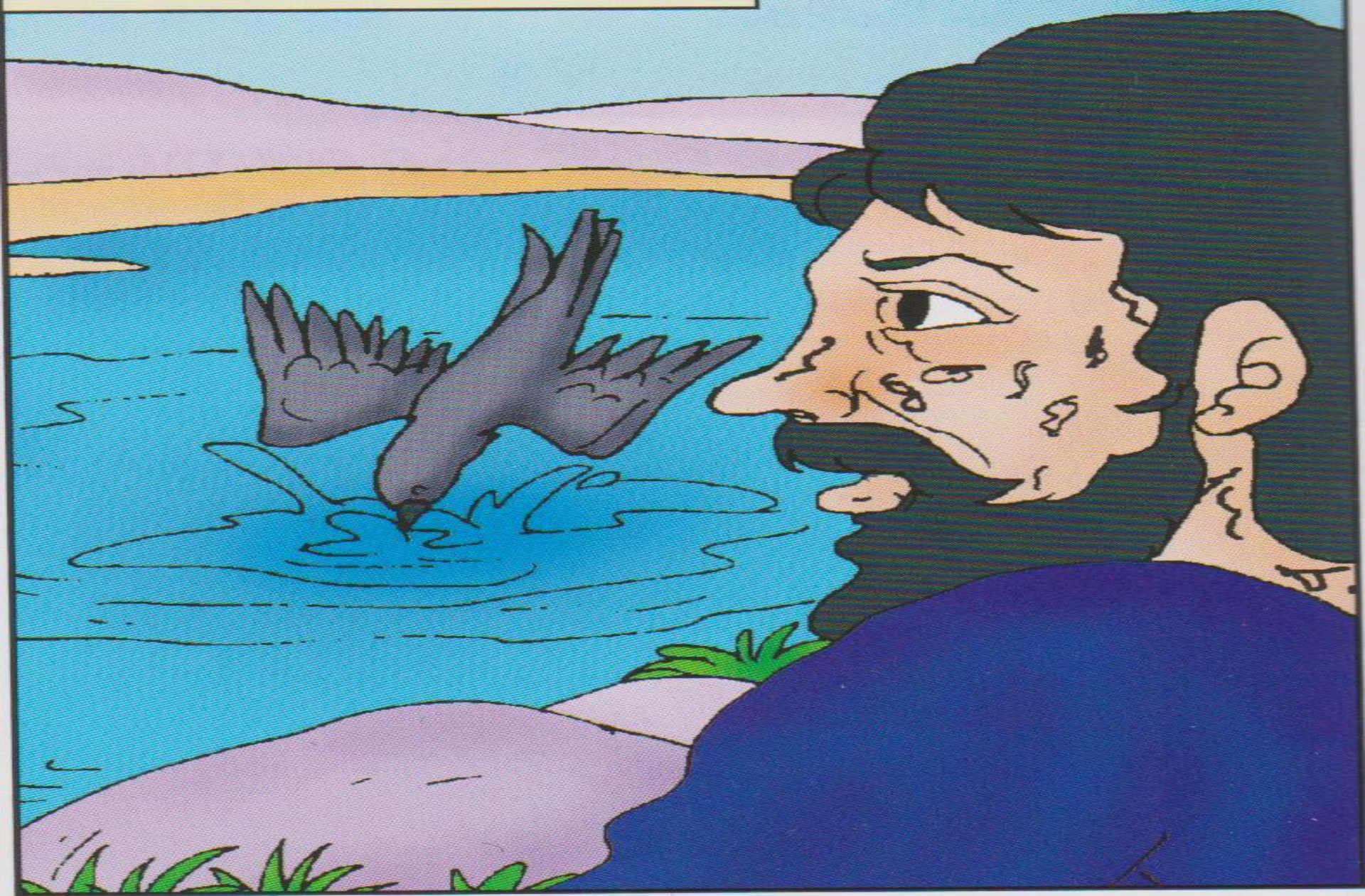
Life was a struggle for Rajni as she had to support herself and her crippled husband.



One day, she left her husband by the very lake that Guru Nanak had loved, and went to find work.



Her husband spotted a crow, taking a dip into the water.

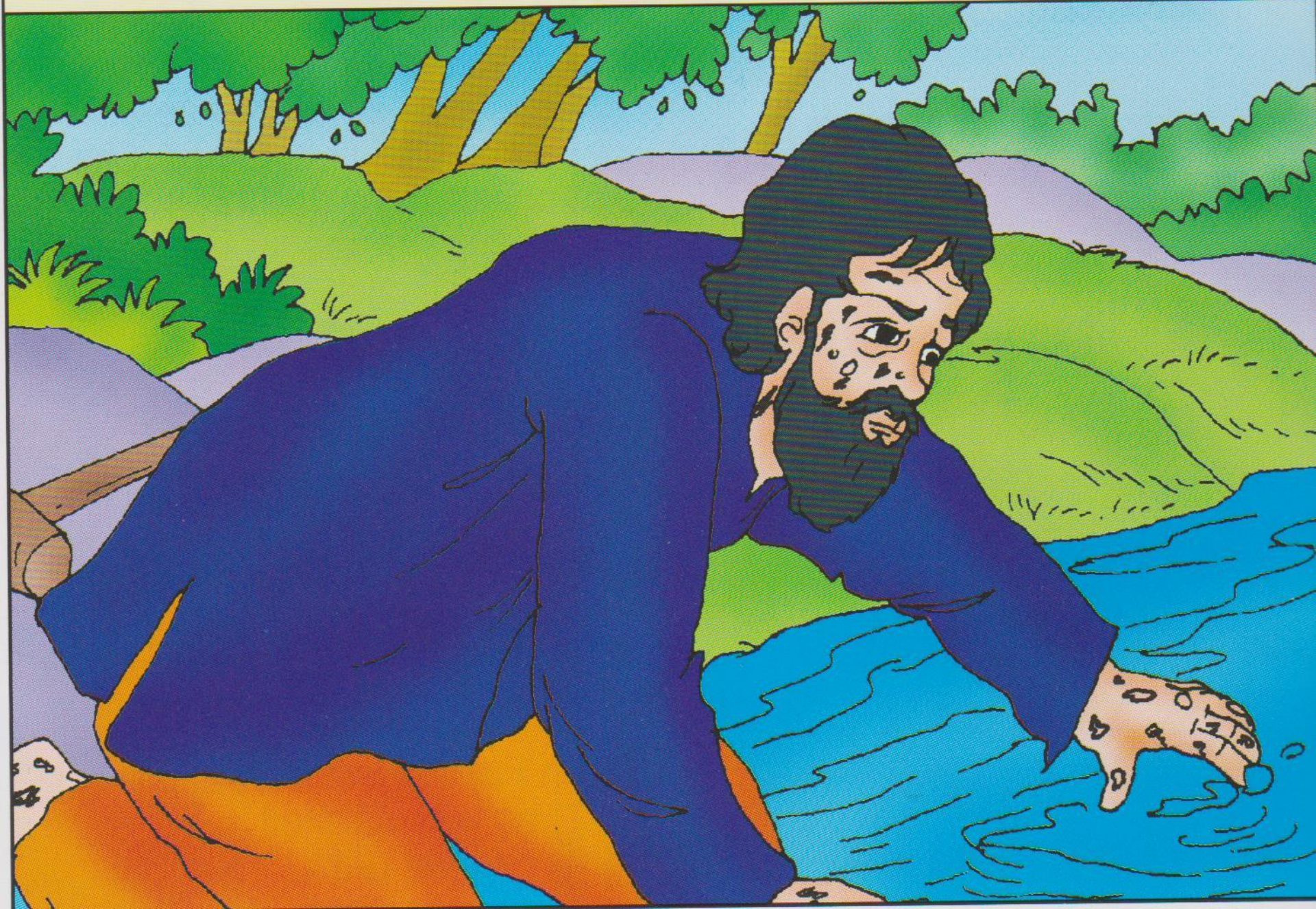


To his astonishment, when the crow emerged, it was pure white!

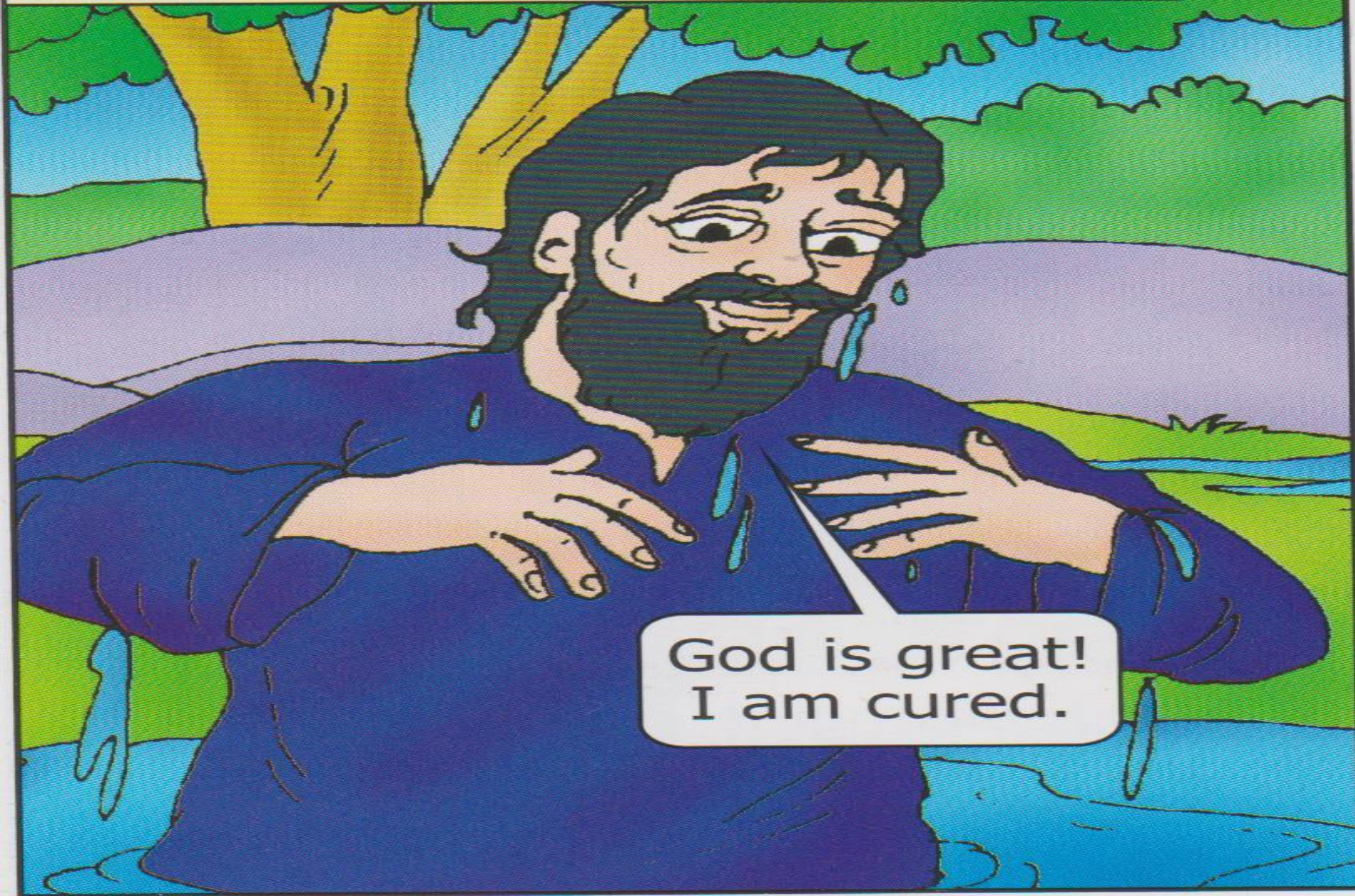
It's a miracle!
The pool must be
sacred! I shall
take a dip, too!



And so, he crawled towards the pool with difficulty and entered the water.




When he emerged, it was like magic - he was completely cured!



God is great!
I am cured.

His wife returned and was thrilled to find her husband looking fine and handsome.



Let us go to our Guru and tell him about this miracle!

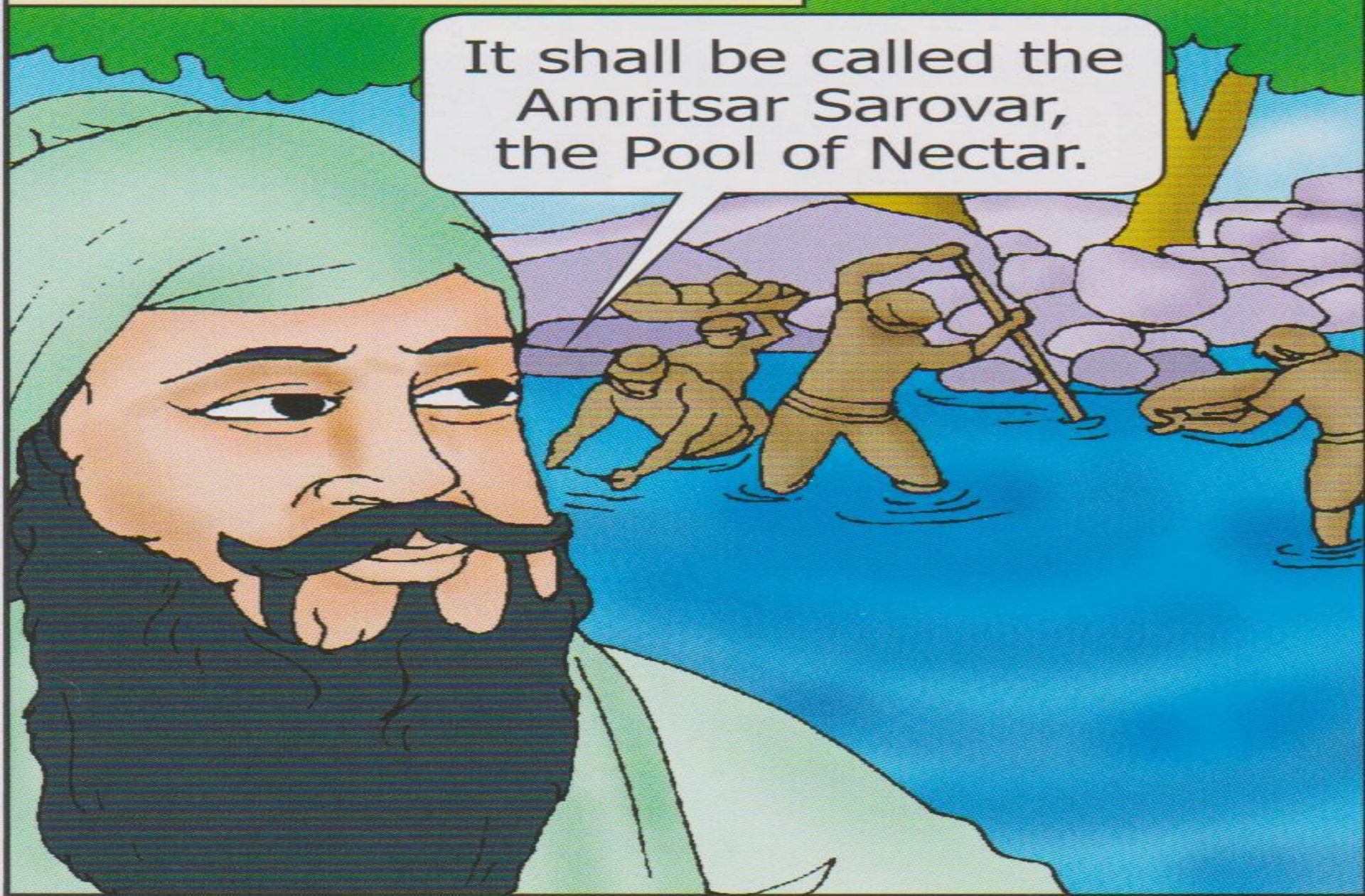
And that is how Guru Ram Das came to know about it.

I shall make some changes to preserve the beauty of it. It will be a Sikh pilgrim centre.

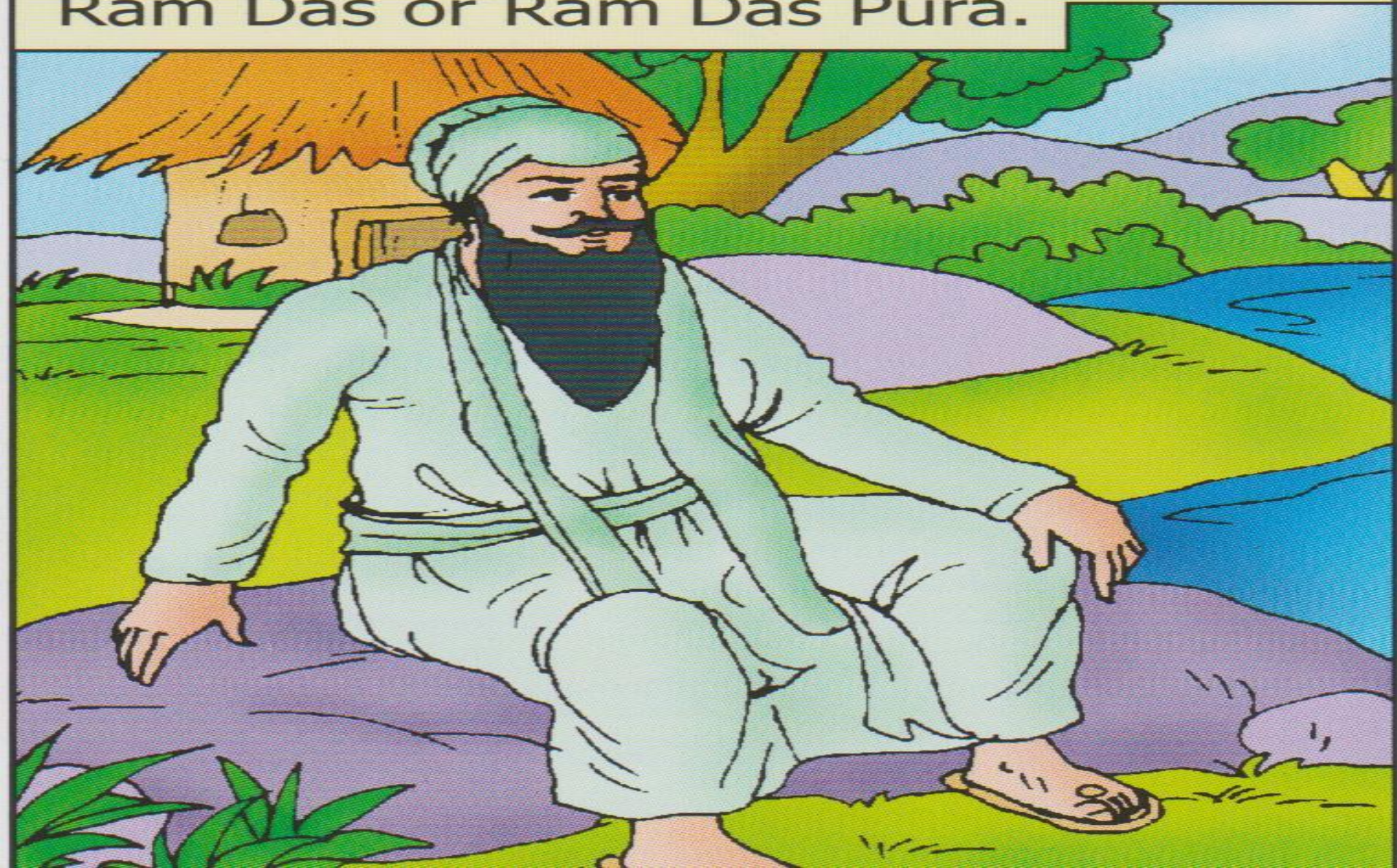


The excavation started in 1577 and the lake was enlarged.

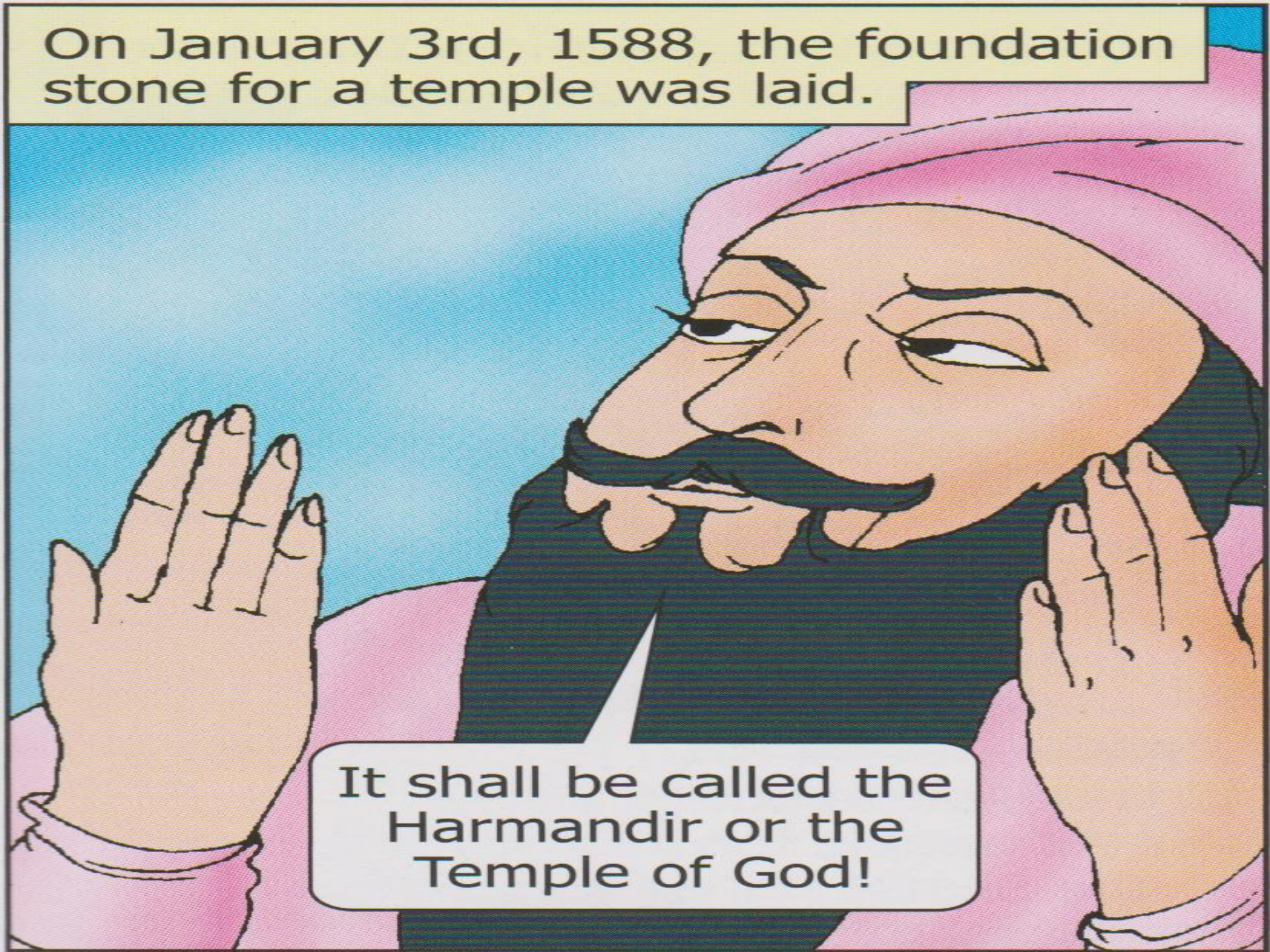
It shall be called the Amritsar Sarovar, the Pool of Nectar.



When he settled down near the lake, the area itself came to be known after him - Guru Ka Chak or Chak Ram Das or Ram Das Pura.

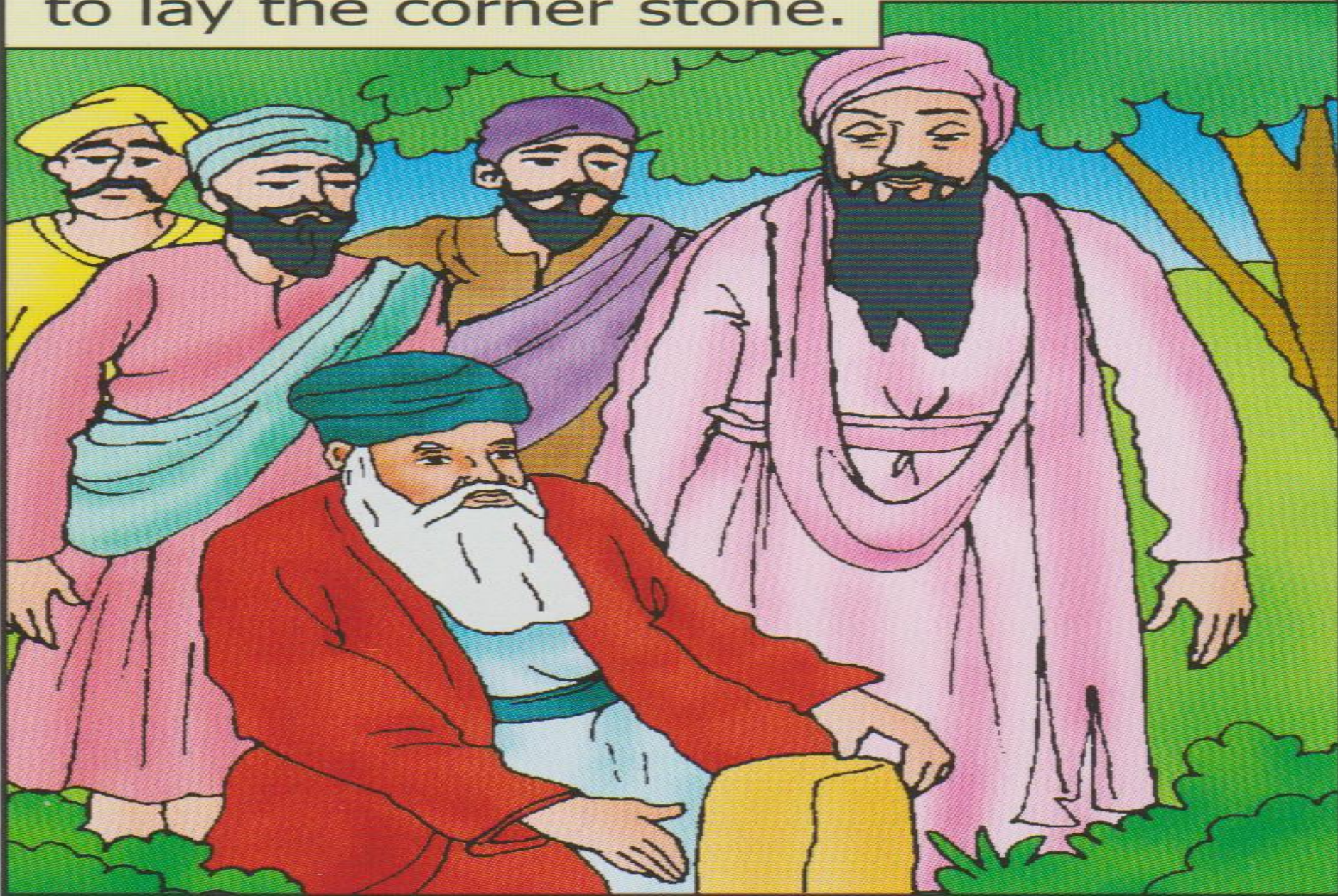


On January 3rd, 1588, the foundation stone for a temple was laid.

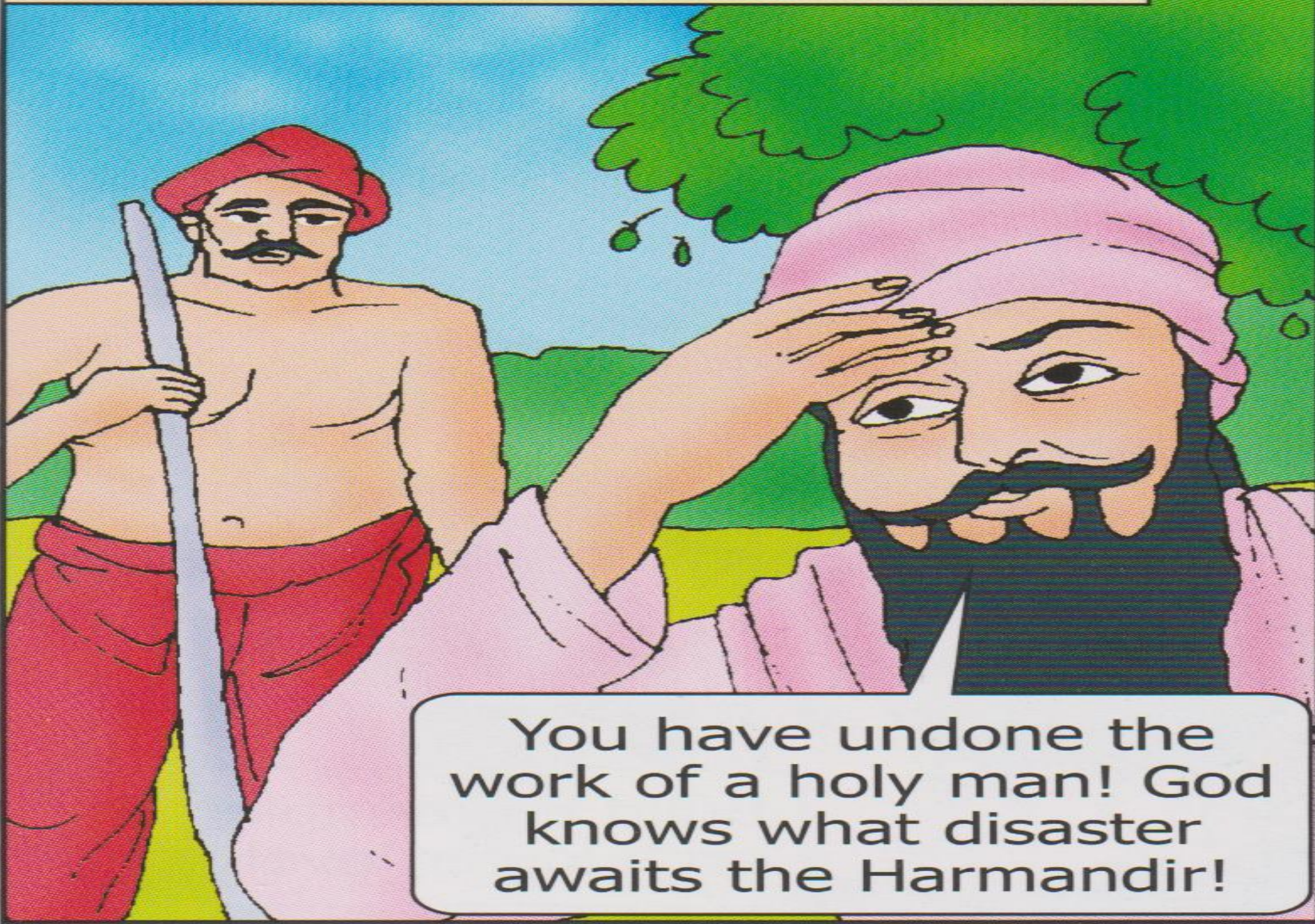


It shall be called the Harmandir or the Temple of God!

Arjan Dev asked his close friend Sufi saint, Hazrat Mian Mir of Lahore to lay the corner stone.

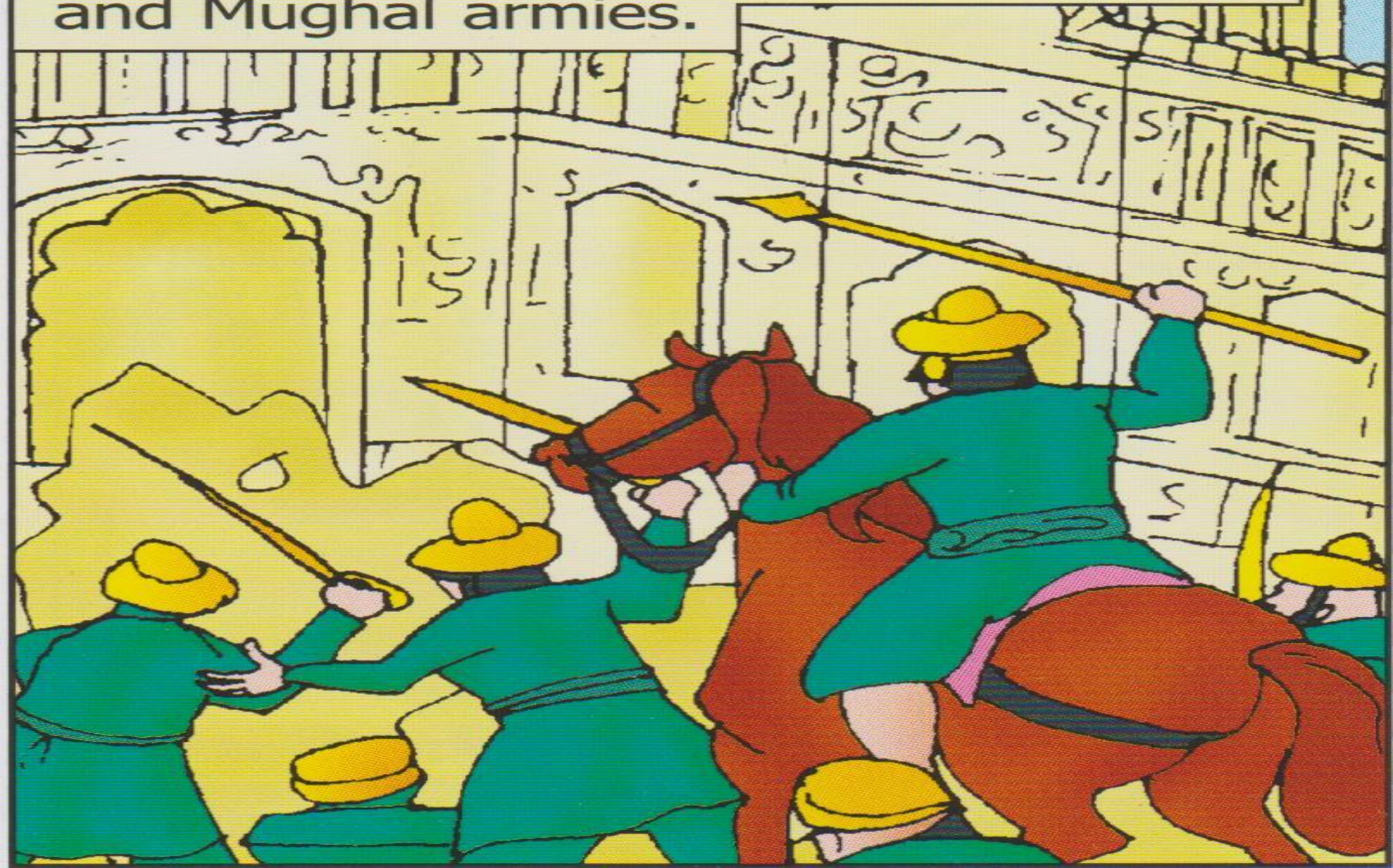


Arjan Dev was disturbed by this.

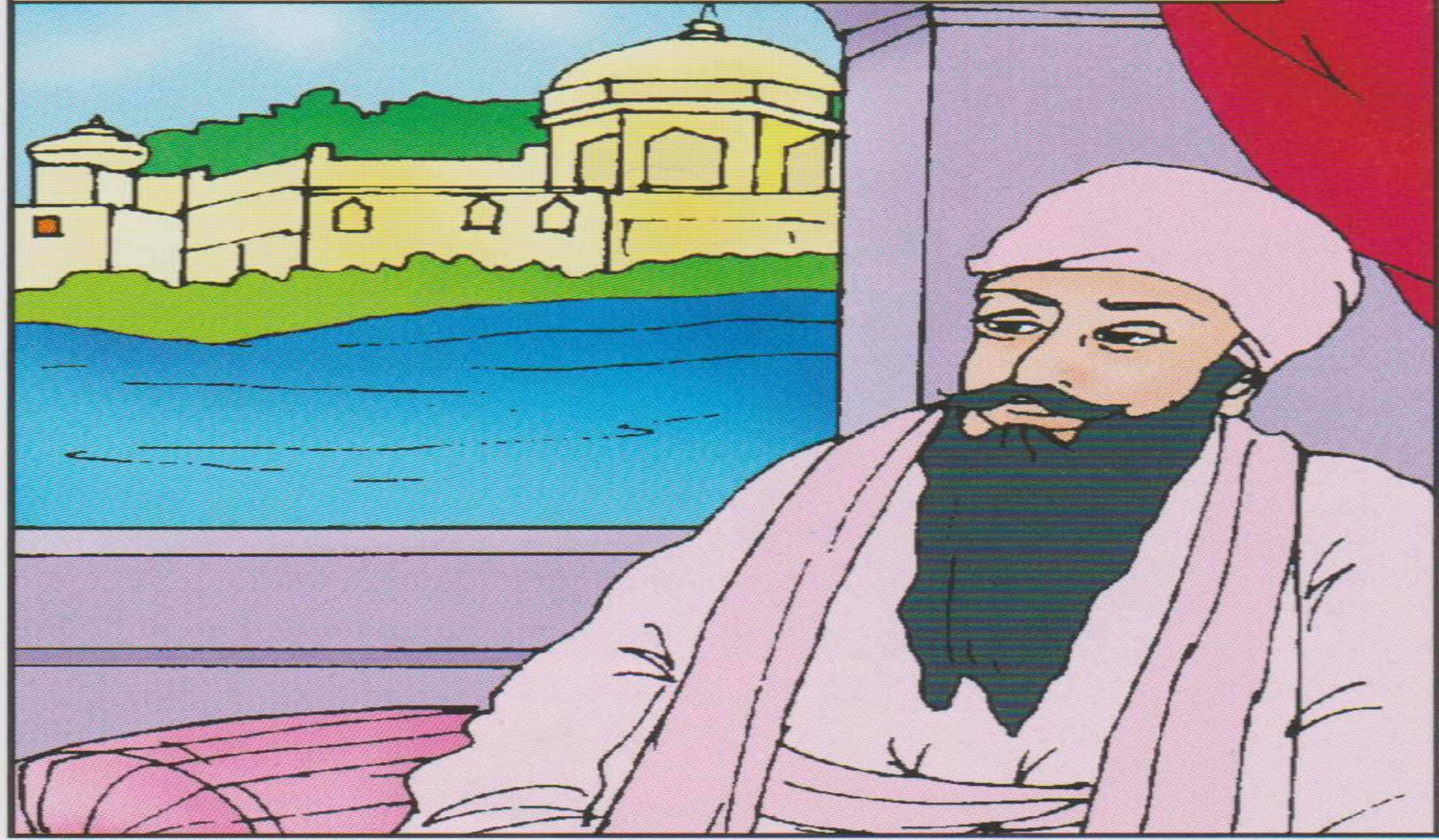


You have undone the work of a holy man! God knows what disaster awaits the Harmandir!

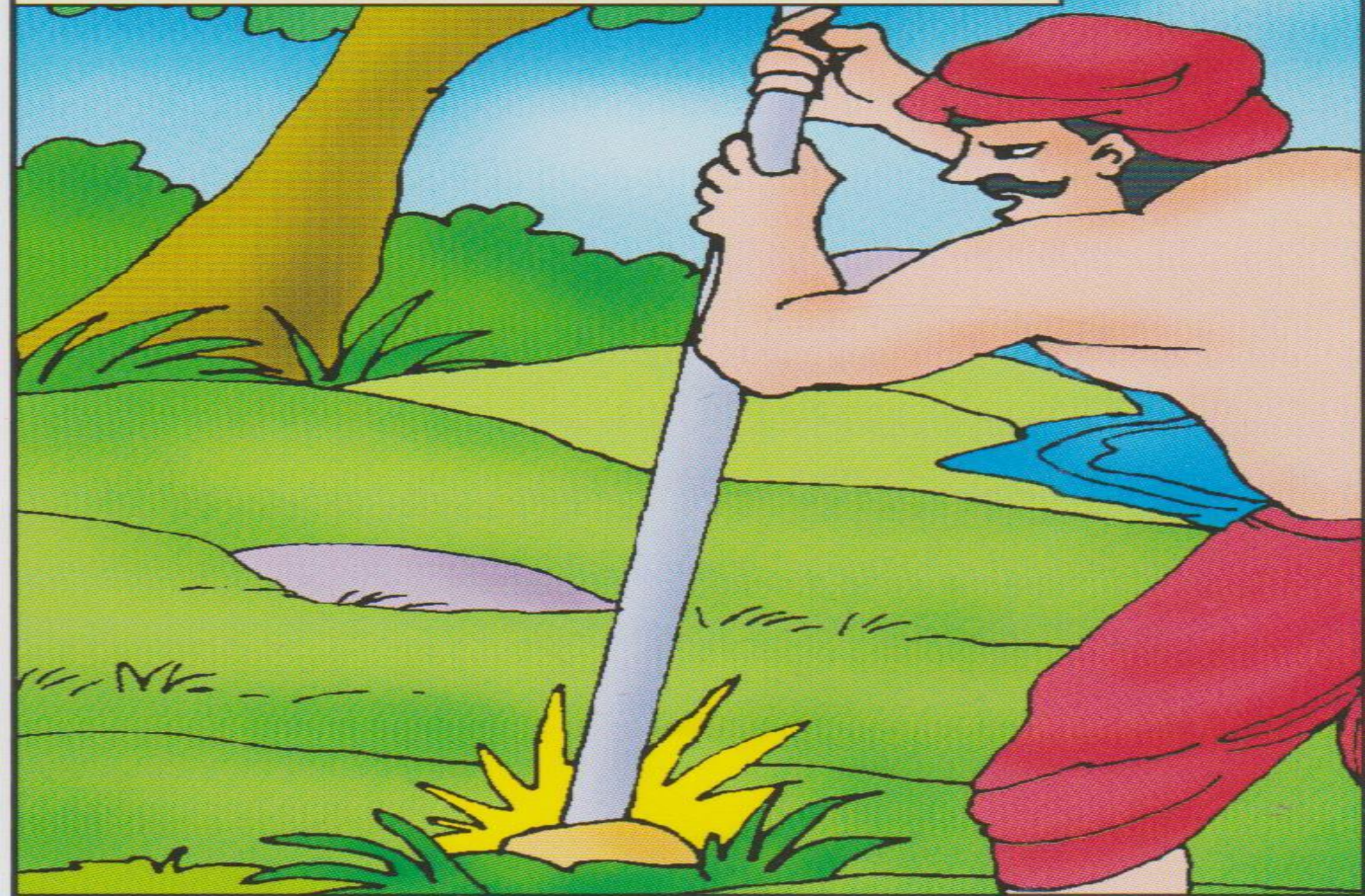
It is said that the temple figured in a lot of conflict in the following years being repeatedly attacked by Afghan and Mughal armies.



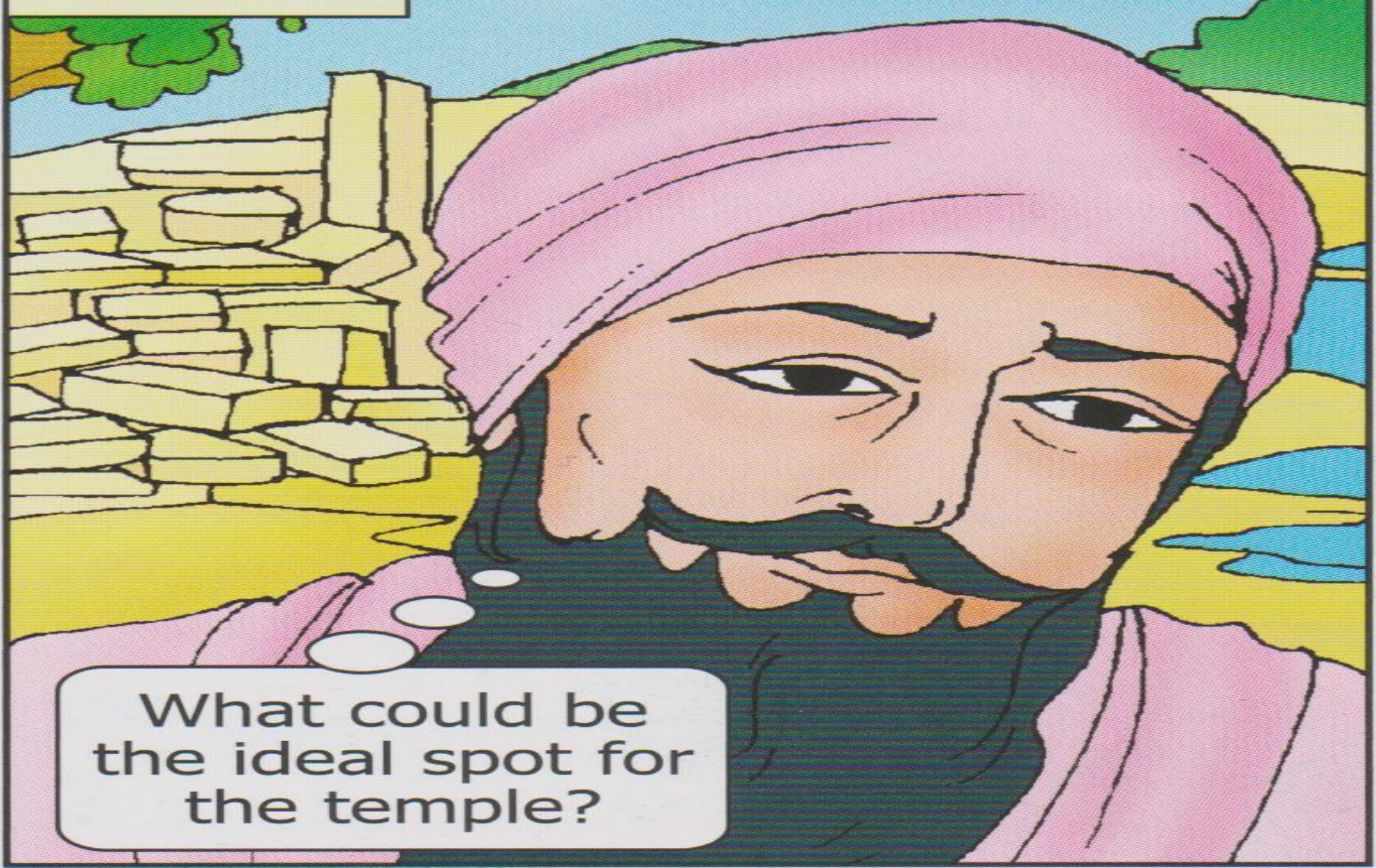
Under the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev Sahib, further renovations were made and since then, the area came to be known as Amritsar, after the lake.



It is said that after he laid the corner stone, a mason displaced it.

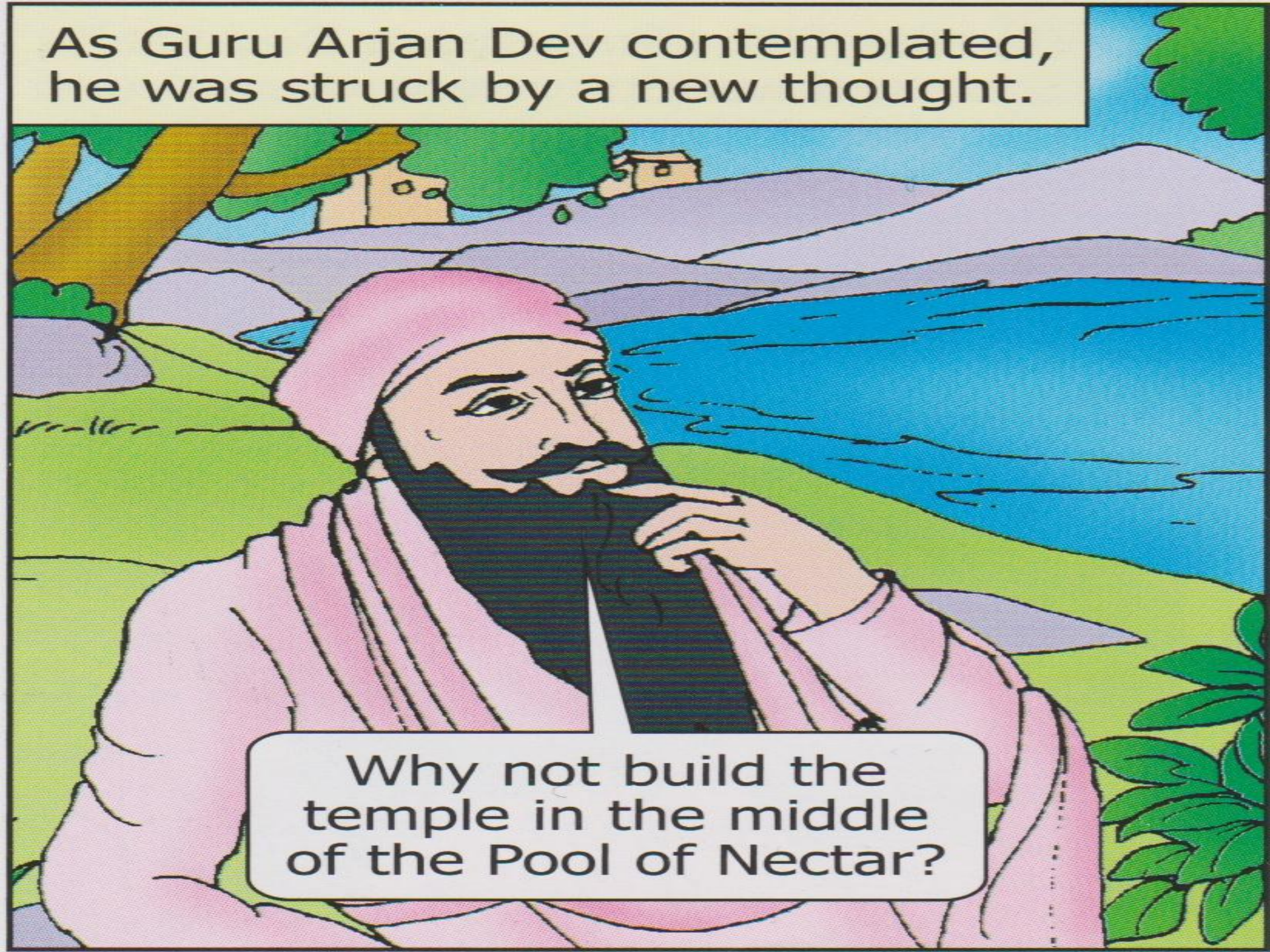


Guru Arjan Dev now ordered the temple to be built with burnt bricks and lime.



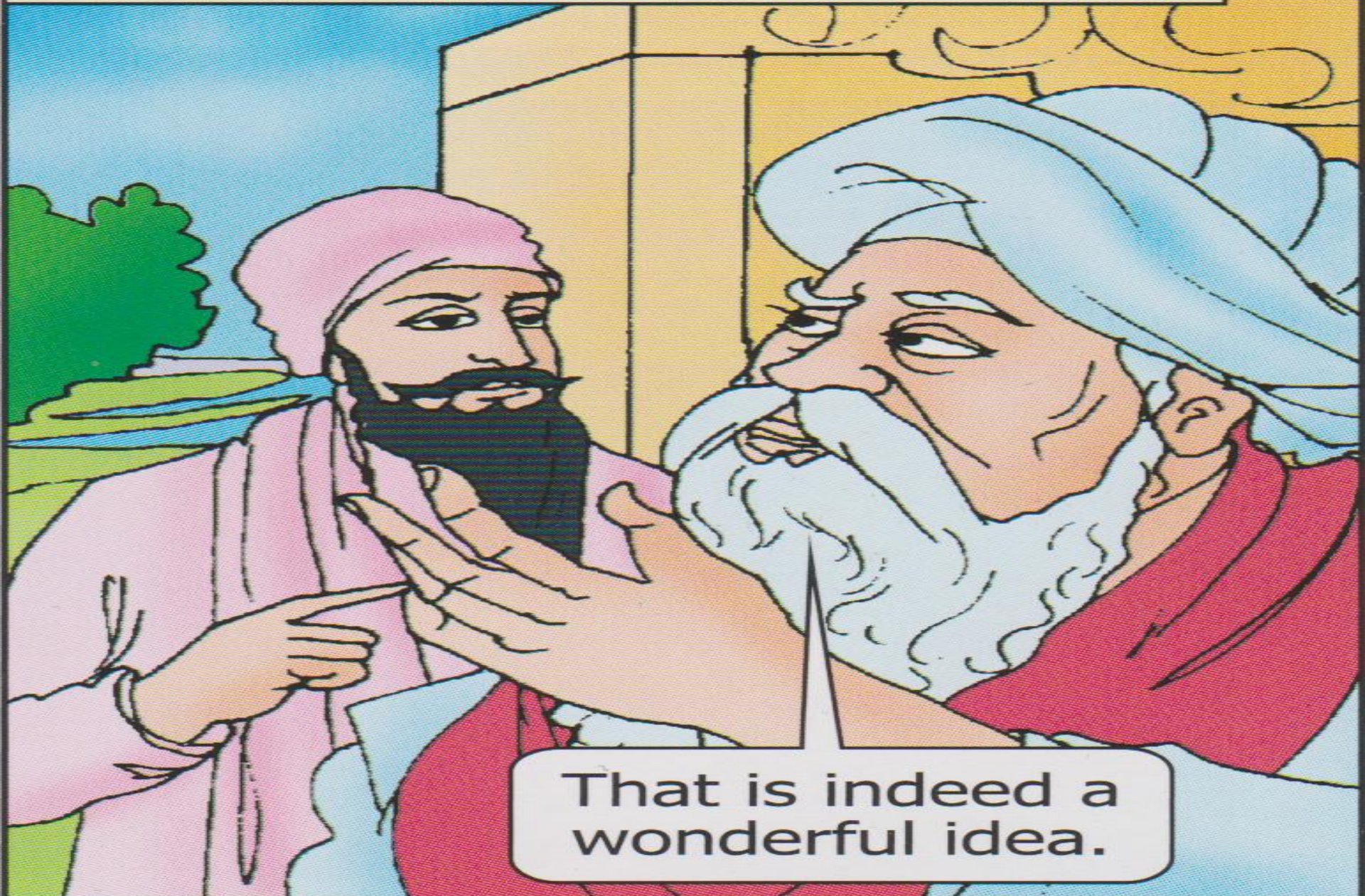
What could be the ideal spot for the temple?

As Guru Arjan Dev contemplated,
he was struck by a new thought.



Why not build the
temple in the middle
of the Pool of Nectar?

He immediately consulted Baba Budha Ji and expressed his wish.



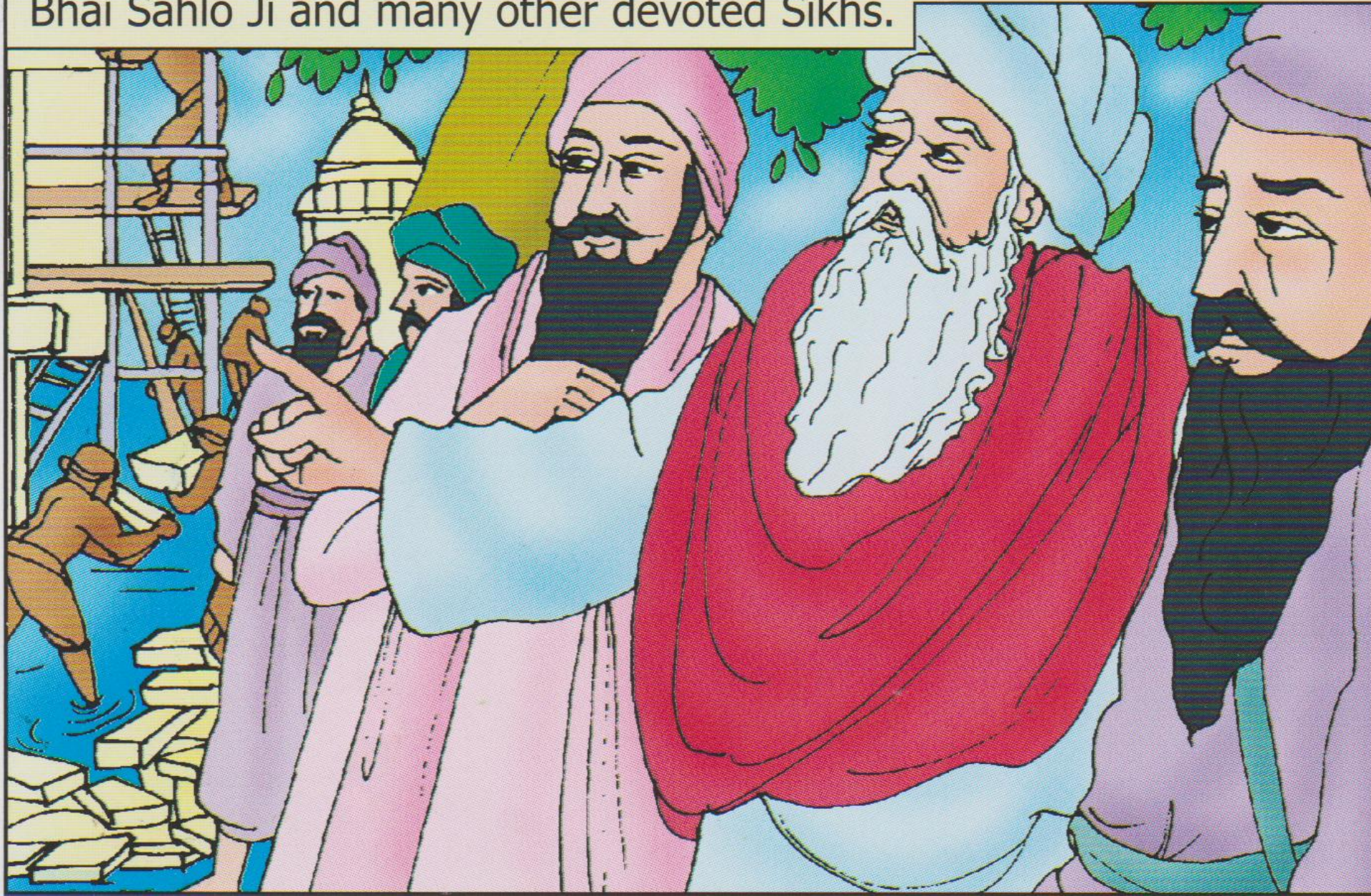
That is indeed a wonderful idea.

The leaders of the Sikh community and the devotees of the Guru welcomed the new plan.

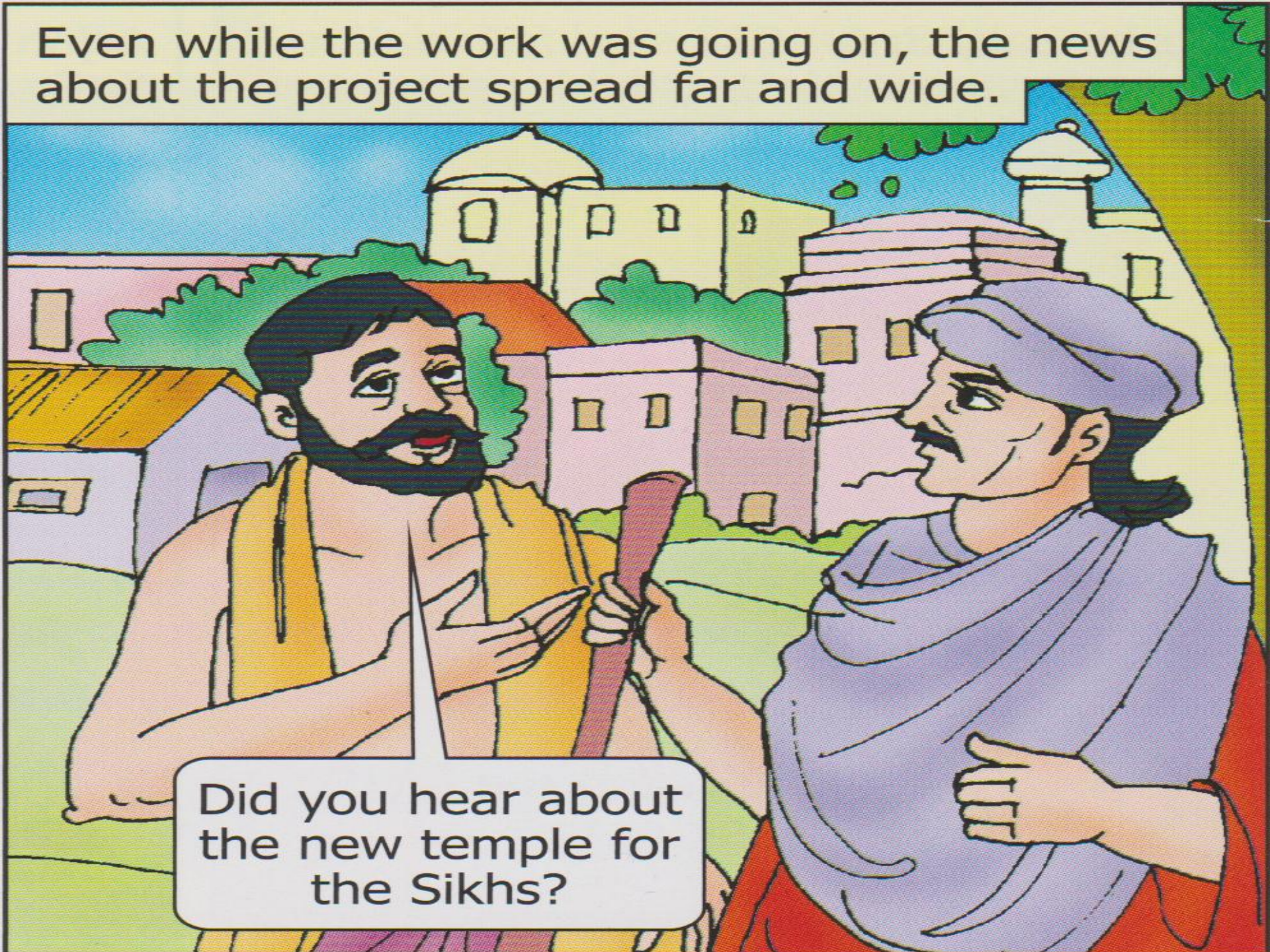
It is going to be beautiful!



Construction work was supervised by Arjan Dev and he was assisted by prominent Sikh personalities like Baba Budha Ji, Bhai Gurdas Ji, Bhai Sahlo Ji and many other devoted Sikhs.



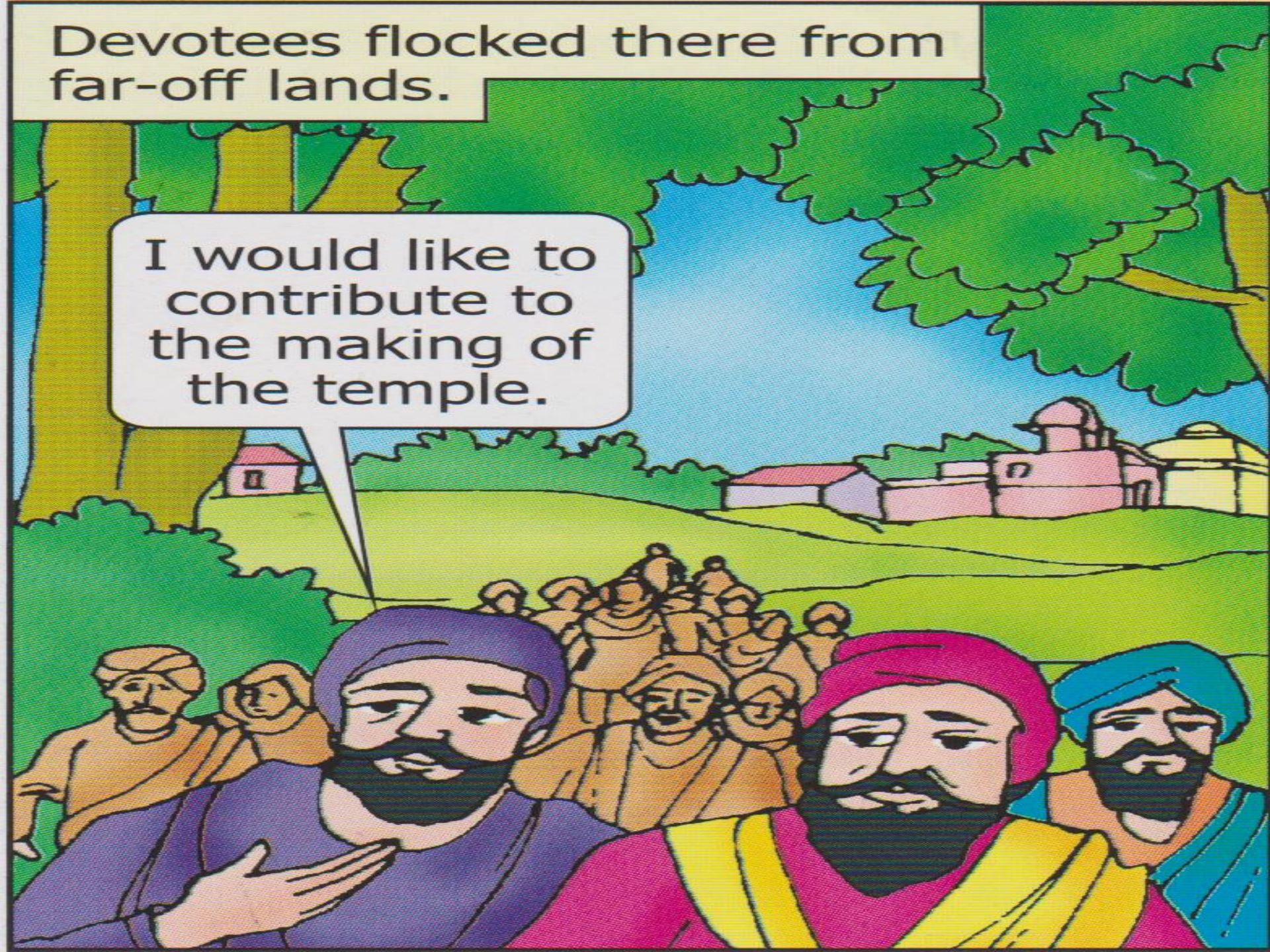
Even while the work was going on, the news about the project spread far and wide.



Did you hear about the new temple for the Sikhs?

Devotees flocked there from far-off lands.

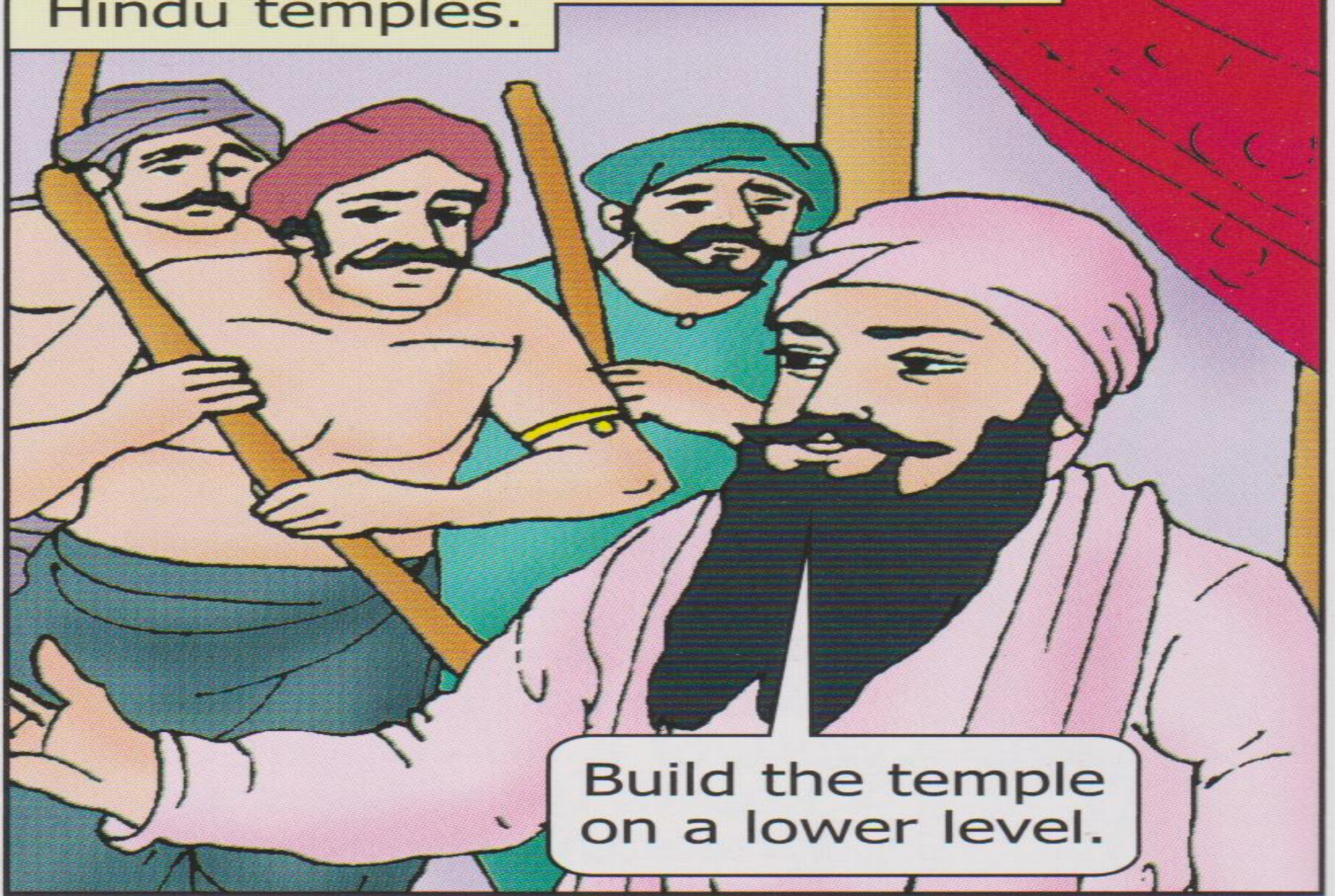
I would like to contribute to the making of the temple.



Many donated money,
especially rich people.



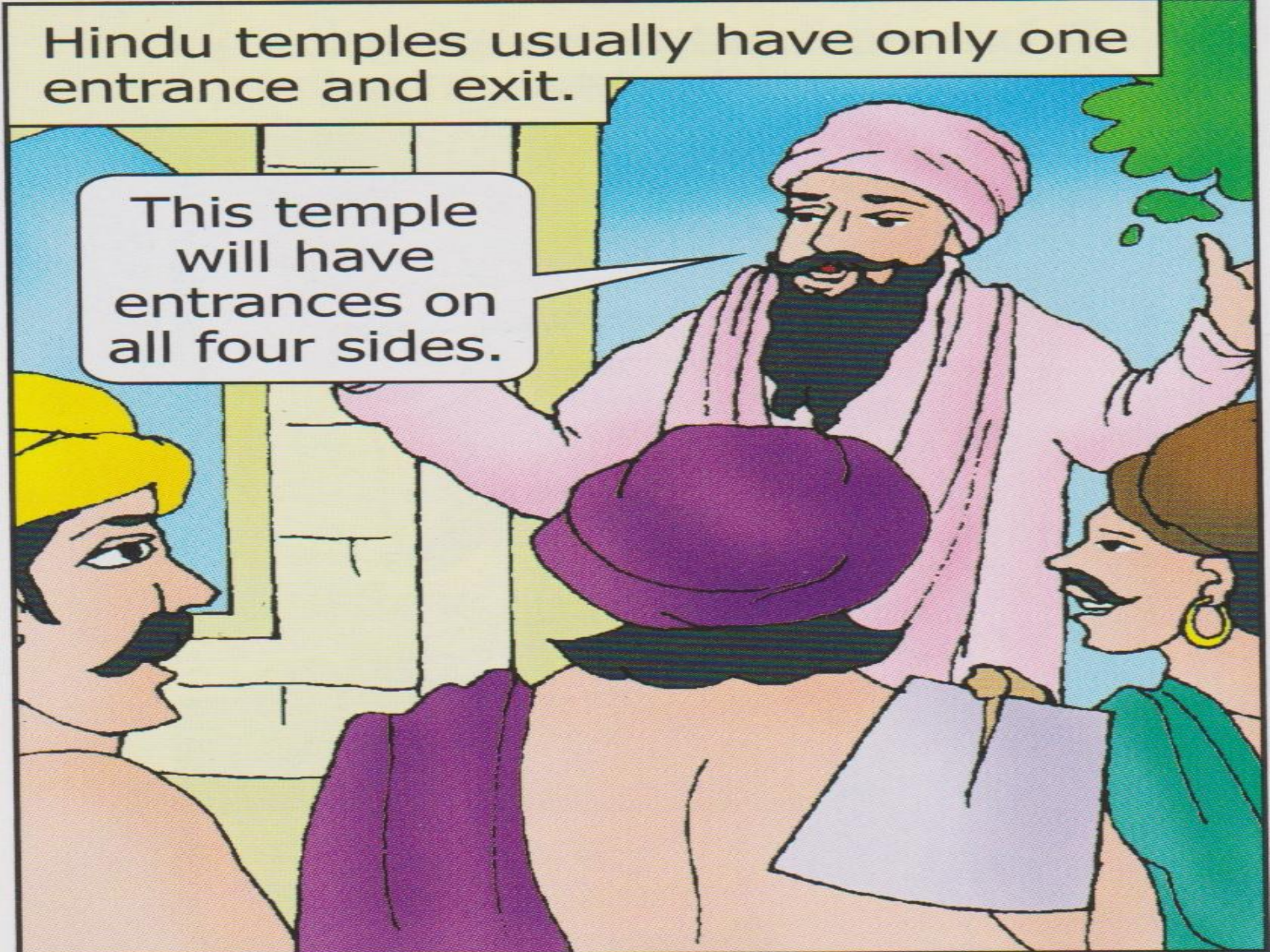
The temple was not to be built on a higher level like the other Hindu temples.



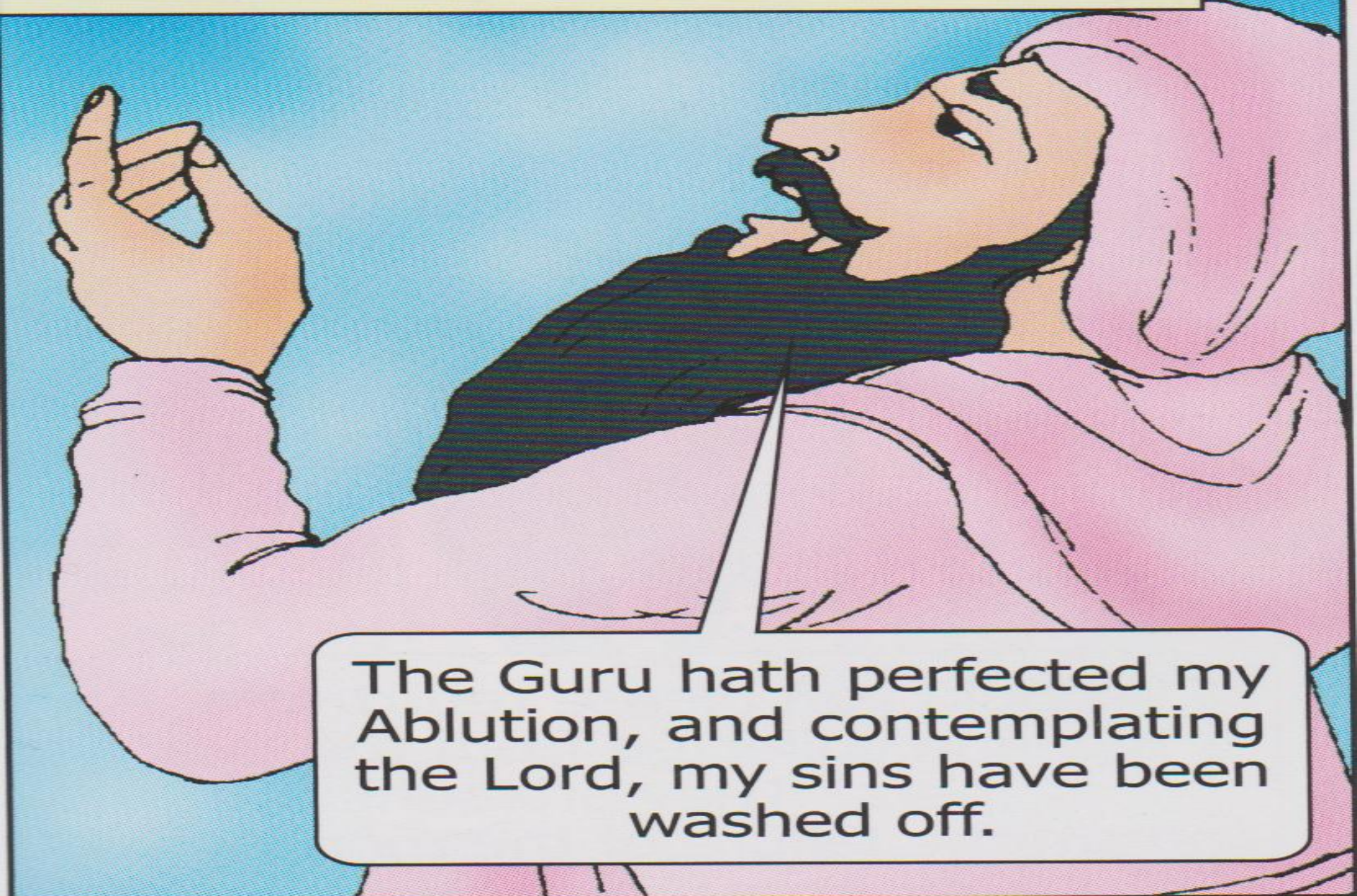
Build the temple on a lower level.

Hindu temples usually have only one entrance and exit.

This temple will have entrances on all four sides.

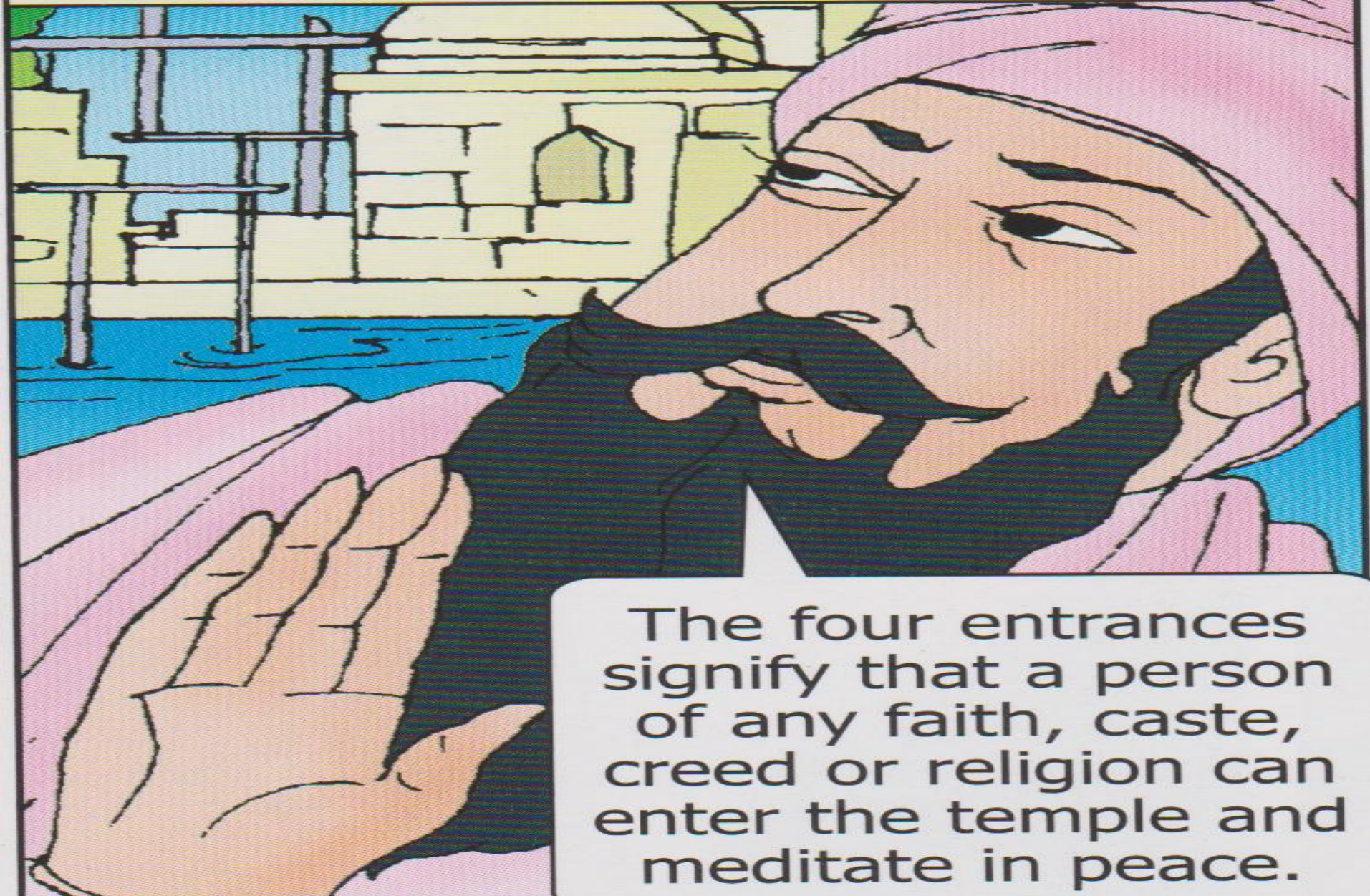


Guru Arjan Dev now composed a hymn to describe the glory of the temple.



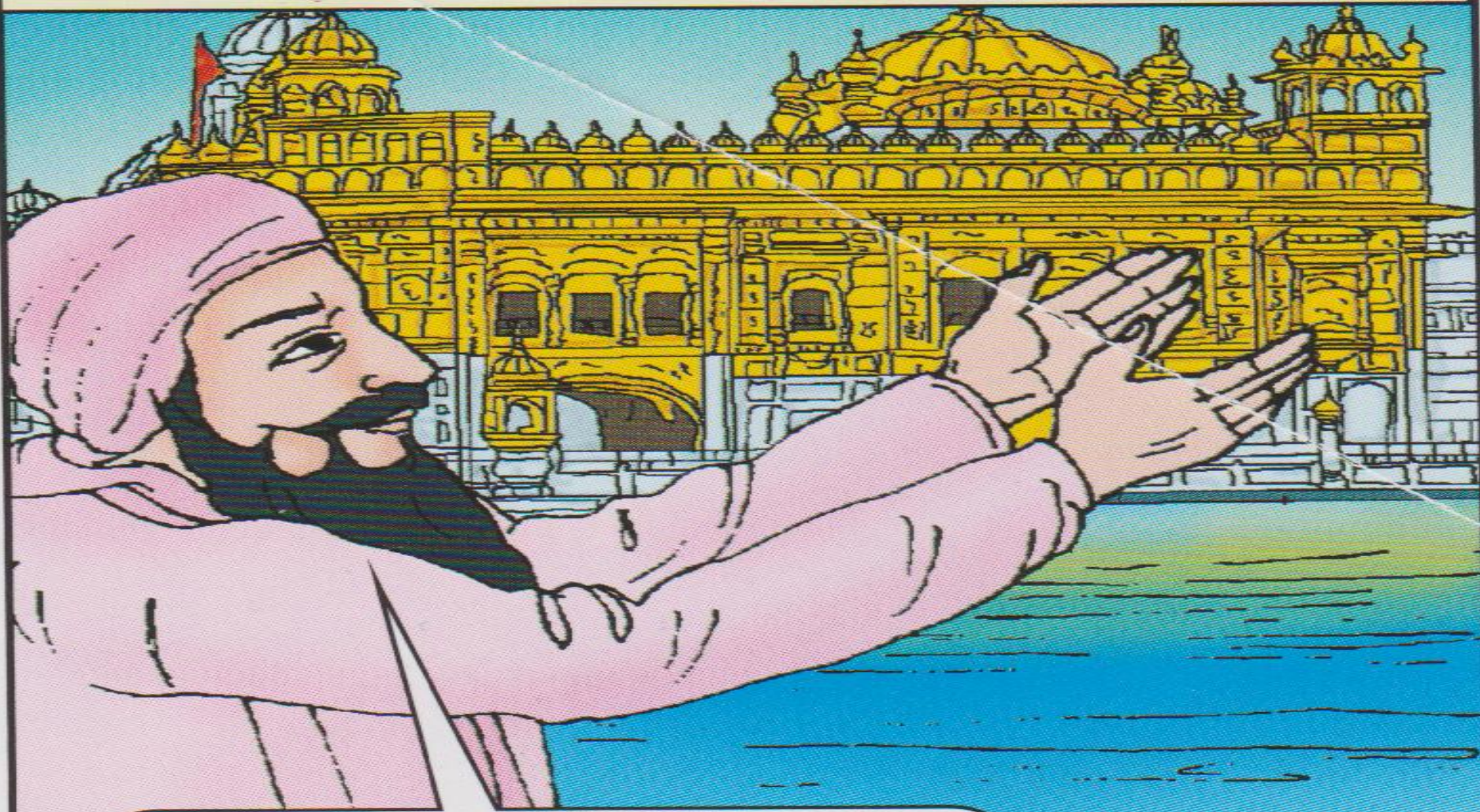
The Guru hath perfected my Ablution, and contemplating the Lord, my sins have been washed off.

With this gesture, he created a symbol of the new faith, Sikhism.



The four entrances signify that a person of any faith, caste, creed or religion can enter the temple and meditate in peace.

The temple was completed in 1601. It stood in the middle of the sacred lake.



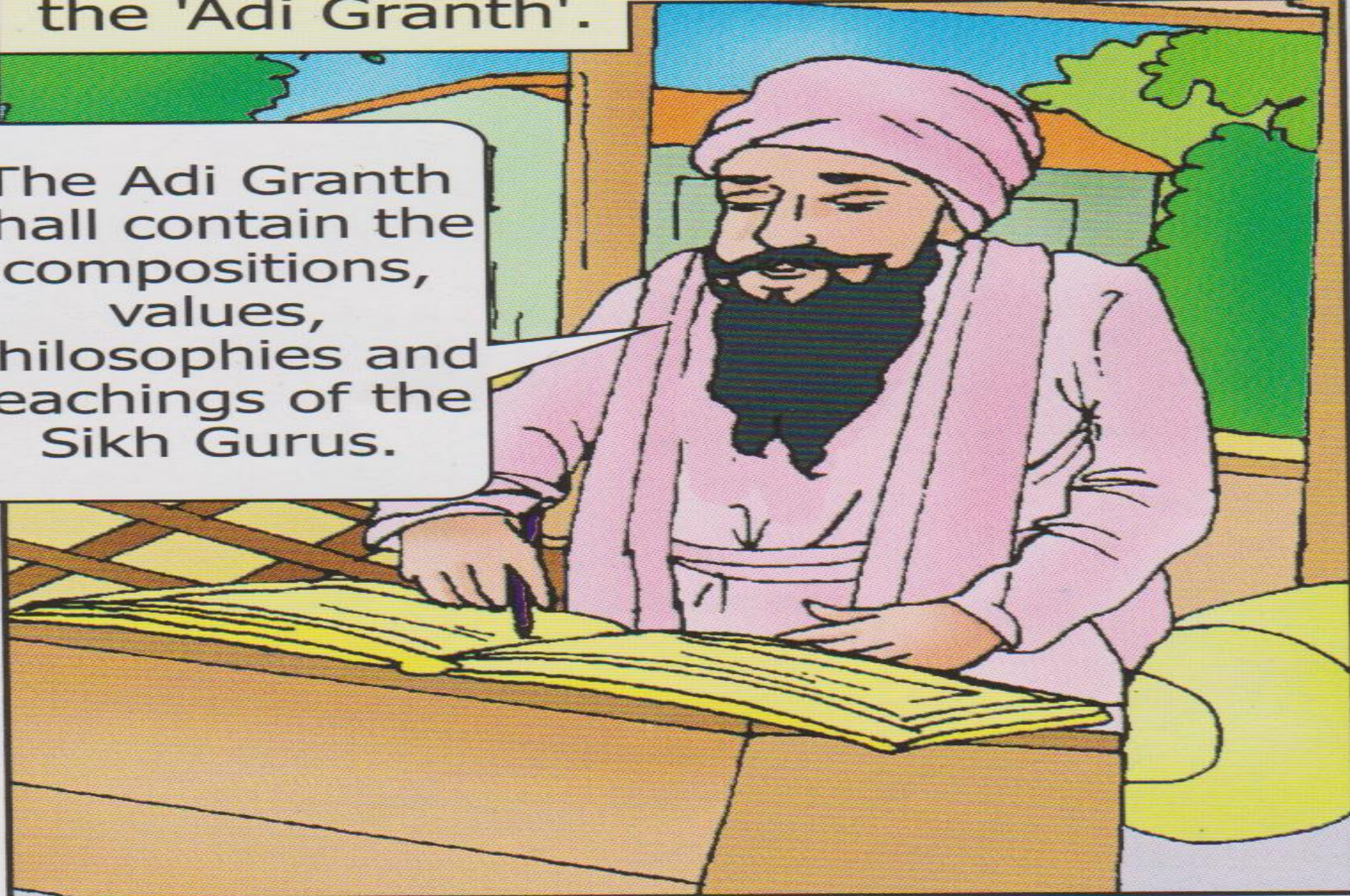
Ah! At last, the shrine of the Sikhs is ready!

In 1590, Guru Arjan Dev moved to the village Wadali, where Guru Hargobind Sahib was born. He later became the sixth Guru.

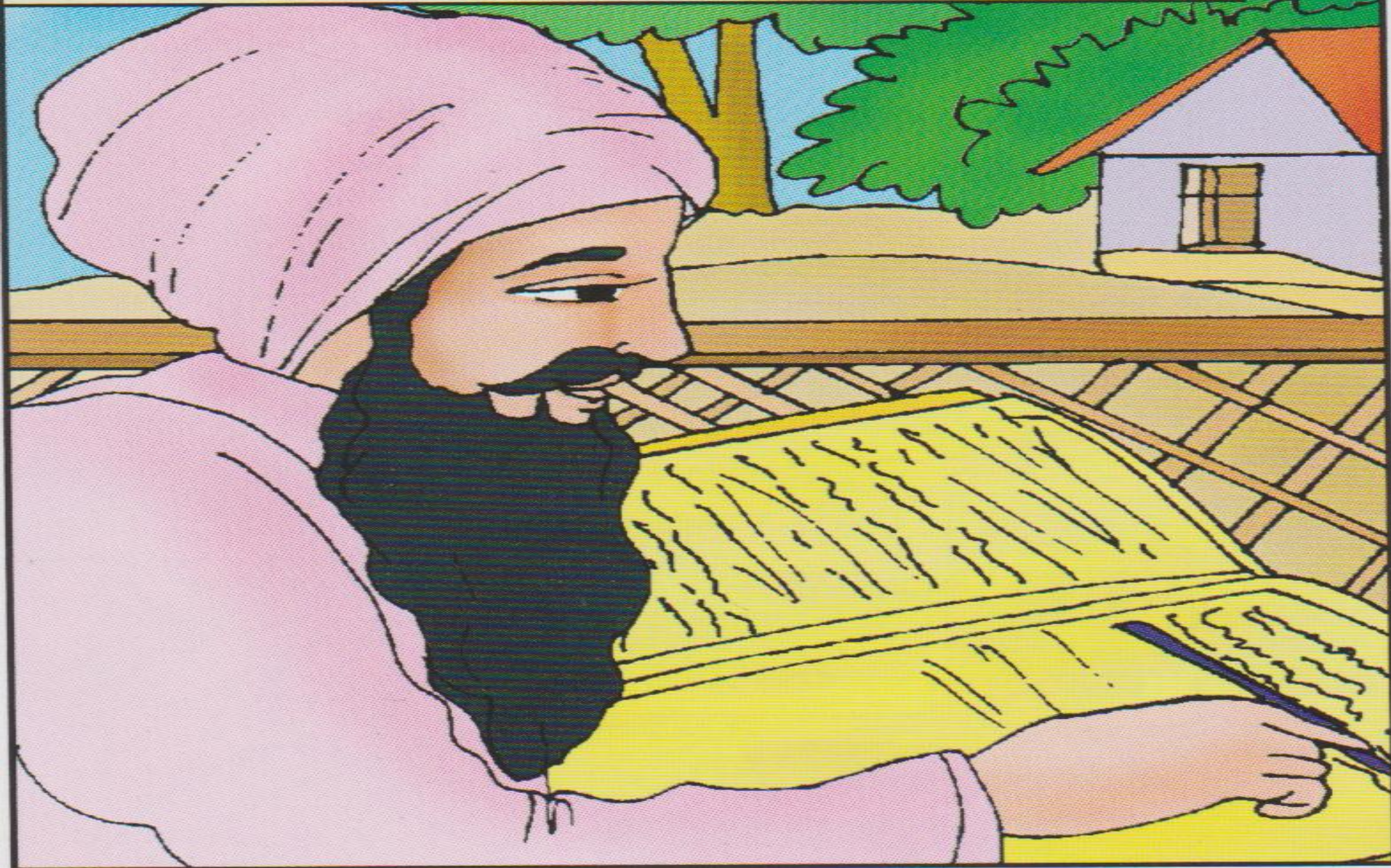


By now, Guru Arjan Dev had begun compiling a holy book of the Sikhs, the 'Adi Granth'.

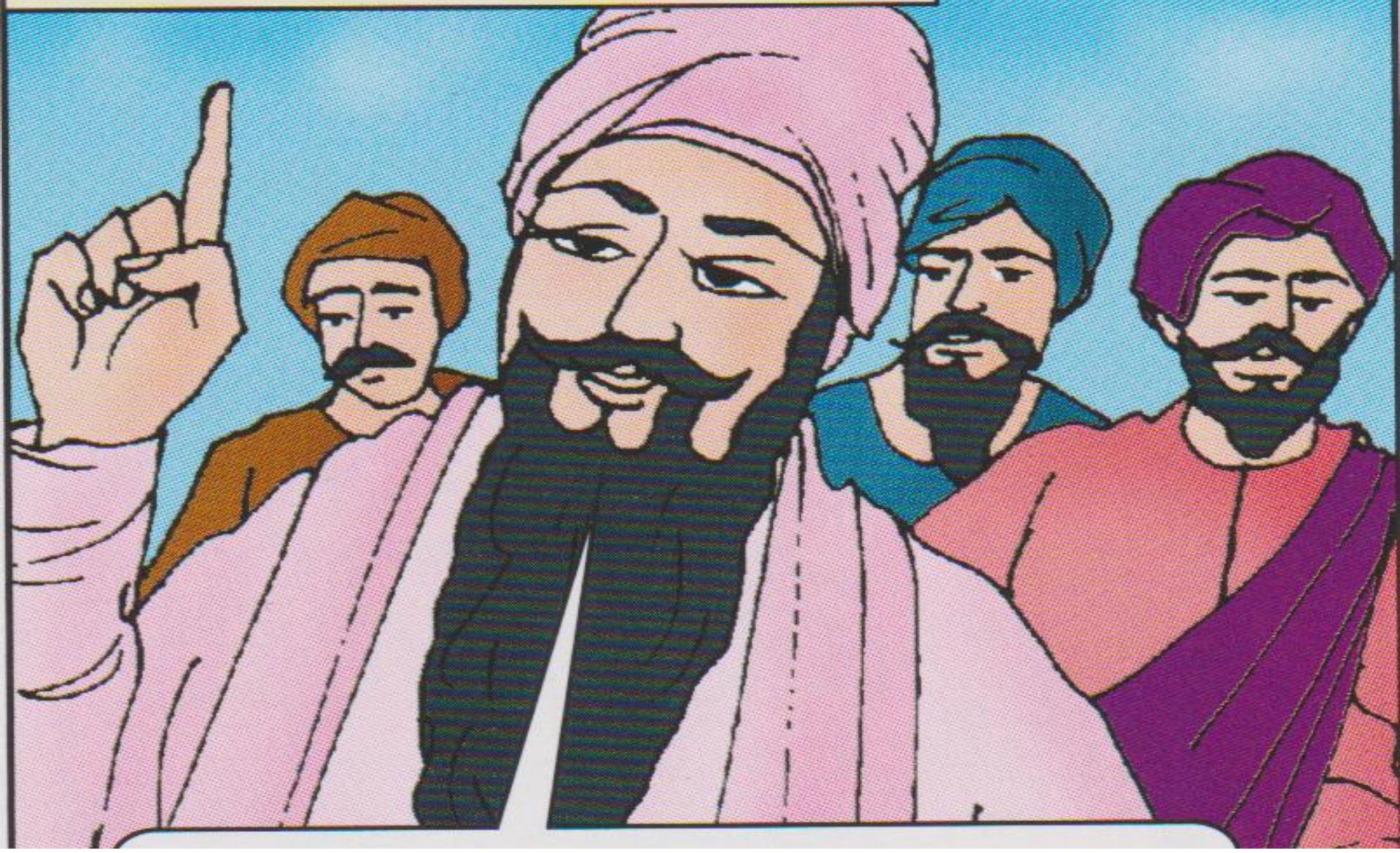
The Adi Granth shall contain the compositions, values, philosophies and teachings of the Sikh Gurus.



He collected the hymns, poems and teachings of the first four Gurus and added his own compositions to it.



He also selected from the writings of Hindu and Muslim saints.

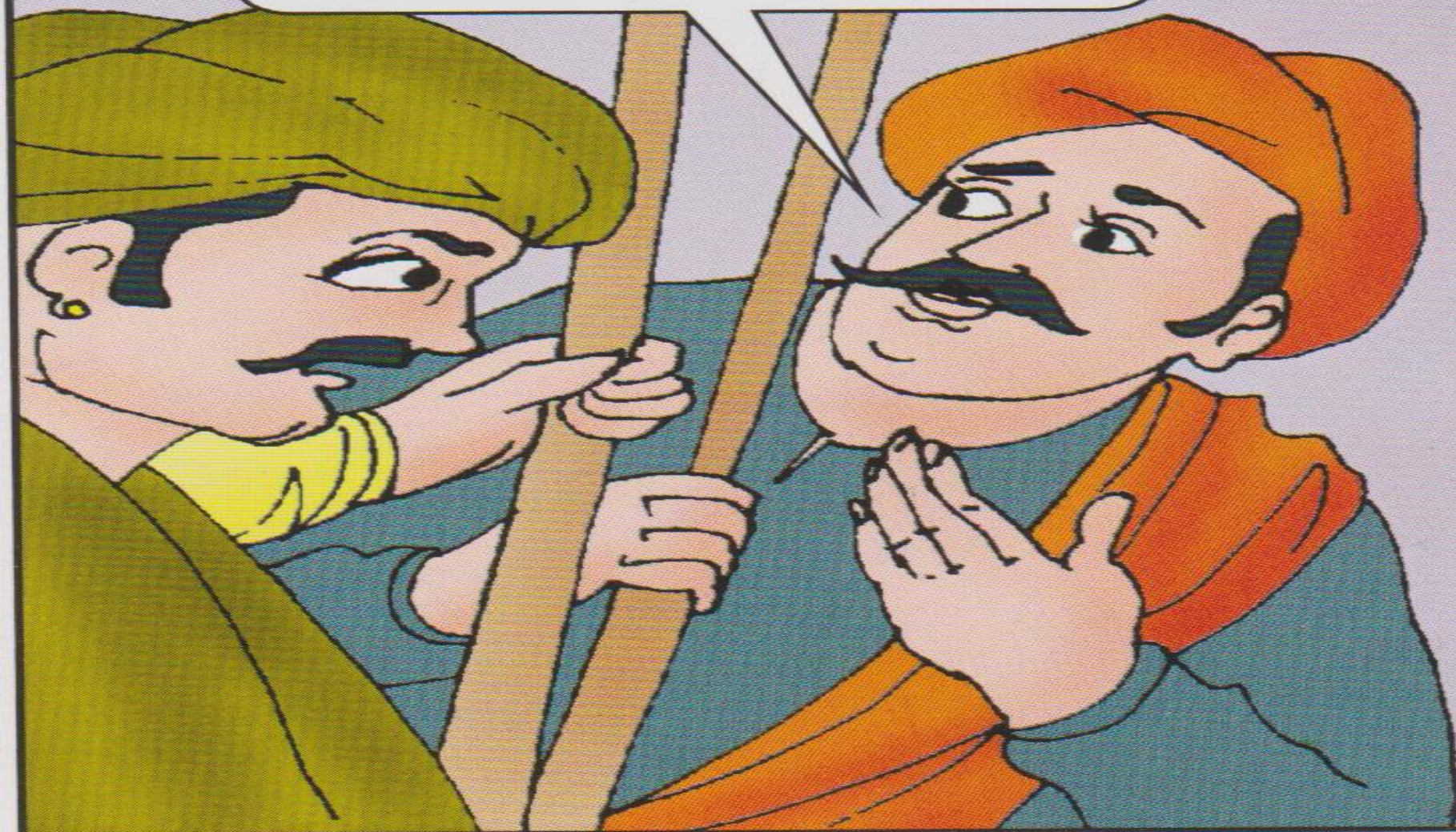


Our scripture will be based on
the concept of Unity of God
and the Brotherhood of Man.



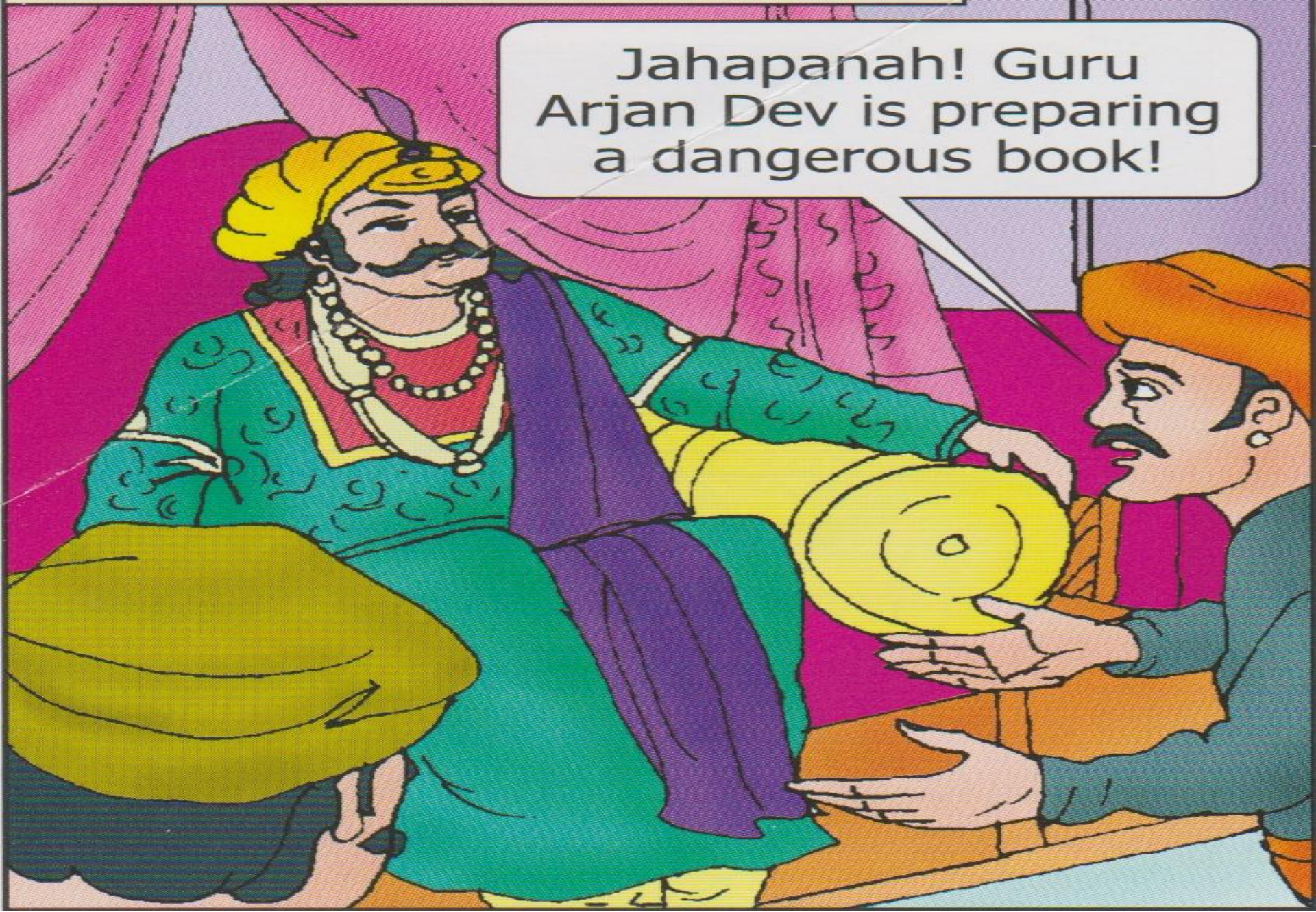
While Arjan Dev was busy this way,
his enemies were busy too.

Let us tell King Akbar
about this holy book!

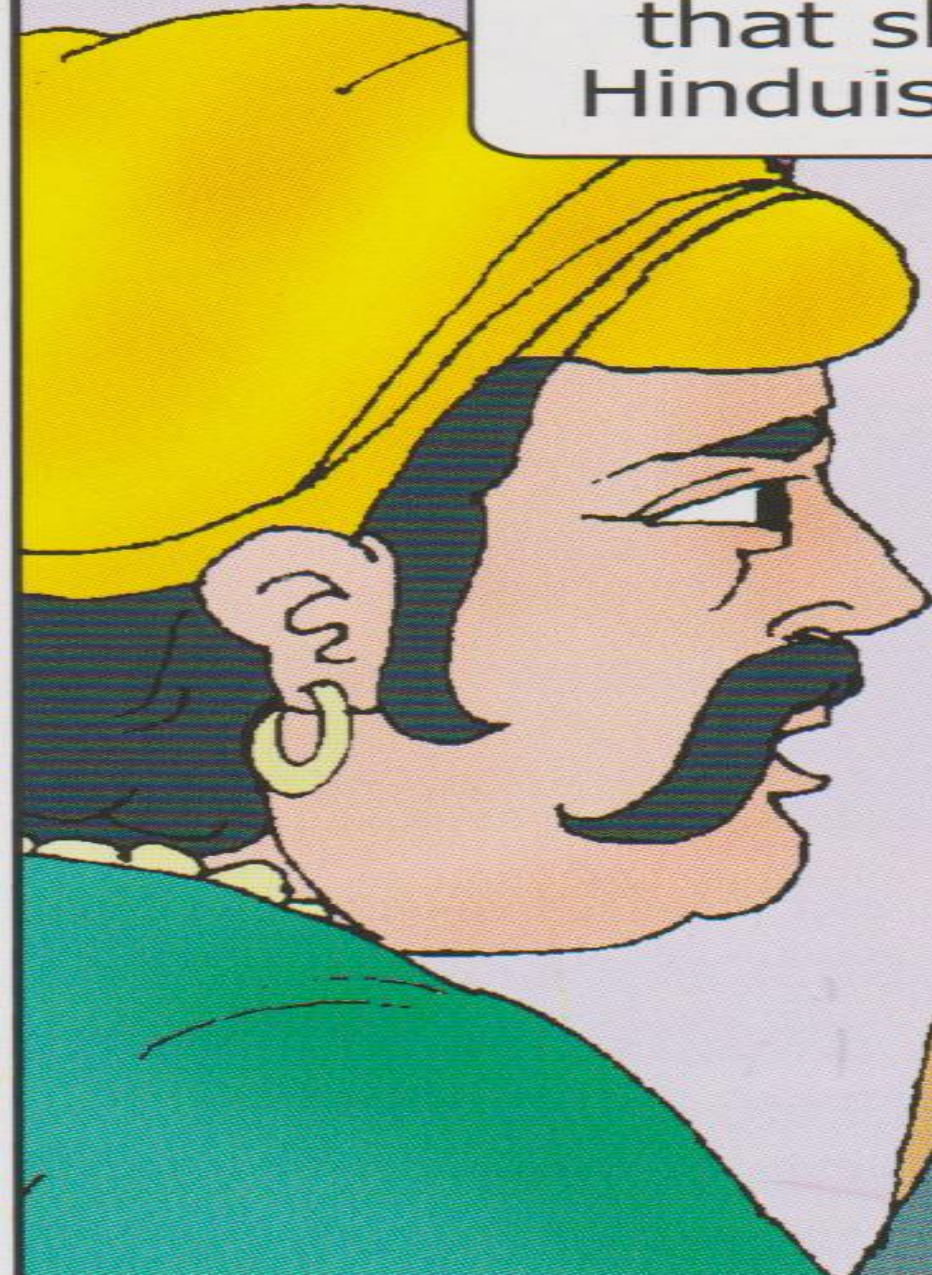


They approached King Akbar.

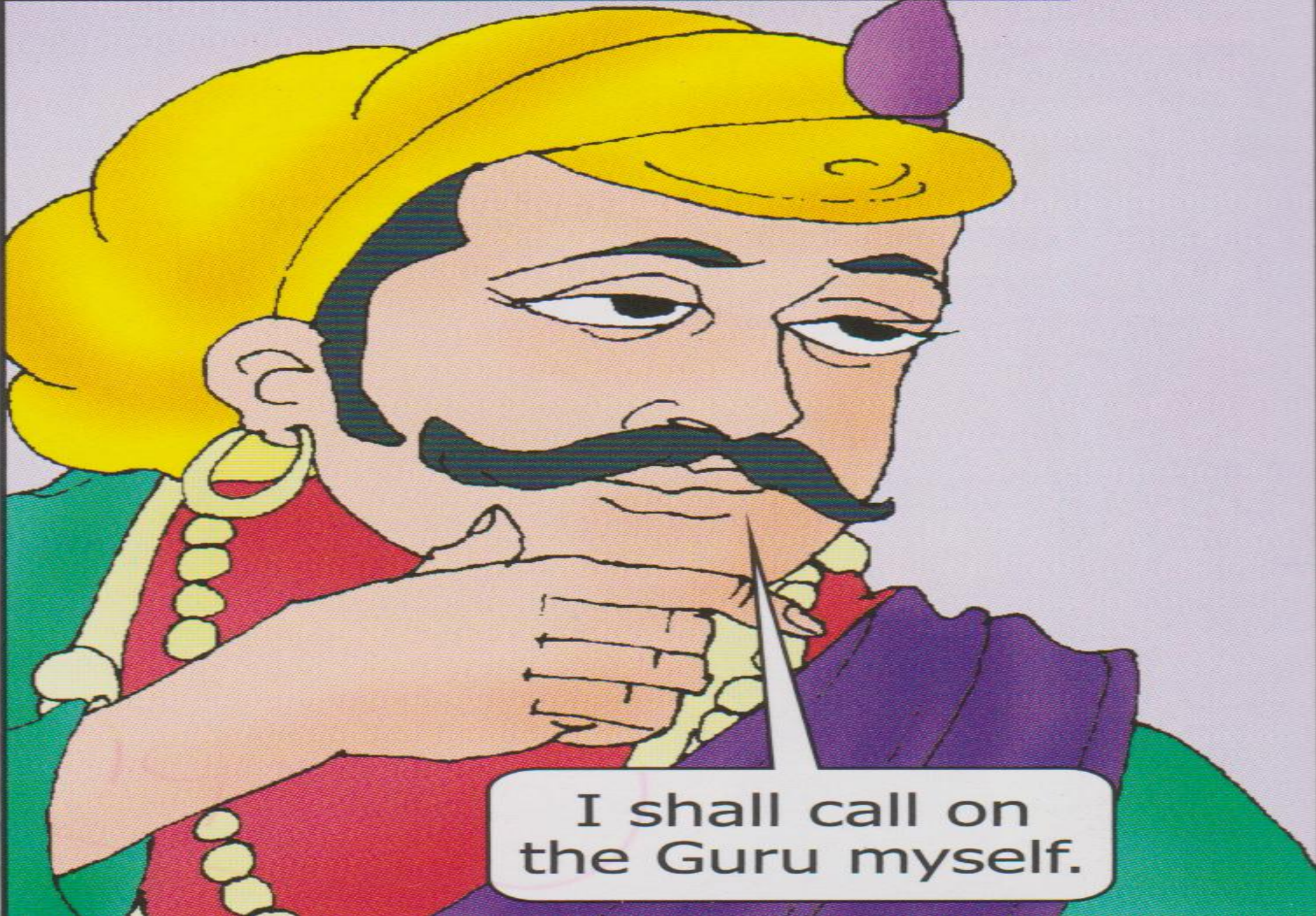
Jahapanah! Guru Arjan Dev is preparing a dangerous book!



Yes! It contains passages that show Islam and Hinduism in poor light!

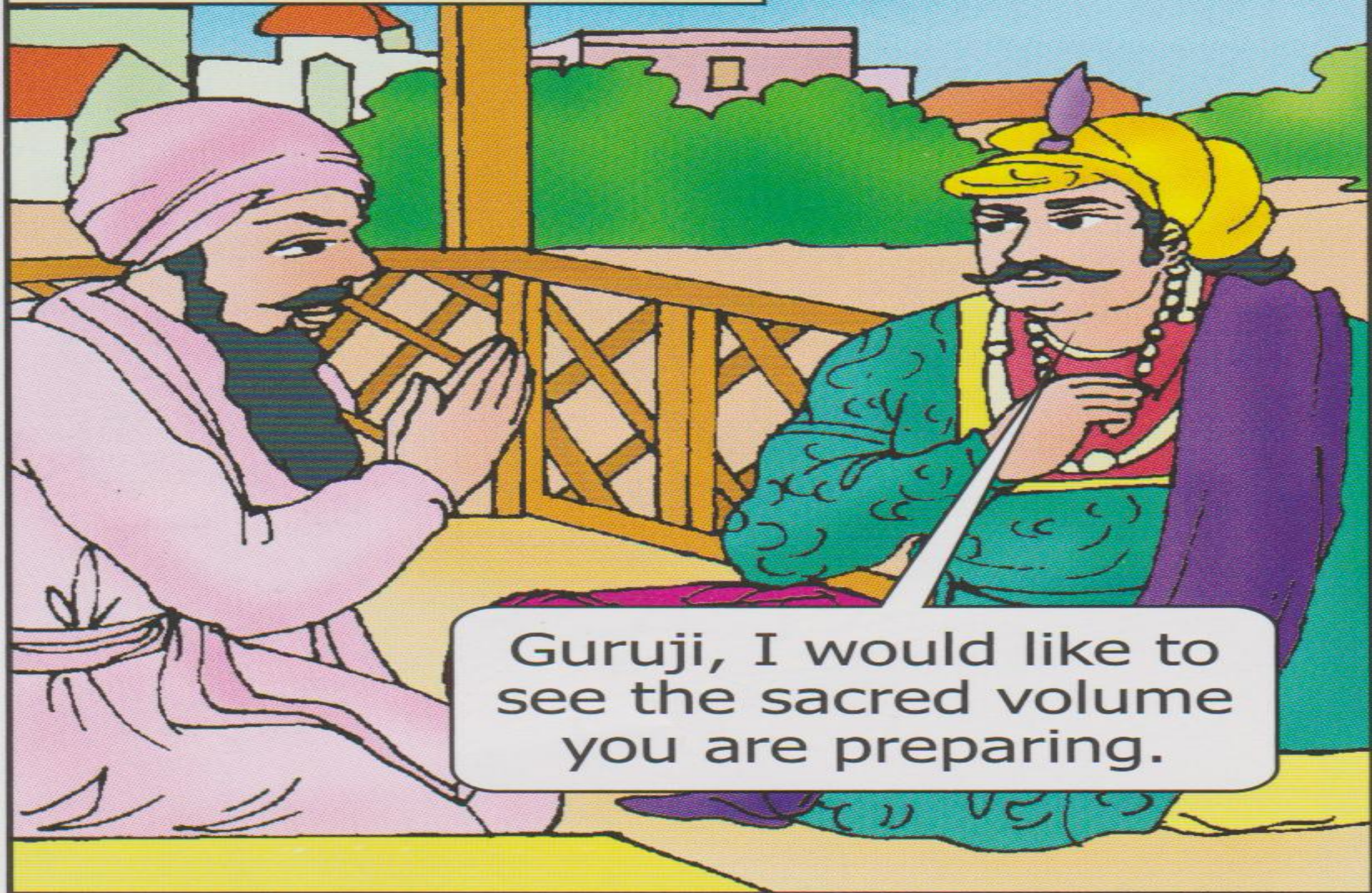


Akbar decided to investigate.



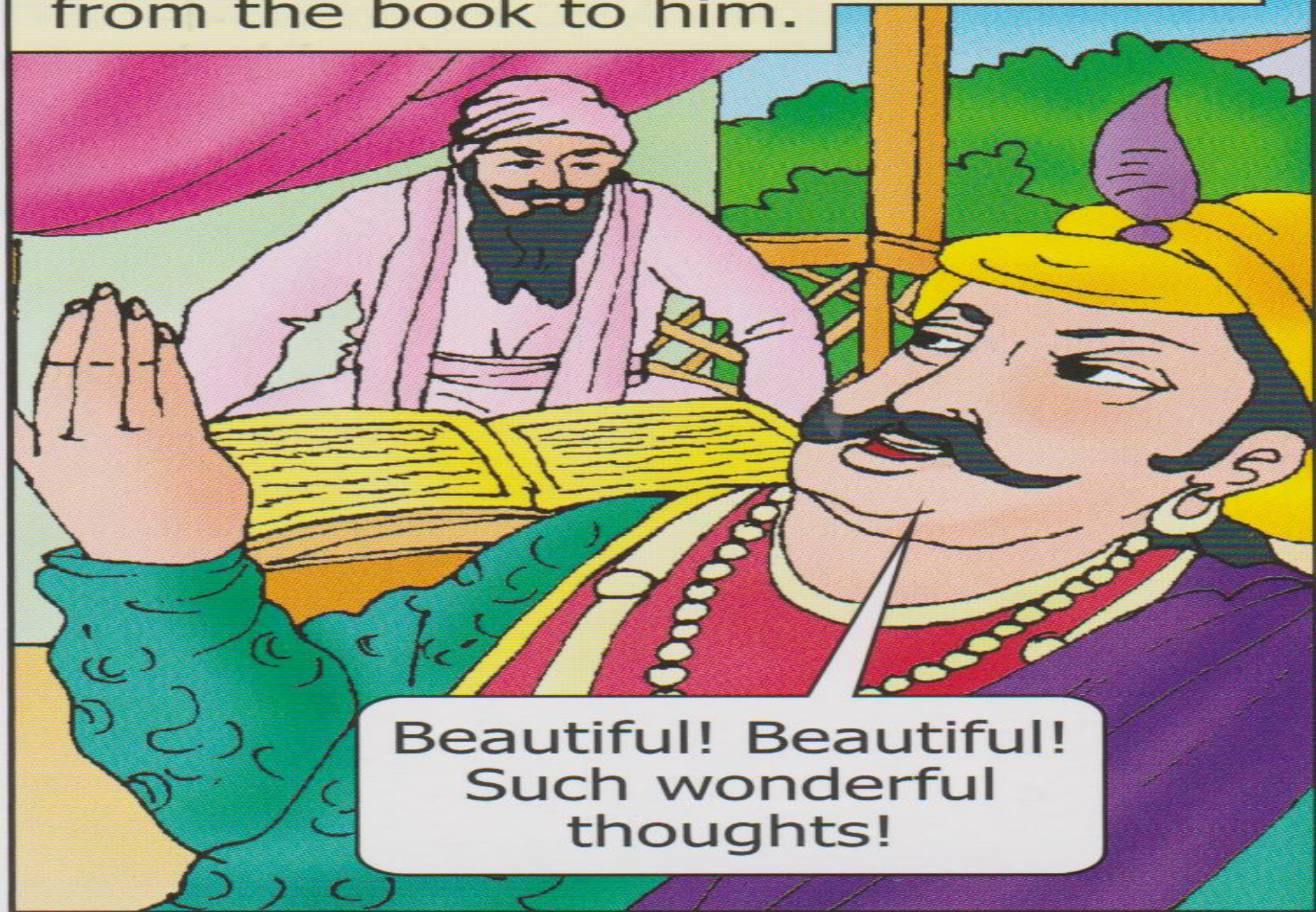
I shall call on the Guru myself.

Akbar visited Guru Arjan Dev enroute to the North in 1598.



Guruji, I would like to see the sacred volume you are preparing.

Guru Arjan Dev read out passages from the book to him.



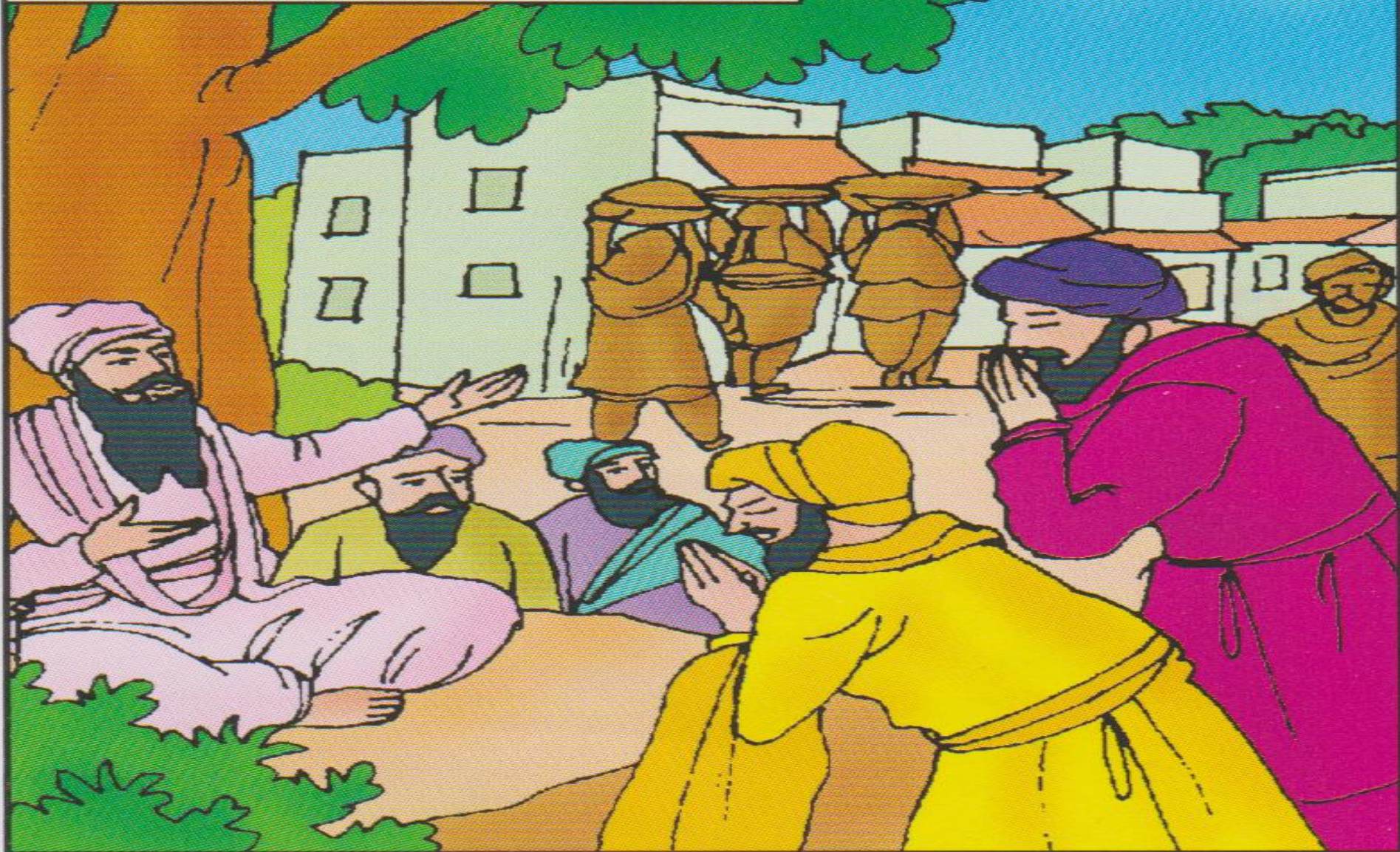
Beautiful! Beautiful!
Such wonderful
thoughts!

He was so pleased that he readily agreed to the Guru's request.



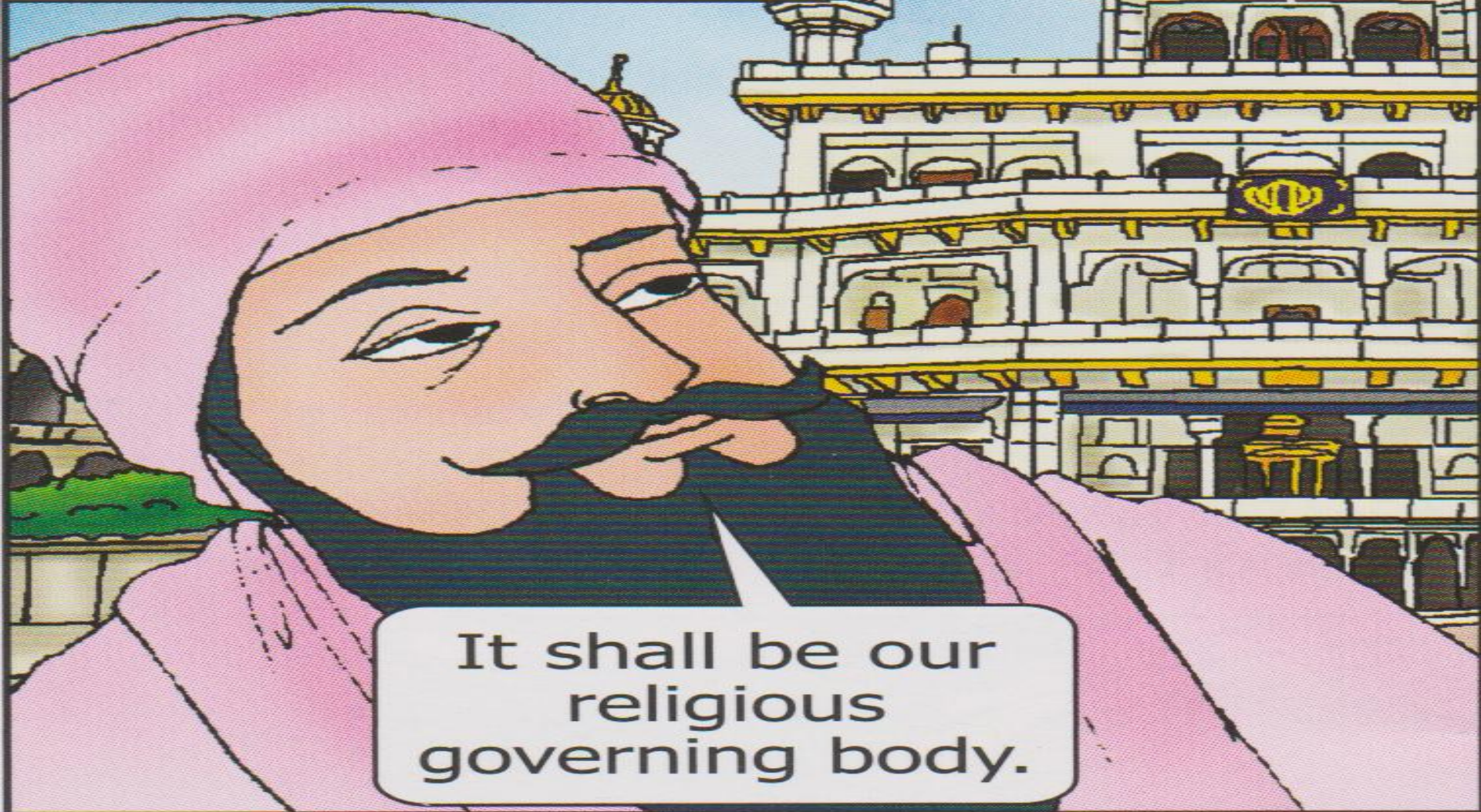
Could you please return the revenue collected from the local

Guru Arjan Dev became even more popular with the local farmers and zamindars* after this.




*A landowner, also a collector of land revenue.

Guru Arjan Dev also began the construction of the Akal Takht, the Throne of the Almighty. His successor, Guru Hargobind Sahib completed it.



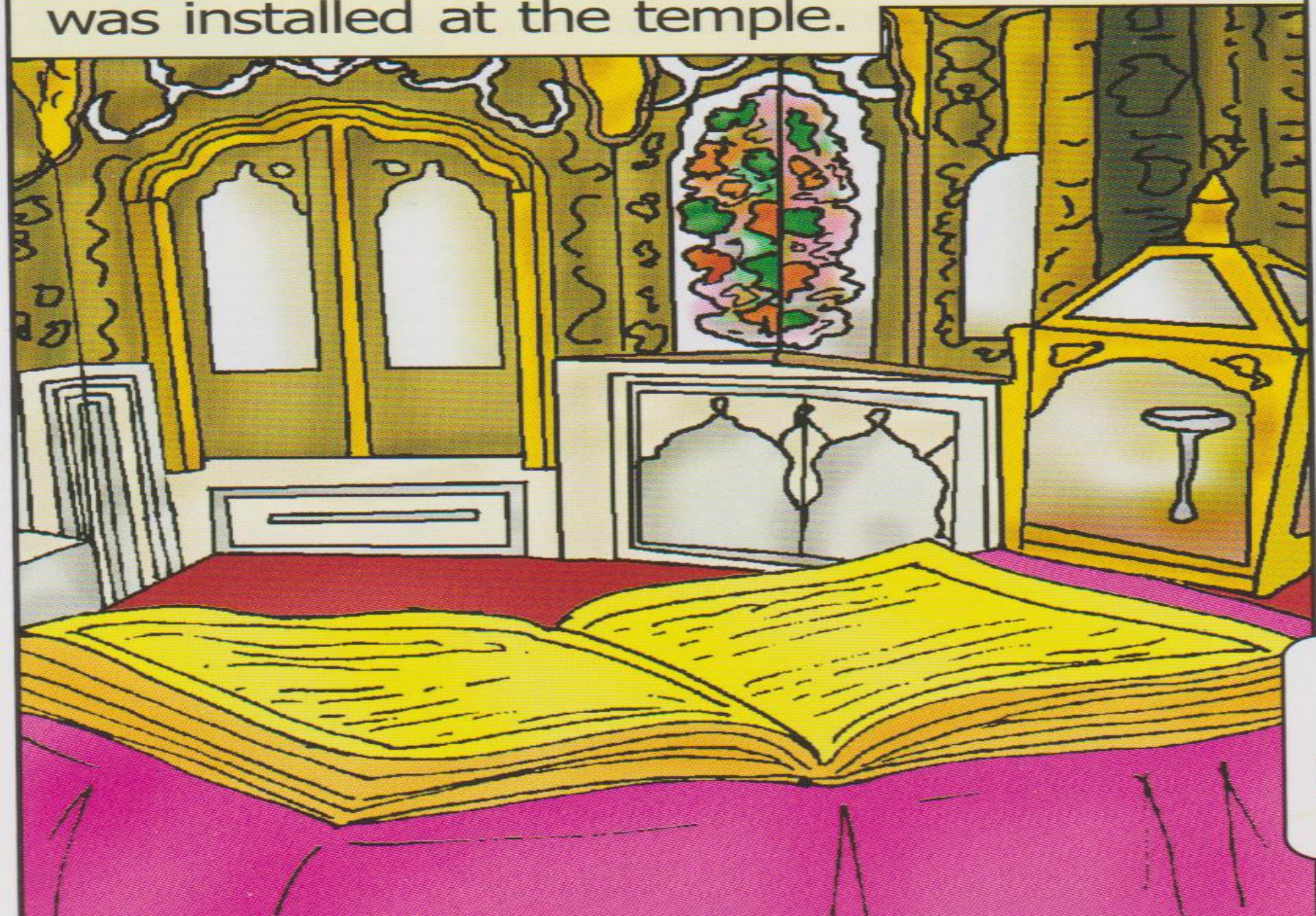
It shall be our
religious
governing body.

Two flags were set up in front of the Akal Takht.

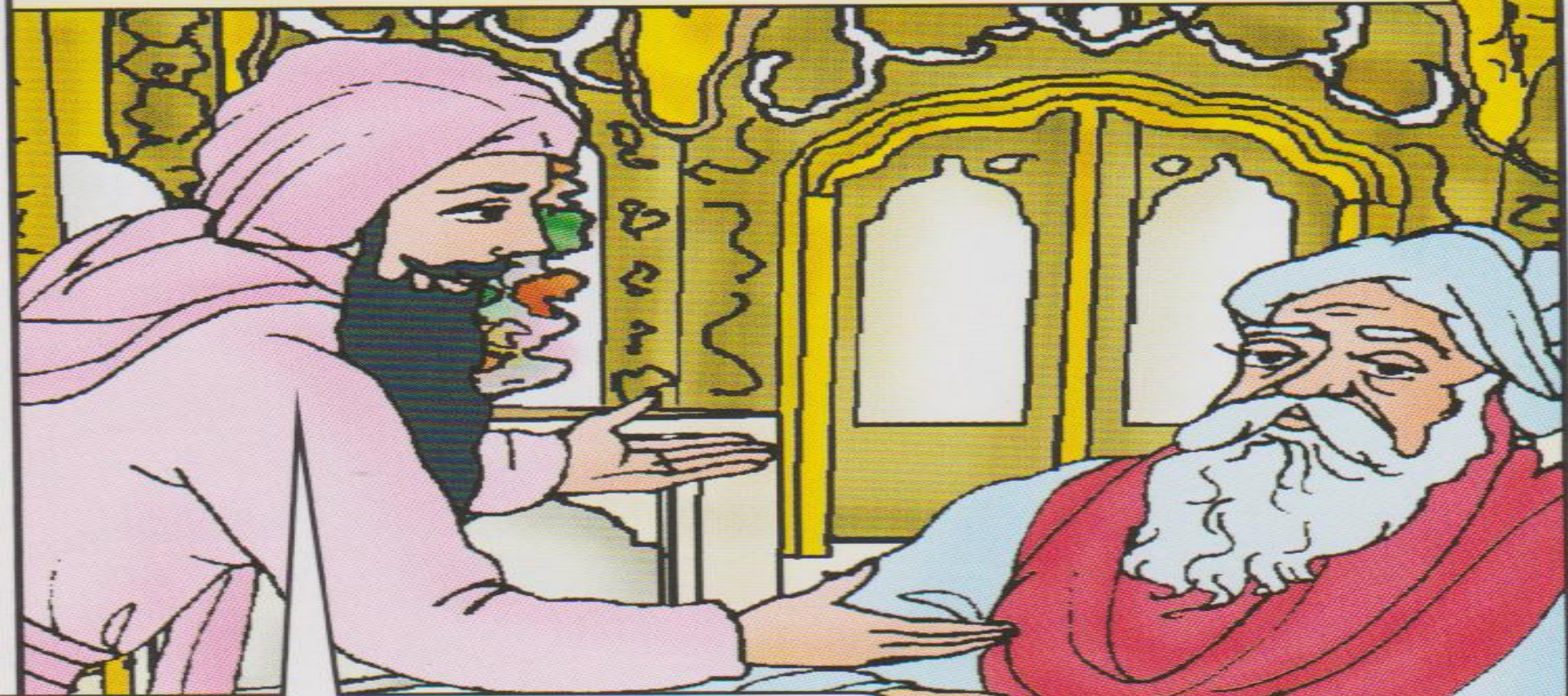


The two flags will represent earthly and spiritual authority.

In 1604, the first volume of the Adi Granth was installed at the temple.

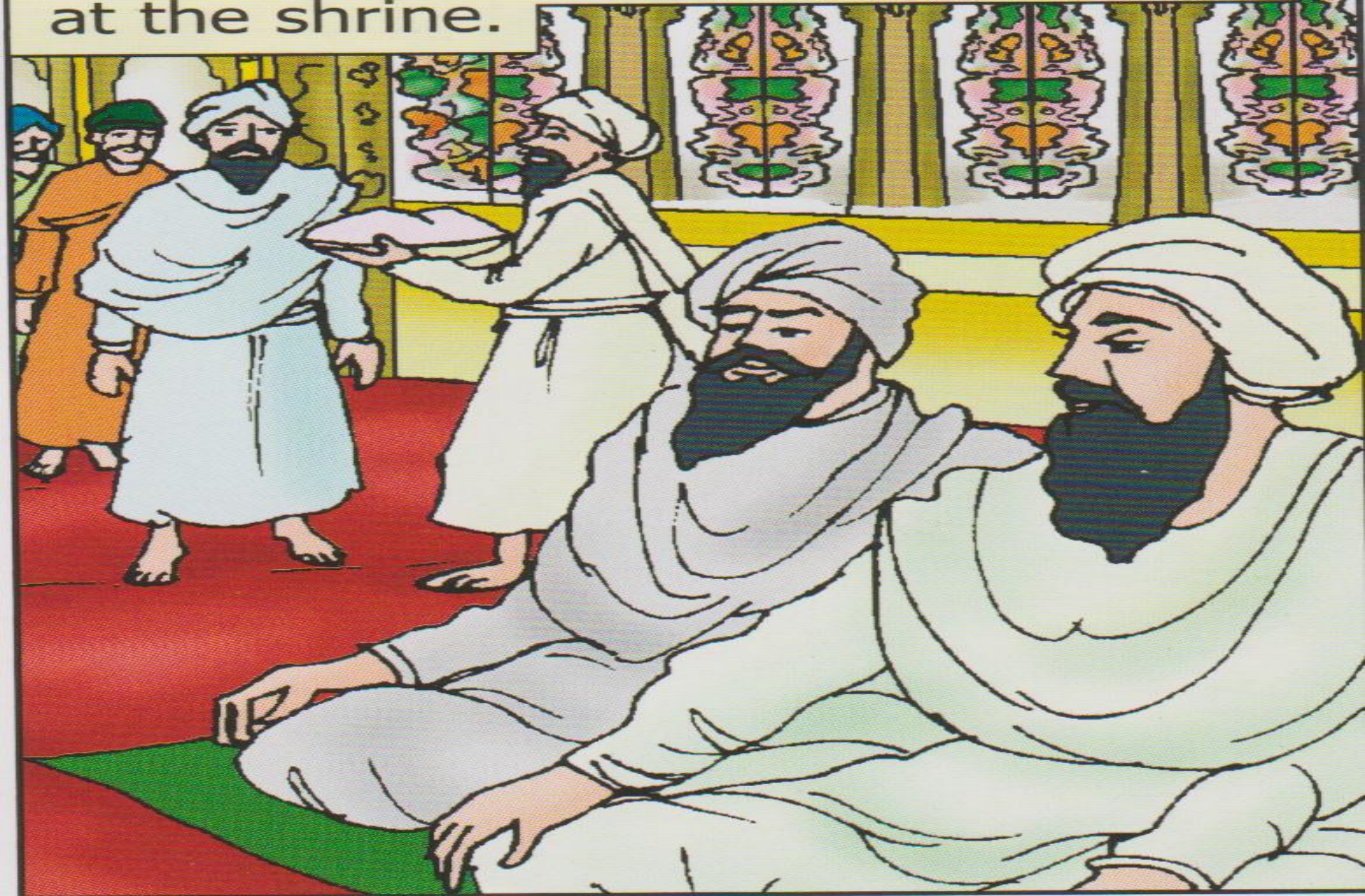


Guru Arjan Dev then appointed
Baba Budha Ji as the first reader.

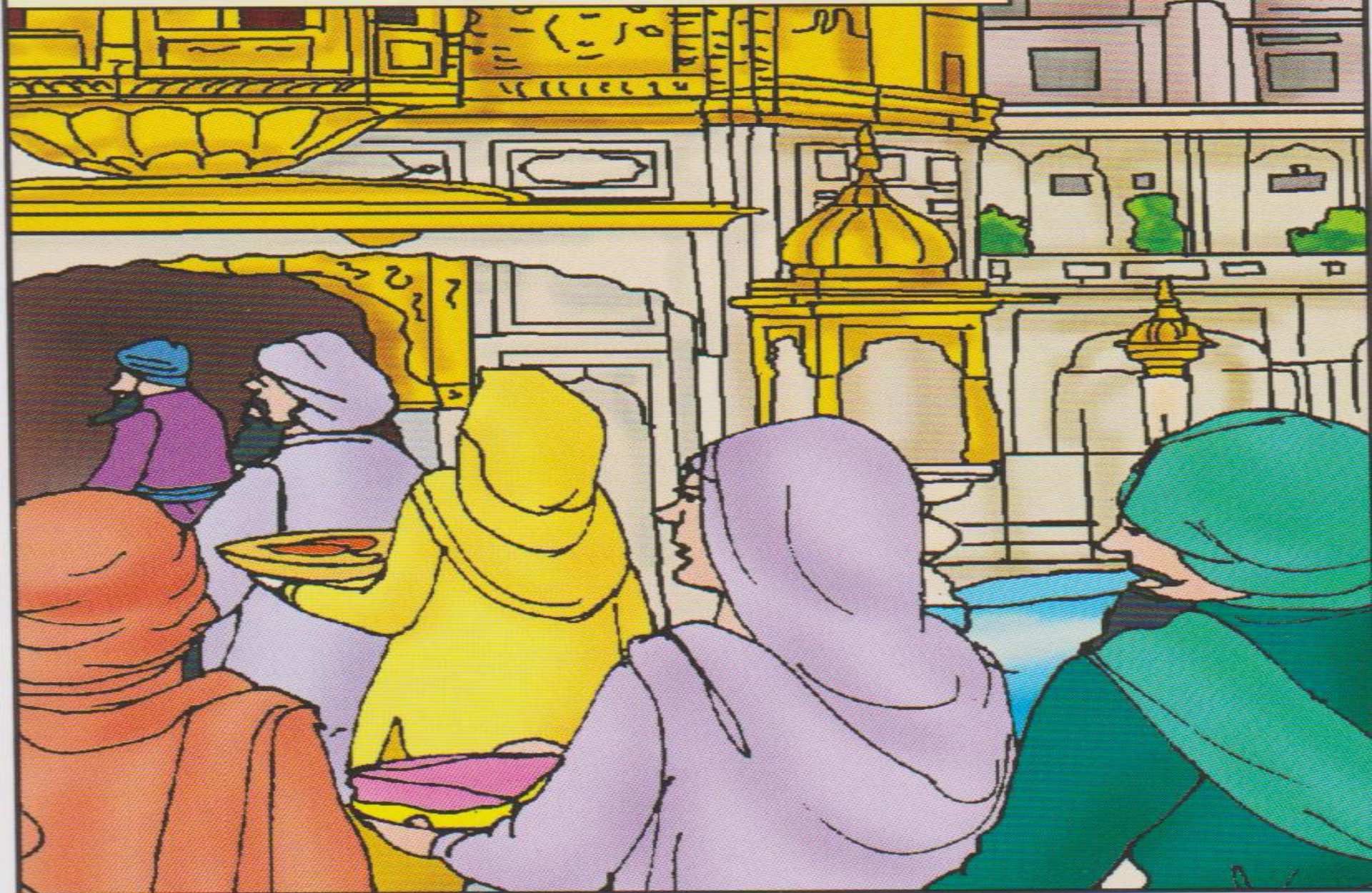


You shall be the first
Granthi . Read the
holy book to the Sikhs
and enlighten them!

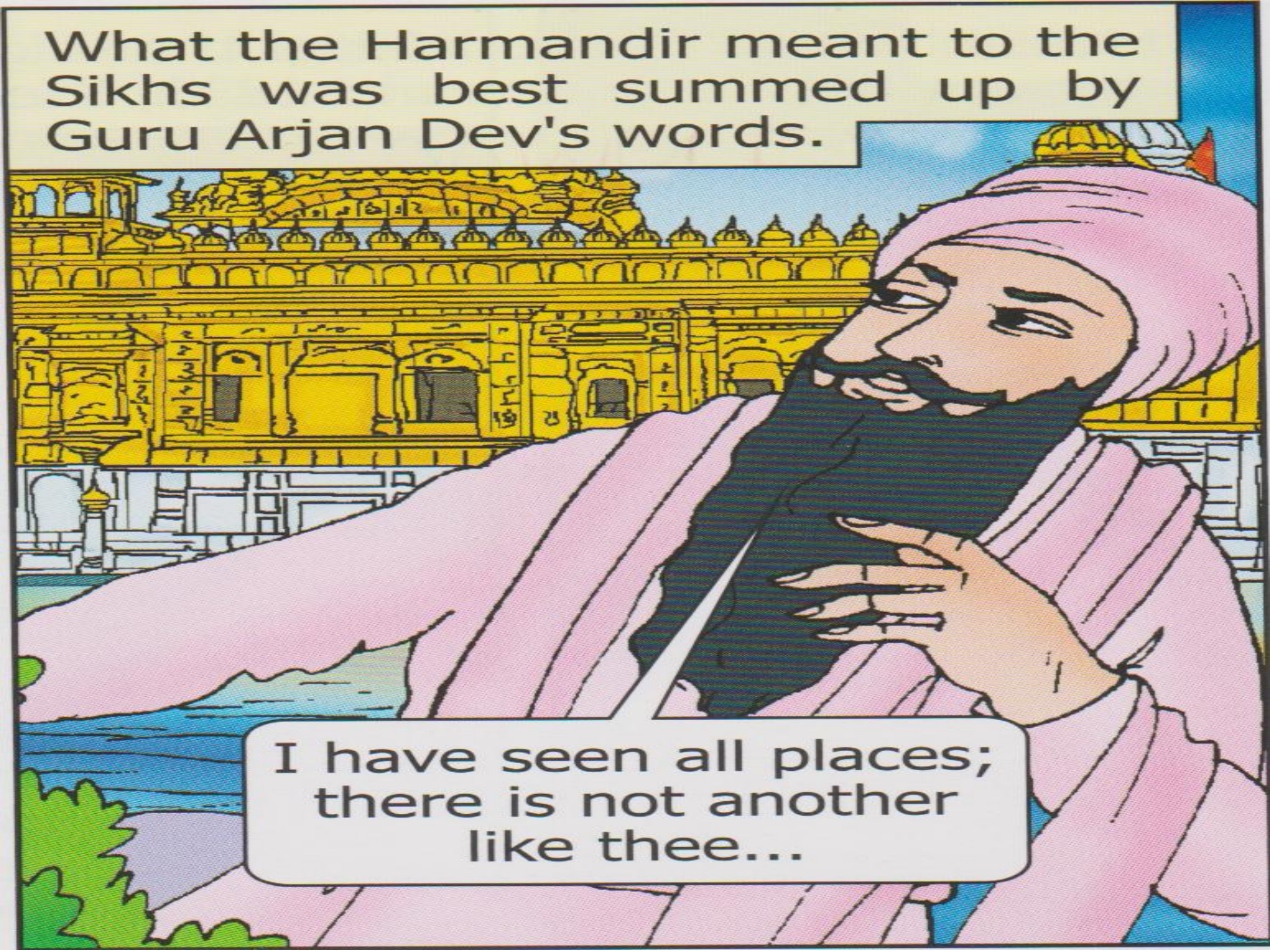
From that very day, regular worship and other religious services started at the shrine.



Soon, the Harmandir became the principal place of worship for the Sikhs.

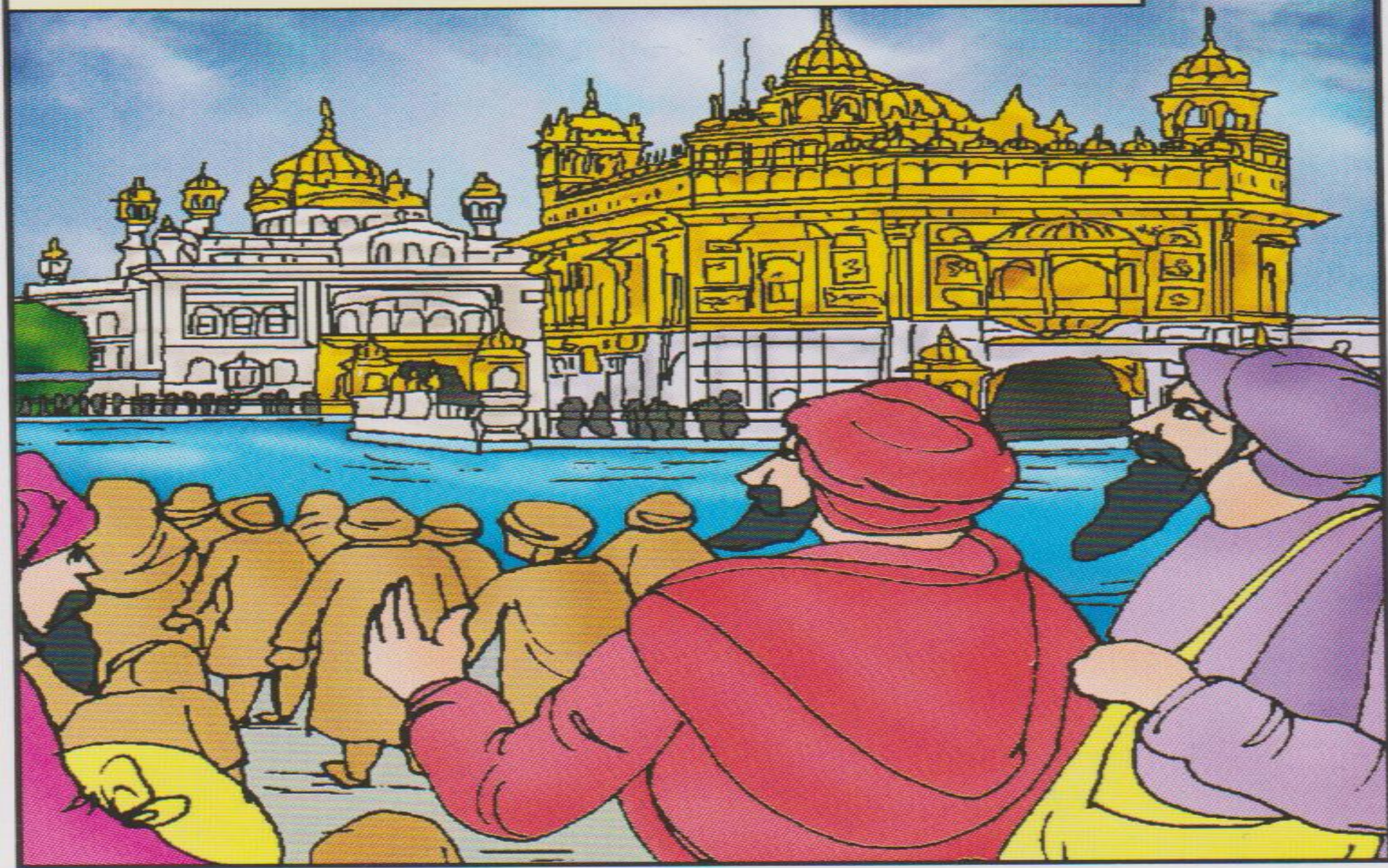


What the Harmandir meant to the Sikhs was best summed up by Guru Arjan Dev's words.

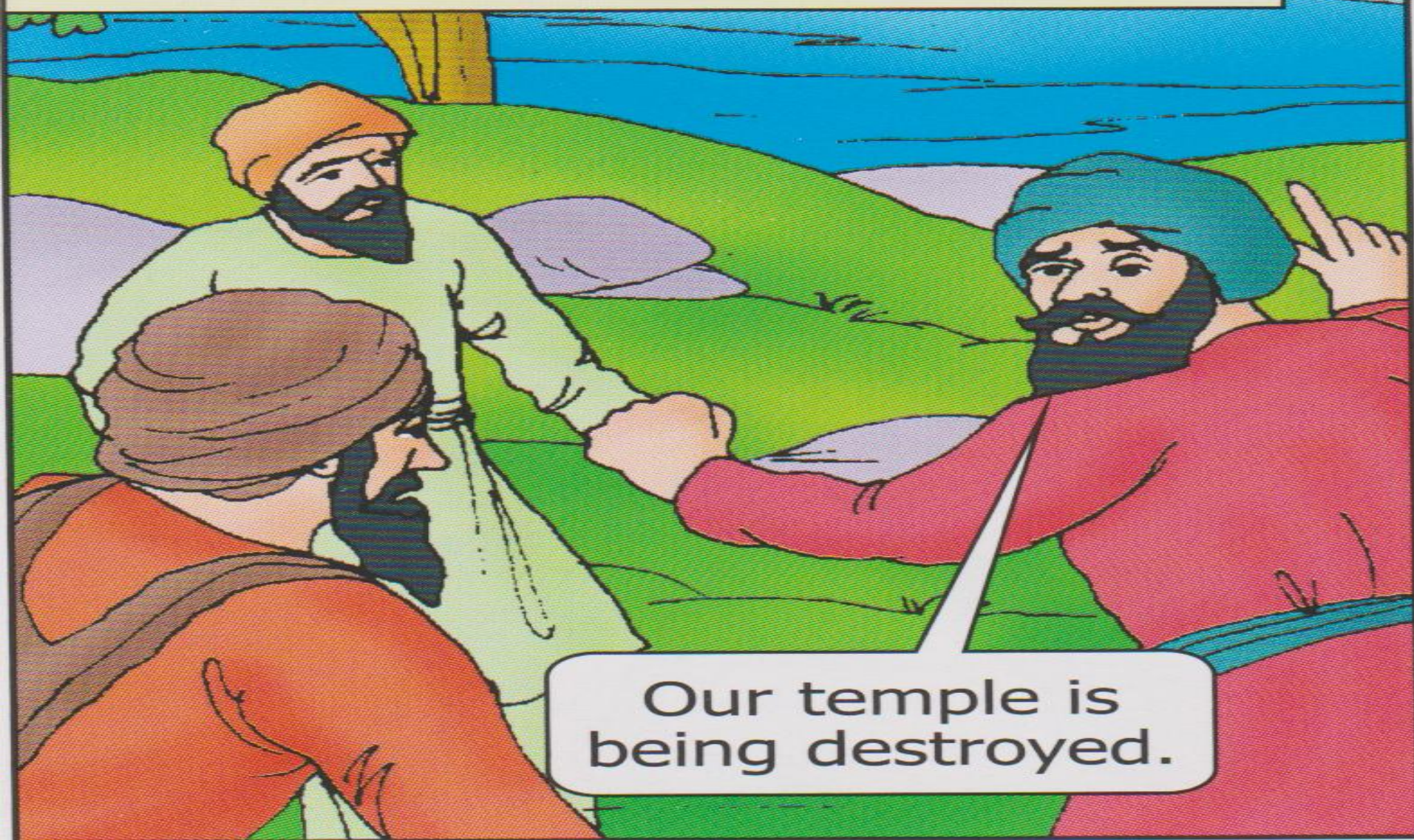


I have seen all places;
there is not another
like thee...

After this, the temple gained the status of Ath Sath Tirath, the Shrine of the Sixty-Eight Holy Places.

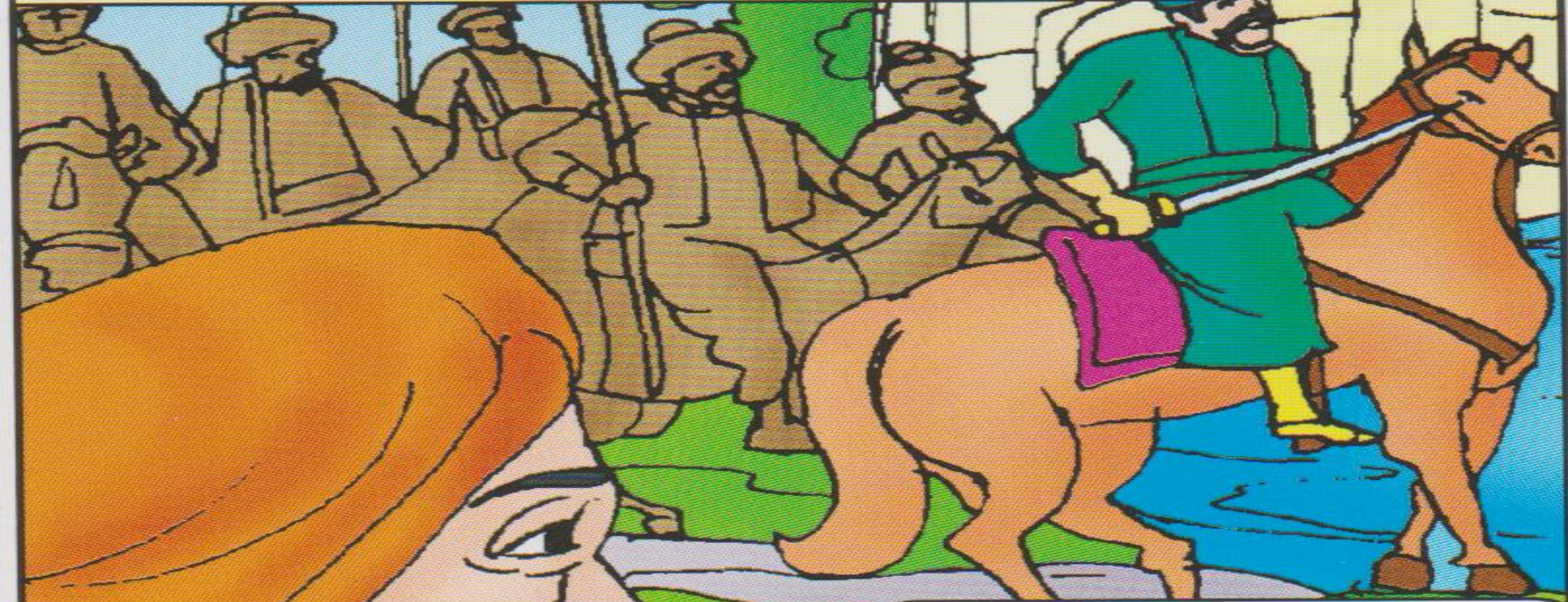


From then on, till the mid-1700's, the succeeding Gurus were constantly involved in defending their religion and their temple against invaders.



Our temple is being destroyed.

In the mid 18th Century, the temple was attacked by the Afghans.



It is Jahan Khan, Ahmed Shah Abdali's general. He is attacking the temple.

By now, the Sikhs were building up an army. Finally, they were strong enough to meet the invaders in a war outside Amritsar.



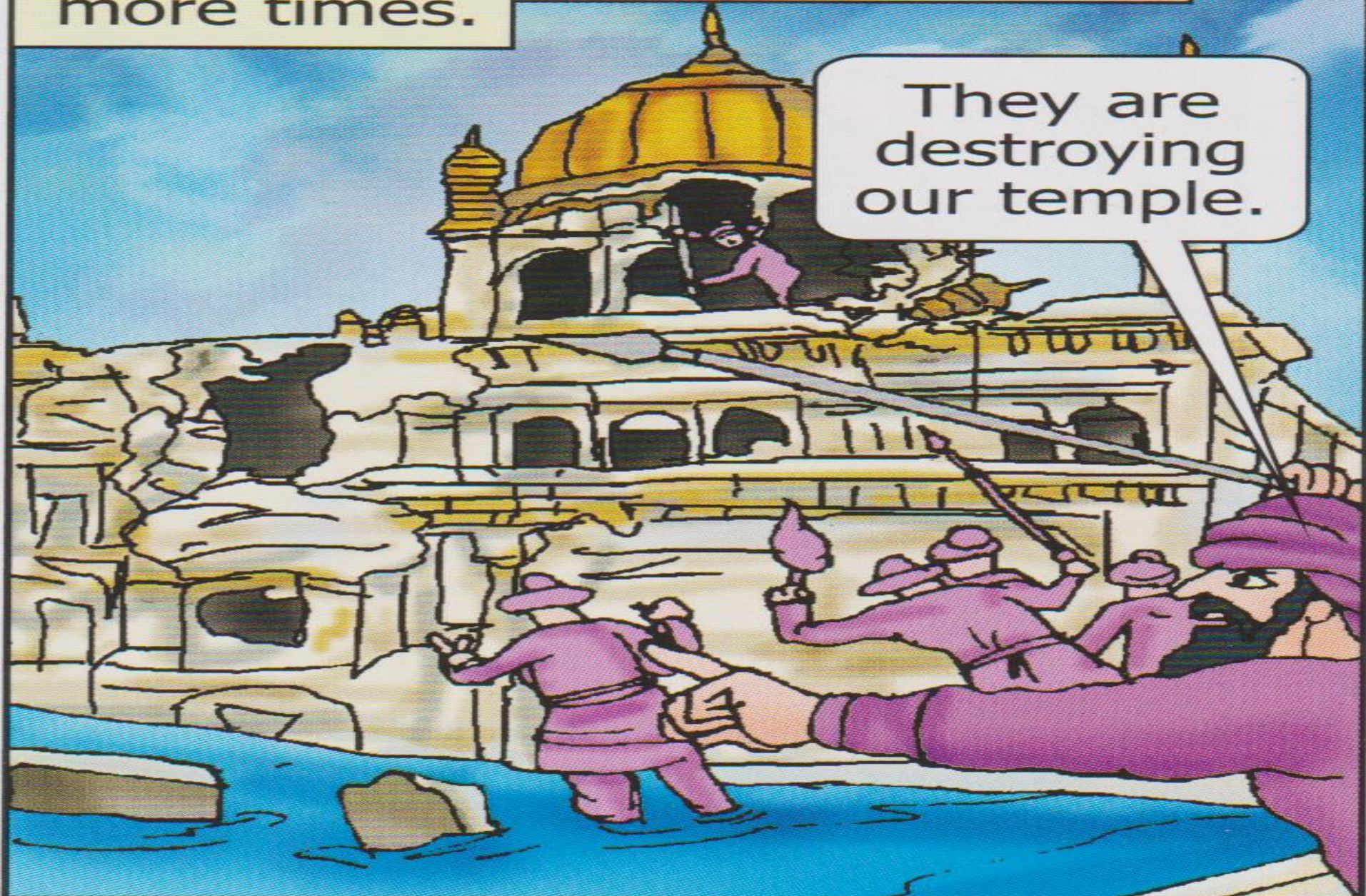
Our army is getting bigger and stronger.

Jahan Khan's army, was destroyed and he was killed by the commander of the Sikh army Sardar, Dayal Singh.

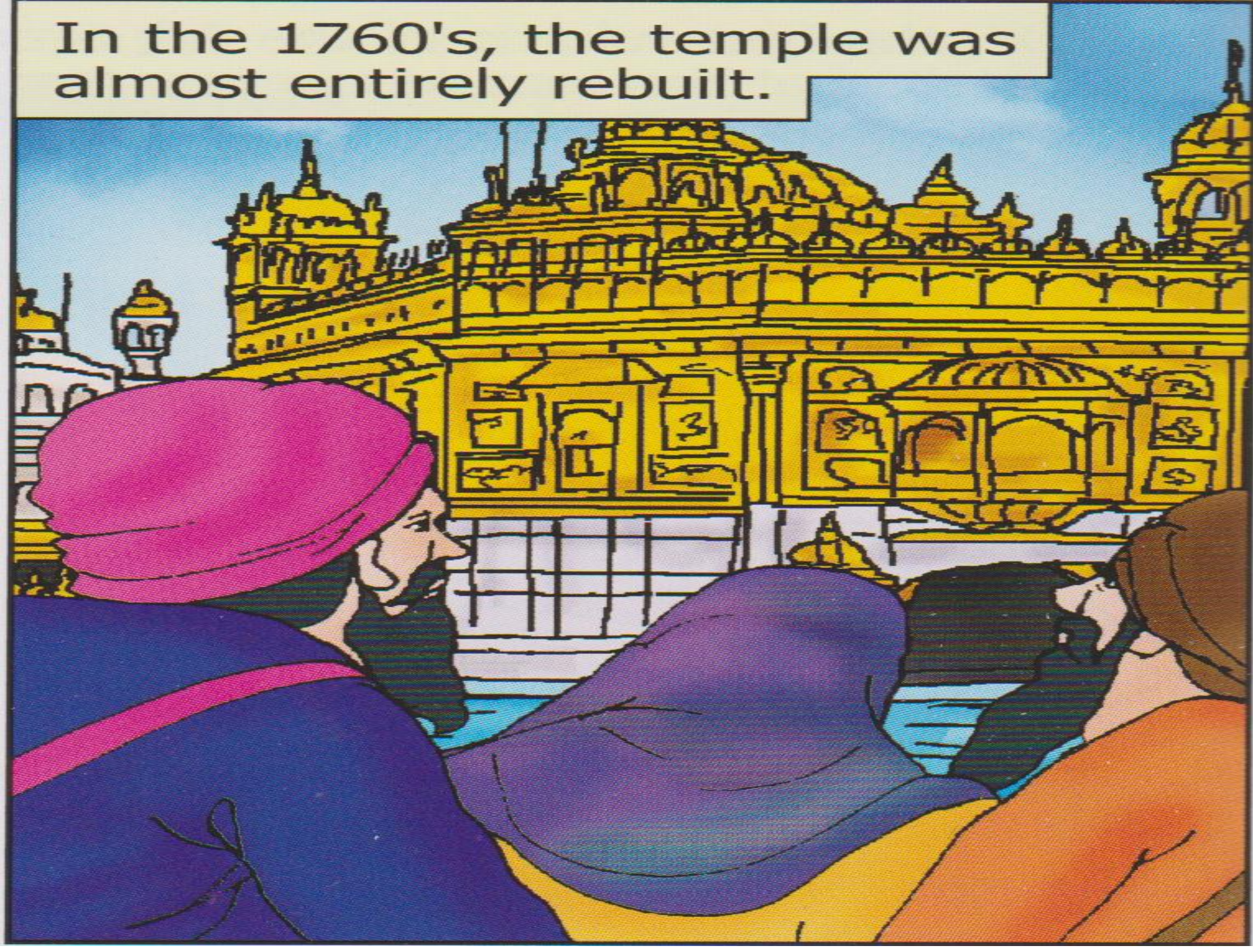


But, the attacks continued and the temple was damaged two more times.

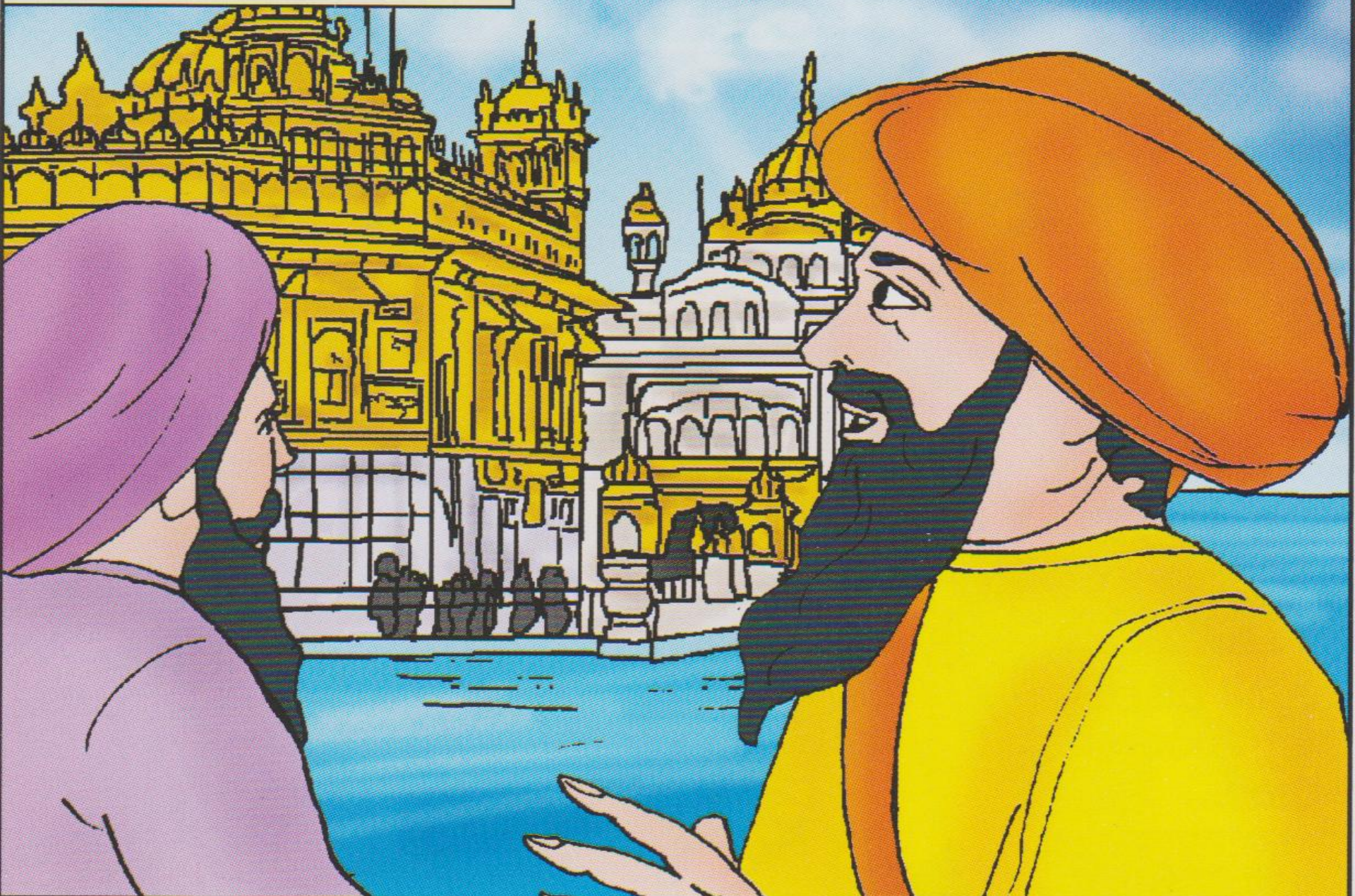
They are destroying our temple.



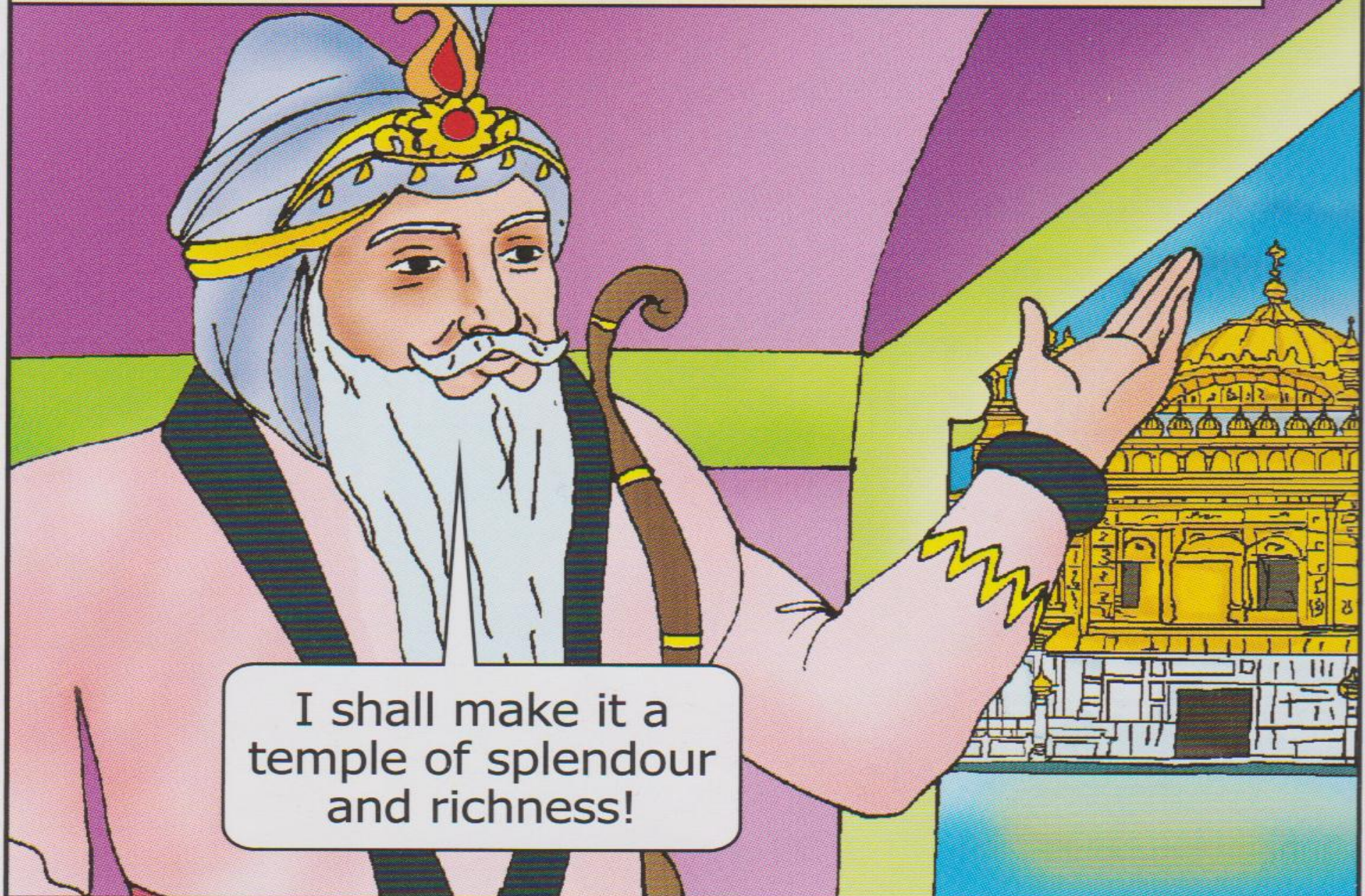
In the 1760's, the temple was almost entirely rebuilt.



The temple became a blend of Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture.



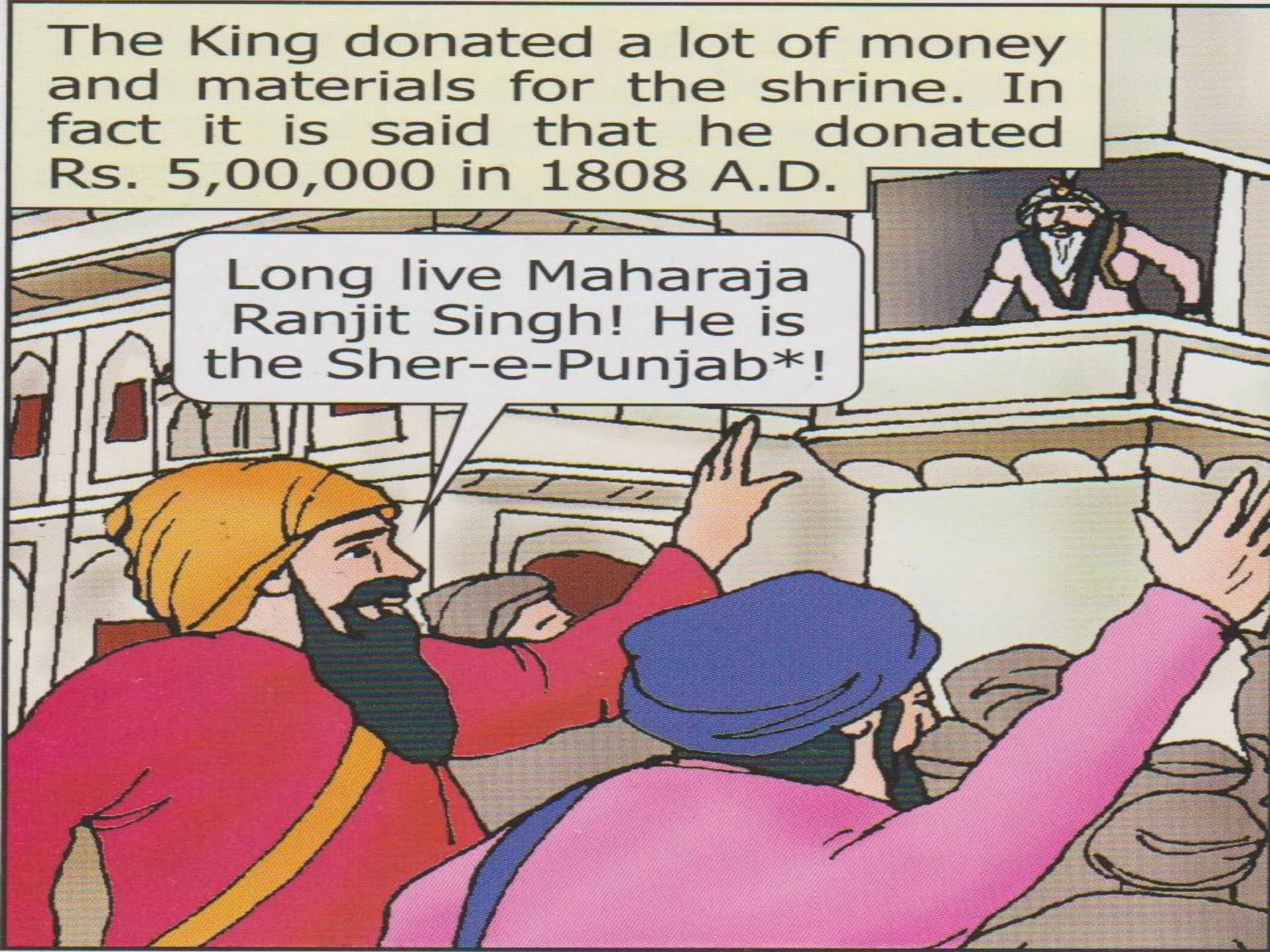
Under the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, between 1780 and 1839, the temple underwent further renovation.



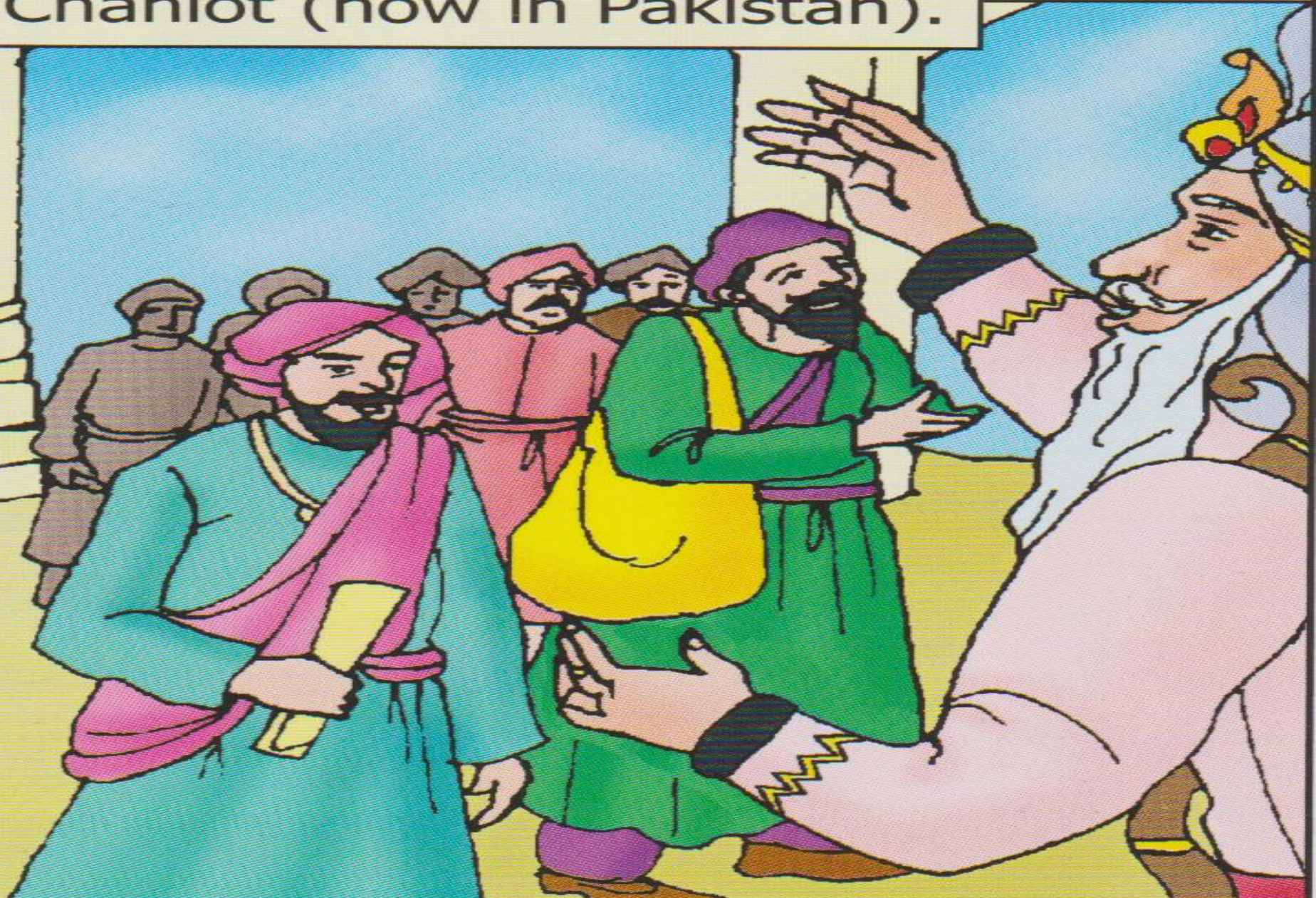
I shall make it a temple of splendour and richness!

The King donated a lot of money and materials for the shrine. In fact it is said that he donated Rs. 5,00,000 in 1808 A.D.

Long live Maharaja Ranjit Singh! He is the Sher-e-Punjab*!



He invited skilled Muslim architects, masons and wood-carvers from Chaniot (now in Pakistan).



He ordered the temple be decorated with magnificent marble work...



...large quantities of dazzling precious stones and golden gilding.

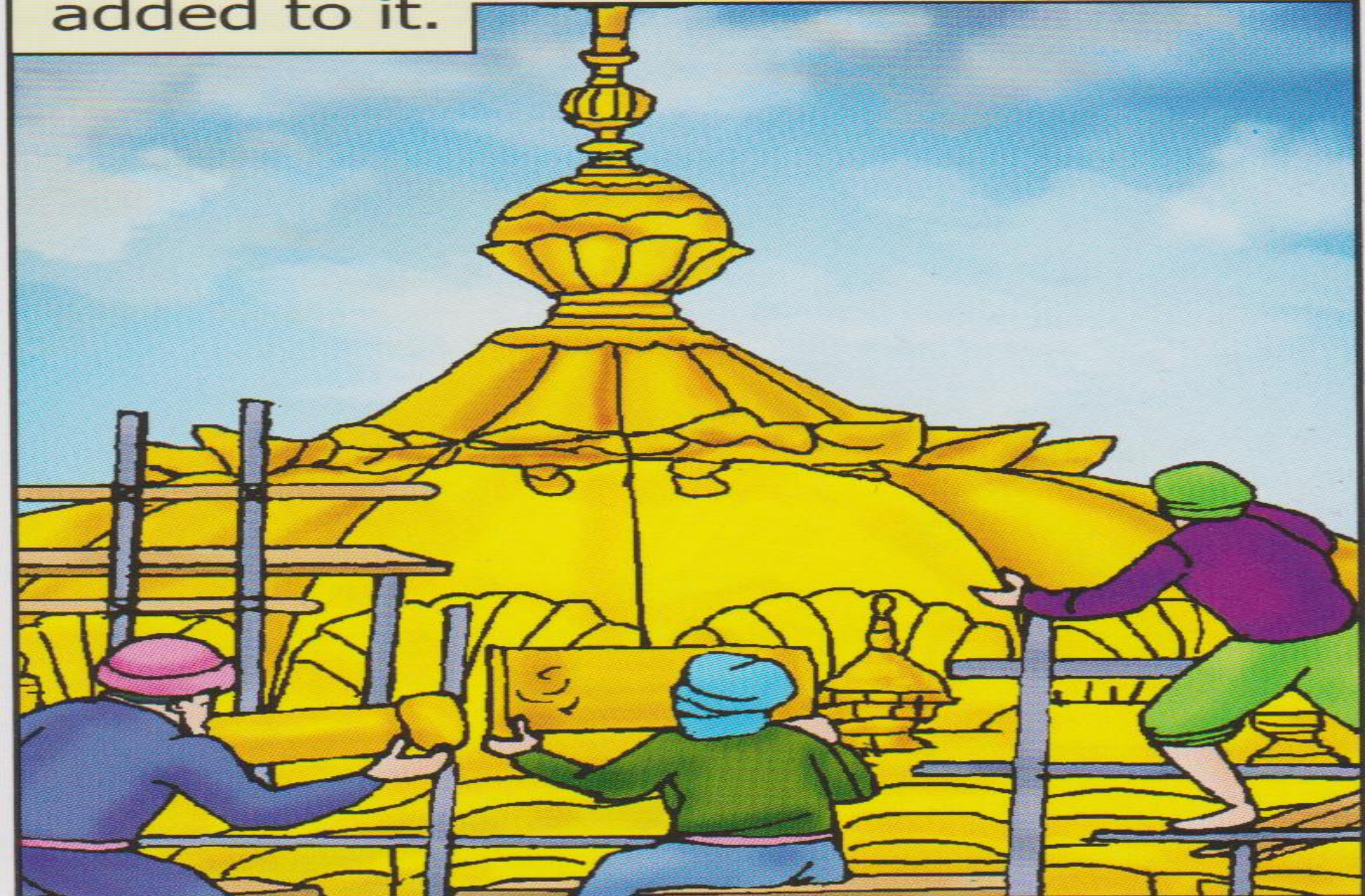


The most significant change was in the dome.

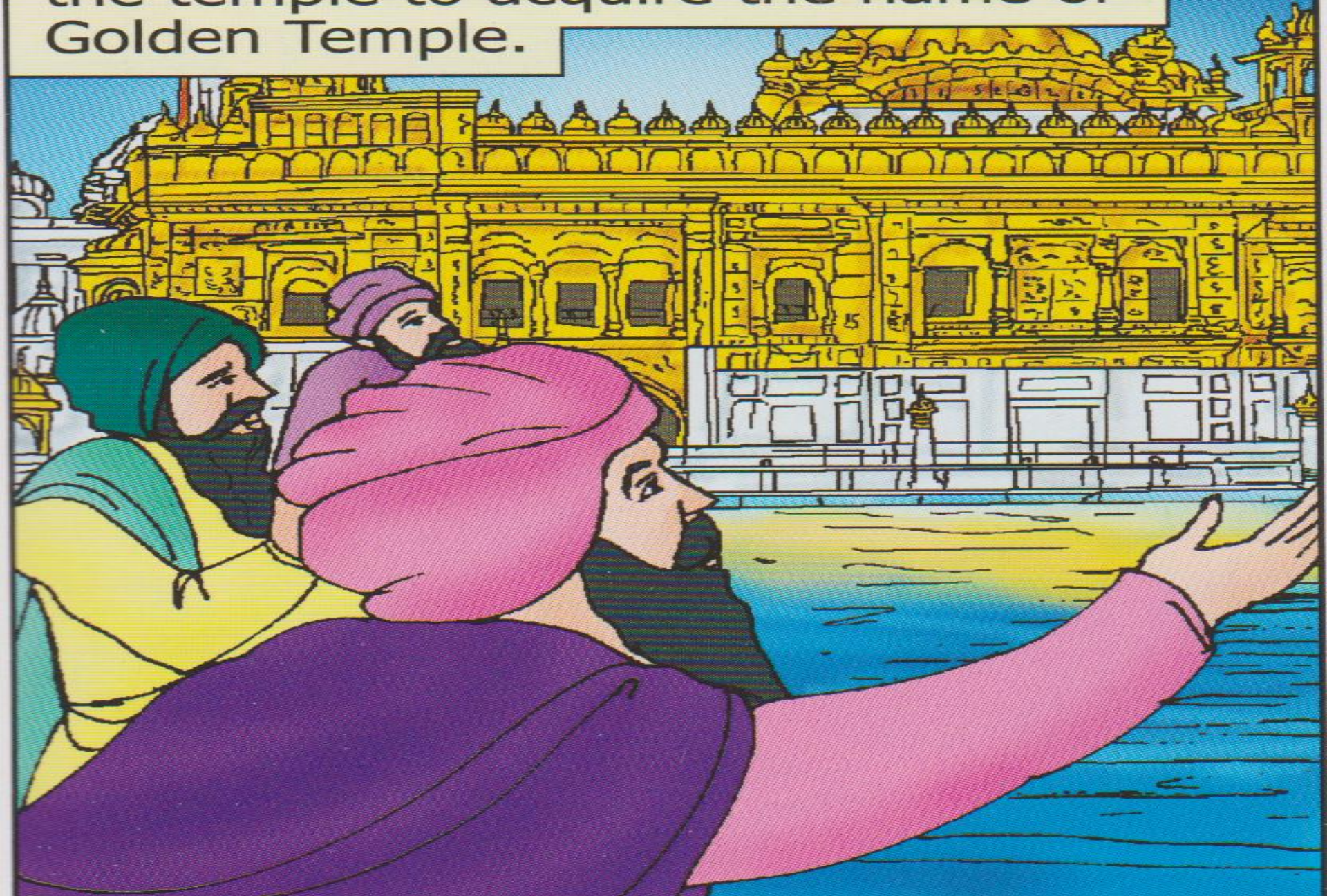


Order 100 kilograms of gold!

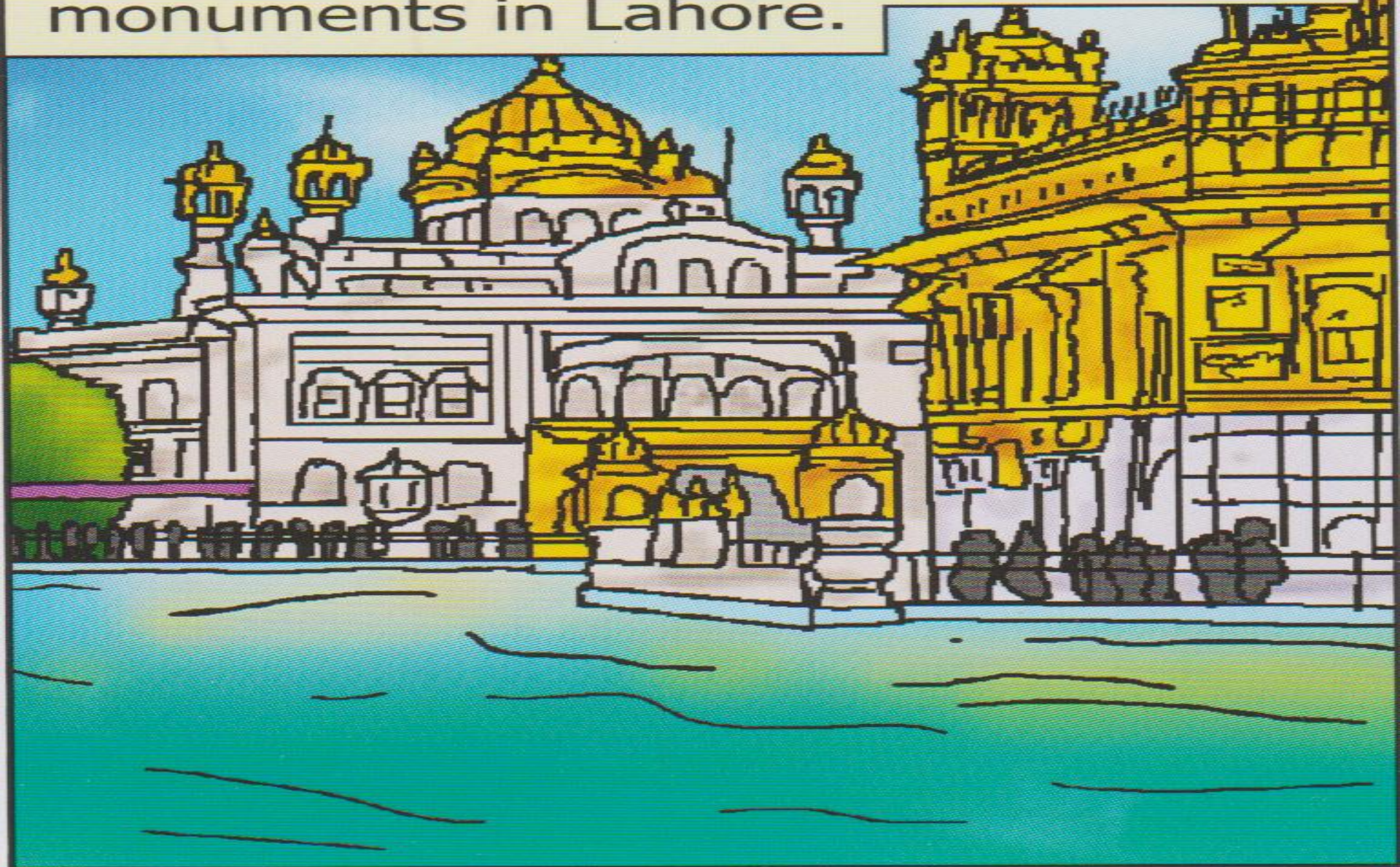
The gold was applied to the dome of the temple. Decorative marble was added to it.



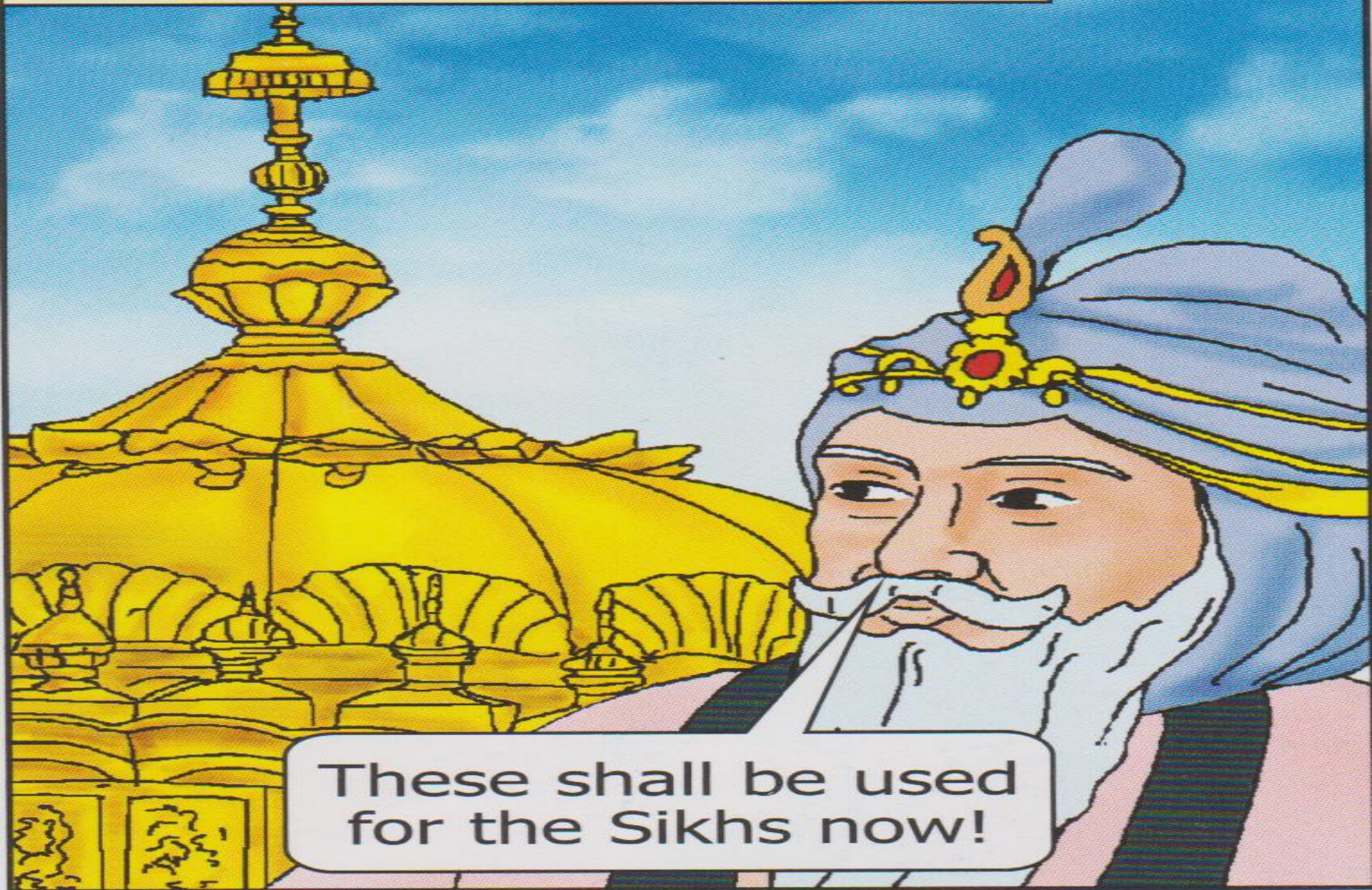
The gold coating was a reason for the temple to acquire the name of Golden Temple.



The beautiful gold and marble work is said to have originally decorated many Mughal buildings and monuments in Lahore.

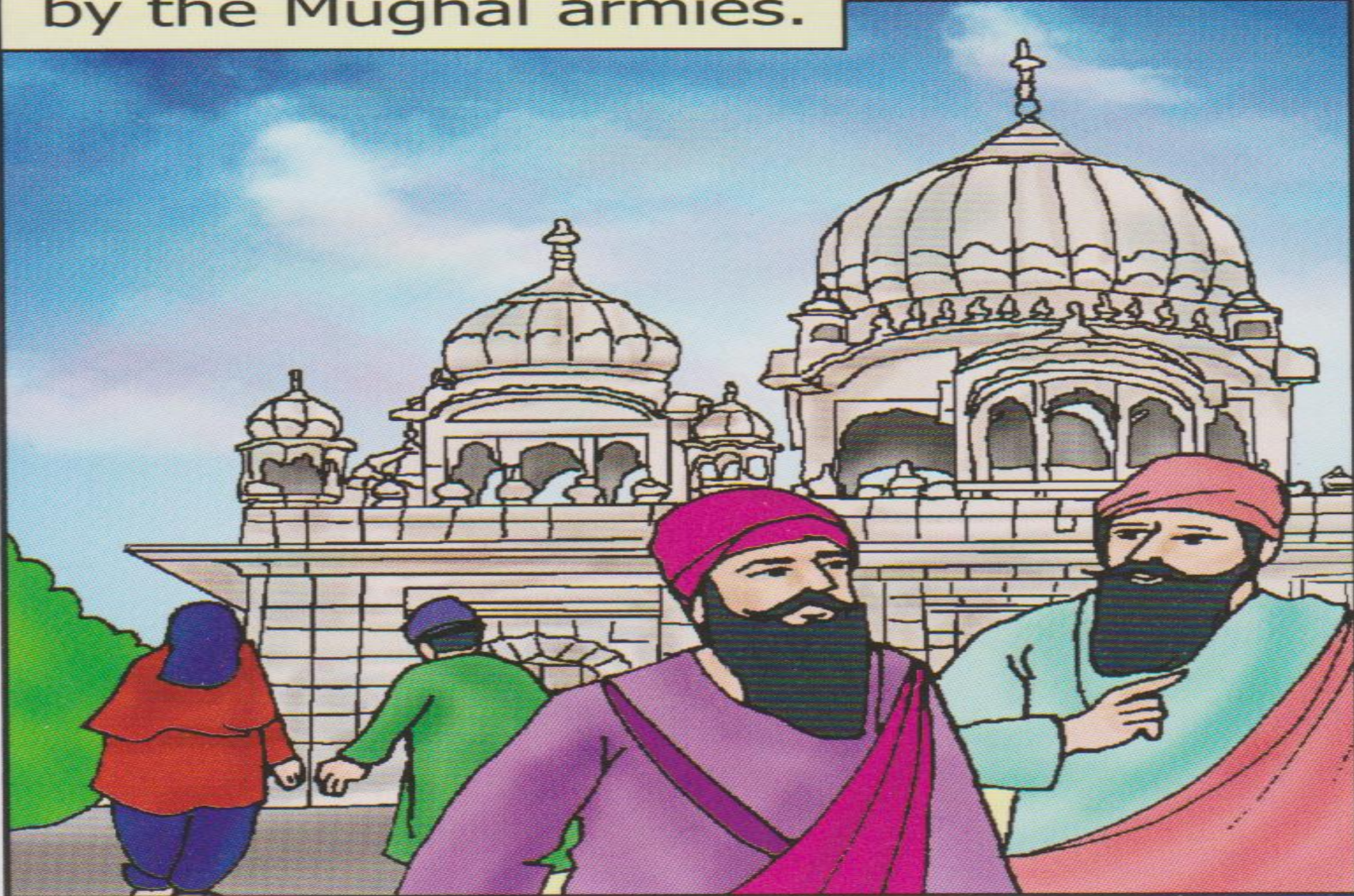


Ranjit Singh stripped these buildings of these precious materials.

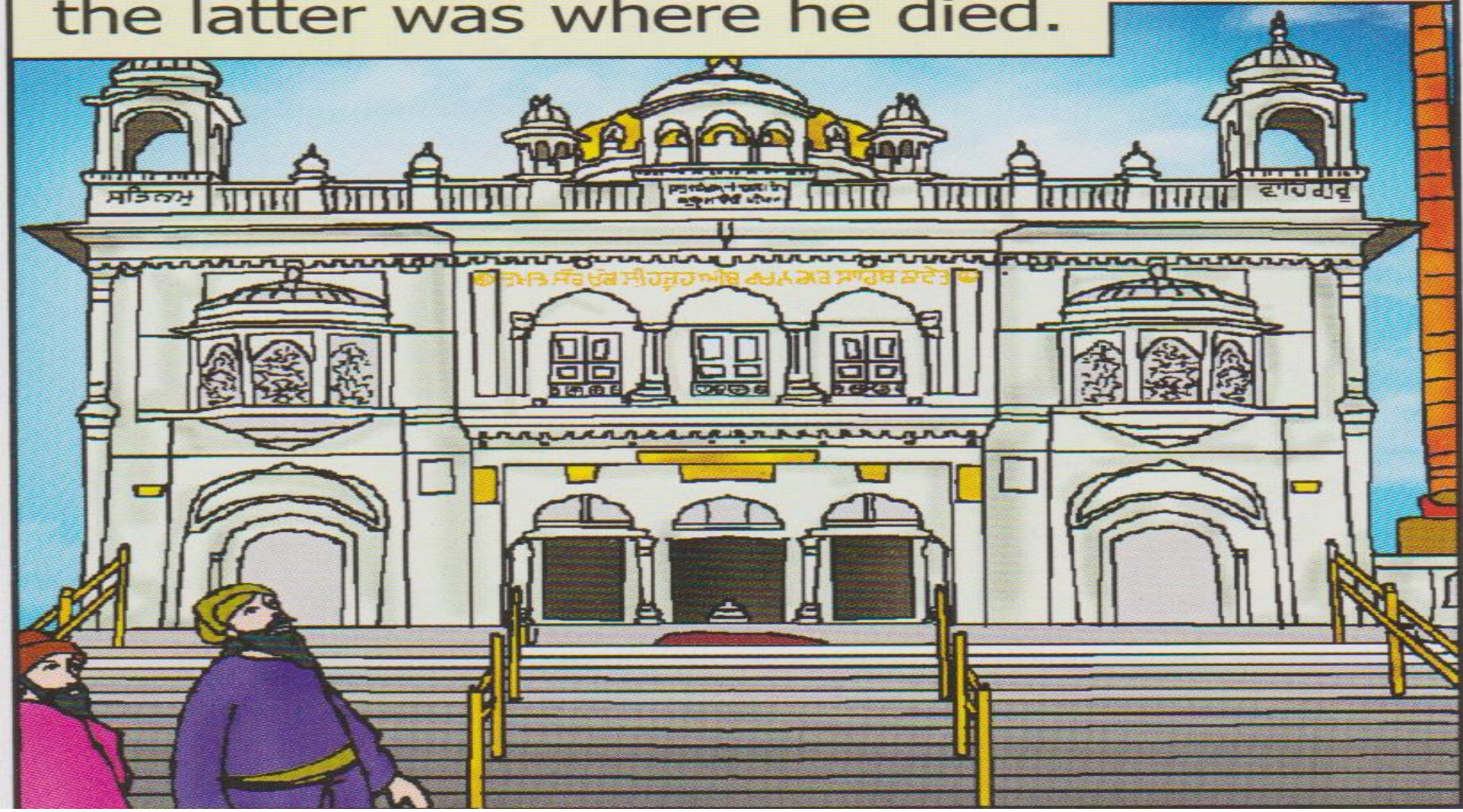


These shall be used for the Sikhs now!

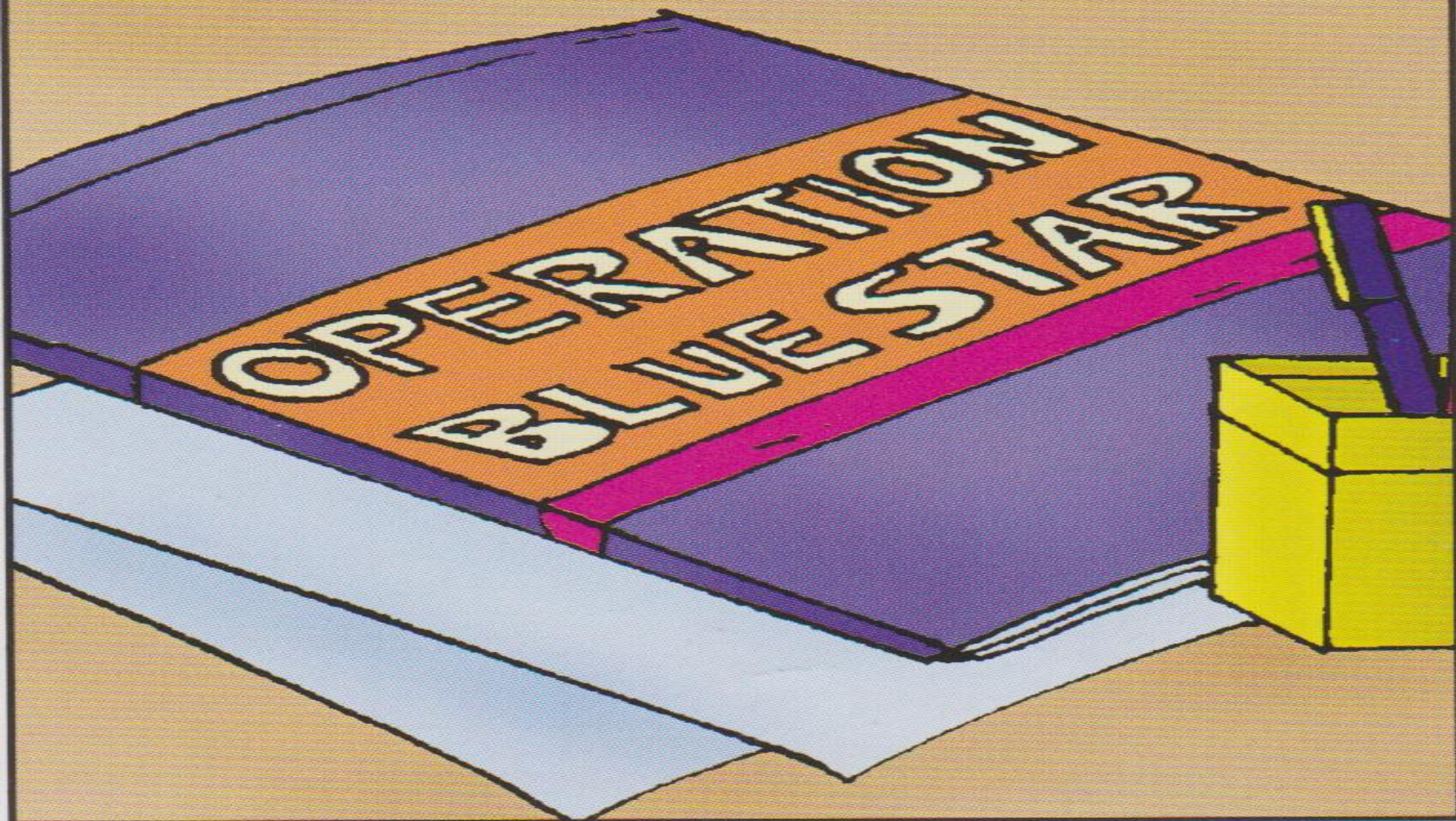
The King also renovated other gurudwaras that had been destroyed by the Mughal armies.



Two of the most revered temples of the Sikhs - the Takht Sri Patna Sahib and the Takht Sri Hazur Sahib were built by him. The former was the birth place of the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh and the latter was where he died.



There was also a tragic incident in 1984 that is associated with the temple history-Operaton Blue Star.



Around that time, there was a small time, preacher named Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who taught about Sikhism.



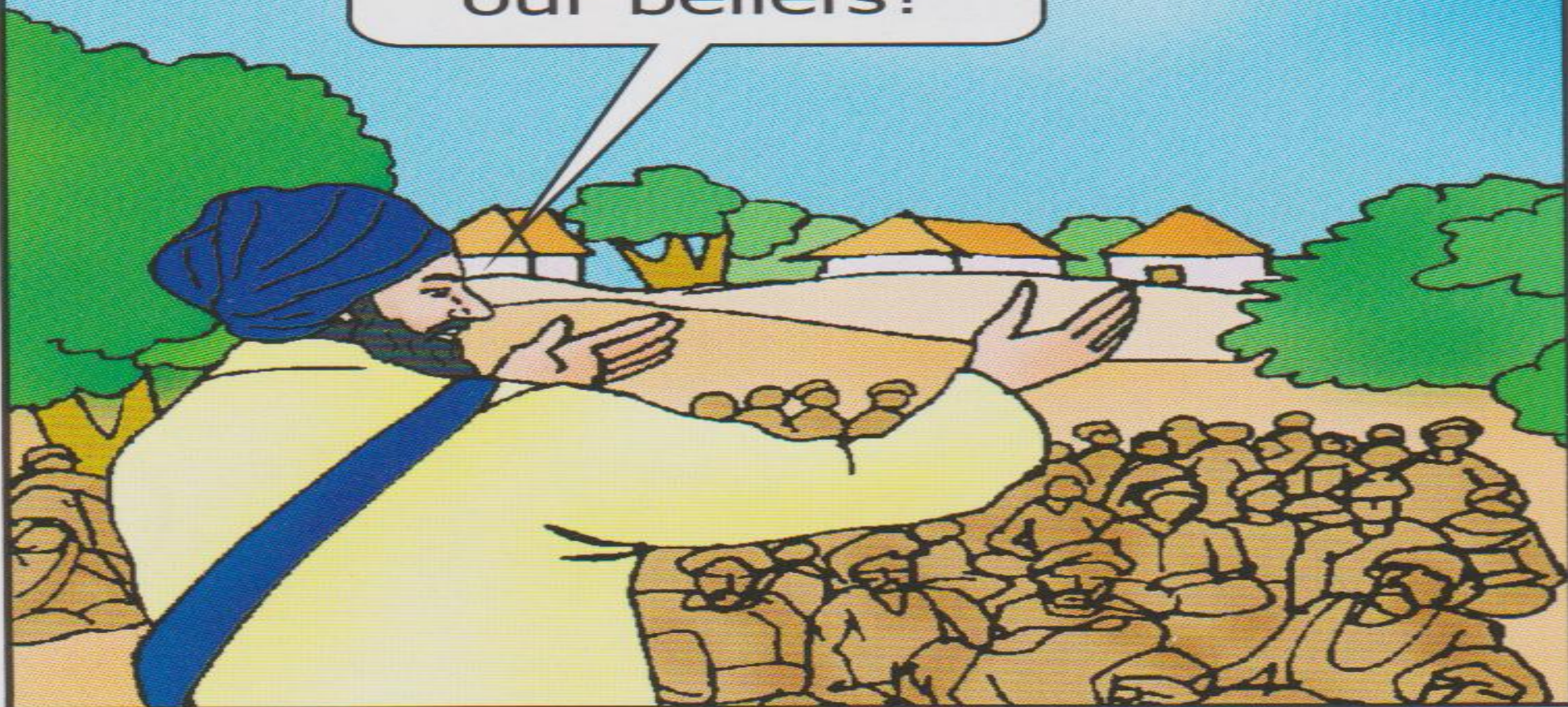
Adopt the wise practices of our Gurus!

He traveled to towns and villages and spread the Sikh teachings to young people.

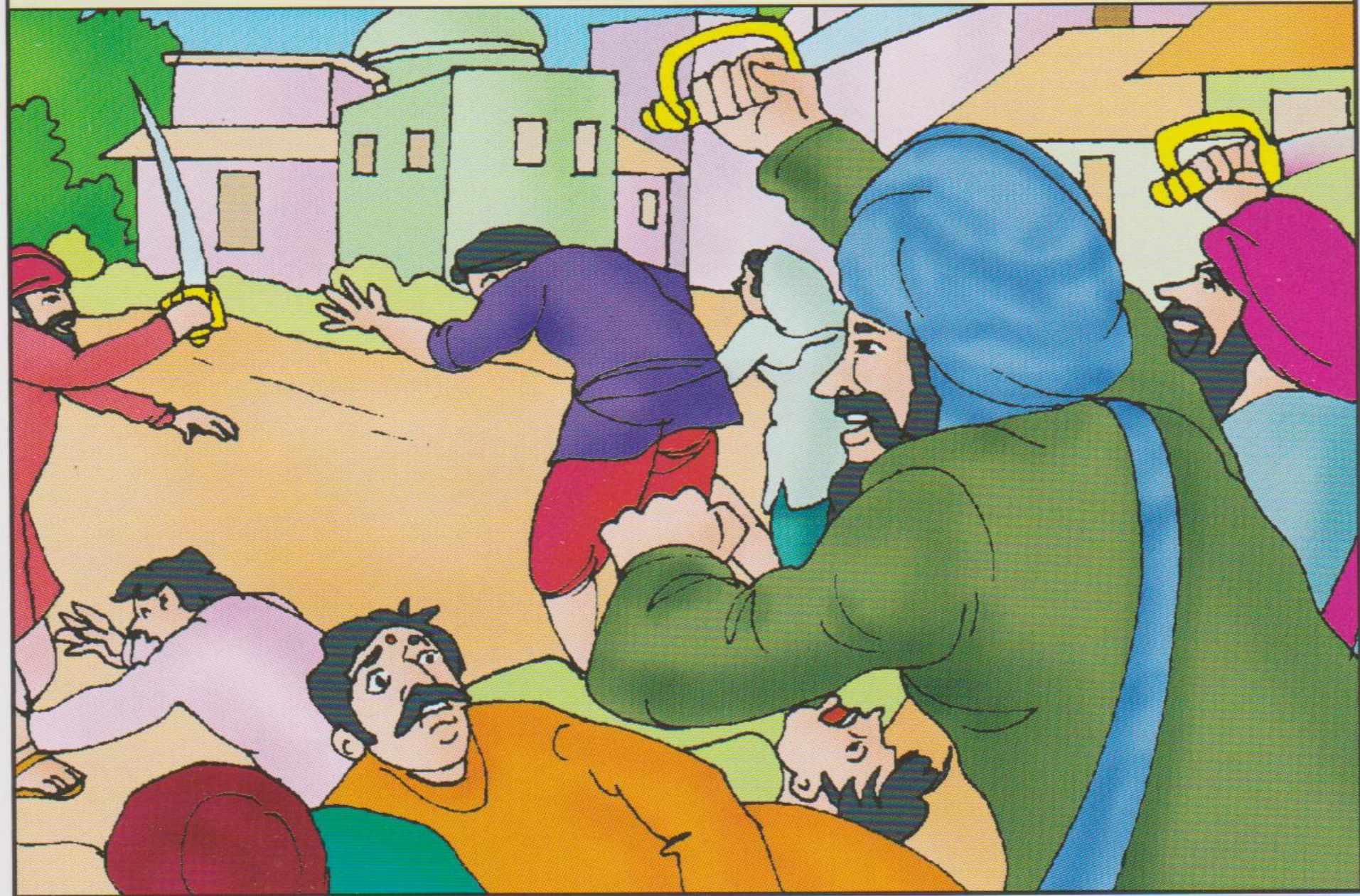


Slowly, Bhindranwale emerged as a fierce Sikh leader, who protested against anti-Sikh groups.

How dare they question our beliefs?




By 1983, there was unrest in Punjab, where armed militants, said to be followers of Bhindranwale randomly killed people.



Bhindrenwale was arrested on the charge of killing some powerful Hindu leaders, but was released soon after.



Around the same time, Bhindranwale moved into the Harmandir complex.



This shall be my
headquarters
from now on.

Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, tried hard to flush him out of the temple, but to no avail.

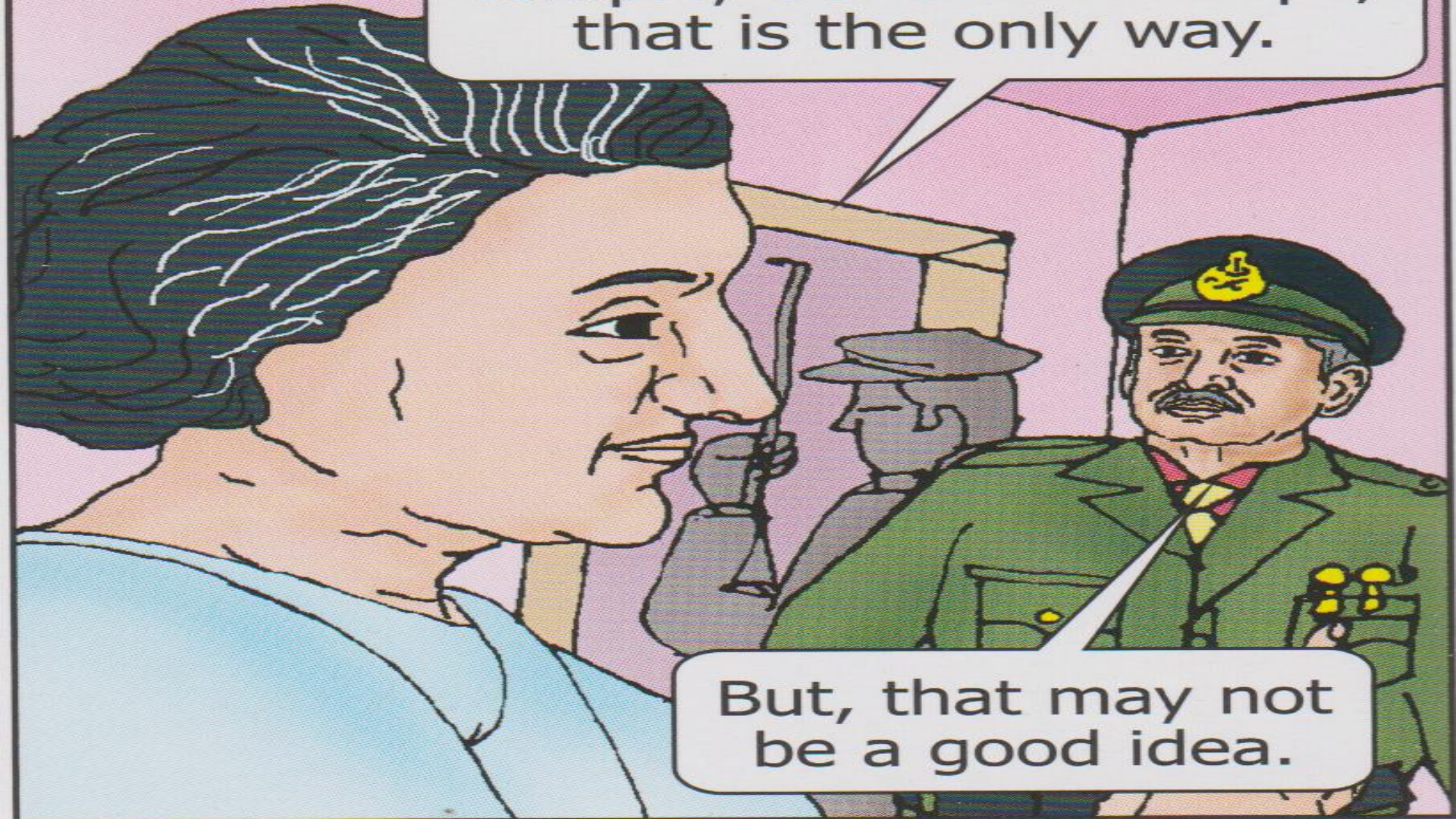
He is safe as long as he is inside the temple.



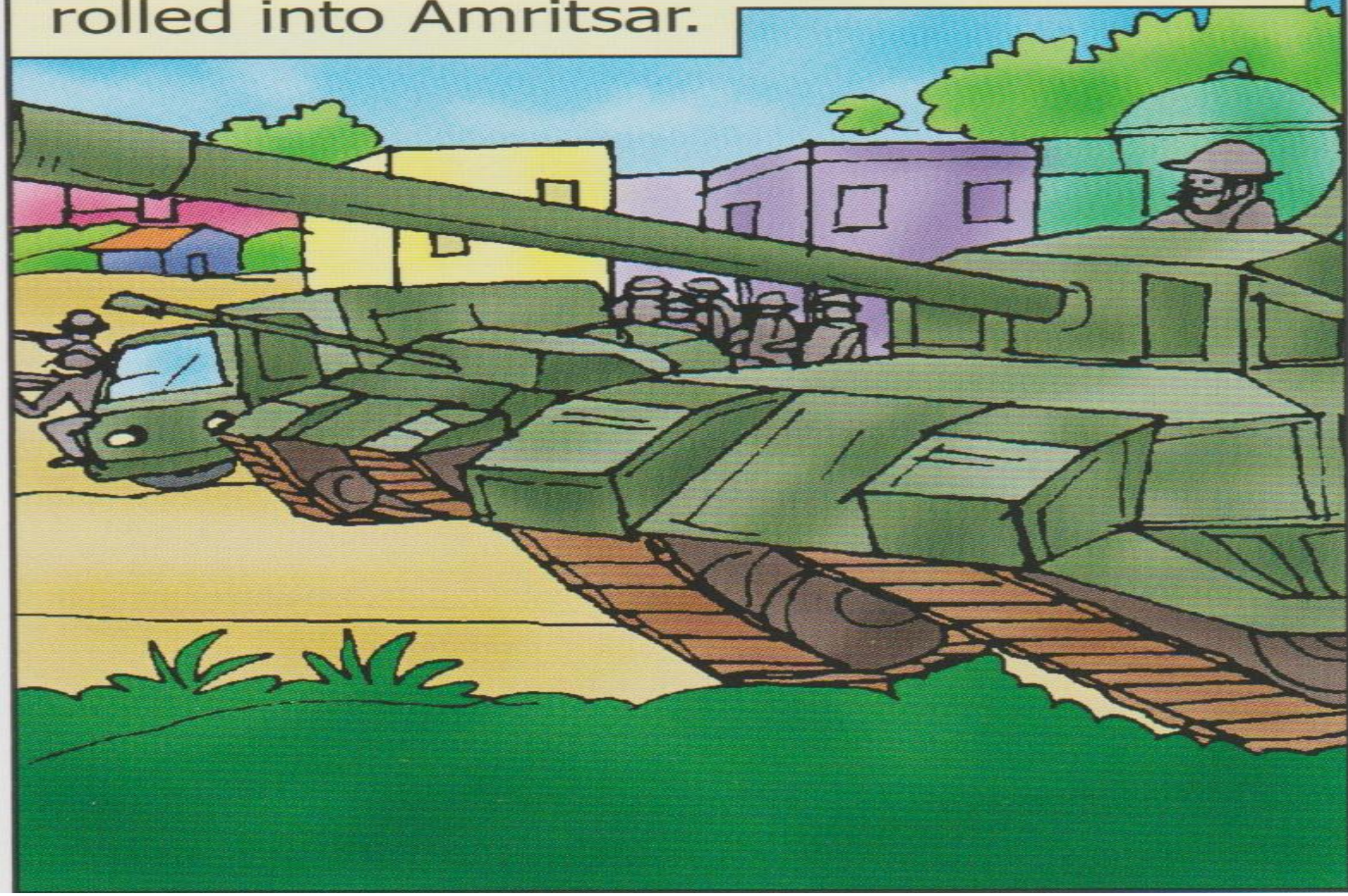
The Prime Minister then resorted to desperate measures.

Let the army enter the temple, General. Perhaps, that is the only way.

But, that may not be a good idea.



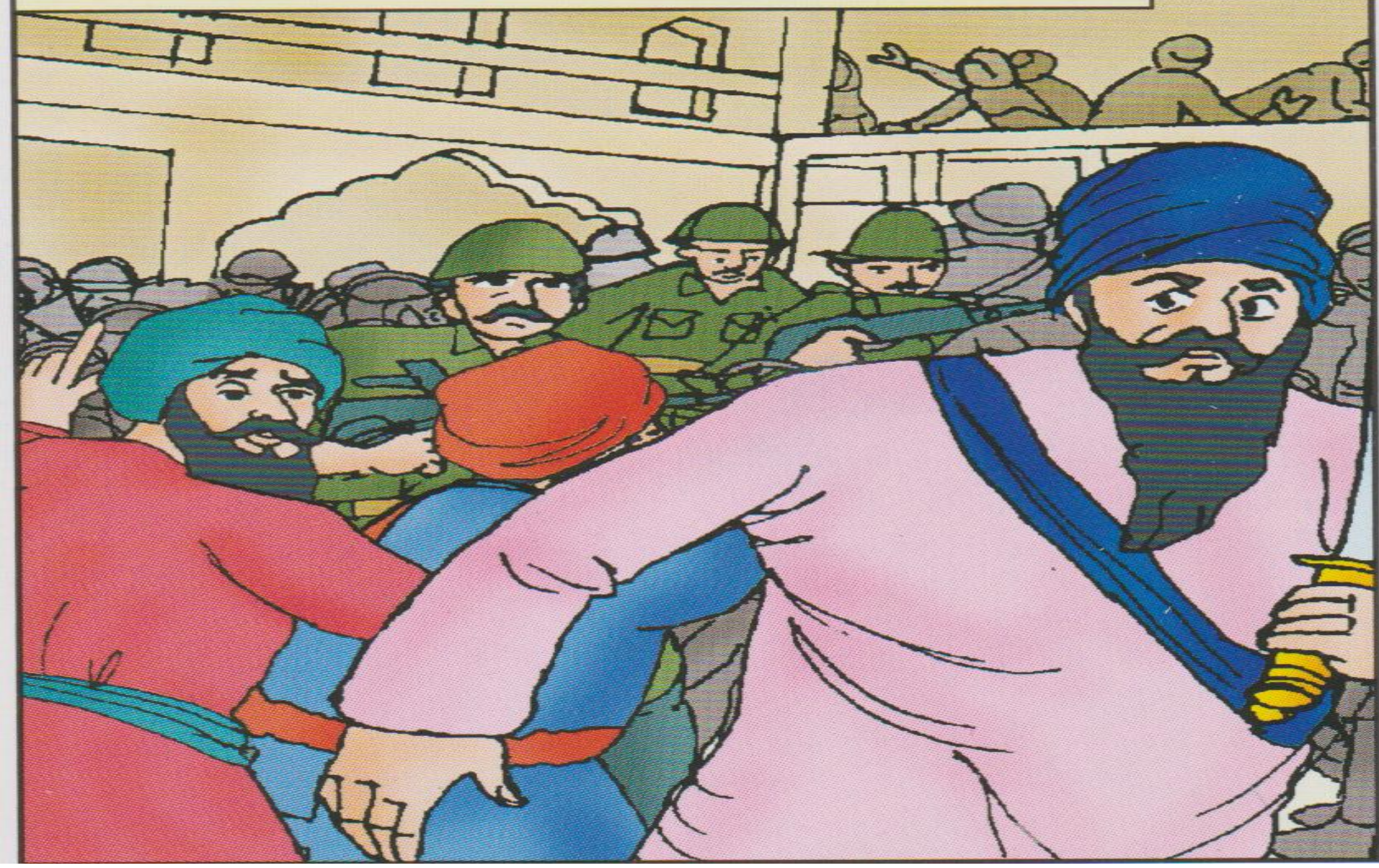
On June 3, 1984 Indian army troops with tanks and armoured vehicles rolled into Amritsar.



A Sikh annual festival was in progress at the time and the temple was packed with pilgrims, including old people and children.



As a part of Operation Blue Star, the Indian Army stormed the Golden Temple during the night on June 5, 1984.



In the ensuing battle, Bhindranwale was killed along with several militants.



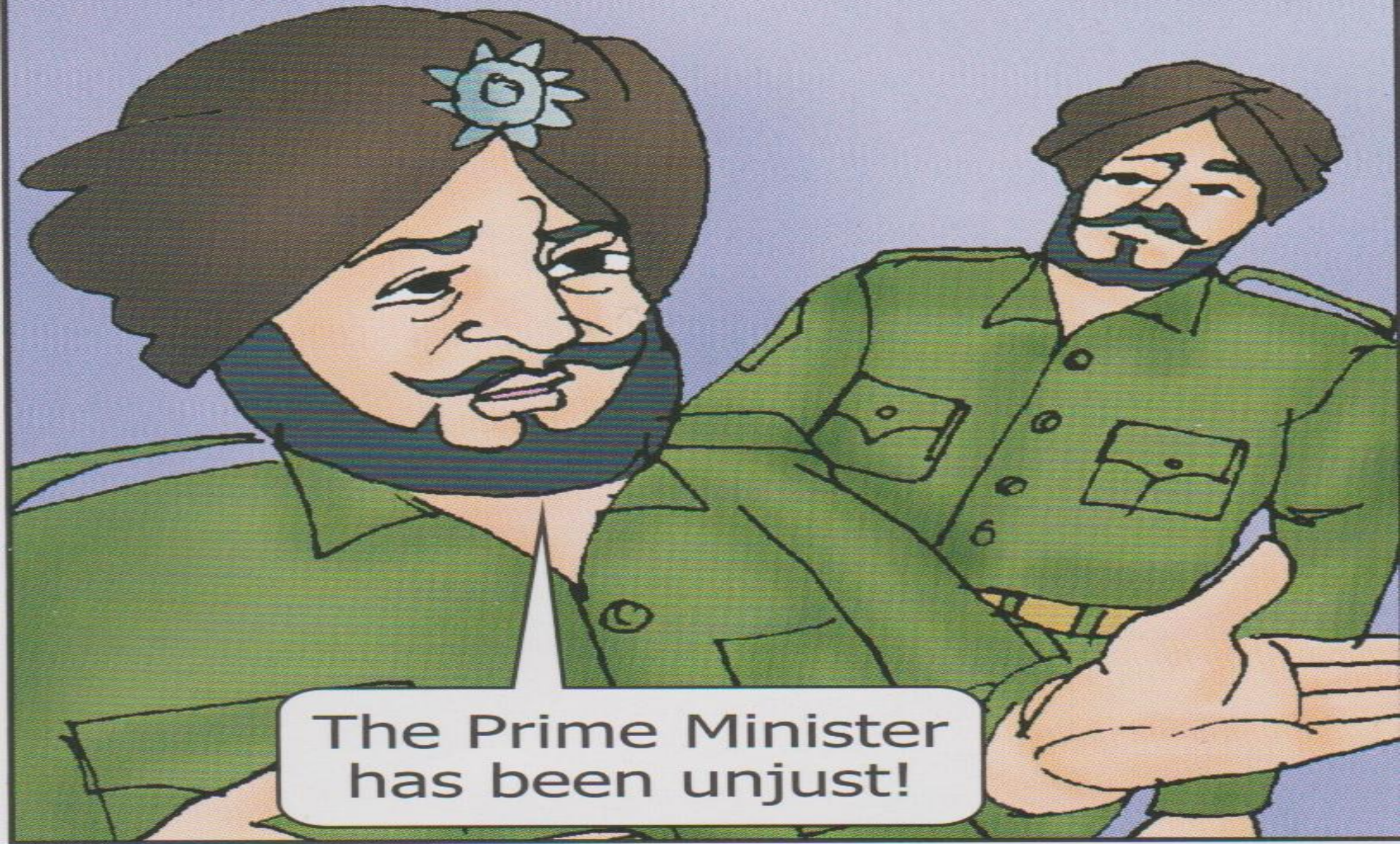
Finally, we got him!

But tragically, nearly 500 civilians also lost their lives.

A cartoon illustration depicting a scene of mass death. In the foreground, a man with a beard and an orange turban, wearing a light blue tunic, is carrying a woman in a green dress. The woman is lying back, appearing to be dead or unconscious. The background is filled with a large number of grey, featureless figures lying on the ground, representing the victims. The scene is set in a room with yellow walls and a large arched doorway. A speech bubble next to the man says "Arrrgh!".

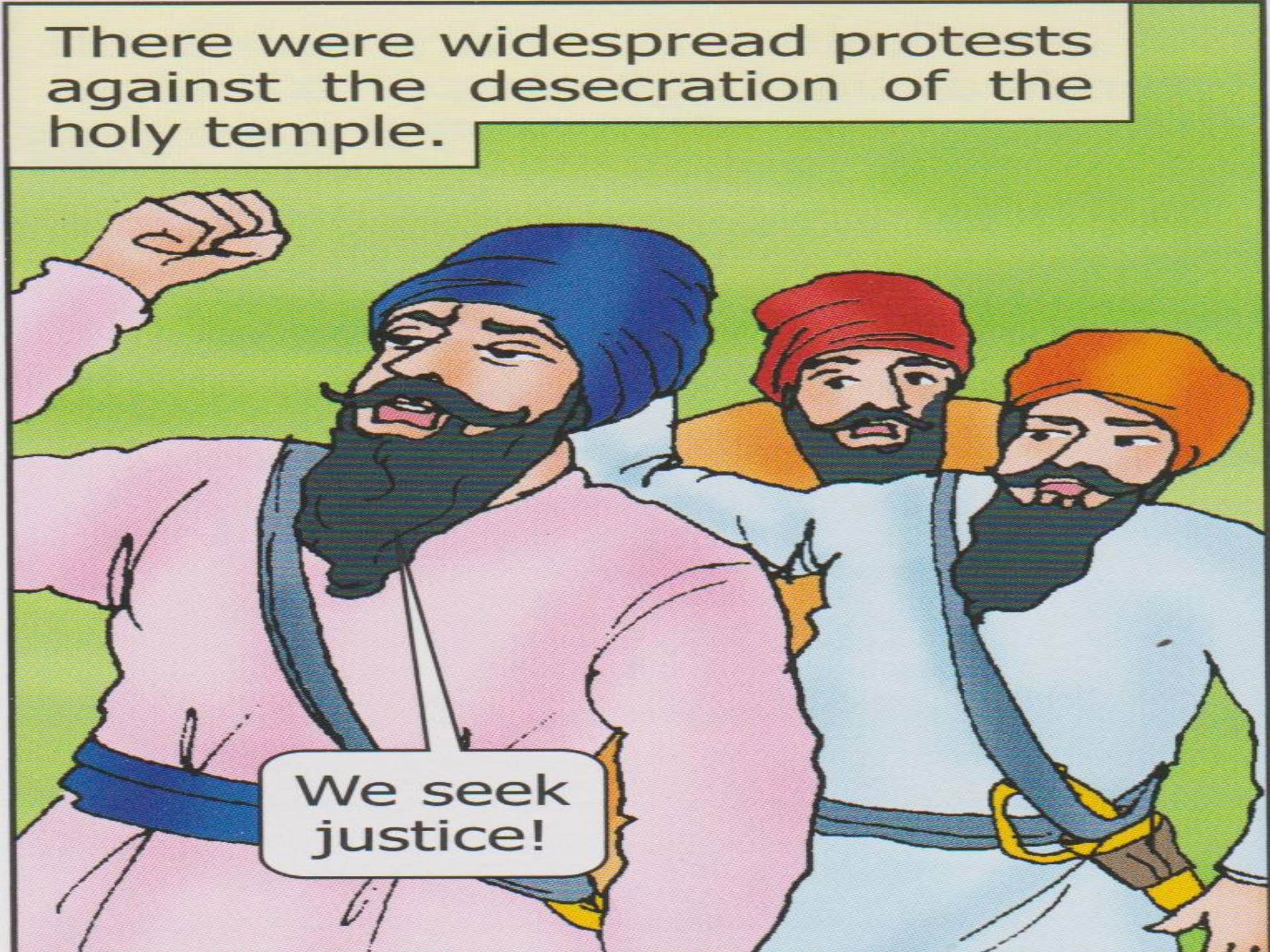
Arrrgh!

After this incident, a large number of Sikh soldiers resigned from the army.



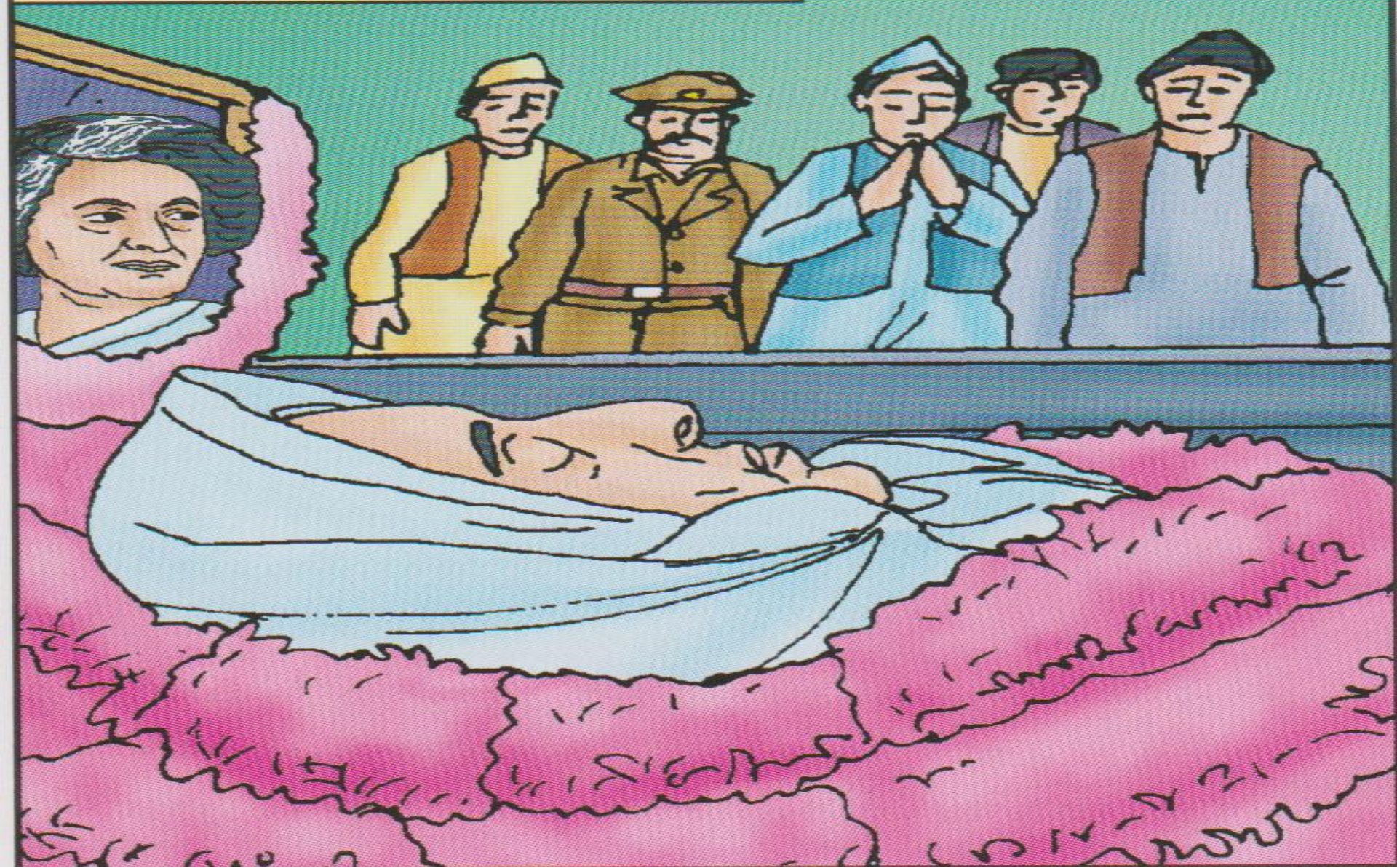
The Prime Minister
has been unjust!

There were widespread protests
against the desecration of the
holy temple.

An illustration of three Sikh men protesting. The man in the foreground is wearing a blue turban and a pink tunic, with a blue sash and a yellow sword. He has a large black beard and is shouting with his mouth open. Behind him are two other men, one in a red turban and one in an orange turban, both with black beards and looking towards the right. The background is a solid light green color.

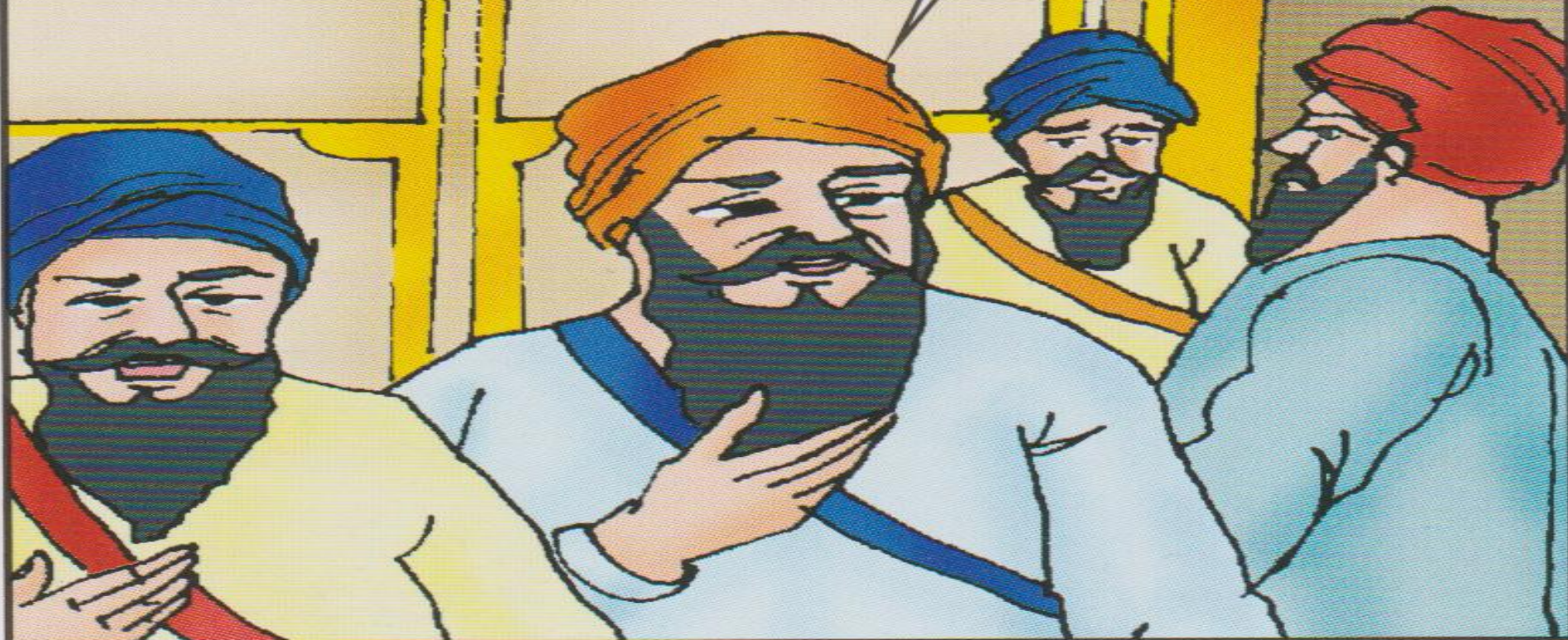
We seek
justice!

Later, in the same year, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards.

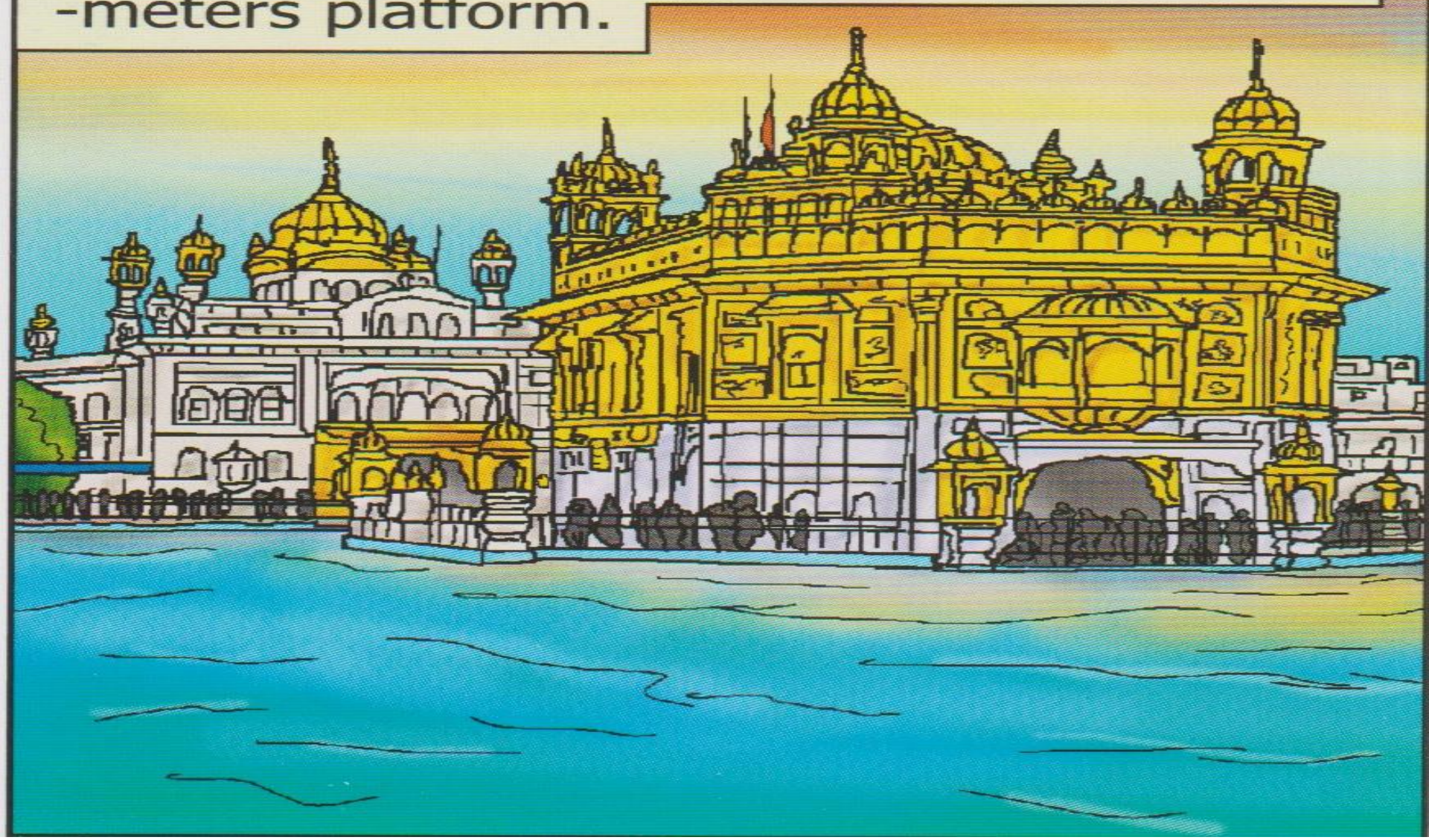


Although the Central Government offered to repair the temple, the Sikhs refused.

We shall undertake the reconstruction ourselves.

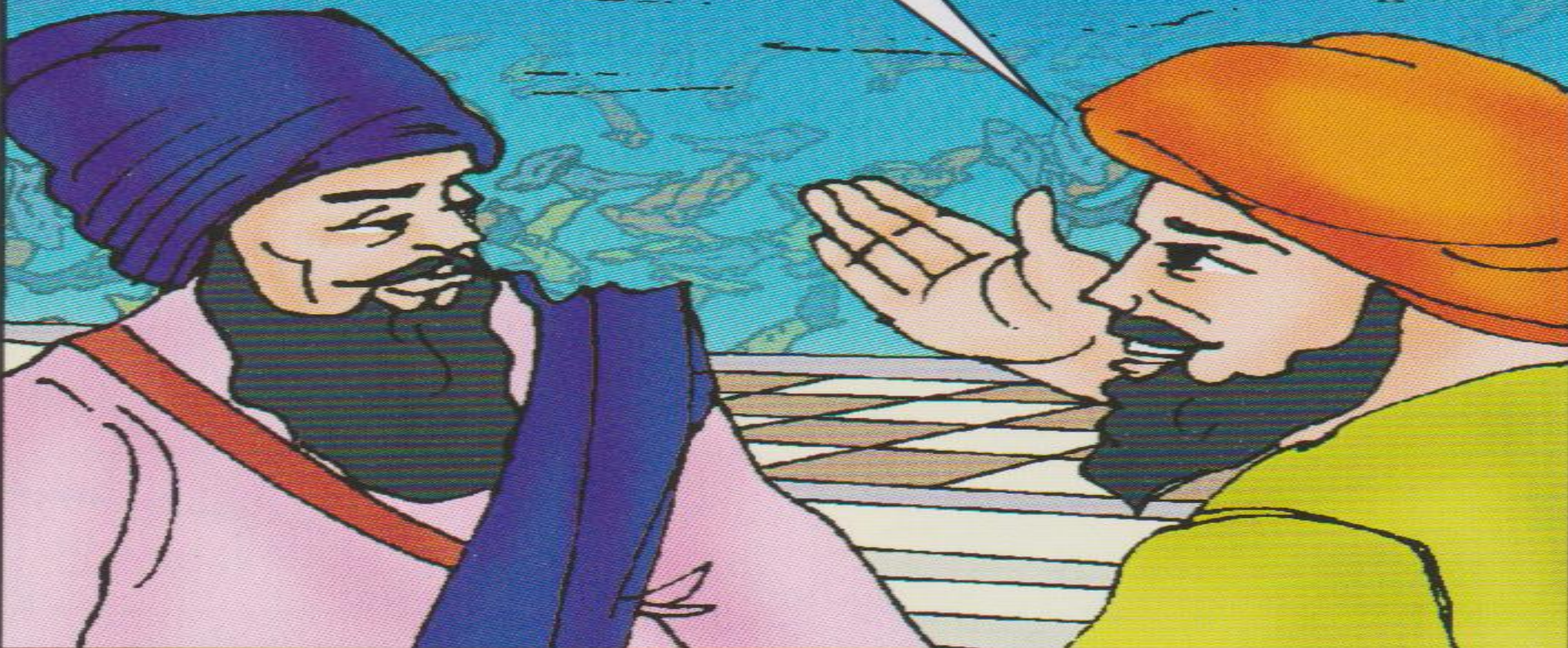


Over the years, the temple has been put through its share of incidents and renovations. Today, the Harmandir Sahib stands tall and beautiful on a 67 square-meters platform.

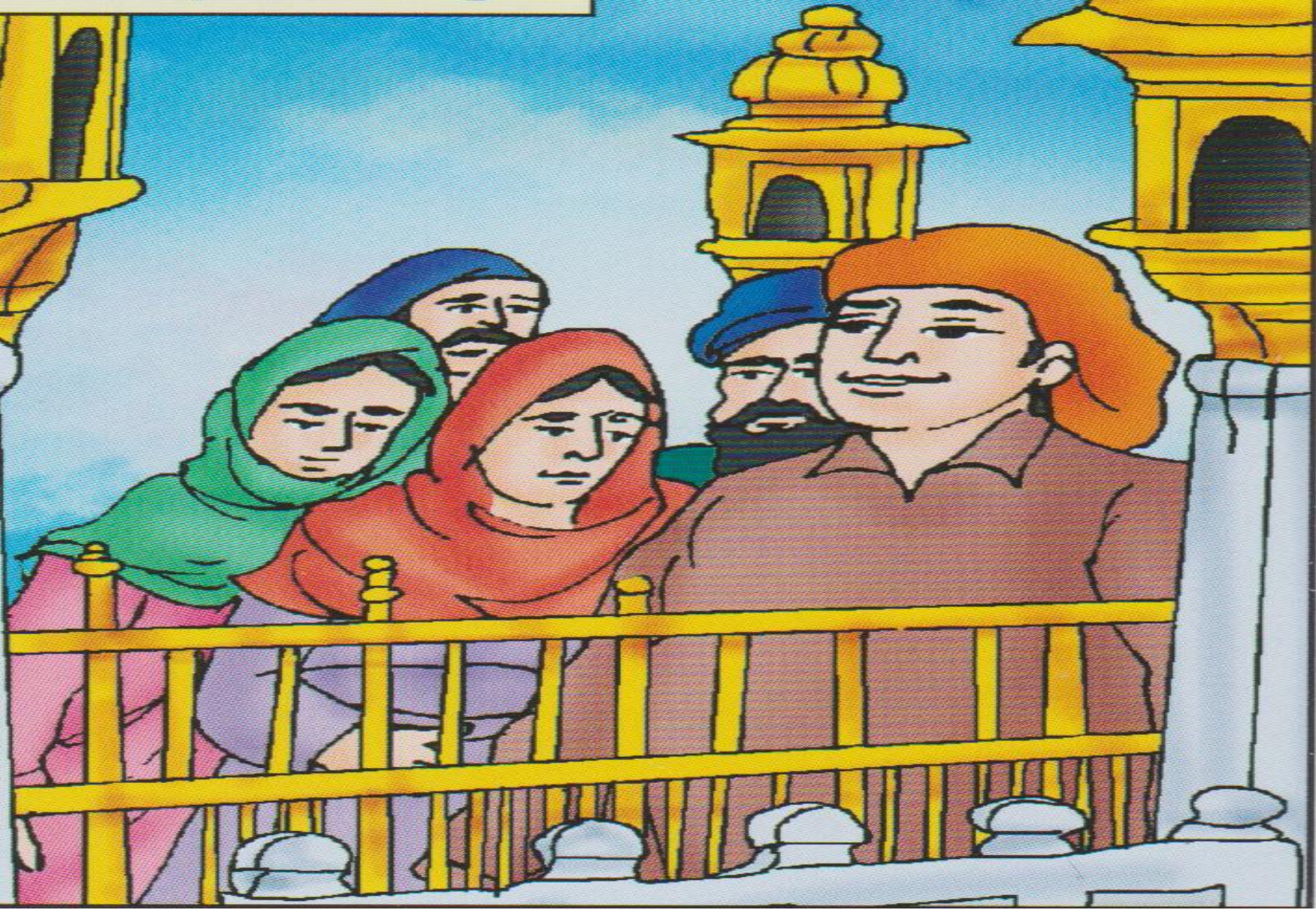


It is right in the middle of the sacred pool of water that houses hundreds of fishes.

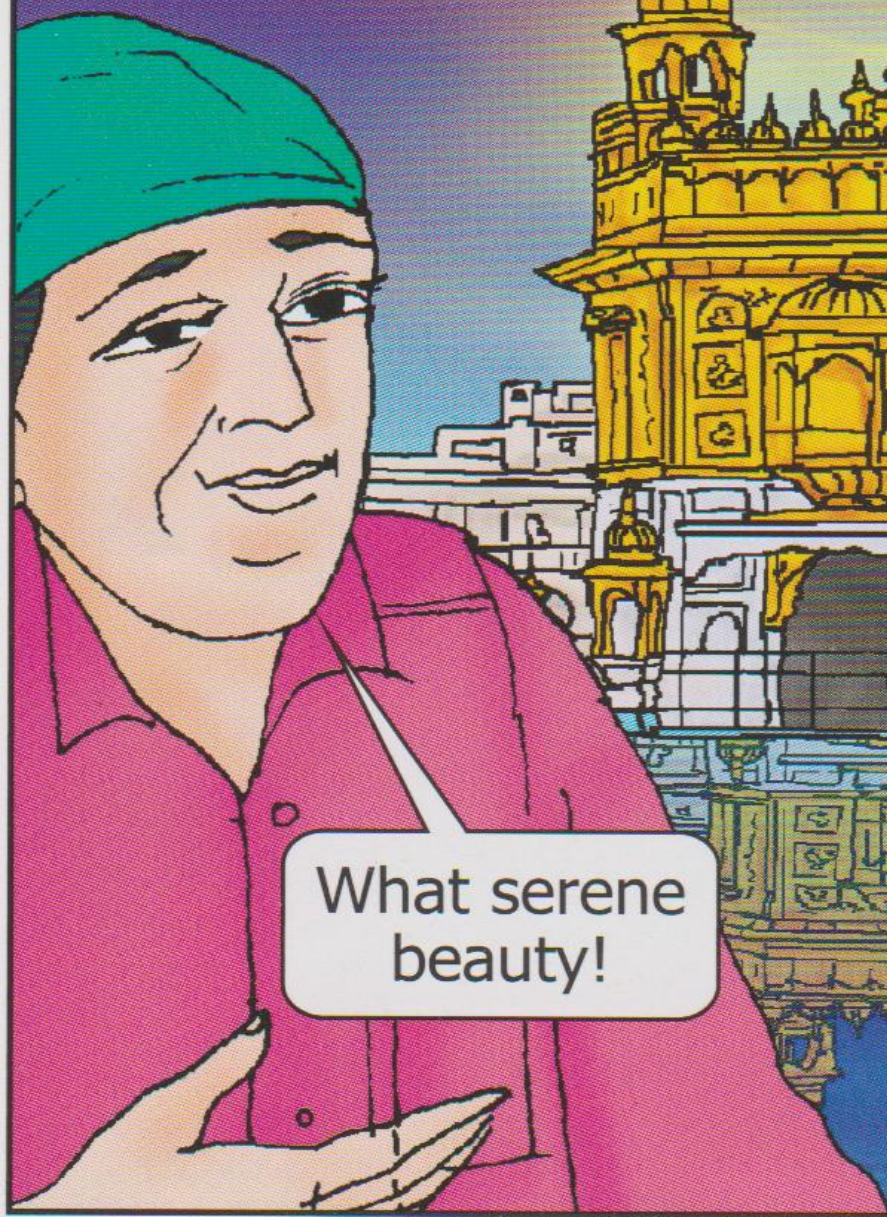
Ah, the Amrit Sarovar!



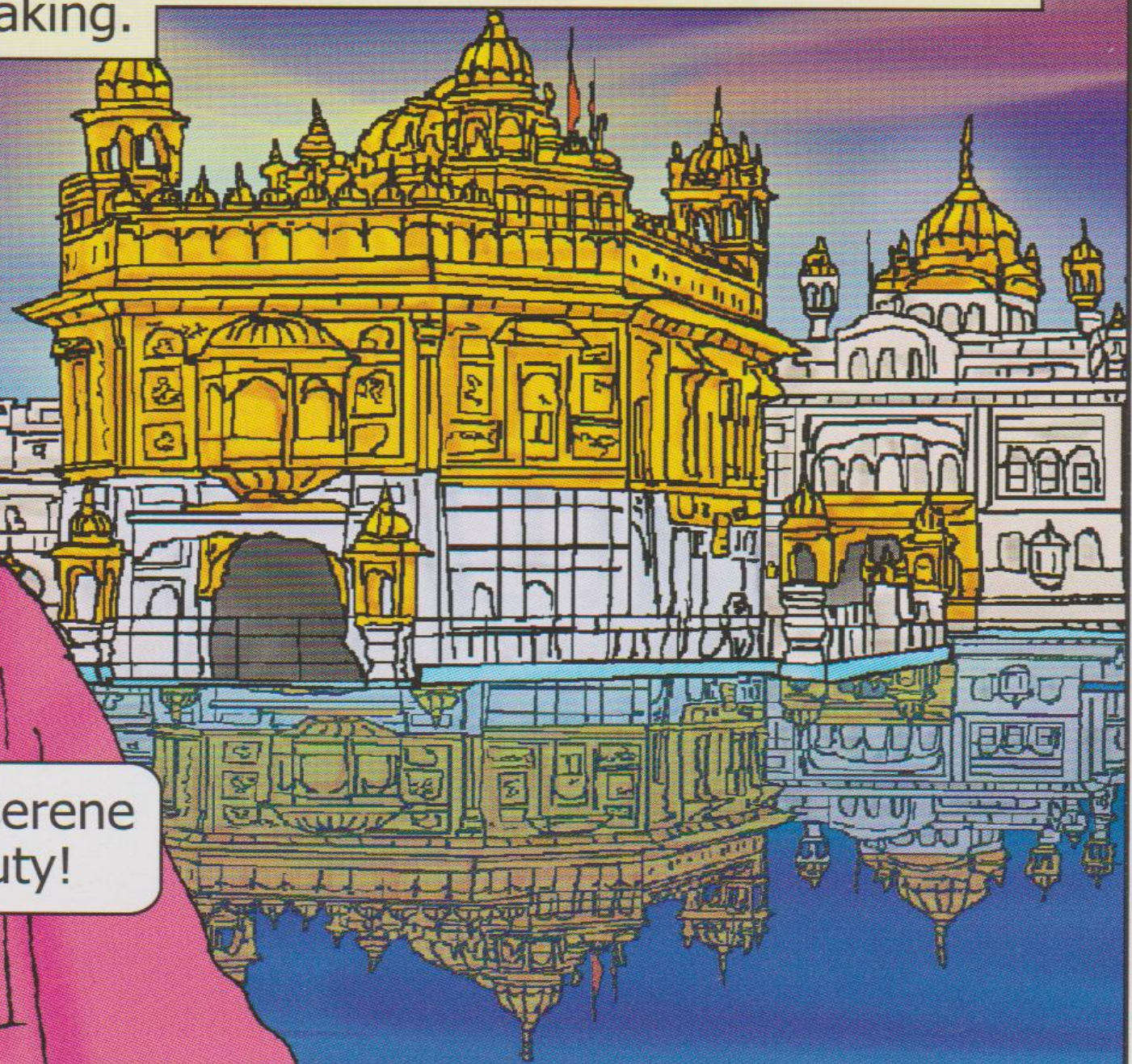
As a custom visitors to the temple have to cover their heads to enter and pay homage.



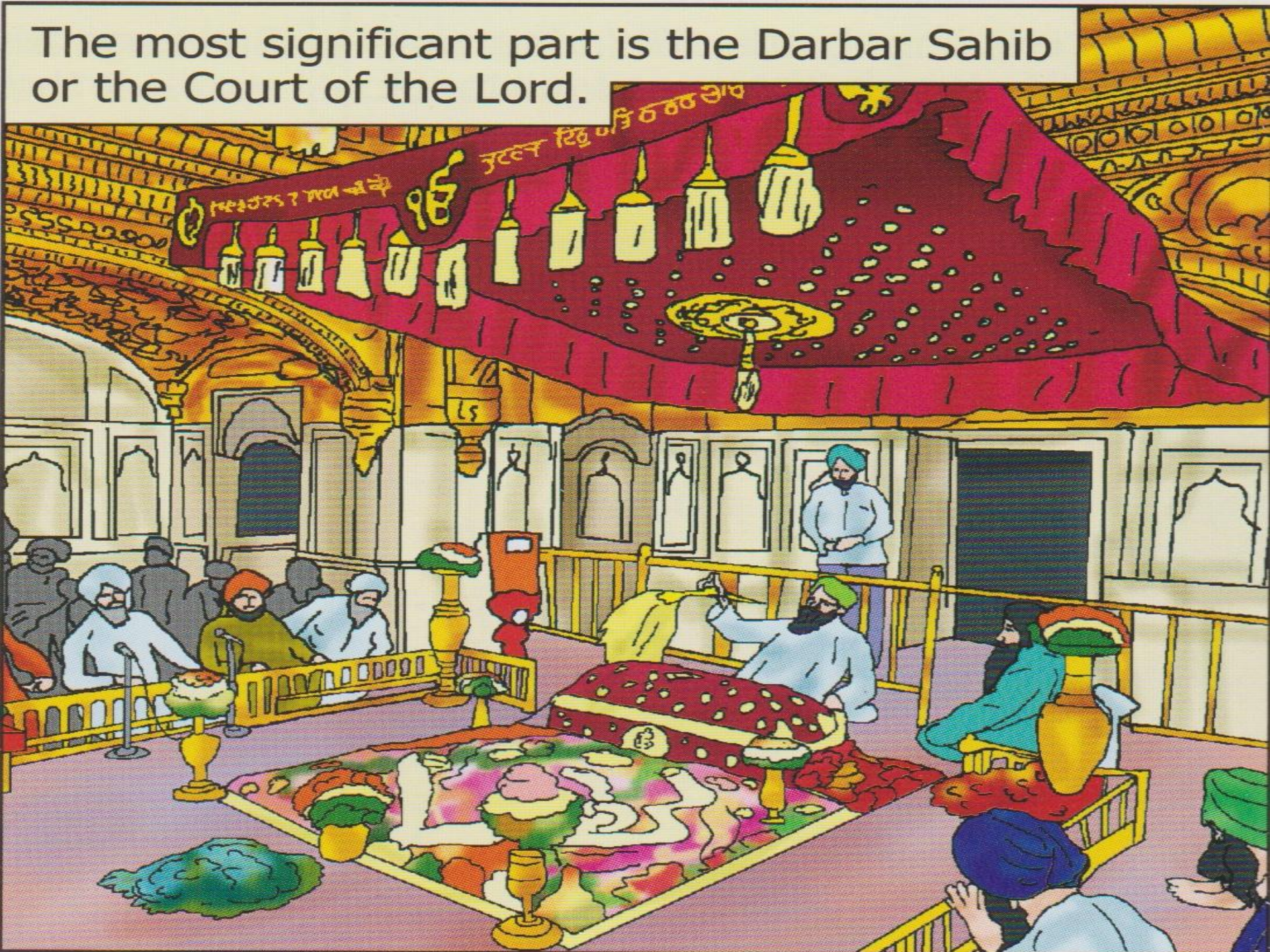
At the first light of dawn, the reflection of the temple in the water is breathtaking.



What serene beauty!



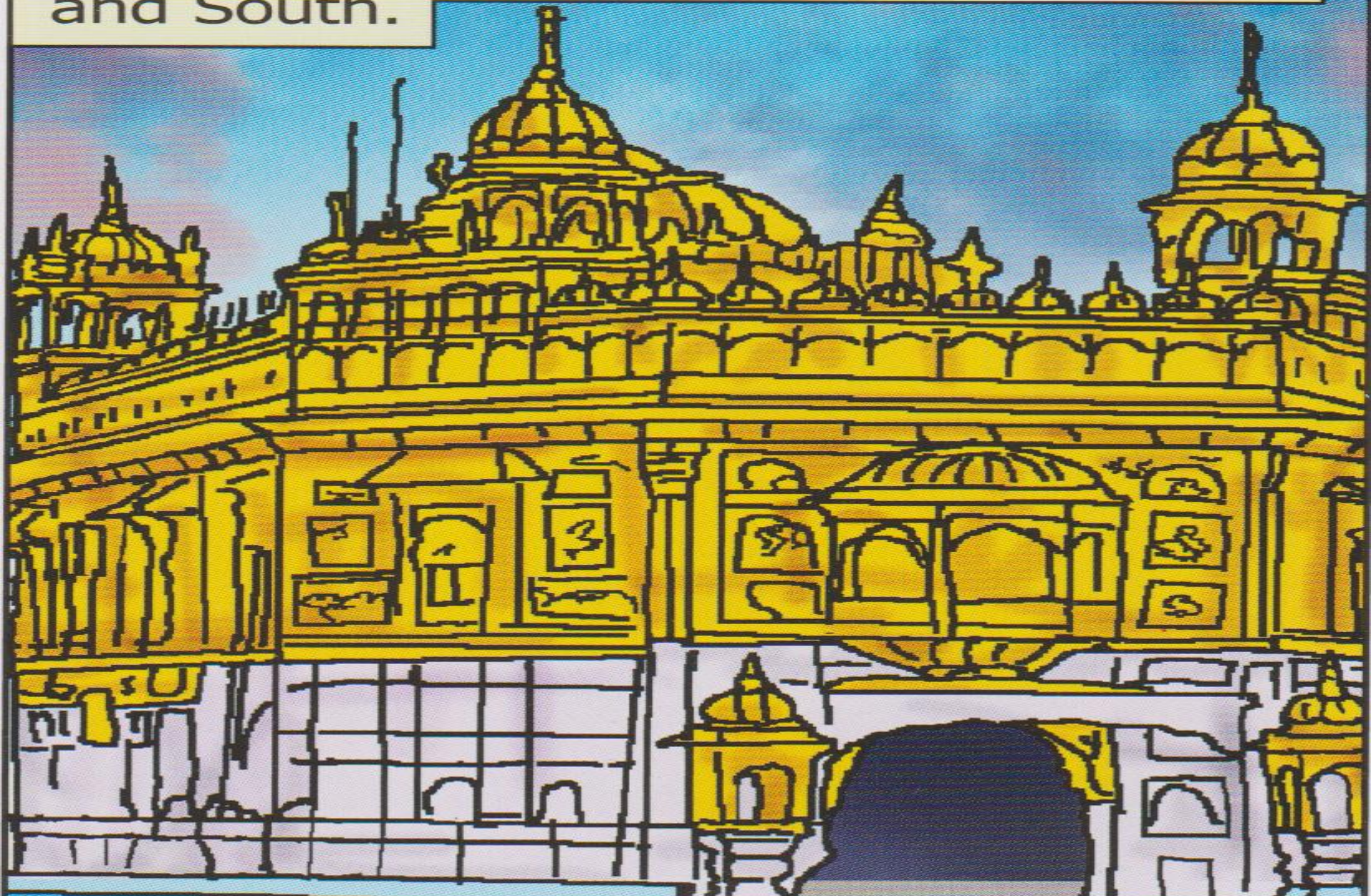
The most significant part is the Darbar Sahib or the Court of the Lord.



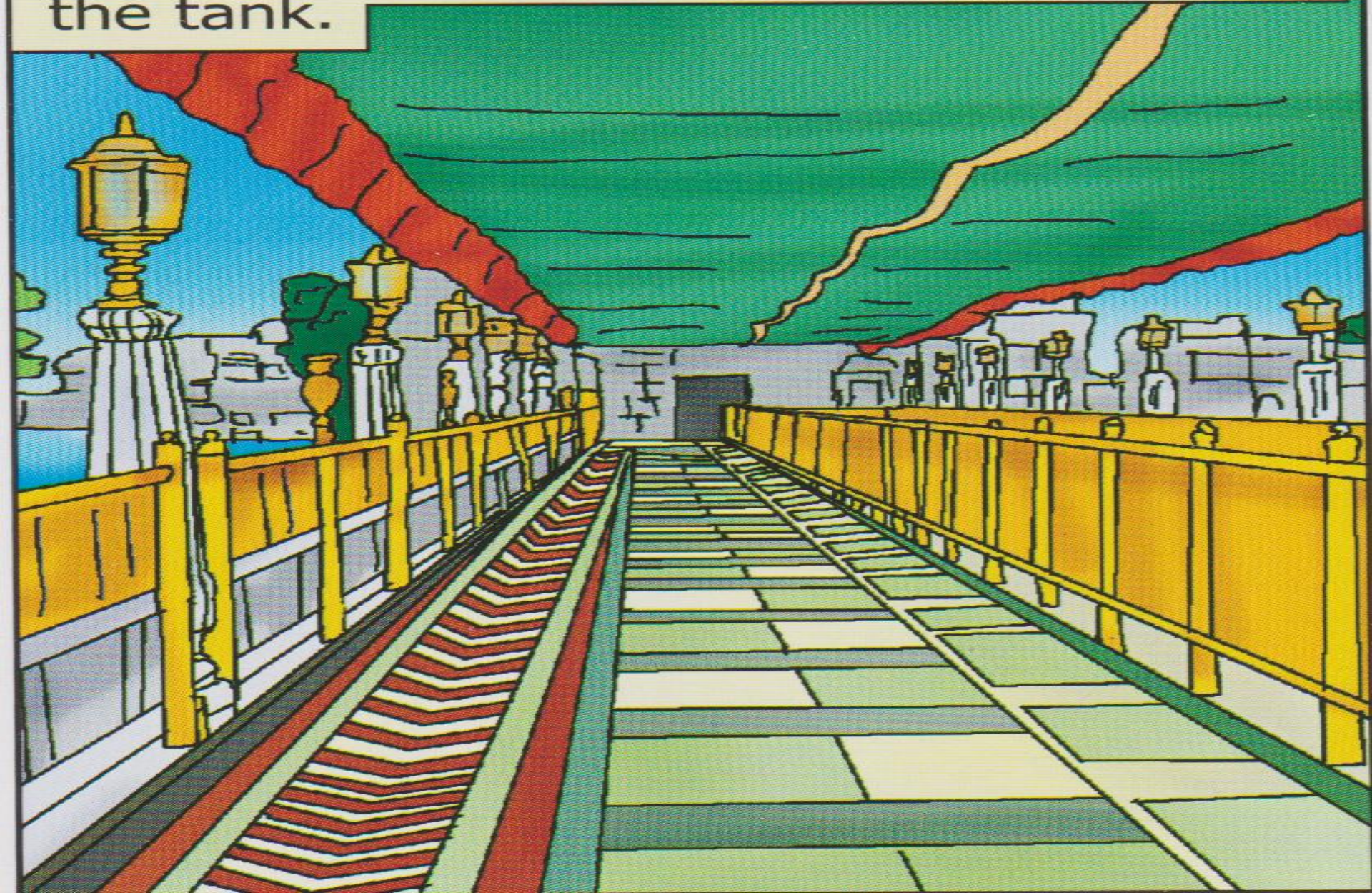
The structure is decorated inside and outside with verses from the Adi Granth.



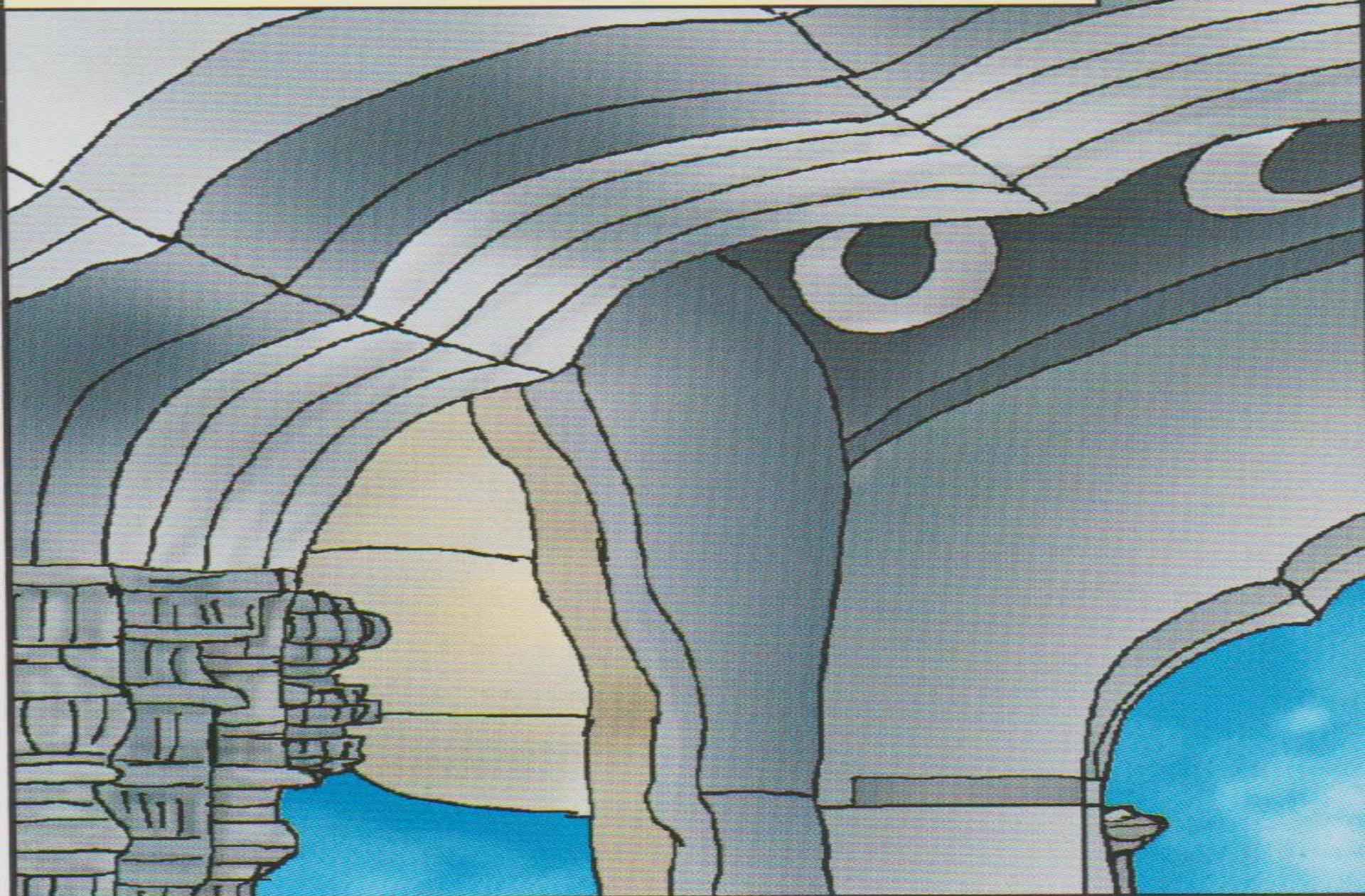
The four doors of the temple face the four directions - East, West, North and South.



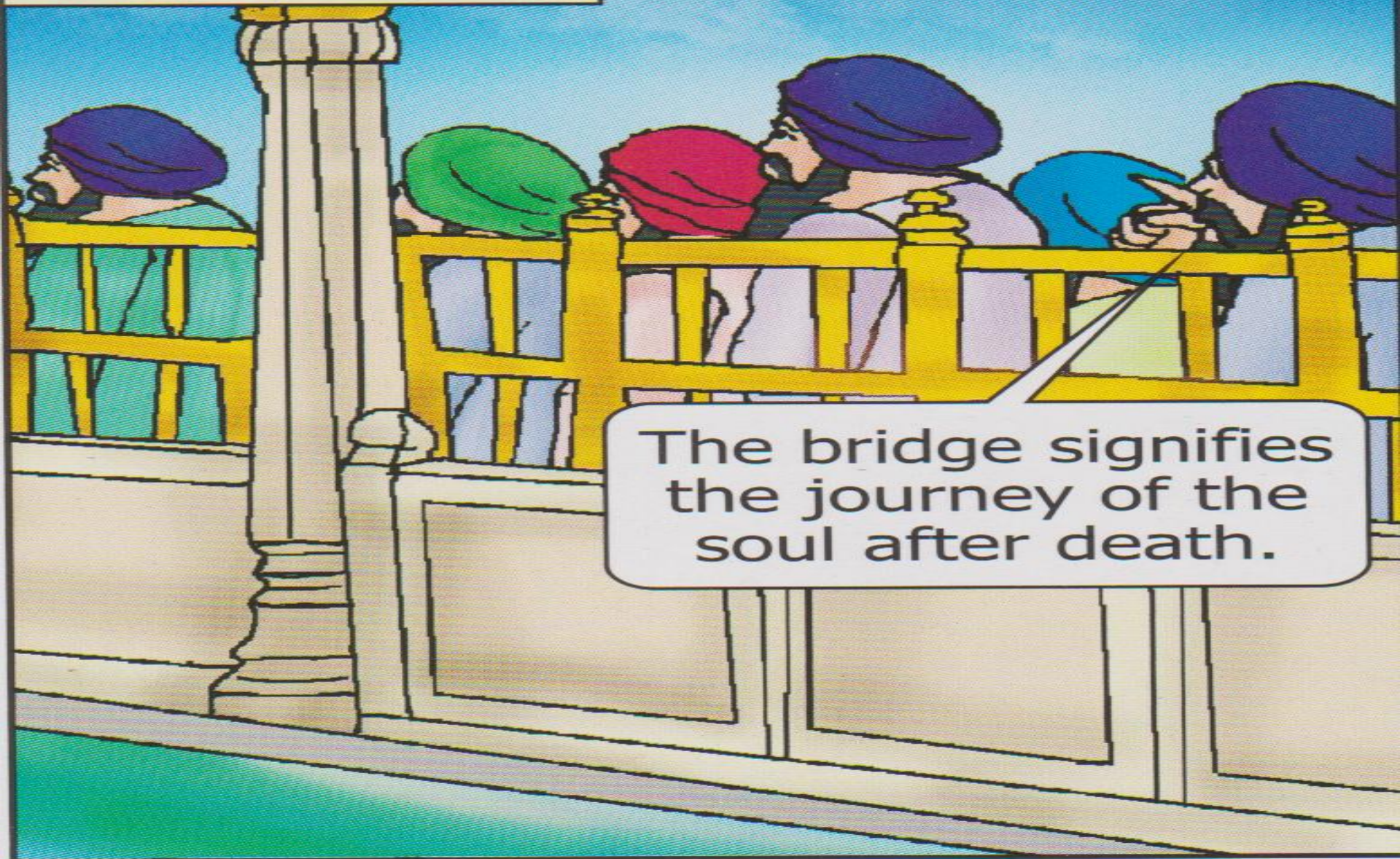
The entrance is up a flight of stairs and then down again to the temple and the tank.



The arch is decorated with beautiful panels and is made of silver.

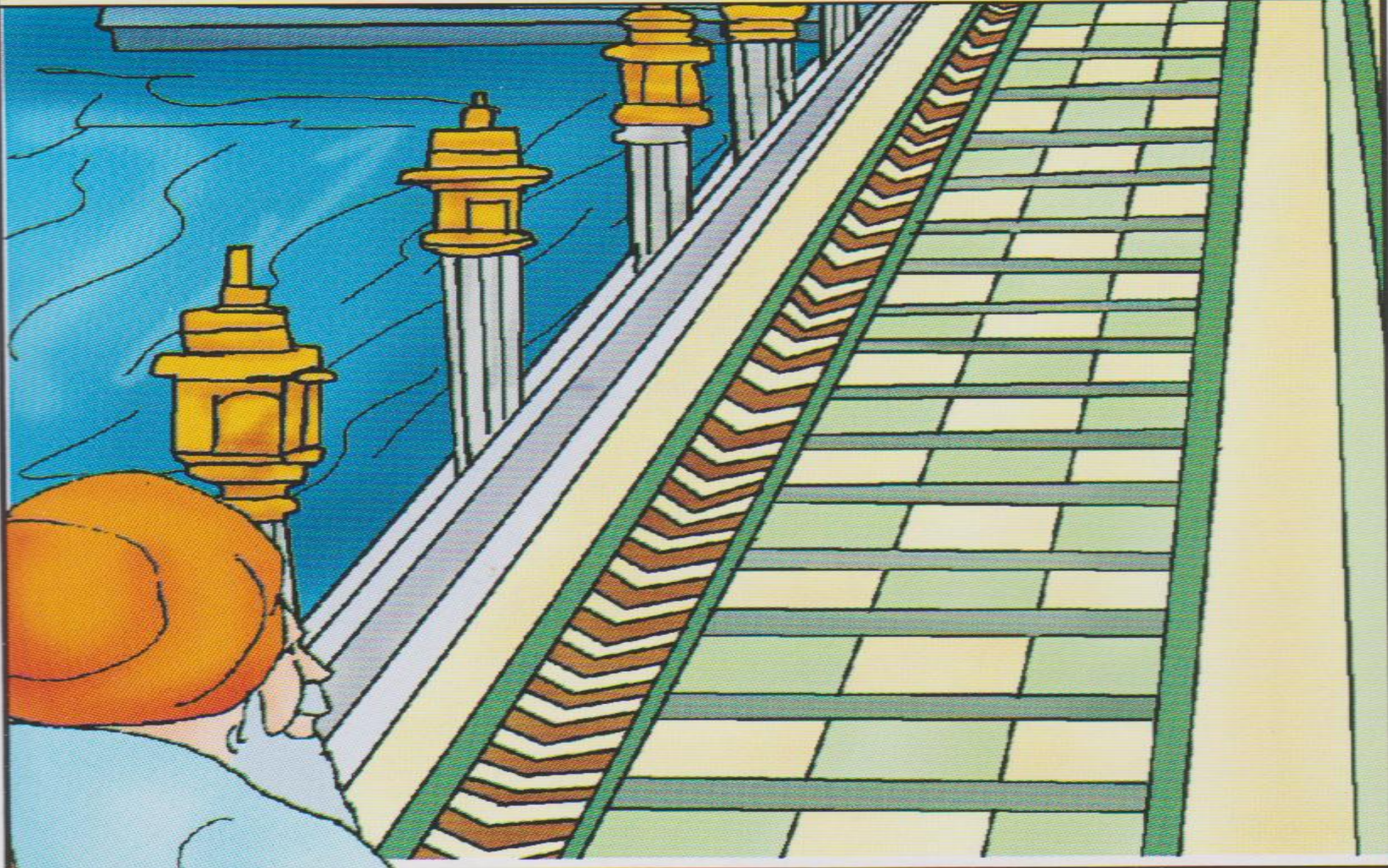


The bridge is called the Guru's Bridge and connects one across the pool to the Harmandir.



The bridge signifies the journey of the soul after death.

The bridge takes one straight to the temple and is a 13-foot broad circulatory path or Pardakshana.

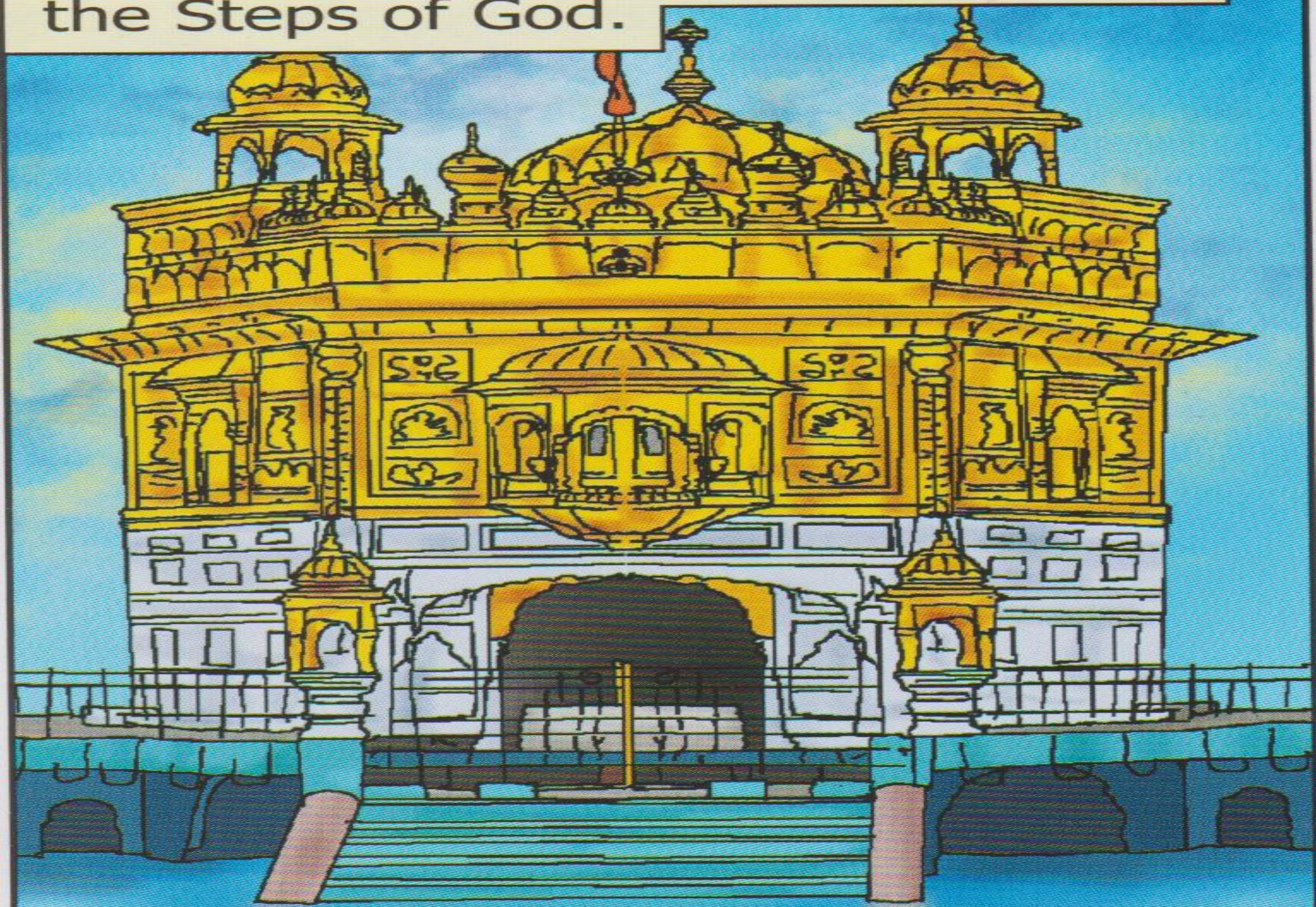


The bridge winds around the main temple...



GURU GURU WAHE GURU!
GURU RAM DAS GURU!!*

...until it reaches the Har Ki Paure,
the Steps of God.



On the first floor of Har ki Paure, there is a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib.



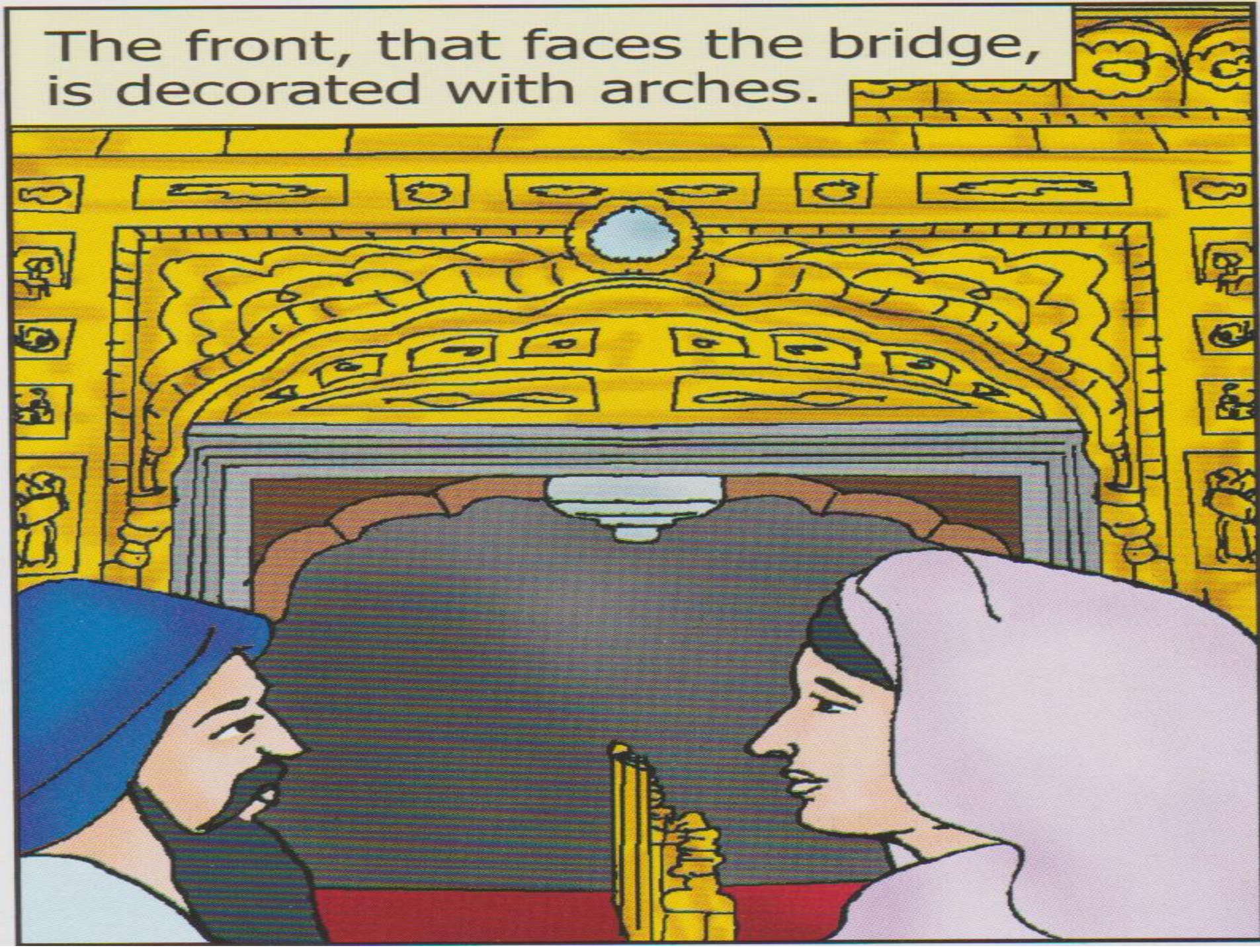
*Calls upon Guru Ram Das in praise of h

The main structure of the Harmandir Sahib is a three-storied one.

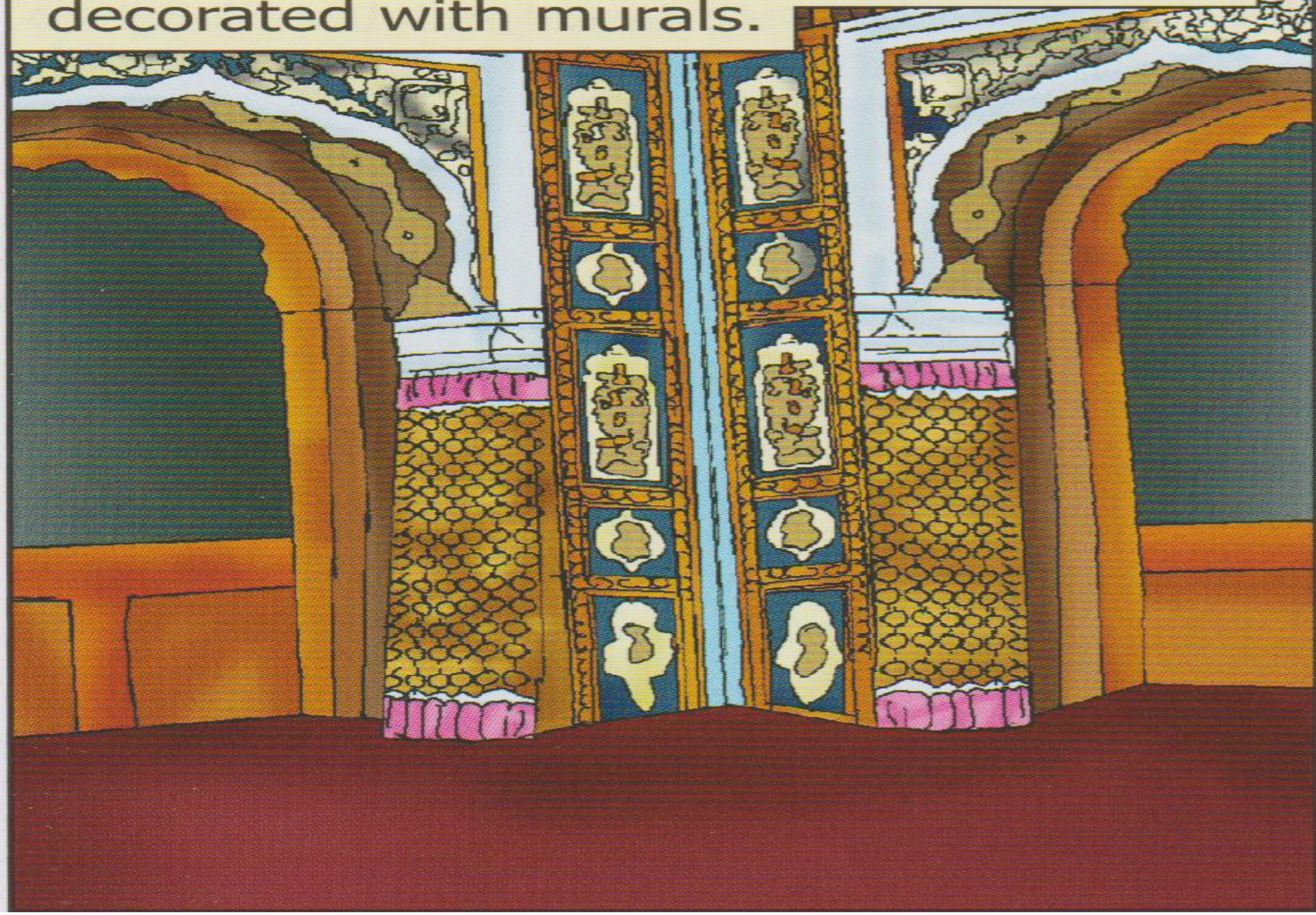


Isn't it beautiful?

The front, that faces the bridge, is decorated with arches.

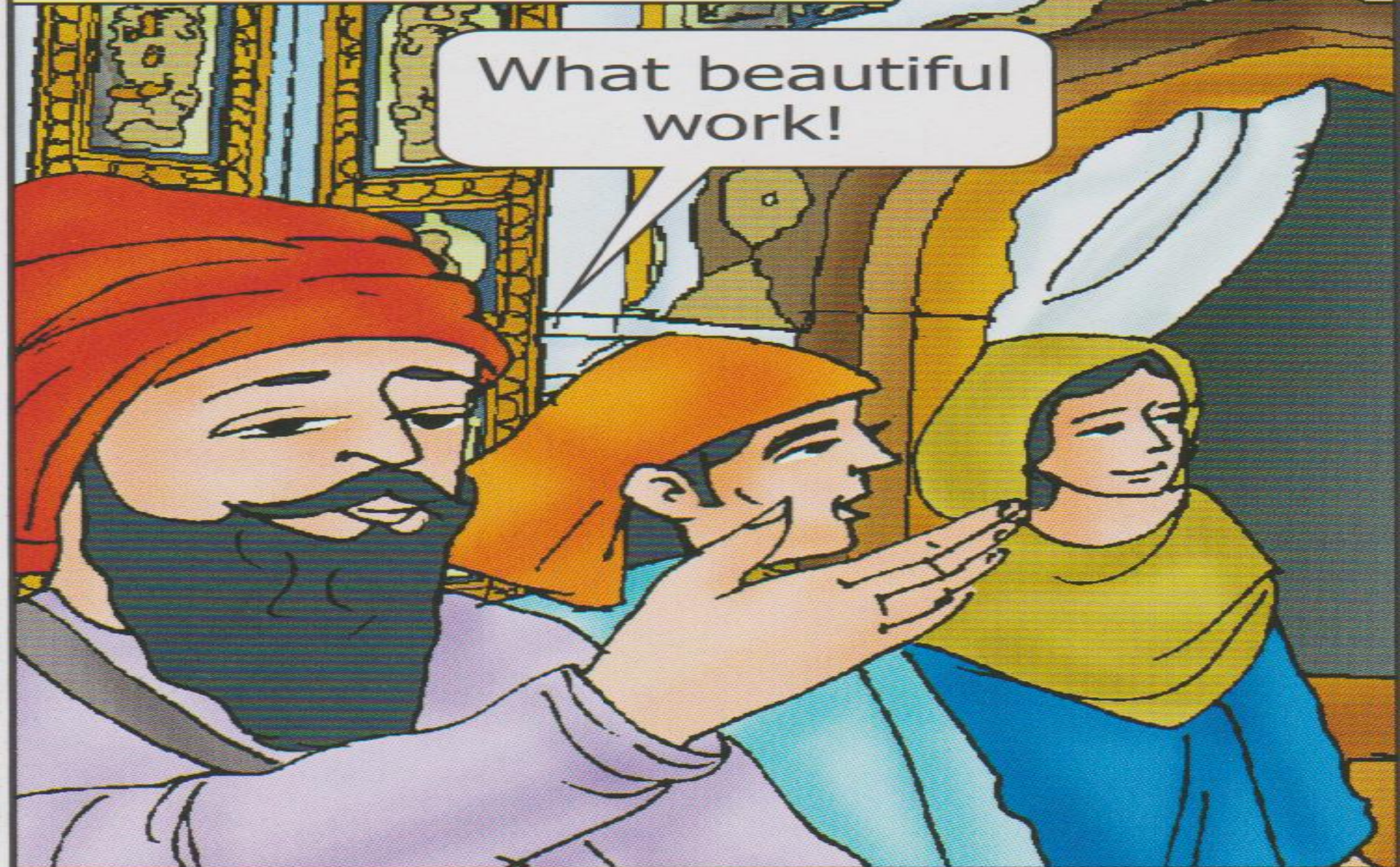


The interior walls of the first floor are decorated with murals.

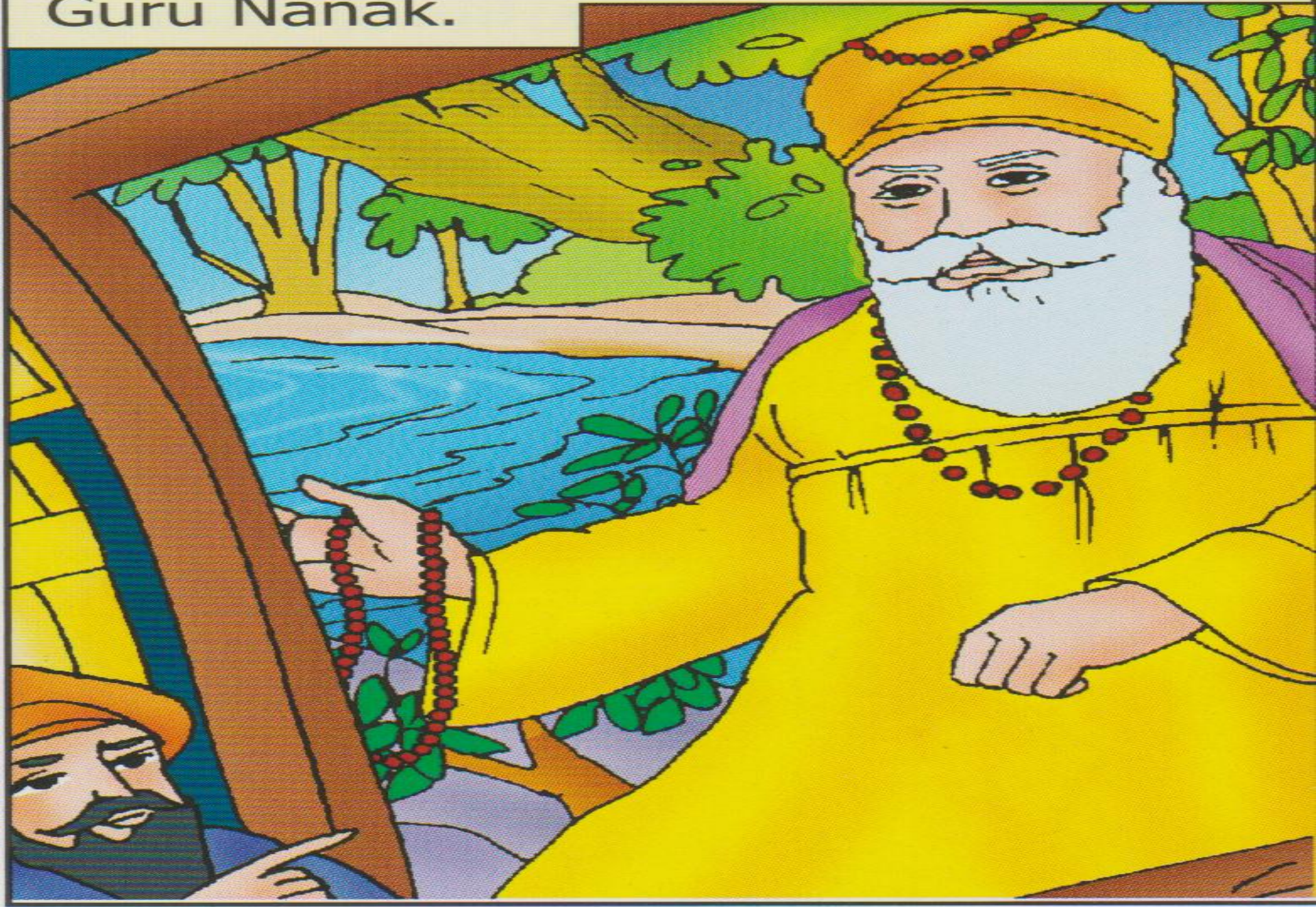


Although most of the murals have been destroyed over the years, 42 panels still survive.

What beautiful work!



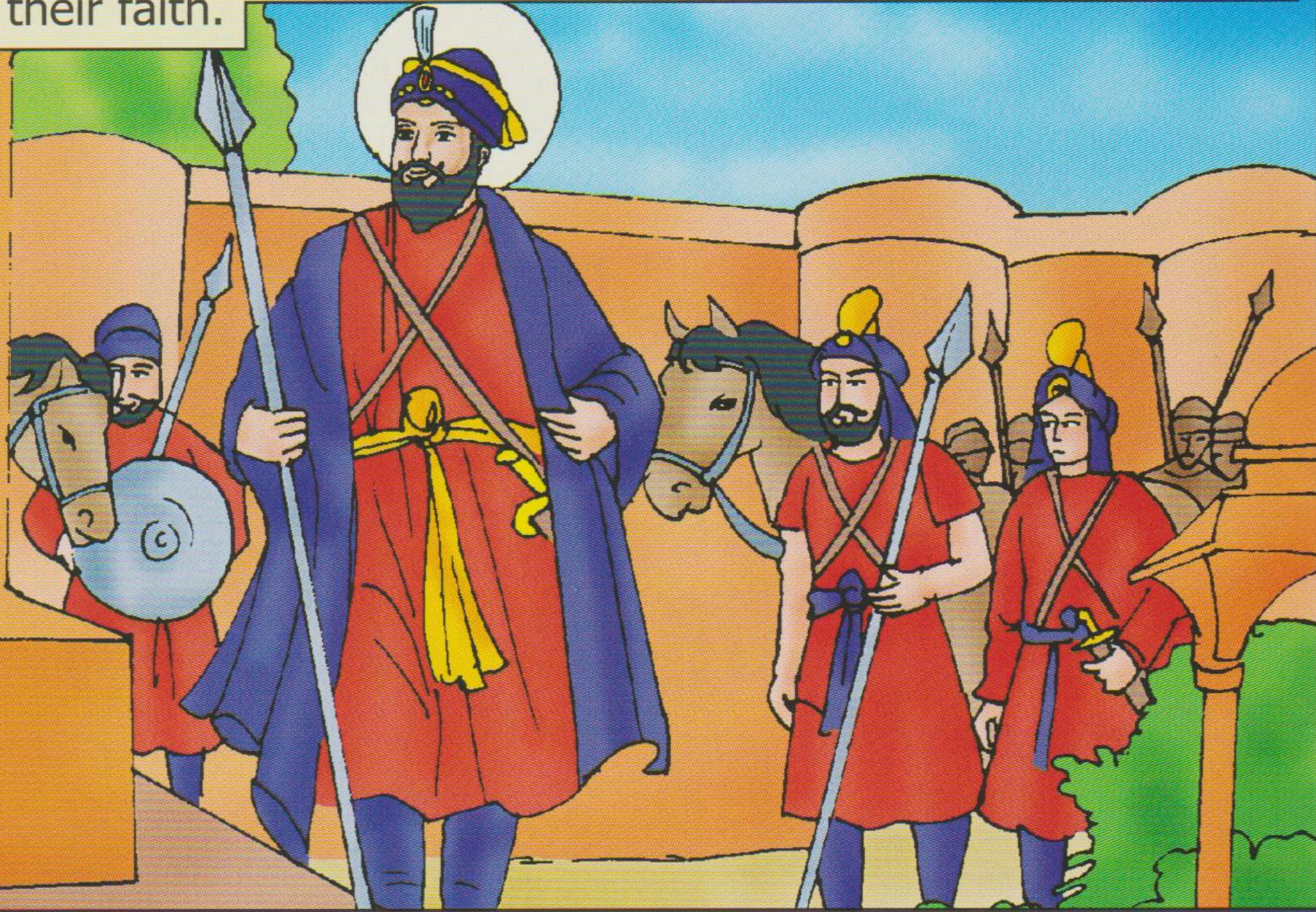
A series of paintings depict the life of Guru Nanak.



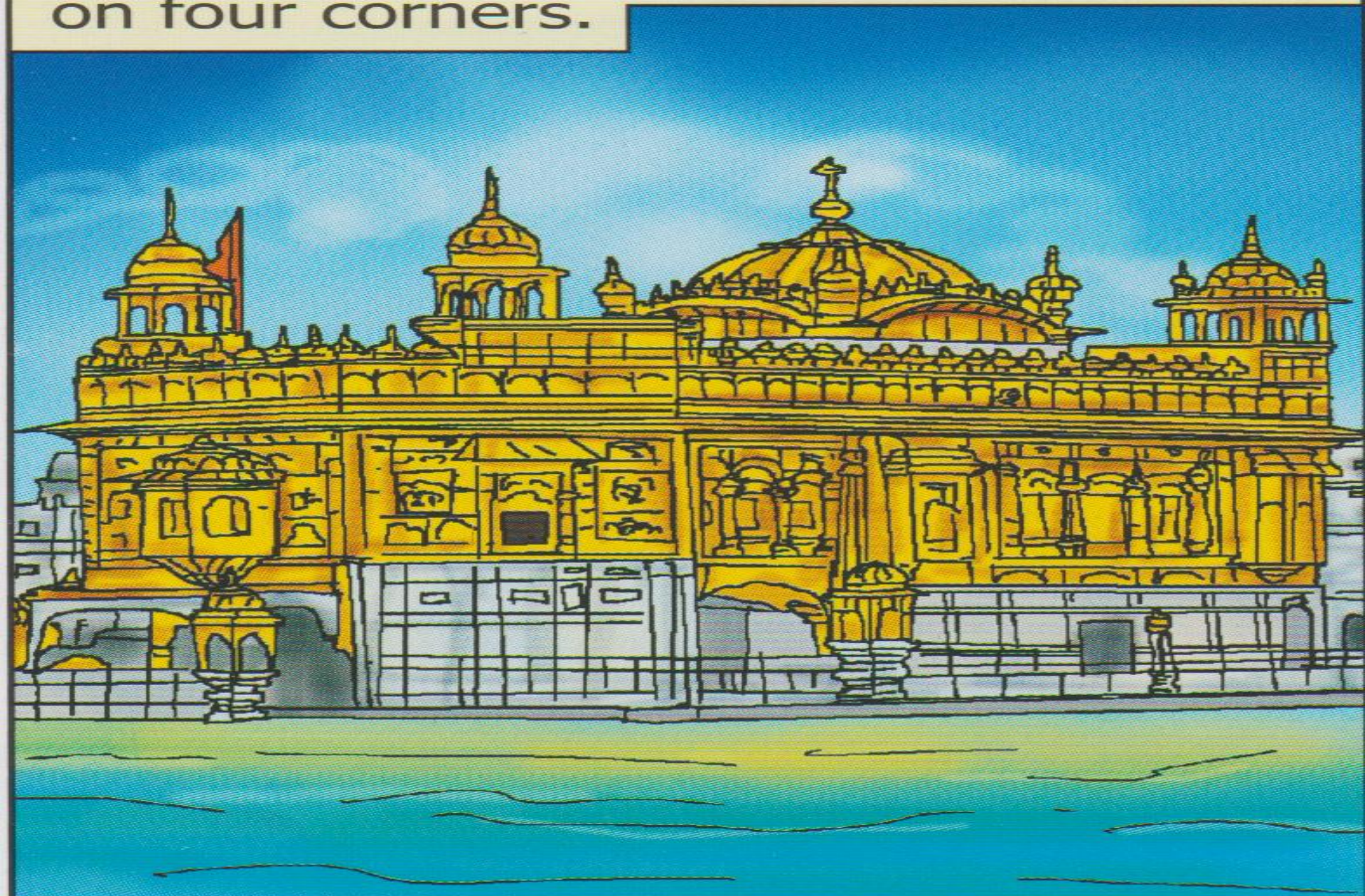
The first painting depicts all the Gods requesting the Almighty to send a holy person to Earth to save it from Kaliyuga*. The last painting depicts Guru Nanak appointing Angad Dev as his successor.

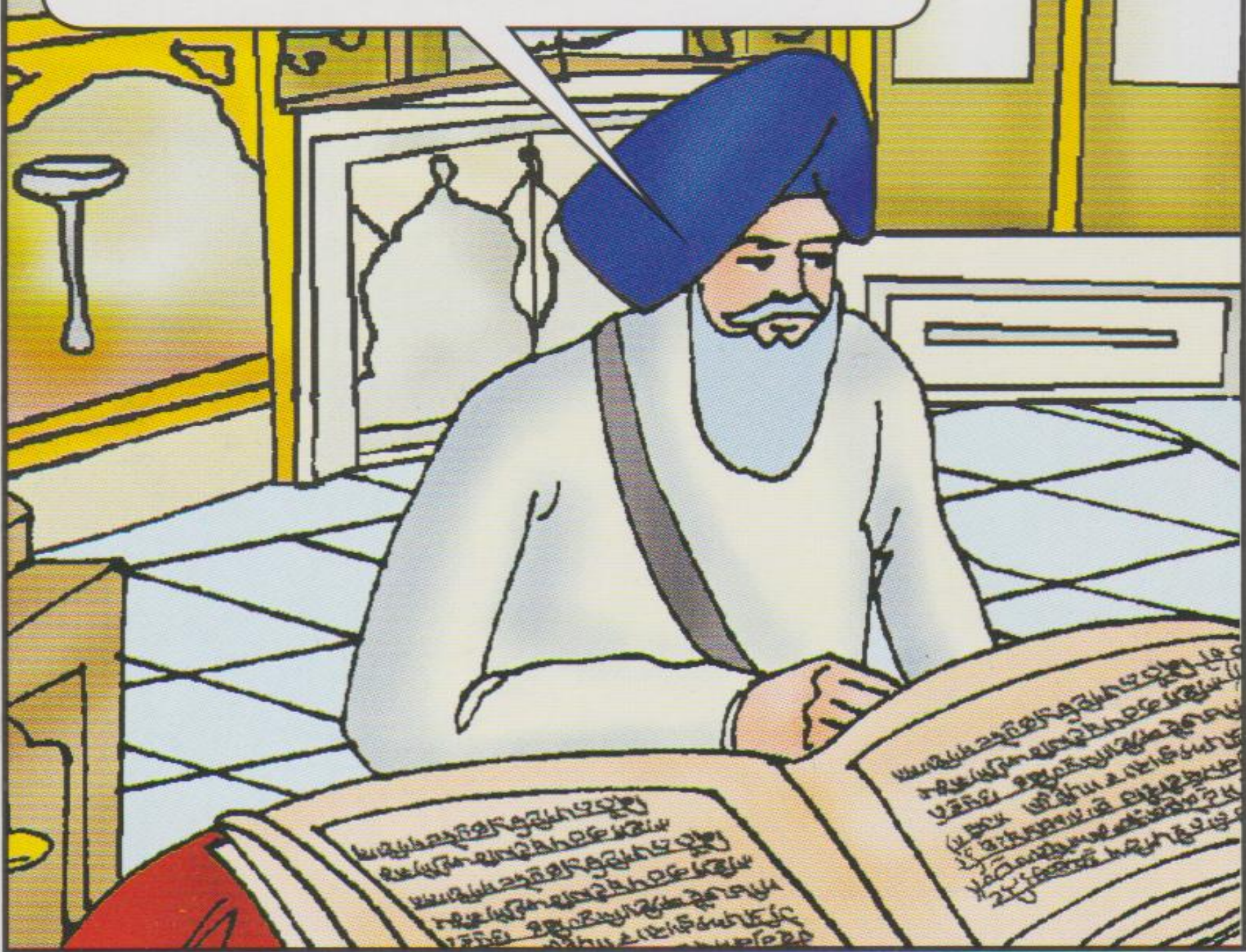


Another series represents Sikh martyrs, including the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who laid down their lives for the cause of their faith.

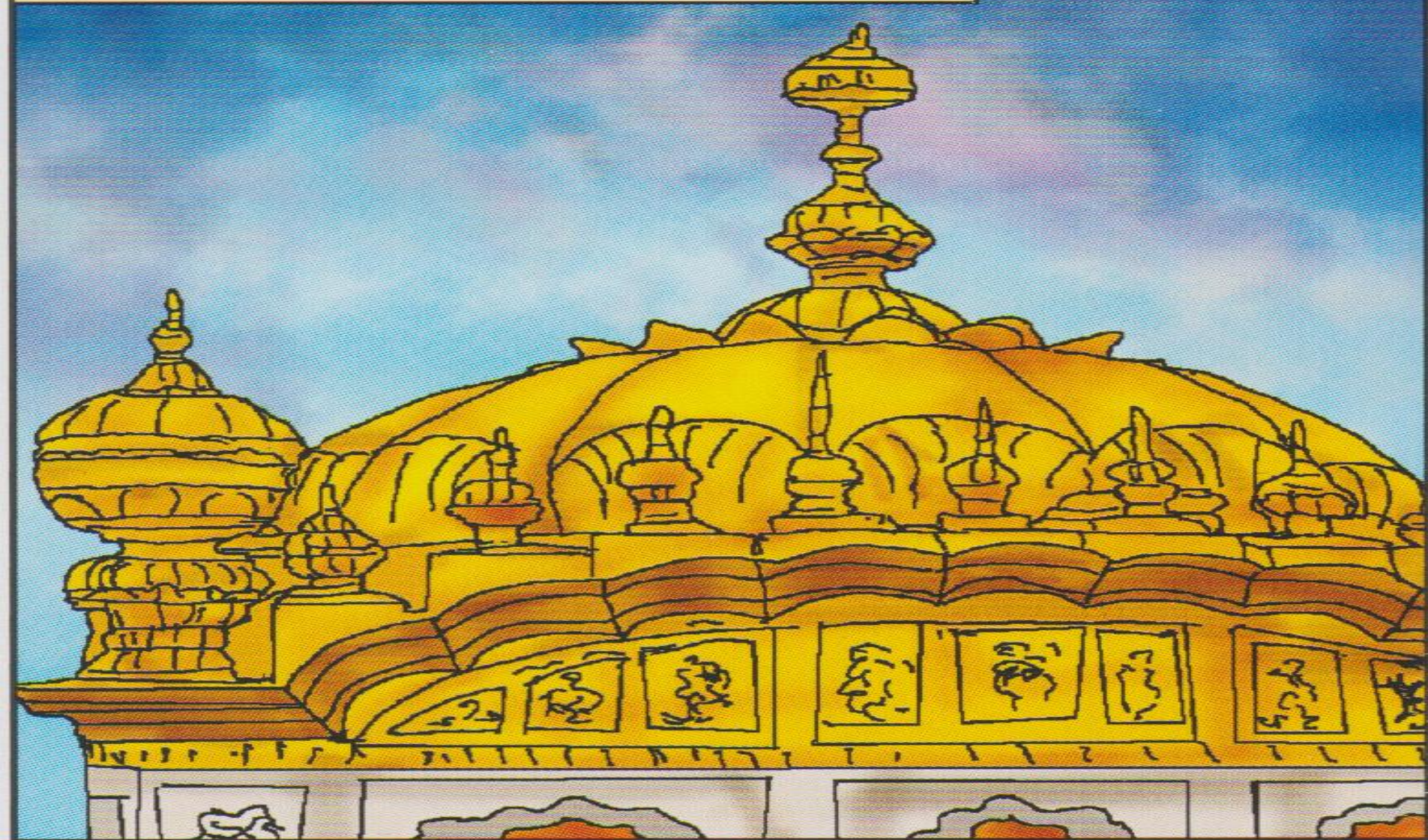


On the top of the first floor, there are parapets with four chhatris or kiosks on four corners.

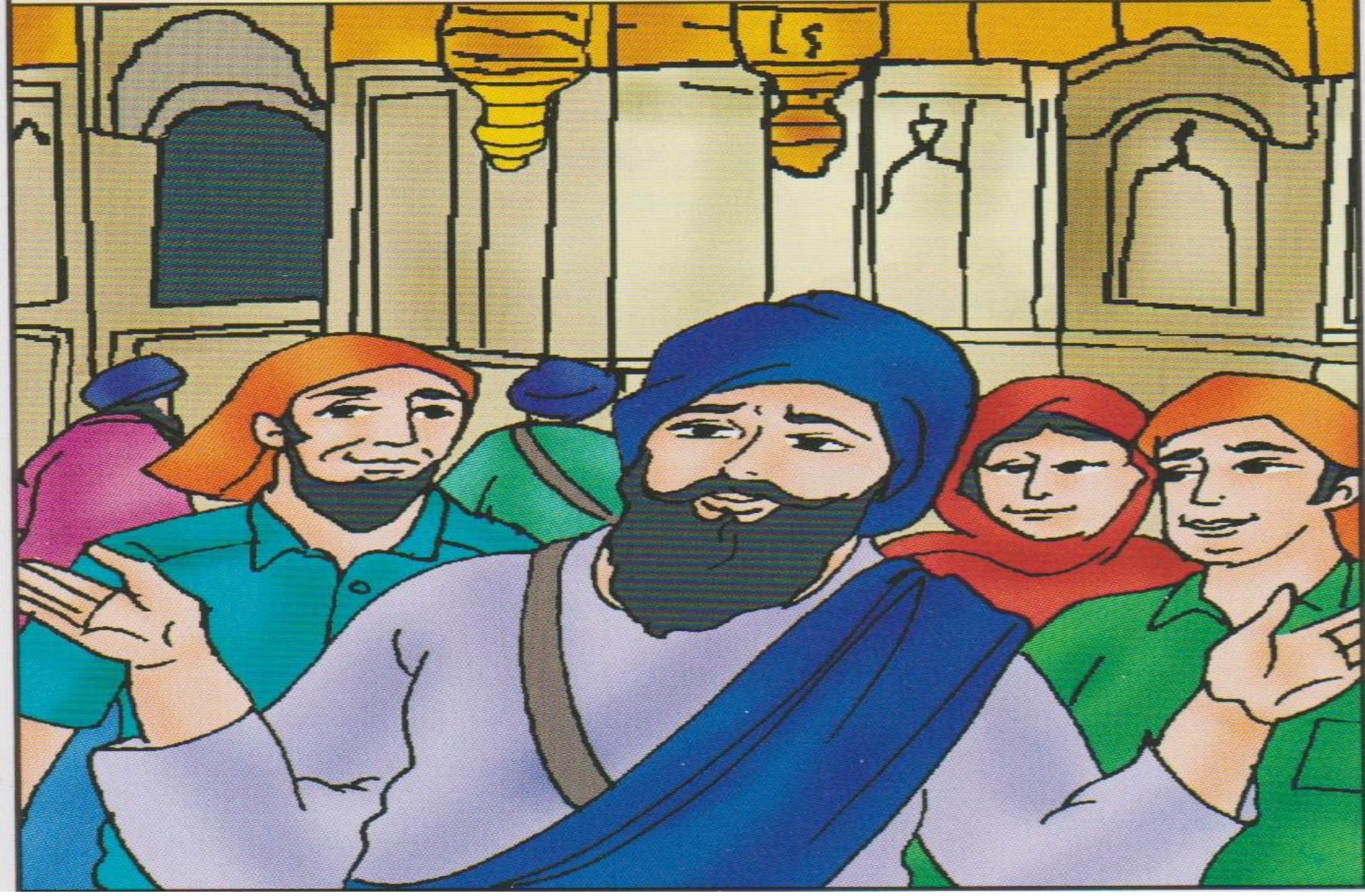




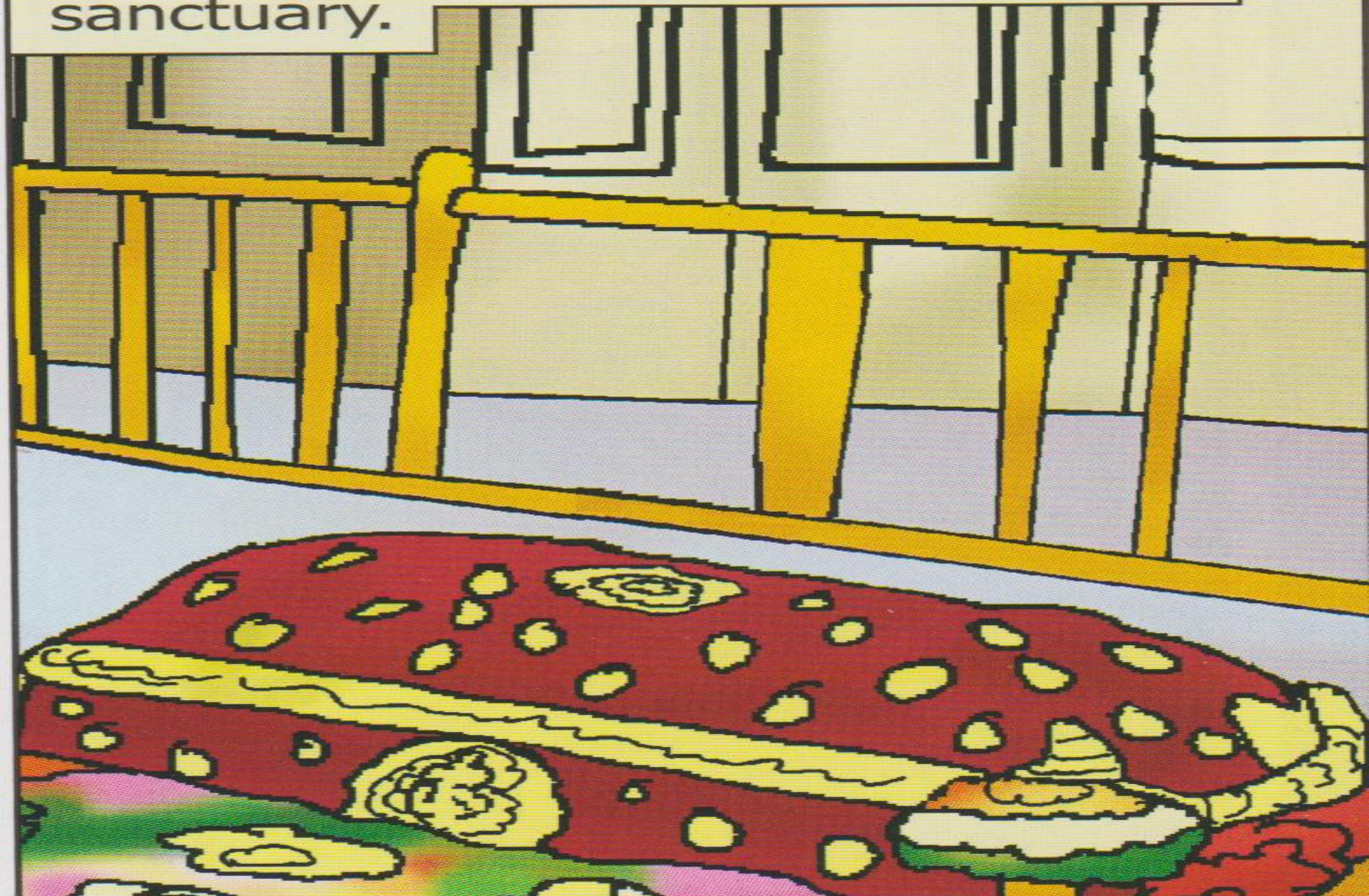
On top of this room is the low-fluted Gumbaz or dome. It has the lotus petal motif at the base and an inverted lotus at the top.



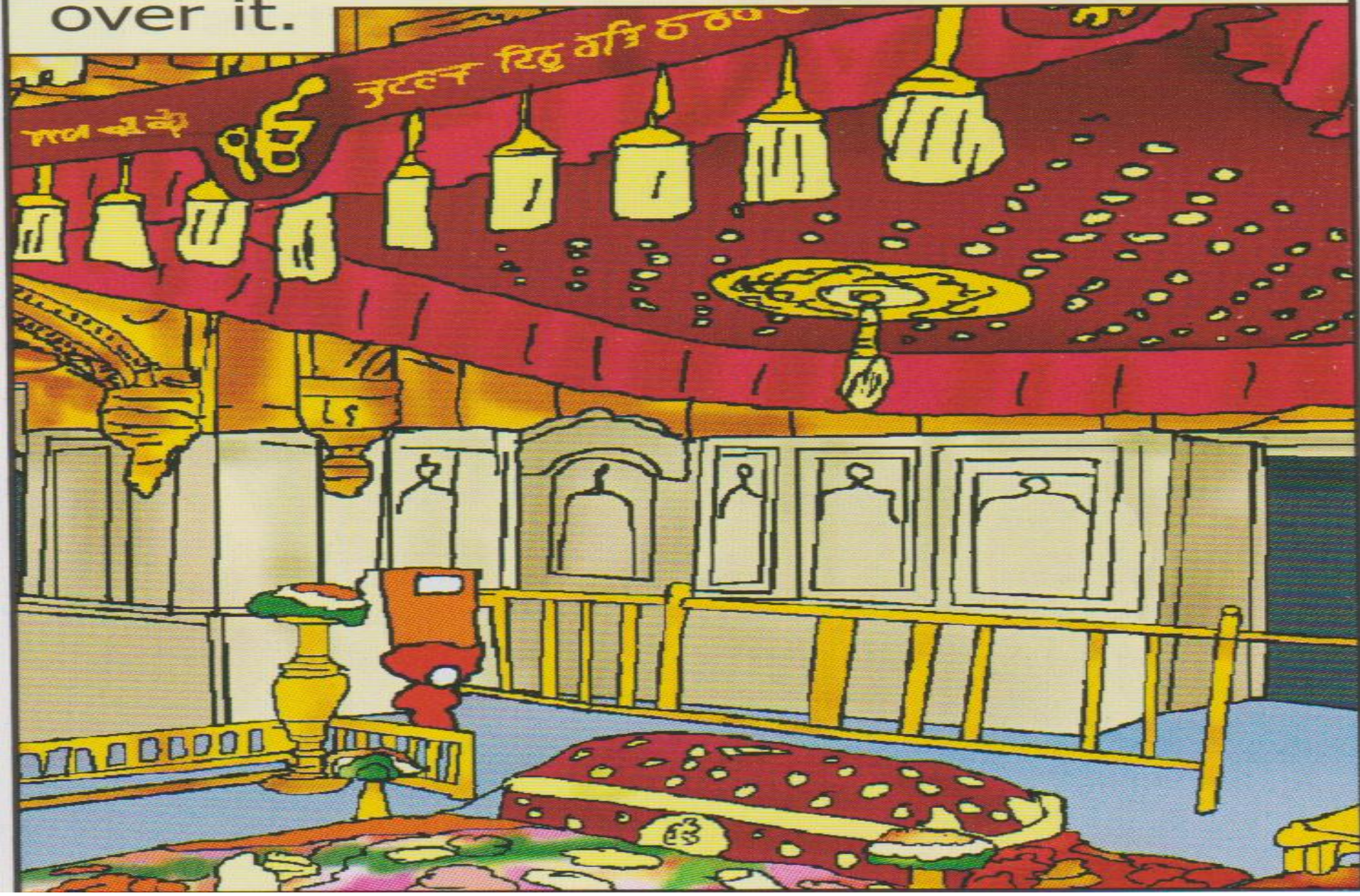
Its architecture, represents a unique harmony of Hindu and Muslim styles.



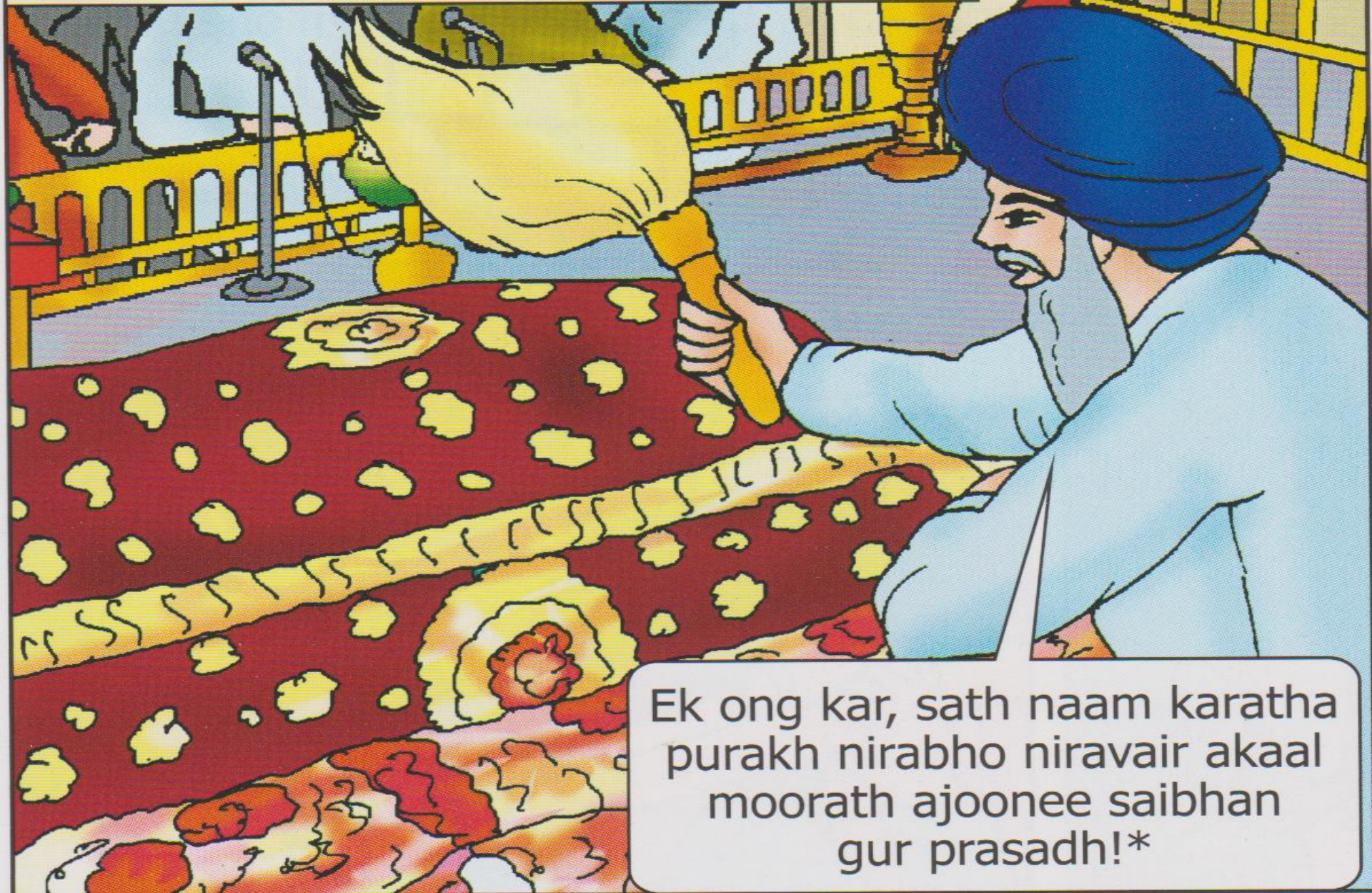
The Adi Granth is laid on top of a jewel studded platform within the sanctuary.



It is enshrined in a beautiful carved brass canopy with an exquisite roof over it.



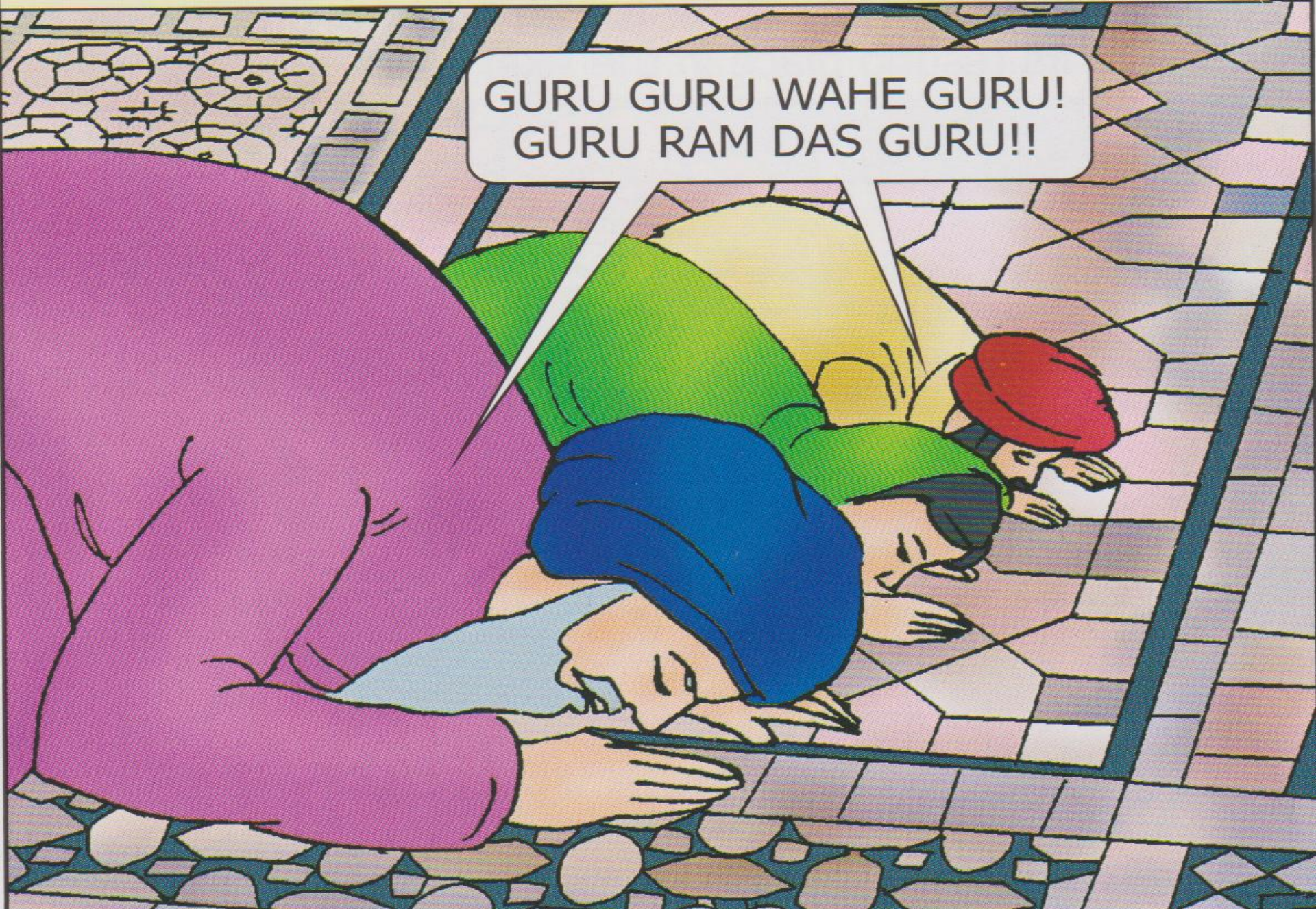
A Chauri or whisk is continually waved above the book as scores of Sikhs pay their respects by...



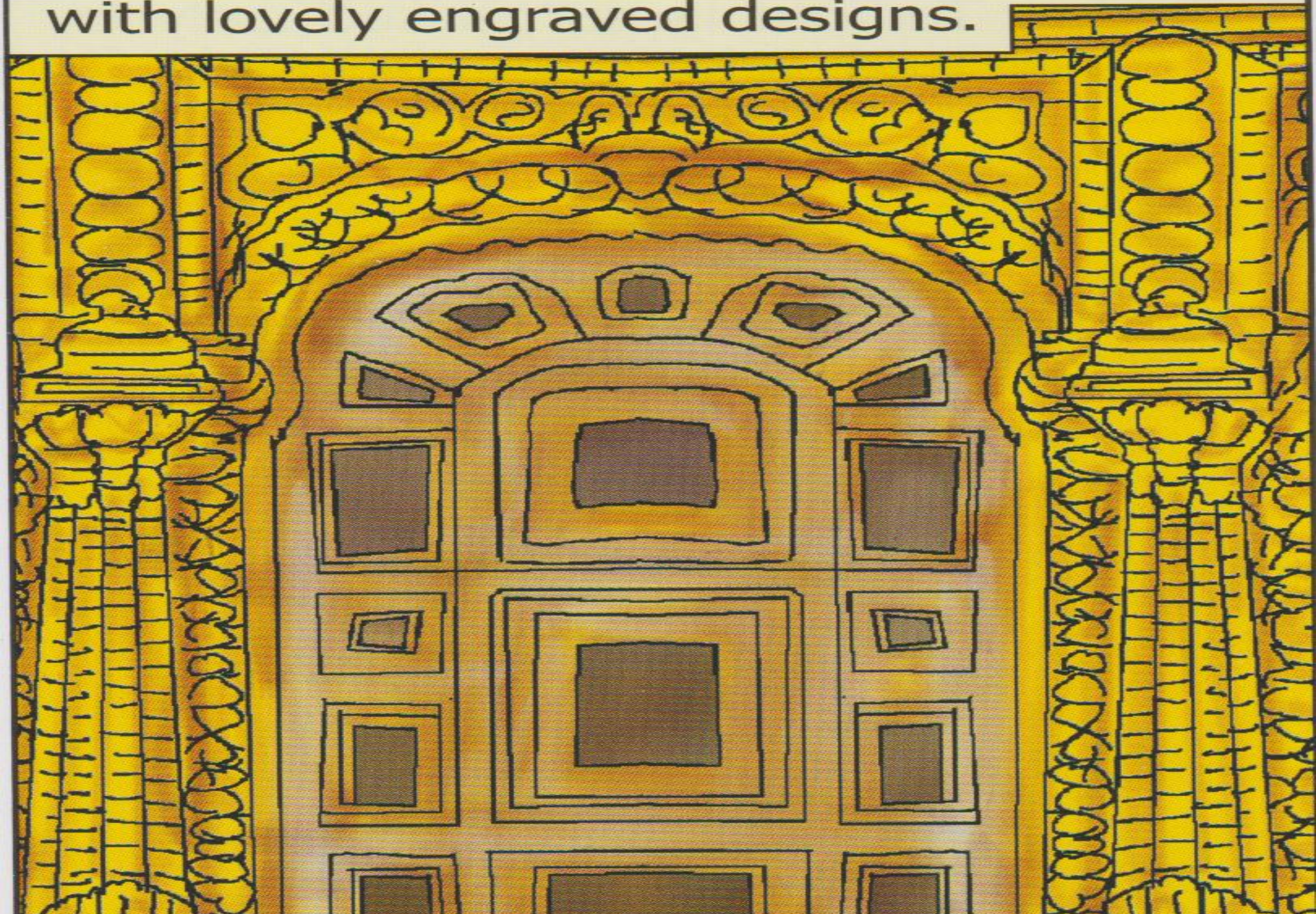
Ek ong kar, sath naam karatha
purakh nirabho niravair akaal
moorath ajoonee saibhan
gur prasadh!*

...touching their foreheads to the temple floor and walls.

GURU GURU WAHE GURU!
GURU RAM DAS GURU!!



The doors are made of silver and brass with lovely engraved designs.



On each of the outer doors, one can find brass plates with Sikh and Hindu themes engraved on them.





These engraved plates were donated by devotees during the Nineteenth Century.

The temple has a holy tree called the Jubi Tree.

The tree has special powers!

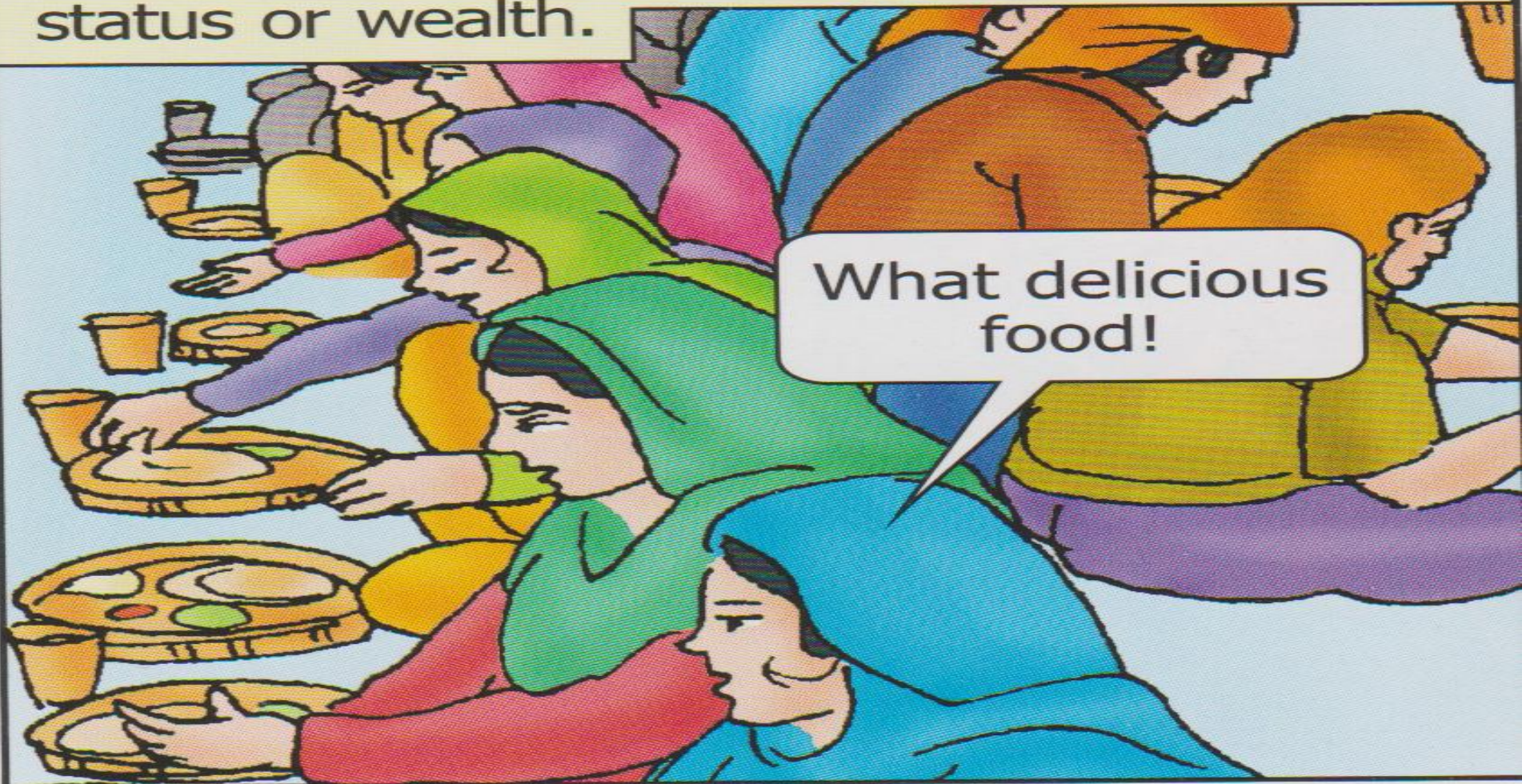


Childless women tie strips of cloth on the branches of the tree, to be blessed with children.



God, please bless me with a child!

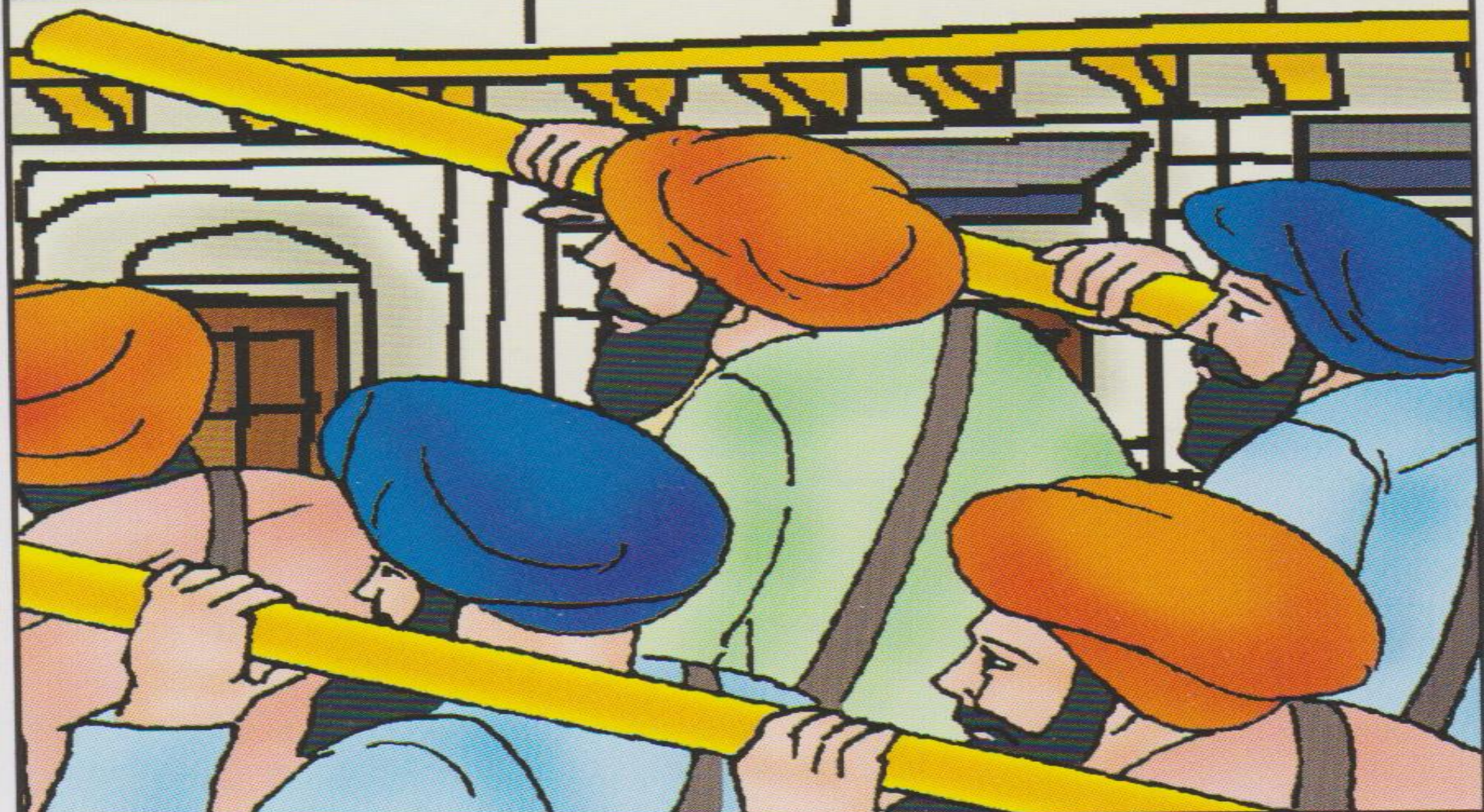
Another highlight of the complex is the Guru-ka-langar, a dining hall. Here, around 35,000 people are given free meals by the temple volunteers, every day. Everyone is invited to join in this ritual and all of them sit on the floor to eat irrespective of caste, status or wealth.



A unique festival called the Palki Sahib is celebrated at the temple every night. The Holy Book is carried in a procession along the bridge to its resting place in the Akal Takht.



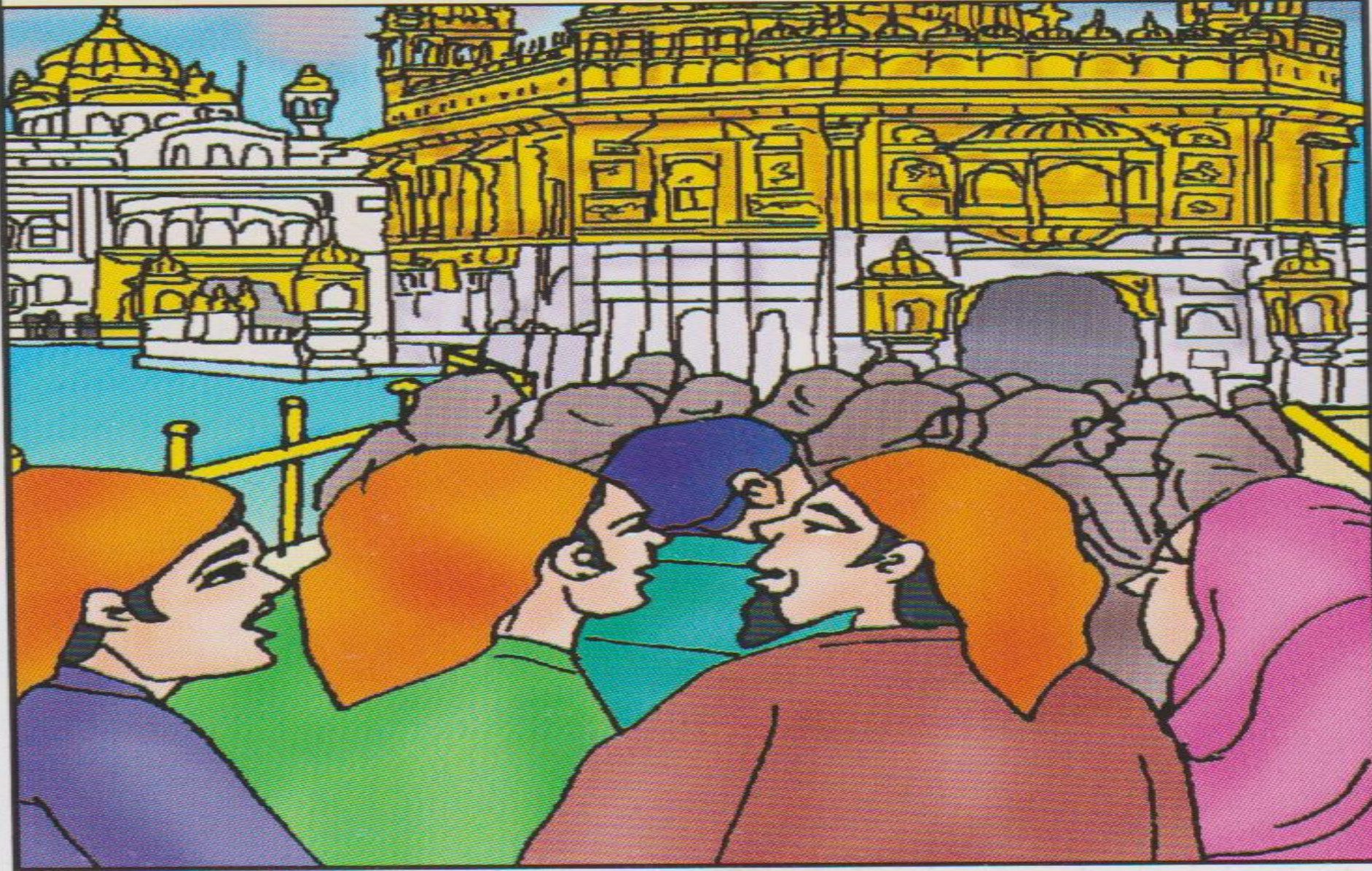
All male pilgrims and visitors actively participate as the heavy palanquin with the book, is passed along from one man to another.



To avail of this honour people form lines in front of and behind the palanquin so that each person can shoulder the burden for a few seconds before passing it along.



This holiest shrine of the Sikhs is visited by thousands every year, of which many are even non-Sikhs.



The peace and beauty of the dazzling Golden Temple is surpassed only by the spiritual values that it holds for the Sikhs.

