

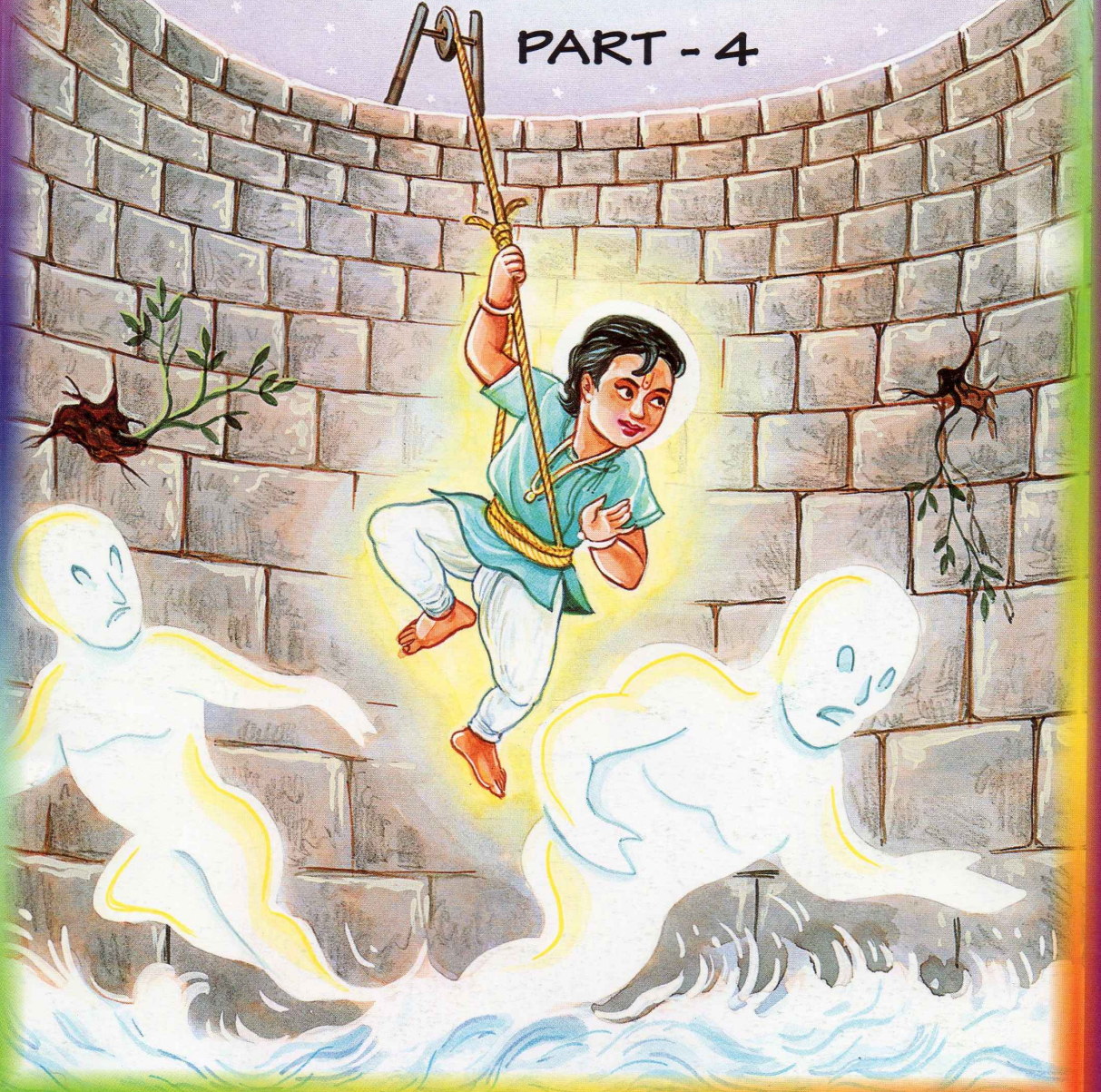
॥ Shree Swaminarayano Vijaytetram ॥

**SHREE**

**GHANASHYAM**

**BAL CHARITRA**

**PART - 4**



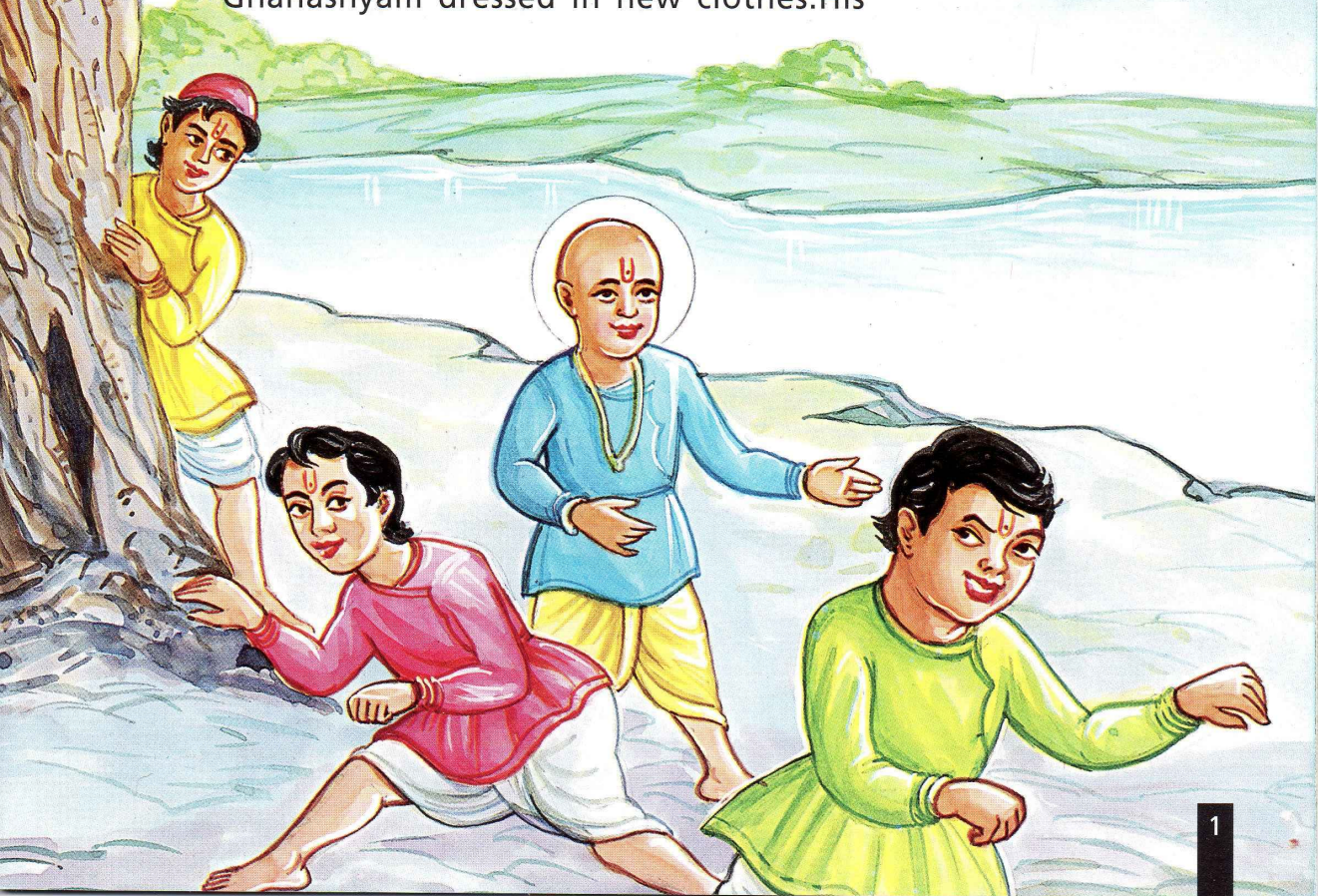




## THE DEMON STORM

It was the day of the little Ghanashyam's first haircut. Sitting on the banks of the Narayan lake, the barber wielded his razor, and the last of Ghanashyam's hair fell to the ground. While the brahmin priest chanted, Ghanashyam picked up his hair, walked to the lake, and threw the hair into the water.

After taking a holy bath in the lake, Ghanashyam dressed in new clothes. His

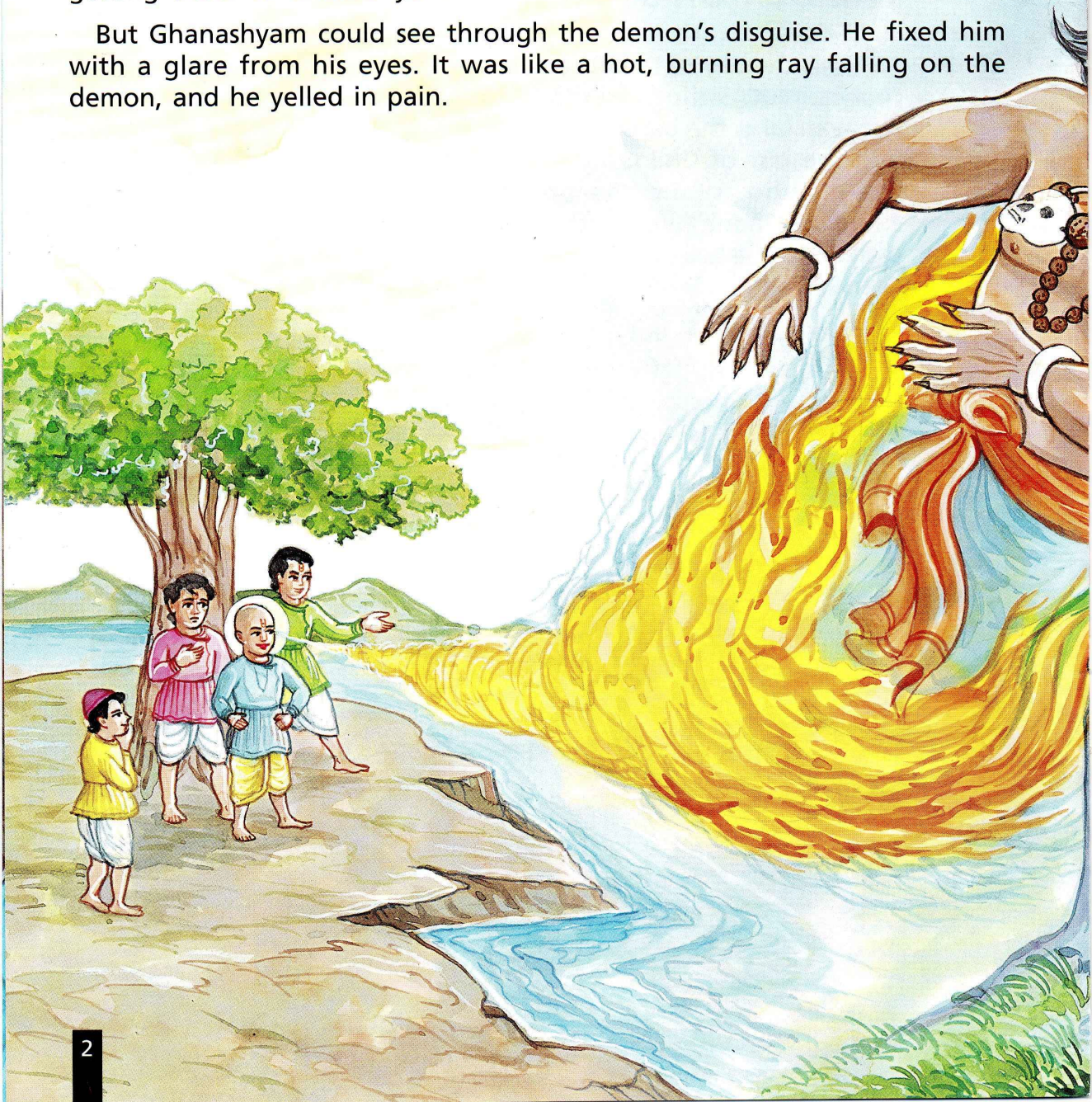




parents then set about feeding the priest and the barber, while Ghanashyam went to play with his friends under the shade of some mango trees.

Watching the small boys playing happily was an evil asura. Seeing the children unguarded, he decided to seize the opportunity to snatch away Ghanashyam. Quickly, he took the form of a small boy, and joined the group of friends. At first he started to play with the boys, but gradually he began to get very rough, and began pushing and pulling them, slowly getting closer to Ghanashyam.

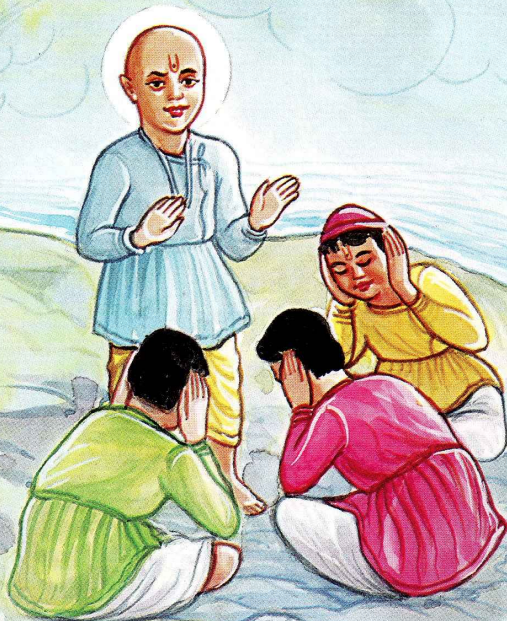
But Ghanashyam could see through the demon's disguise. He fixed him with a glare from his eyes. It was like a hot, burning ray falling on the demon, and he yelled in pain.



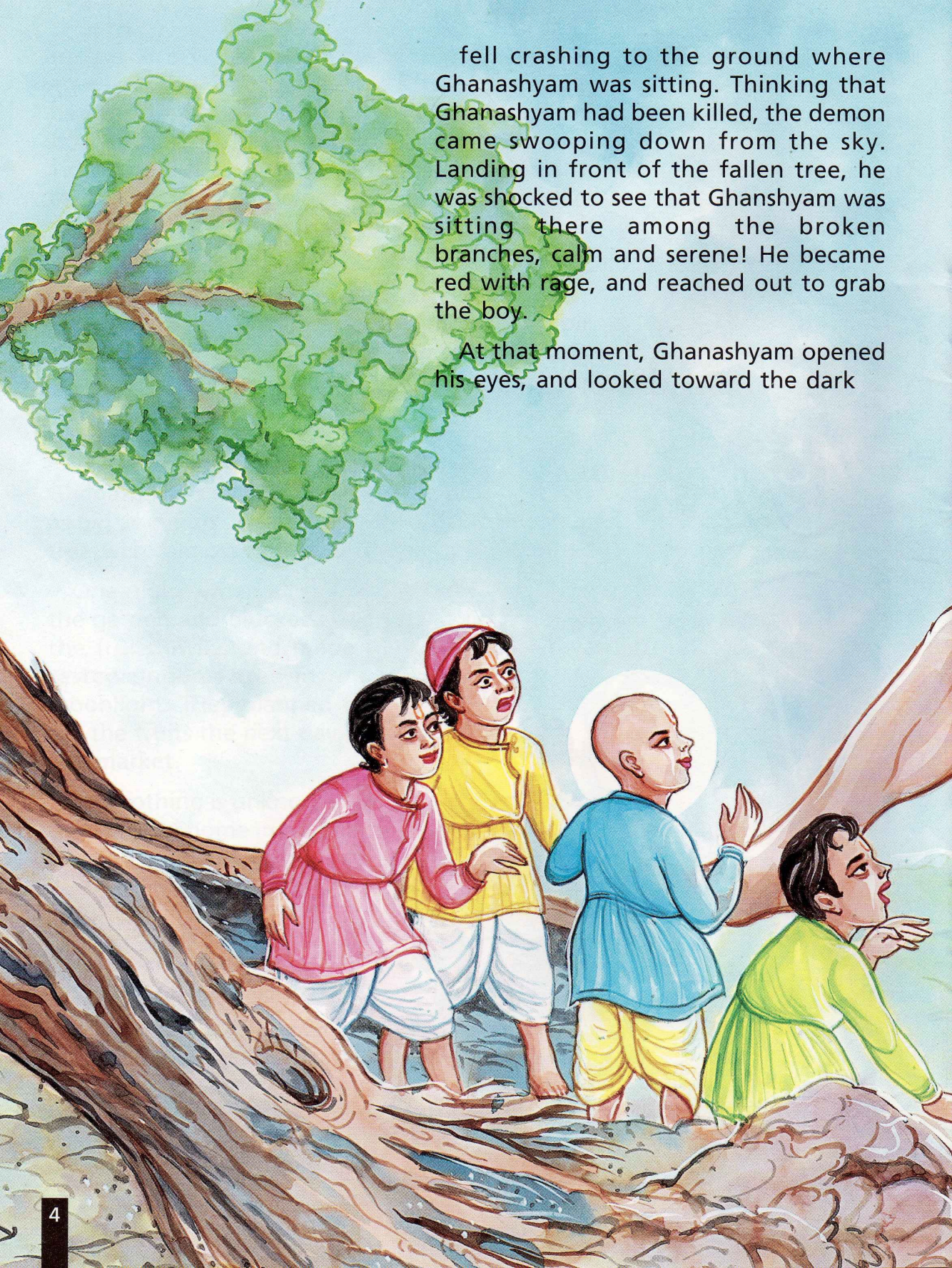


Quickly the demon flew into the skies, and there he caused a violent storm to rage. Suddenly it began to pour with rain. The thunder roared, and great streaks of lightning shot down from the skies. Ghanashyam's friends began to run helter-skelter, seeking the protection of the trees. But Ghanashyam remained calm, and sat on the ground and closed his eyes in meditation.

Suddenly the demon threw a great bolt of lightning from the sky. It hit the tree under which Ghanashyam was sitting, and there was a loud cracking sound. The tree was split in two, and







fell crashing to the ground where Ghanashyam was sitting. Thinking that Ghanashyam had been killed, the demon came swooping down from the sky. Landing in front of the fallen tree, he was shocked to see that Ghanashyam was sitting there among the broken branches, calm and serene! He became red with rage, and reached out to grab the boy.

At that moment, Ghanashyam opened his eyes, and looked toward the dark

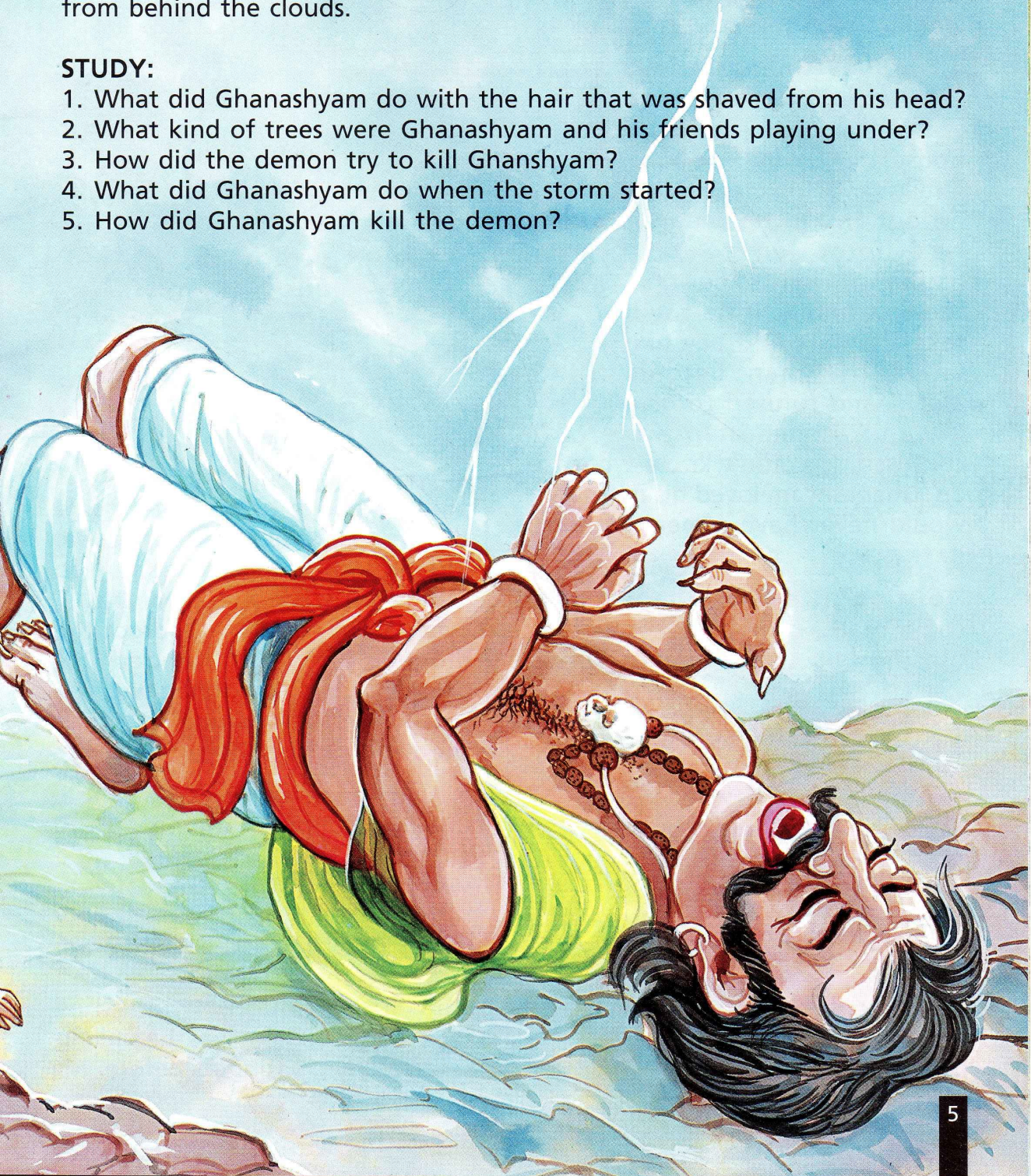


skies. As his gaze pierced the clouds, a searing bolt of lightning shot out from them, and streaking down to earth it hit the demon asura! The thunder roared, and the demon fell down dead.

Then just as quickly as it began, the storm stopped, and the sun came out from behind the clouds.

**STUDY:**

1. What did Ghanashyam do with the hair that was shaved from his head?
2. What kind of trees were Ghanashyam and his friends playing under?
3. How did the demon try to kill Ghanashyam?
4. What did Ghanashyam do when the storm started?
5. How did Ghanashyam kill the demon?



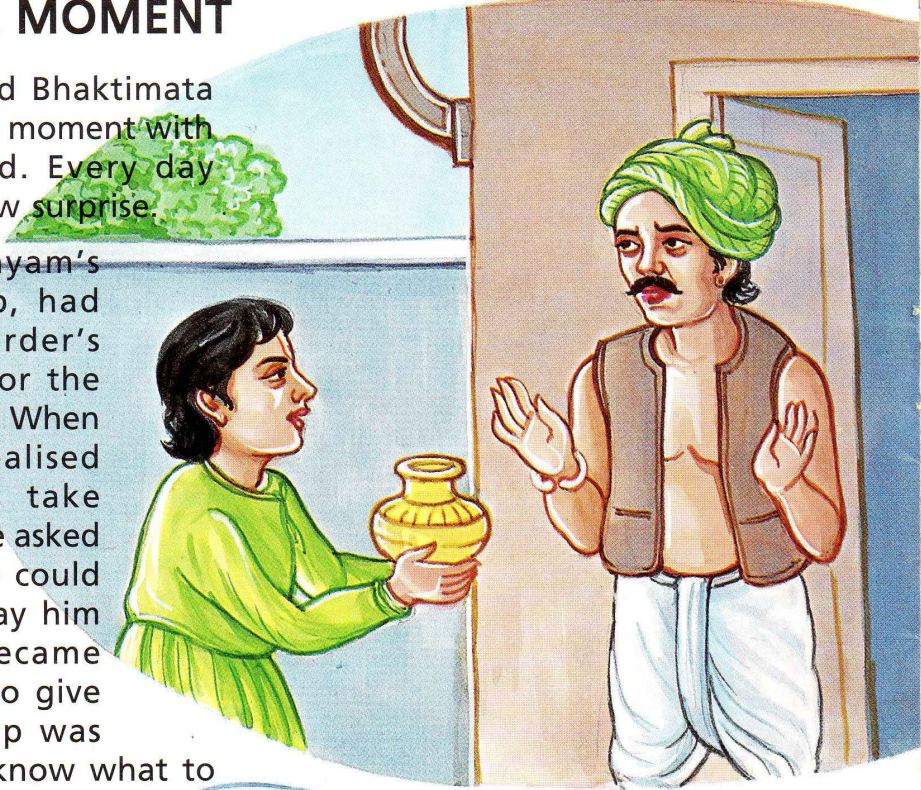


# NEVER A DULL MOMENT

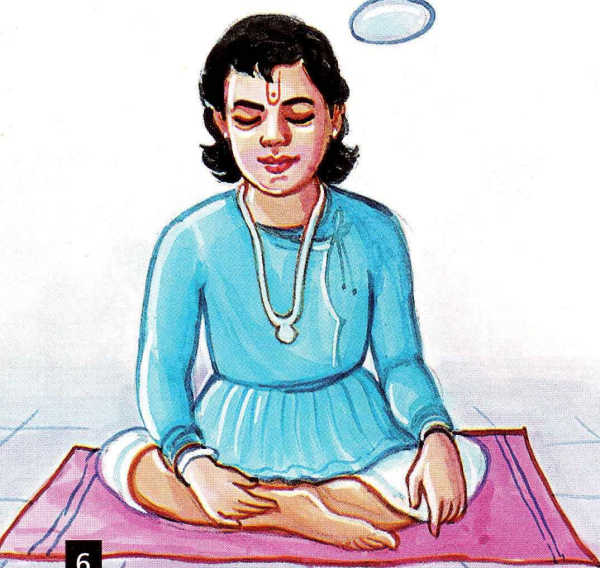
For Dharmadev and Bhaktimata there was never a dull moment with Ghanashyam around. Every day would bring some new surprise.

One day Ghanashyam's brother, Rampratap, had gone to a cow-herder's house to buy milk for the family's evening meal. When he got there, he realised he'd forgotten to take money with him, so he asked the cow-herder if he could take the milk and pay him later. The man became angry, and refused to give him milk. Rampratap was confused. He didn't know what to do. Ghanashyam loved his milk, and would never have a meal without it.

Sitting at home, Ghanashyam could read his brother's thoughts. Closing his eyes, he projected

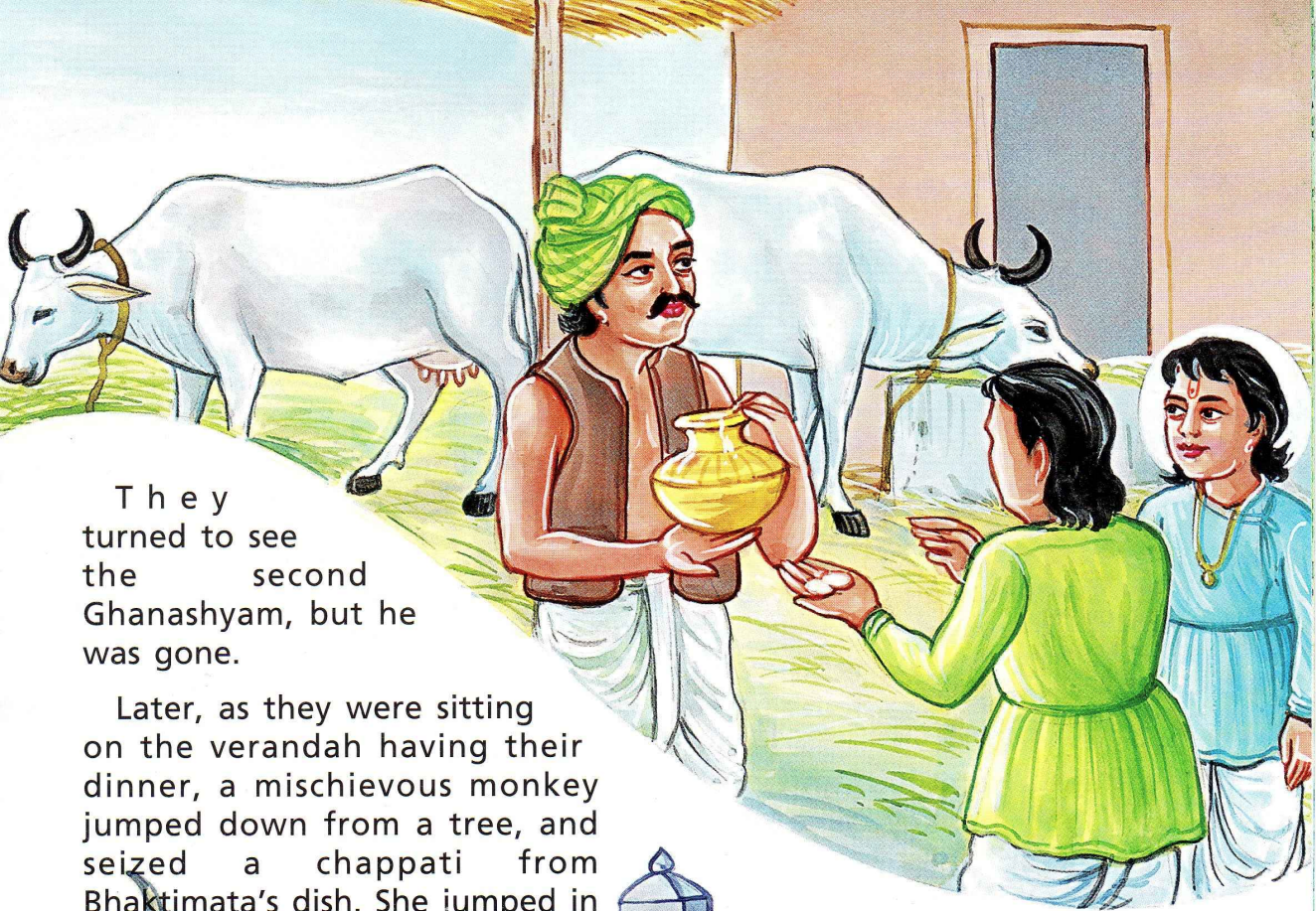


another image of himself outside the cow-herder's house. Rampratap was surprised to see him there. "Here, brother," Ghanashyam said. "You forgot the money." And he handed his brother a coin. Rampratap paid the cow-herder, and taking the milk, the two boys set off for home.



As they approached their house, Bhaktimata was standing on the verandah. Her eyes opened wide when she saw Ghanashyam returning with his brother. "How can this be?" she asked Rampratap. "Your brother is inside the house." And sure enough, when they looked inside, there was the smiling Ghanashyam, sitting as before. his





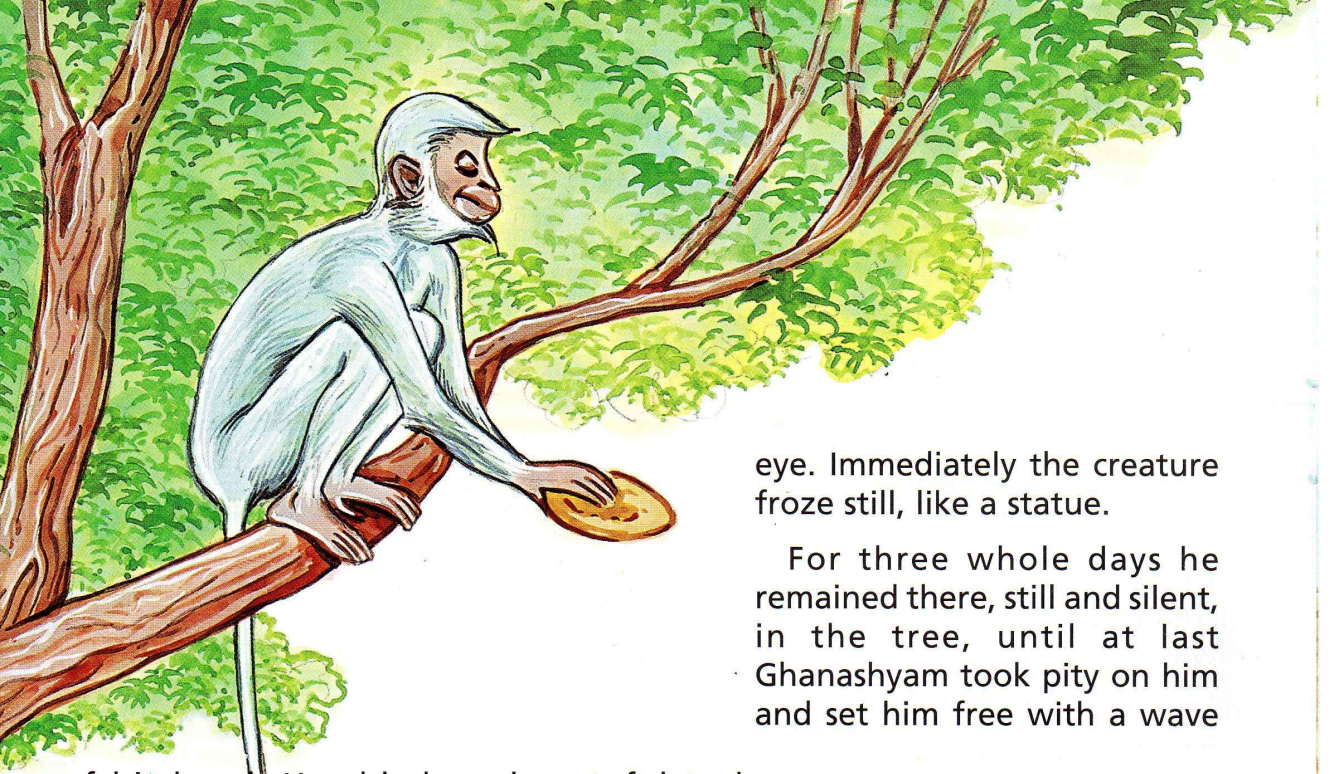
They turned to see the second Ghanashyam, but he was gone.

Later, as they were sitting on the verandah having their dinner, a mischievous monkey jumped down from a tree, and seized a chappati from Bhaktimata's dish. She jumped in fright, as the monkey dashed back to the tree and sat on a branch to eat the chappati.

Ghanashyam looked up from his food and fixed the monkey with







eye. Immediately the creature froze still, like a statue.

For three whole days he remained there, still and silent, in the tree, until at last Ghanashyam took pity on him and set him free with a wave

of his hand. Humbled, and grateful to be released, the monkey came down from the tree, touched Ghanashyam's feet in reverence, and went on his way.

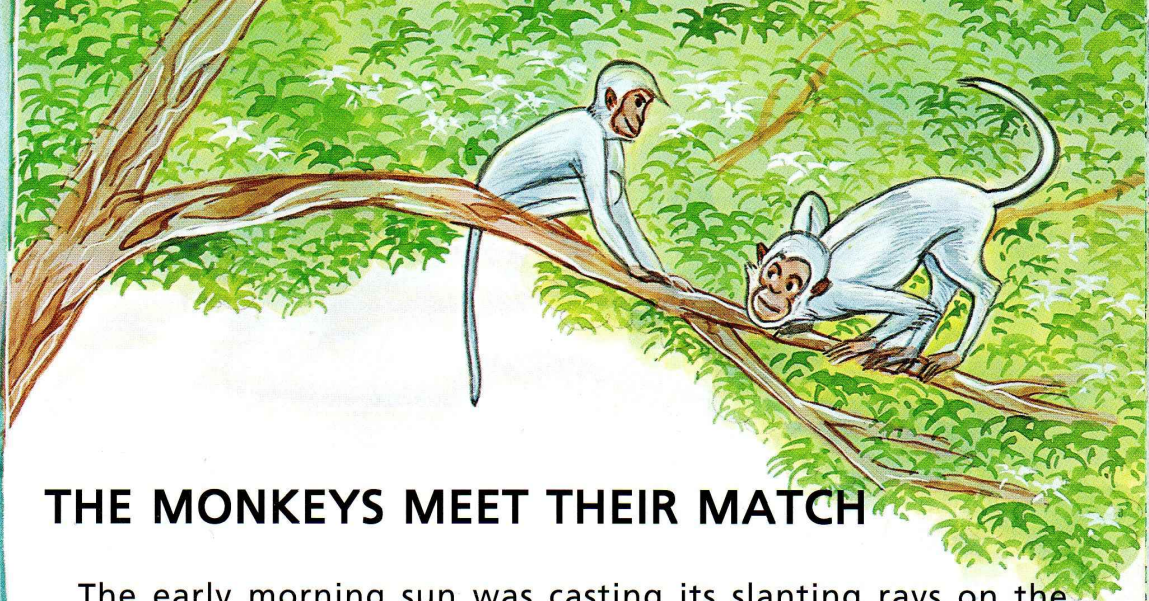
In these, and so many other ways, Ghanashyam used to surprise and delight his whole family.

### STUDY:

1. Fill in the gap.  
"Ghanashyam surprised his family by being in more than one \_\_\_\_\_ at the same time."
2. Fill in the gap." Ghanashyam always liked to drink \_\_\_\_\_ with his dinner."
3. How did Ghanashyam punish the naughty monkey?
4. How many days did the monkey stay in the tree?







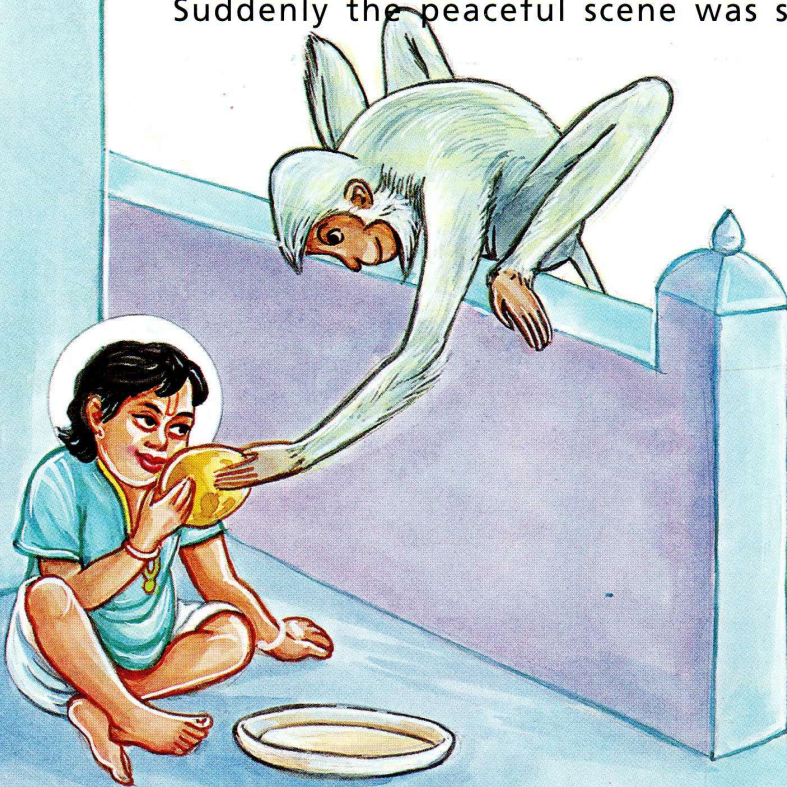
## THE MONKEYS MEET THEIR MATCH

The early morning sun was casting its slanting rays on the verandah, as Bhaktimata sat there feeding her darling Ghanashyam with curd and chappati. After a few bites, Ghanashyam asked for water, and his mother went off to the well to fill up the water pot.

Suddenly the peaceful scene was shattered by the loud

chattering of a monkey in a tree. The hungry animal eyed Ghanashyam's chappati jealously. Leaping from the branch, he bounded across the verandah, snatched the chappati from the little boy's hand, and leapt back to the tree. He sat there, snatching bites from the chappati, and baring his teeth at Ghanashyam.

Ghanashyam thought he should teach the thieving animal a lesson.







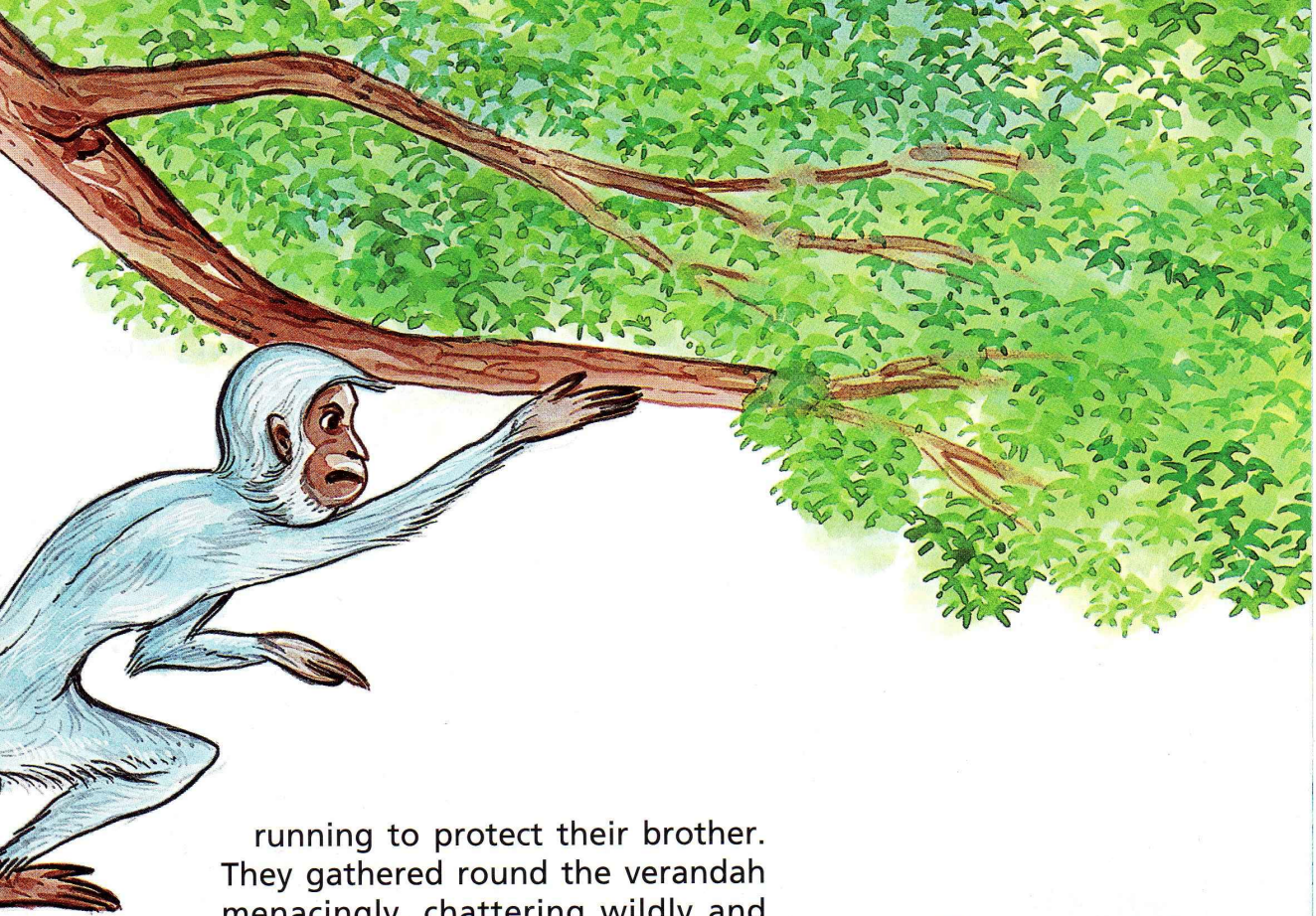
Focussing his concentration, he extended his arms toward the animal. Immediately his arms began to grow and stretch, and he picked up the shocked creature and threw him down to the ground!



The monkey let out a wild shriek of pain. Hearing this, all the other monkeys in the neighborhood came

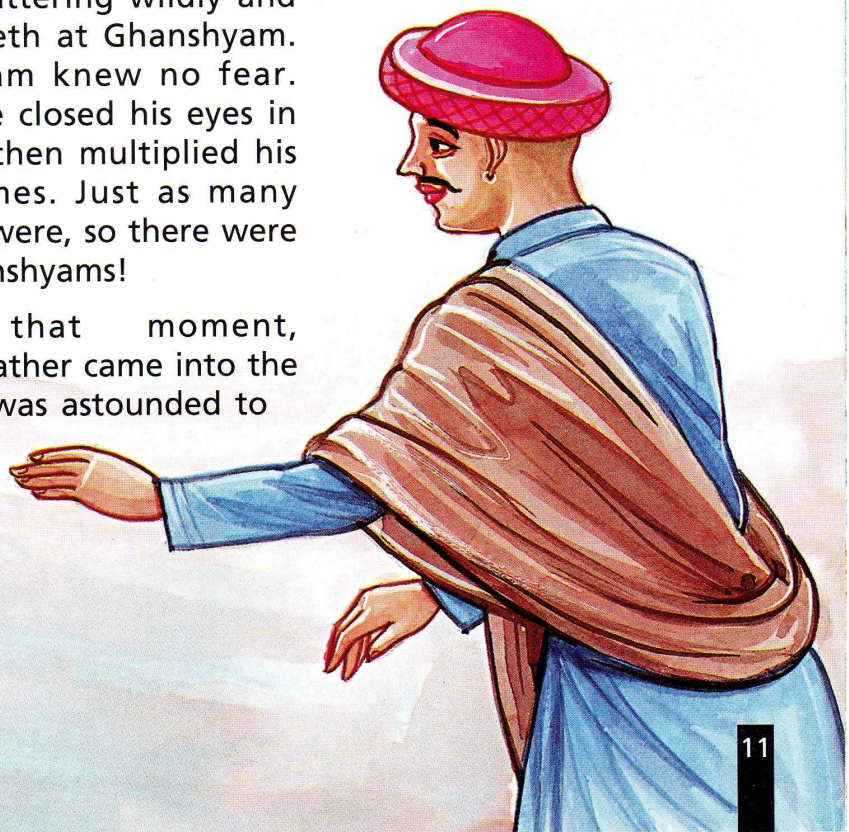






running to protect their brother. They gathered round the verandah menacingly, chattering wildly and baring their teeth at Ghanashyam. But Ghanashyam knew no fear. Standing up, he closed his eyes in concentration, then multiplied his body many times. Just as many monkeys there were, so there were that many Ghanashyams!

Just at that moment, Ghanashyam's father came into the compound. He was astounded to





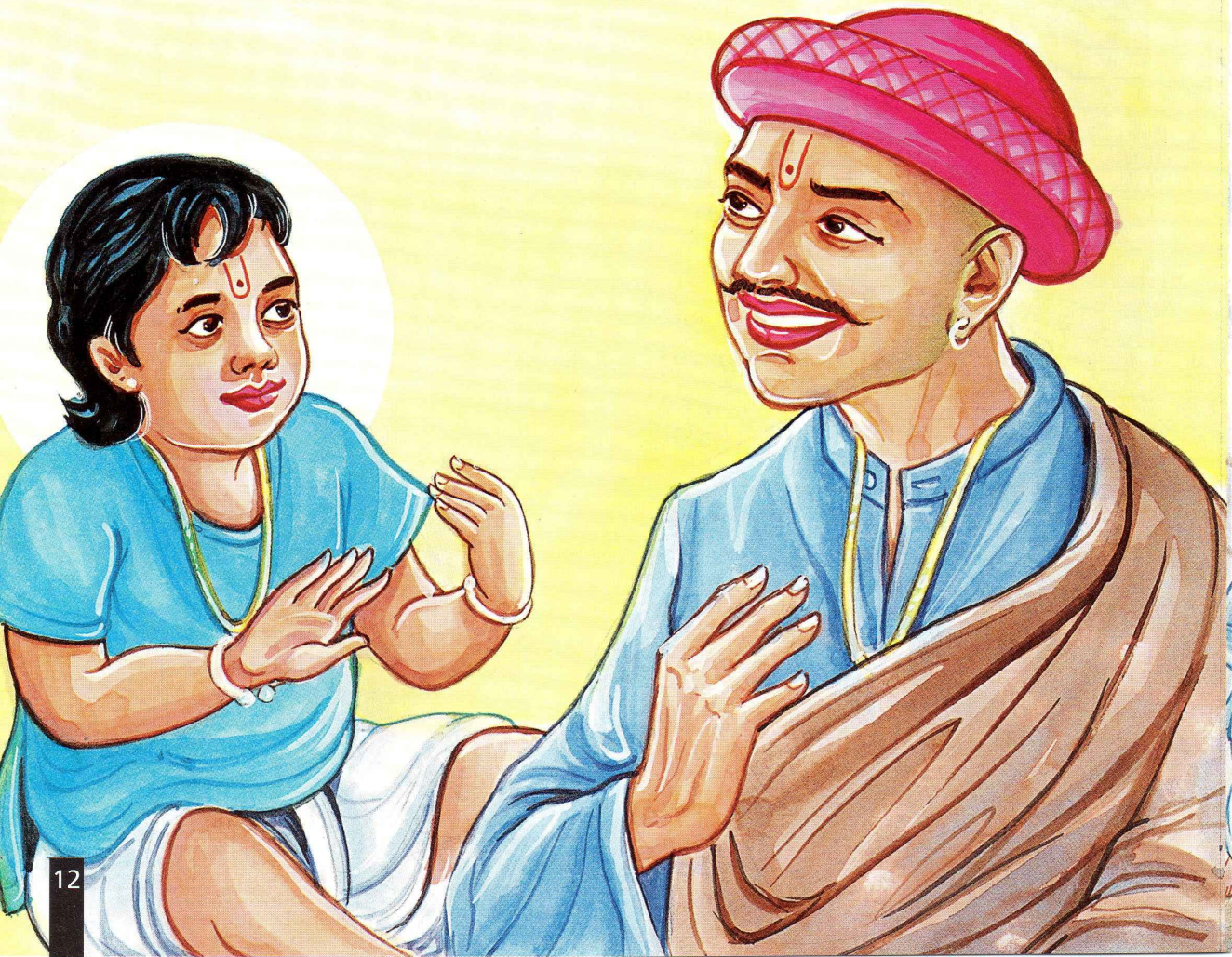
see the army of monkeys facing the army of Ghanashyams! As he watched, all the Ghanashyams picked up sticks and began to chase the monkeys. They ran helter-skelter, shrieking wildly, and clambered back into the trees.

Immediately Ghanashyam assumed his single form again, and his father came running up to him. When Ghanashyam told him what had happened, Dharmadev laughed and picked his son up and held him in his arms.

“Well, that monkey won’t forget you in a hurry,” he said, “ And I’m sure he will be a great man in his next life, because he has taken prasad from my little lord’s hand!”

### STUDY:

1. What was Ghanashyam having for breakfast that morning?
2. How did Ghanashyam reach the monkey in the tree?
3. How did Ghanashyam manage to fight so many monkeys?
4. Why will the monkey be a great man in his next life?





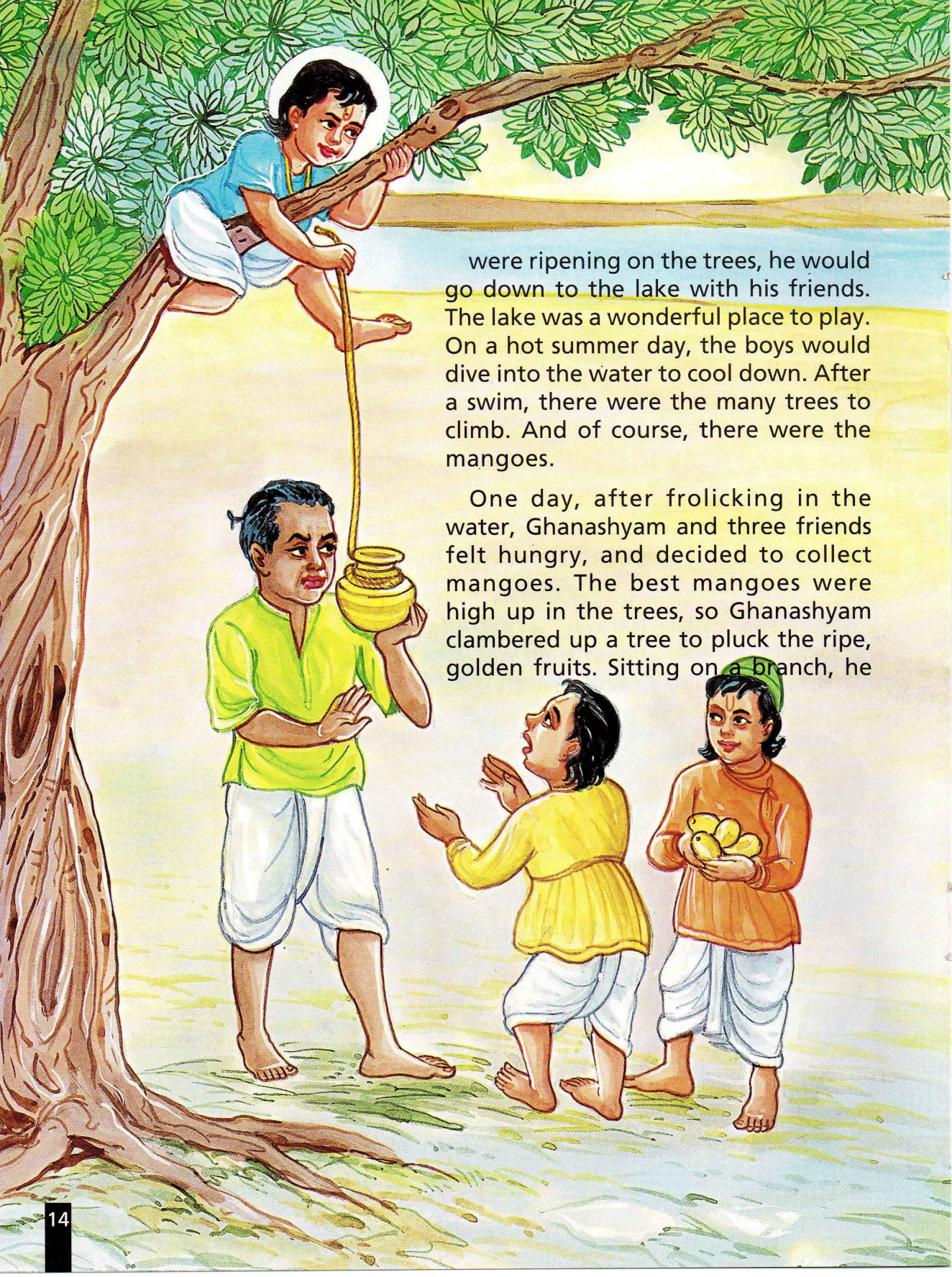


## THE MANGO FIGHT

The Mango is called the king of fruits. No other fruit can compare in flavour with its rich, sweet taste.

By the side of the Narayan lake, there were many mango trees. Ghanashyam was very fond of mangoes, and in summer when the fruits

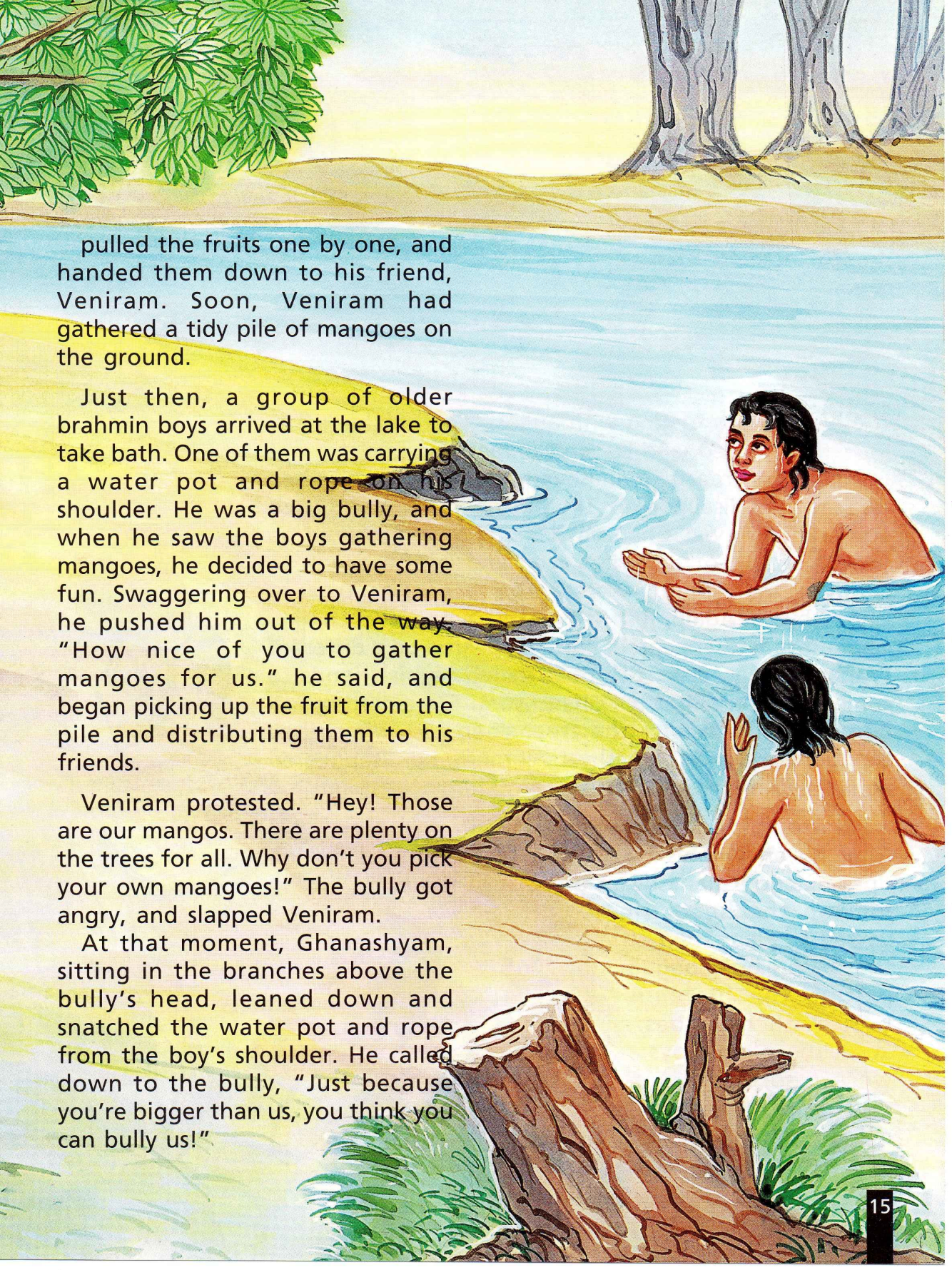




were ripening on the trees, he would go down to the lake with his friends. The lake was a wonderful place to play. On a hot summer day, the boys would dive into the water to cool down. After a swim, there were the many trees to climb. And of course, there were the mangoes.

One day, after frolicking in the water, Ghanashyam and three friends felt hungry, and decided to collect mangoes. The best mangoes were high up in the trees, so Ghanashyam clambered up a tree to pluck the ripe, golden fruits. Sitting on a branch, he





pulled the fruits one by one, and handed them down to his friend, Veniram. Soon, Veniram had gathered a tidy pile of mangoes on the ground.

Just then, a group of older brahmin boys arrived at the lake to take bath. One of them was carrying a water pot and rope on his shoulder. He was a big bully, and when he saw the boys gathering mangoes, he decided to have some fun. Swaggering over to Veniram, he pushed him out of the way. "How nice of you to gather mangoes for us." he said, and began picking up the fruit from the pile and distributing them to his friends.

Veniram protested. "Hey! Those are our mangos. There are plenty on the trees for all. Why don't you pick your own mangoes!" The bully got angry, and slapped Veniram.

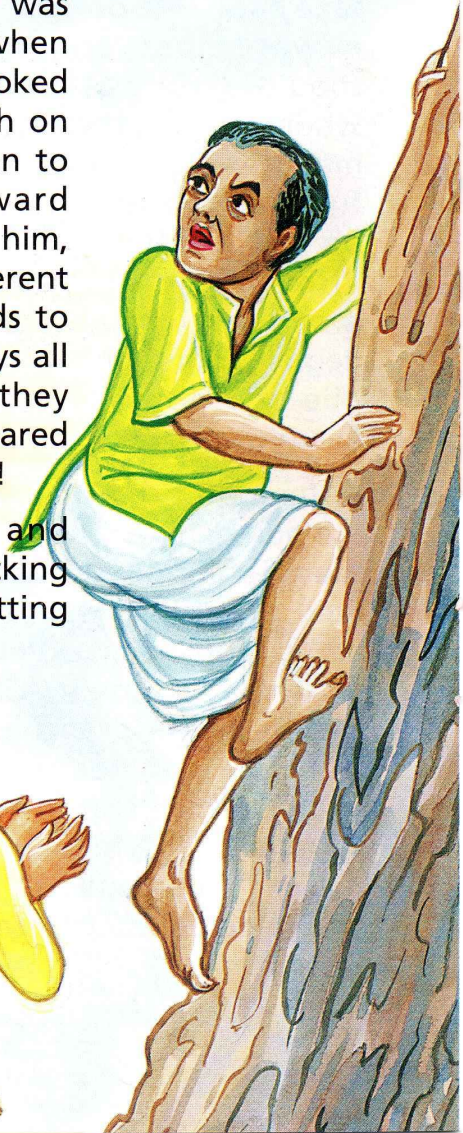
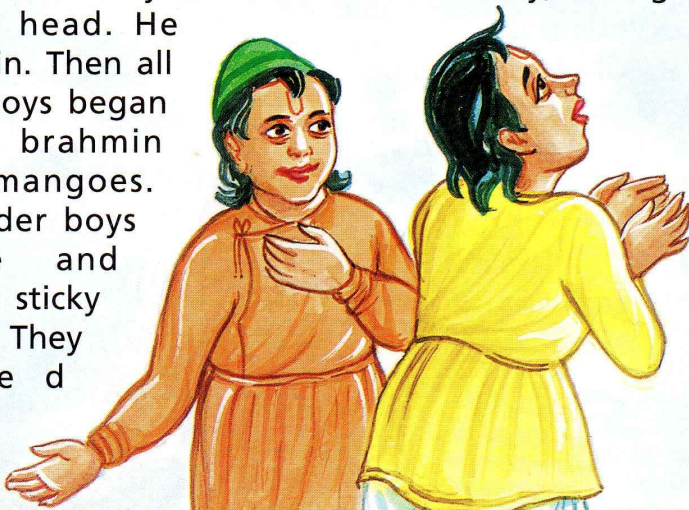
At that moment, Ghanashyam, sitting in the branches above the bully's head, leaned down and snatched the water pot and rope from the boy's shoulder. He called down to the bully, "Just because you're bigger than us, you think you can bully us!"



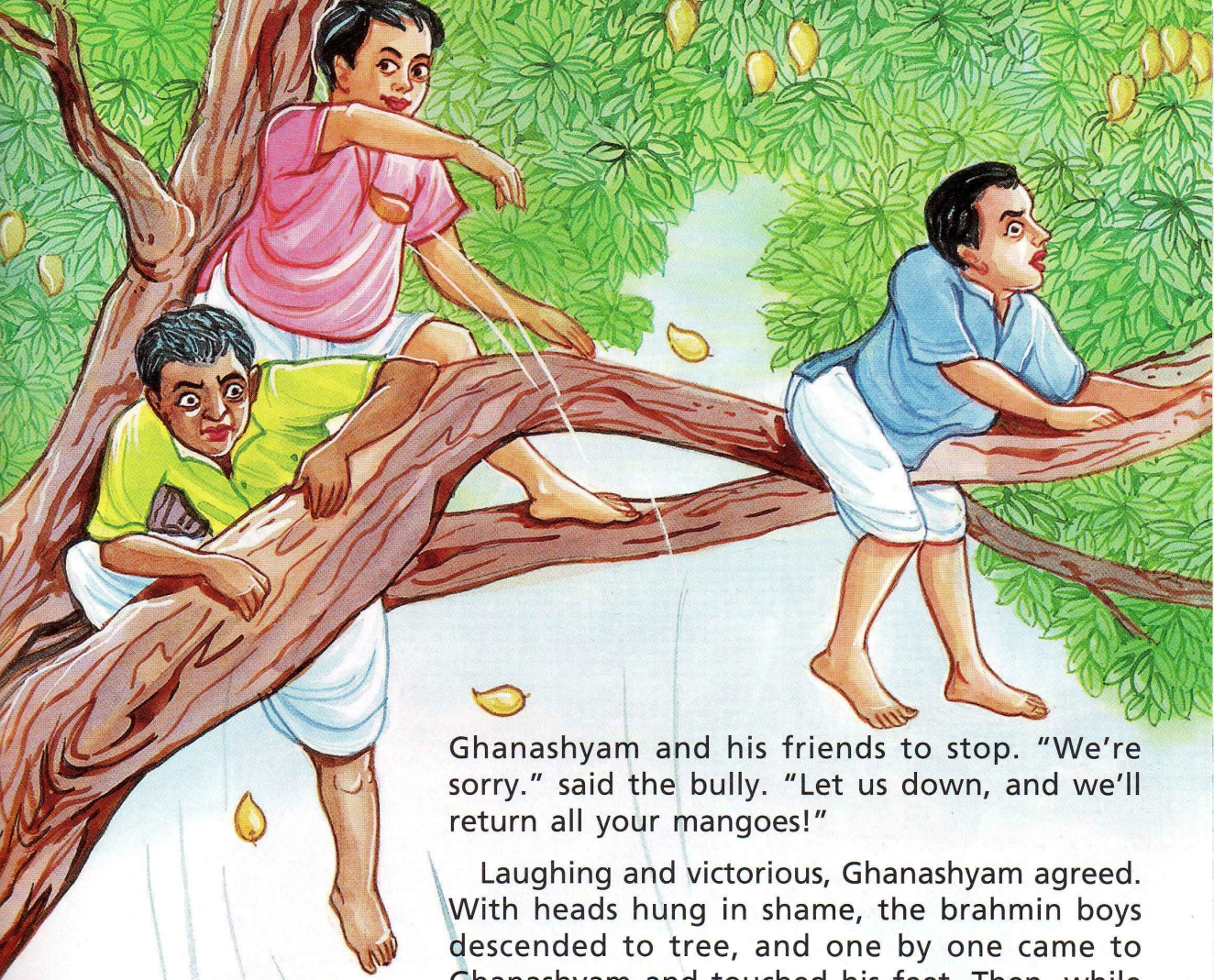


The bully began fuming with anger. "Give me back that pot!" he shouted, and began climbing the tree. He was just about to reach Ghanashyam on the branch, when Ghanashyam disappeared. The bully blinked, and looked around. There was Ghanashyam sitting on a branch on the other side of the tree! Even angrier, he began to clamber menacingly across the branches toward Ghanashyam. Again, just as he was about to reach him, Ghanashyam disappeared, and reappeared on a different branch. Exasperated, the bully called to his friends to come and help him catch Ghanashyam. The older boys all began to clamber up the tree. Then just when they thought they had Ghanashyam cornered, he disappeared again, and reappeared on the ground below them!

All the older boys were now in the tree, and Ghanashyam and his friends were on the ground. Picking up a mango, Ghanashyam threw it at the bully, hitting him on the head. He yelled in pain. Then all the young boys began pelting the brahmin boys with mangoes. Soon the older boys were sore and covered with sticky mango pulp. They







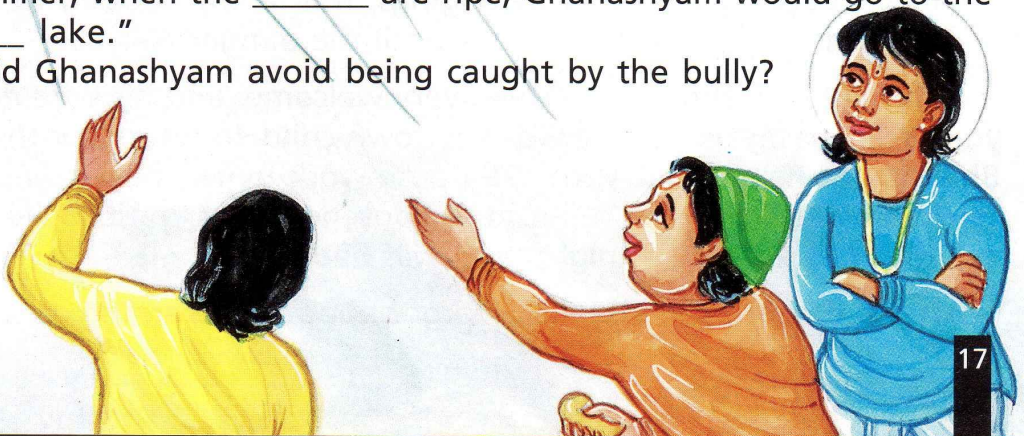
Ghanashyam and his friends to stop. "We're sorry." said the bully. "Let us down, and we'll return all your mangoes!"

Laughing and victorious, Ghanashyam agreed. With heads hung in shame, the brahmin boys descended to tree, and one by one came to Ghanashyam and touched his feet. Then, while

Ghanashyam and his friends relaxed like little lords under the shade of a tree, the bullies gathered mangoes for them!

### STUDY:

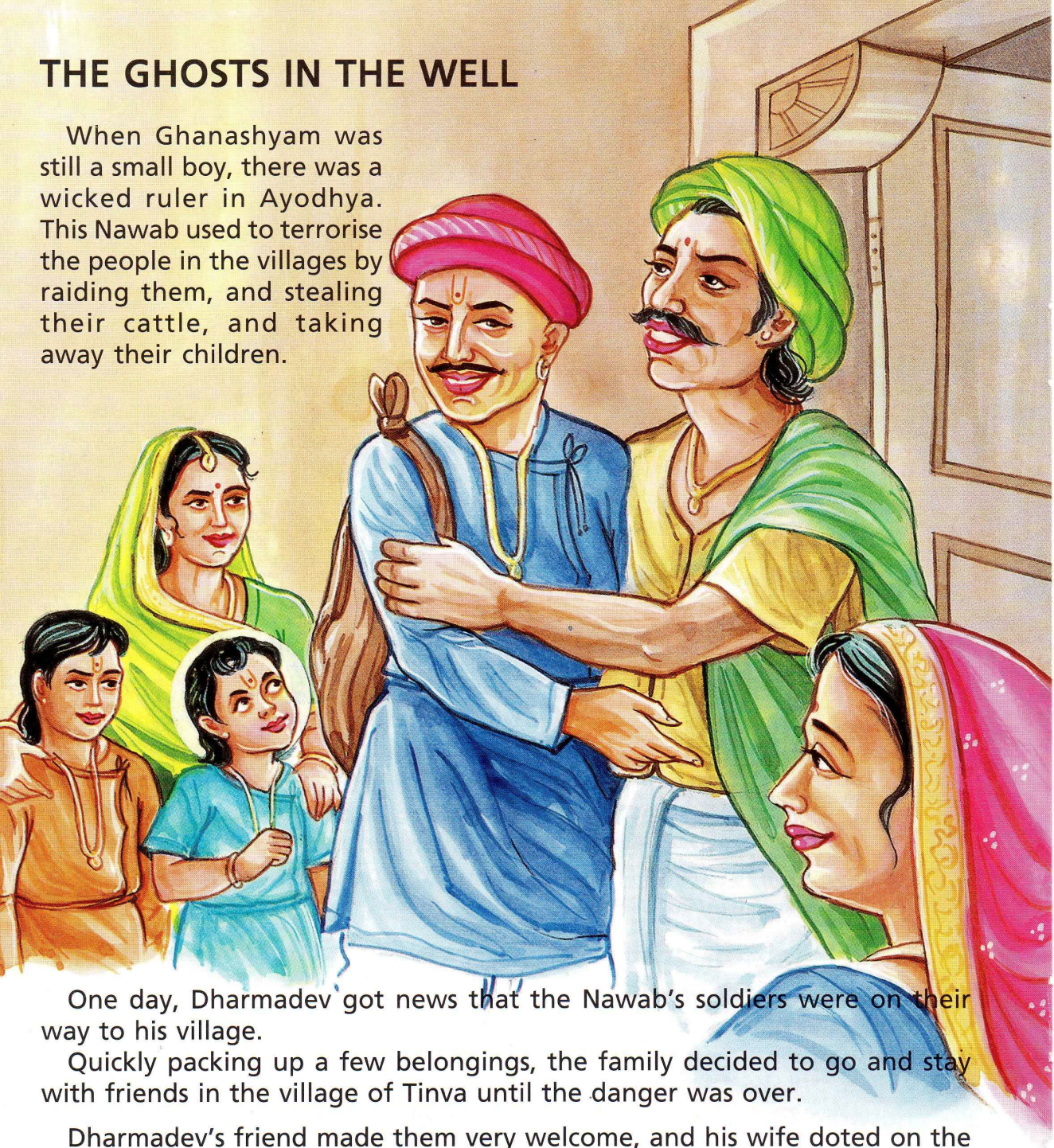
1. What is the mango called?
2. Fill in the blanks.  
"In summer, when the \_\_\_\_\_ are ripe, Ghanashyam would go to the \_\_\_\_\_ lake."
3. How did Ghanashyam avoid being caught by the bully?





## THE GHOSTS IN THE WELL

When Ghanashyam was still a small boy, there was a wicked ruler in Ayodhya. This Nawab used to terrorise the people in the villages by raiding them, and stealing their cattle, and taking away their children.



One day, Dharmadev got news that the Nawab's soldiers were on their way to his village.

Quickly packing up a few belongings, the family decided to go and stay with friends in the village of Tinva until the danger was over.

Dharmadev's friend made them very welcome, and his wife doted on the young Ghanashyam as if he were her own child. In return for their kindness, Bhaktimata helped out with the house-work while they stayed there, and fetched water from the well for the household. But Pratit's wife warned her not to go to the well at night, as it was haunted.

After a day or so, Bhaktimata forgot about the warning. It was evening,



and there was no water to drink in the house. Picking up a water-pot and a rope, she made her way to the well. There, she tied the rope to a wooden beam, and lowered the pot into its deep, dark interior. The pot hit the water, and she could hear the glug-glug sound of water as it filled up. She pulled on the rope to raise the pot. But something seemed to be holding it. Looking over the edge, she was horrified to see ghostly forms coming from the inside walls of the well, clutching at the rope! With a shriek, she let the rope go and ran back to the house.

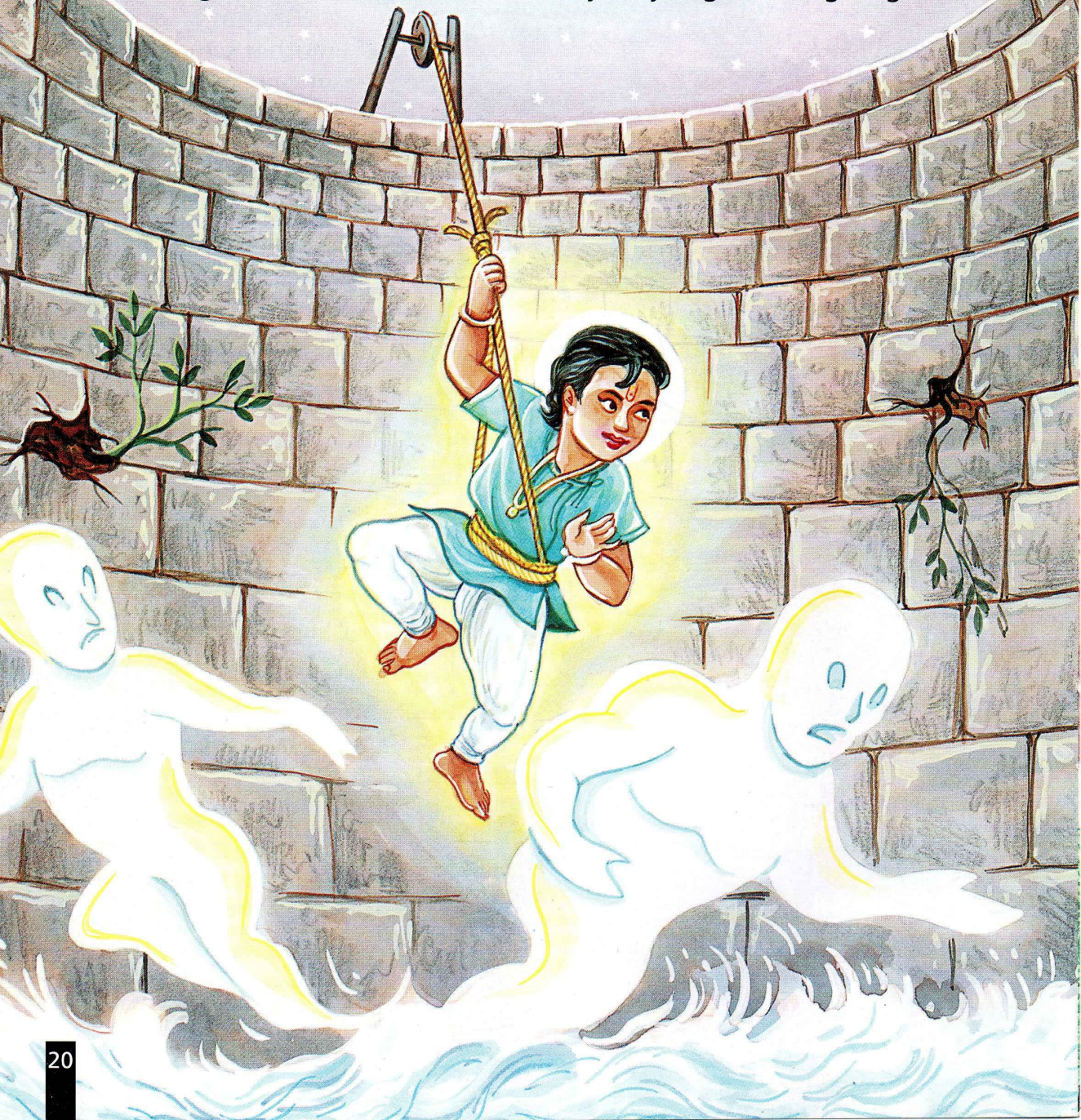
Ghanashyam saw his mother's terrified eyes when she returned, and asked her what had happened. When she told him about the ghosts, he immediately ran off to the well, his mother calling after him, begging him not to go.





There in the darkness of night at the well, Ghanashyam clambered on to the wall of the well, and began to lower himself by the rope into the black interior. He was half way down, when ghostly forms began to emerge from the walls, giving off an eerie light. The ghosts began to reach for Ghanashyam, grabbing at him. Then Ghanashyam's body began to glow brightly, and as the ghosts touched him, they drew back in pain, as if burnt.

It was then that the ghosts realised that Ghanashyam was no ordinary human being, but God himself. Immediately they began to beg forgiveness.





Ghanashyam looked with compassion at their tortured faces, and asked them how they came to be trapped in the well. They told the tale of how they used to drink and gamble with the Nawab's soldiers, and one day they had a big fight with them, and all were killed at this spot. Because they were sinners, they could not go to heaven, and were doomed to stay in the well. They begged Ghanashyam to release them from their tortured existence.

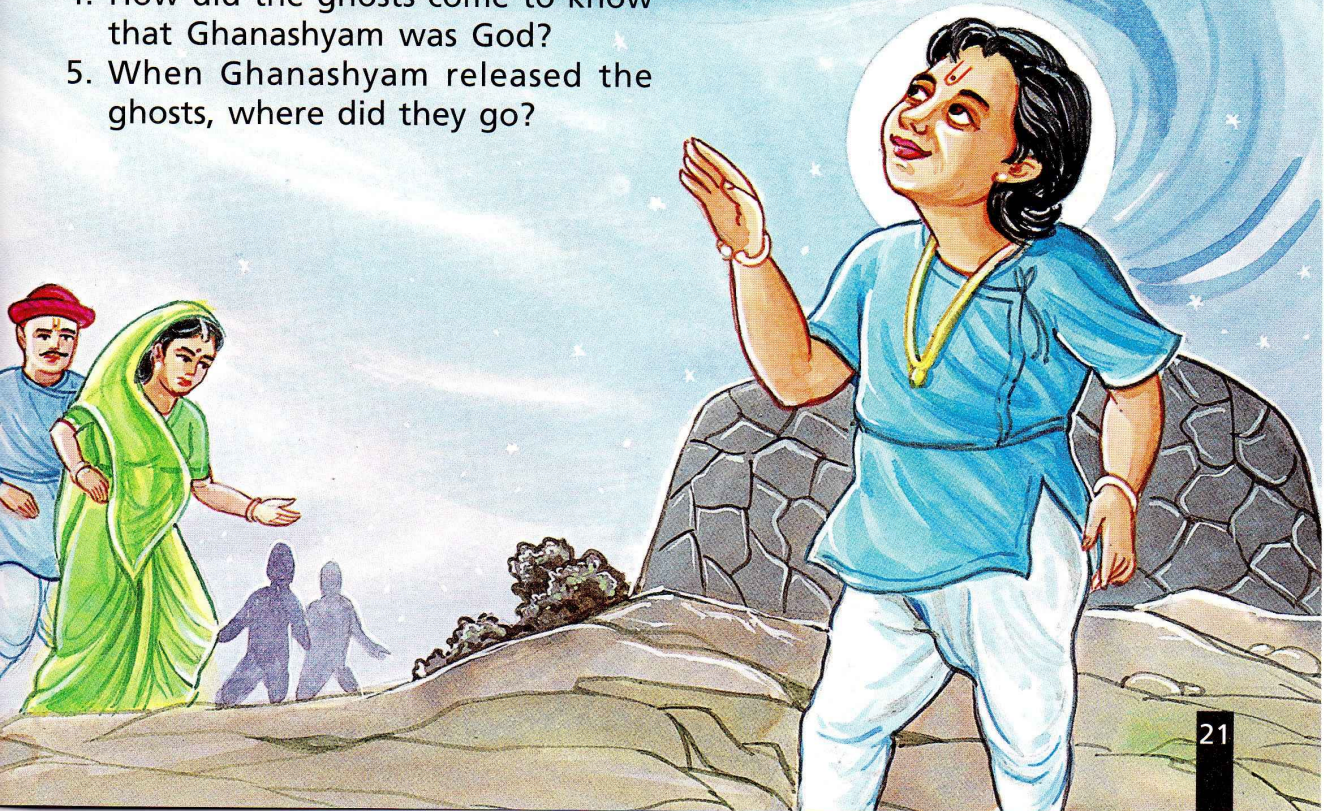
Ghanashyam looked at the poor souls with pity. Then, raising his hand, he blessed them, forgave their sins, and released them.

Immediately, the ghostly forms began to emerge completely from the walls of the well, and their souls drifted up and out into the night sky, wending their way to heaven. At that moment, Dharmadev and Bhaktidevi arrived at the well. They stood there awe-struck as they watched the ghosts float up and away. And then from the well, the smiling face of their little Ghanashyam appeared, and they rushed to him, and held him tightly.

From that time on, there have been no more ghosts in the well at Tinva, and the villagers are able to draw their water at any time, day or night.

#### STUDY:

1. What was the name of the village where Ghanashyam and his family went to stay?
2. What was it that frightened Bhaktimata?
3. Why were the ghosts trapped in the well?
4. How did the ghosts come to know that Ghanashyam was God?
5. When Ghanashyam released the ghosts, where did they go?

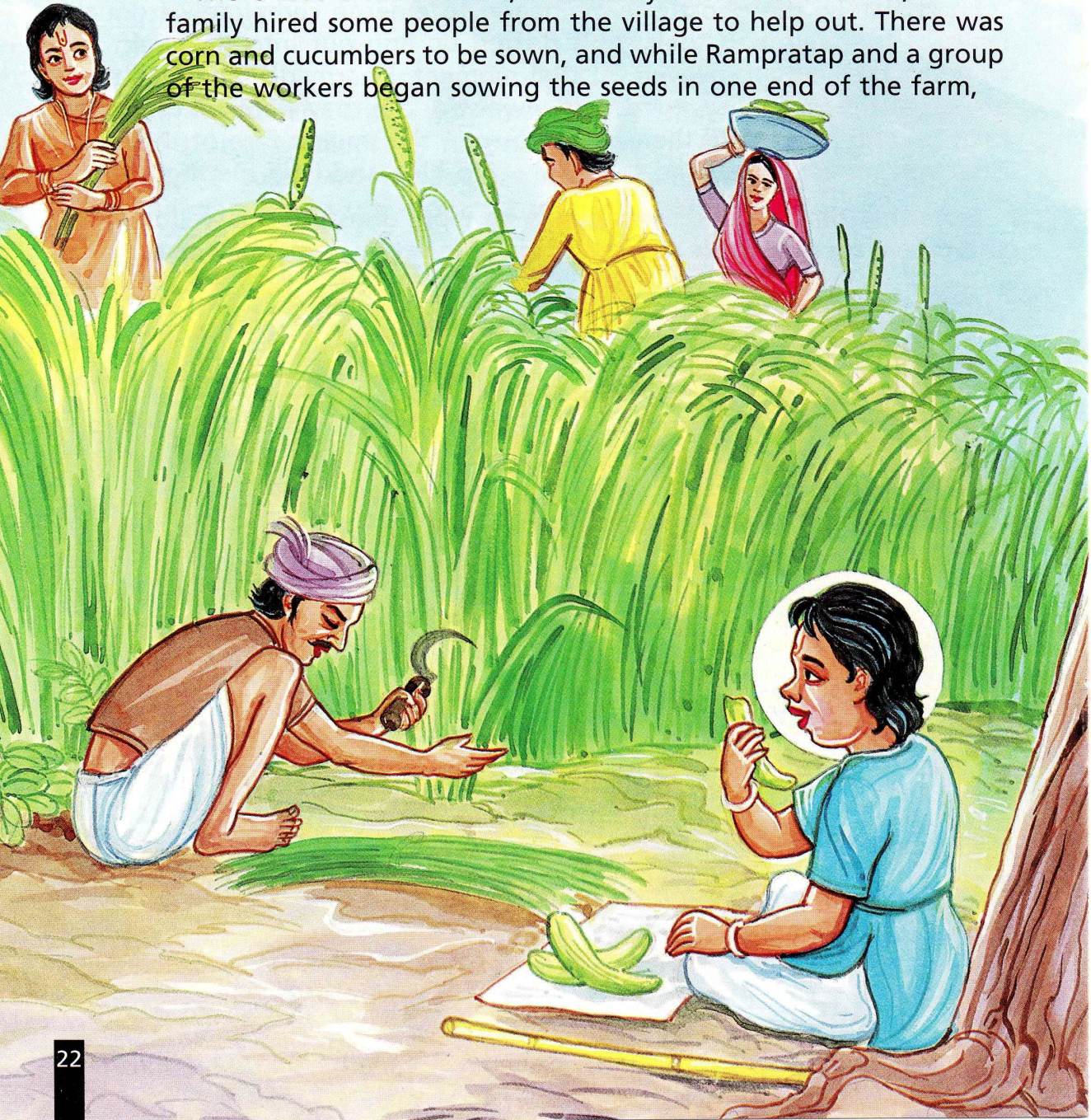




# GHANASHYAM RUNS AWAY

Dharmadev had a farm at the village of Targam which he was running in partnership with another man. It was just before the rainy season, and all the seeds had to be sown, so Dharmadev, with Bhaktidevi and their two sons, Rampratap and Ghanshyam, had gone to Targam to work on the farm.

There was a lot of land, and many seeds to be sown, so the family hired some people from the village to help out. There was corn and cucumbers to be sown, and while Rampratap and a group of the workers began sowing the seeds in one end of the farm,

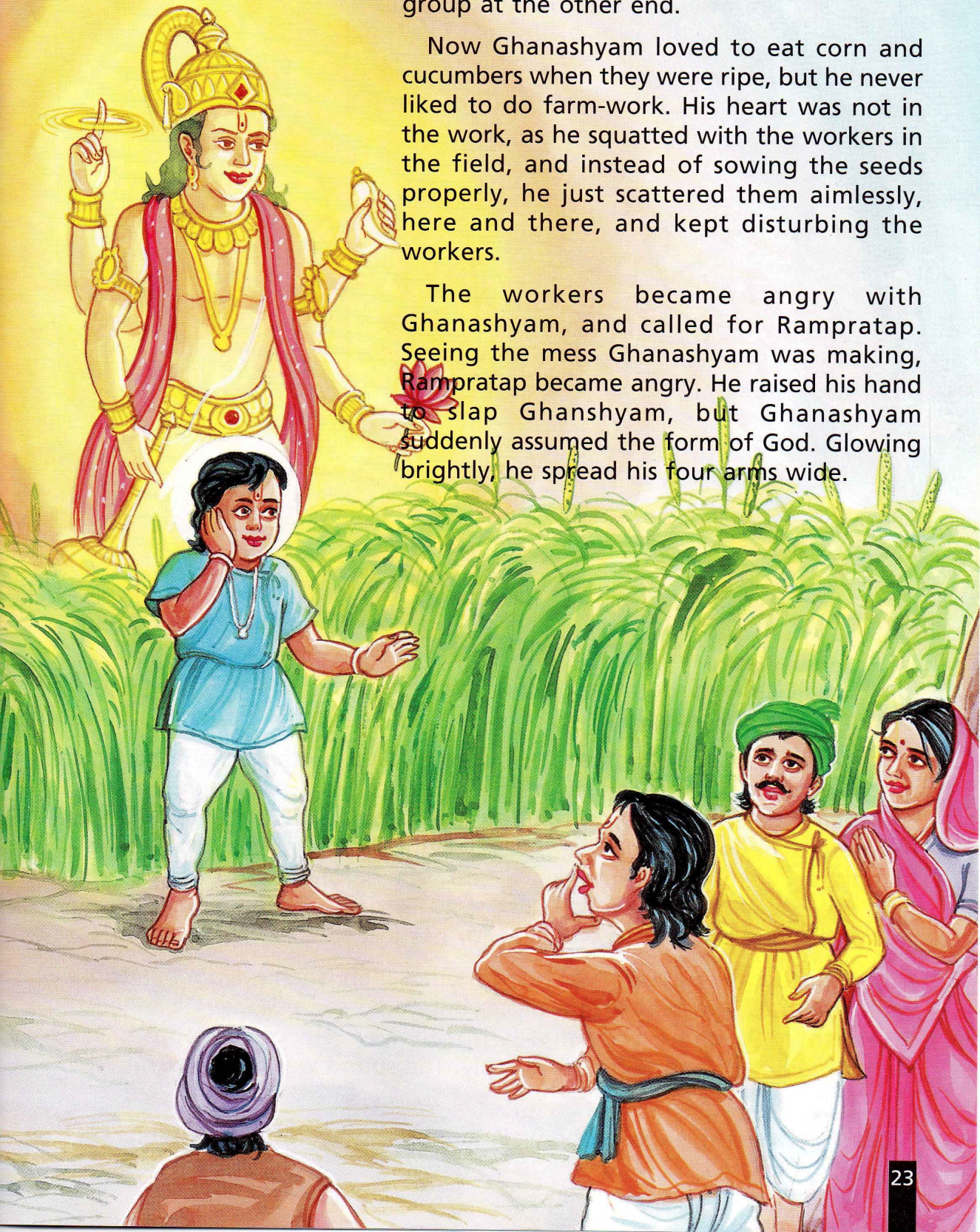




Ghanshyam began to sow with another group at the other end.

Now Ghanashyam loved to eat corn and cucumbers when they were ripe, but he never liked to do farm-work. His heart was not in the work, as he squatted with the workers in the field, and instead of sowing the seeds properly, he just scattered them aimlessly, here and there, and kept disturbing the workers.

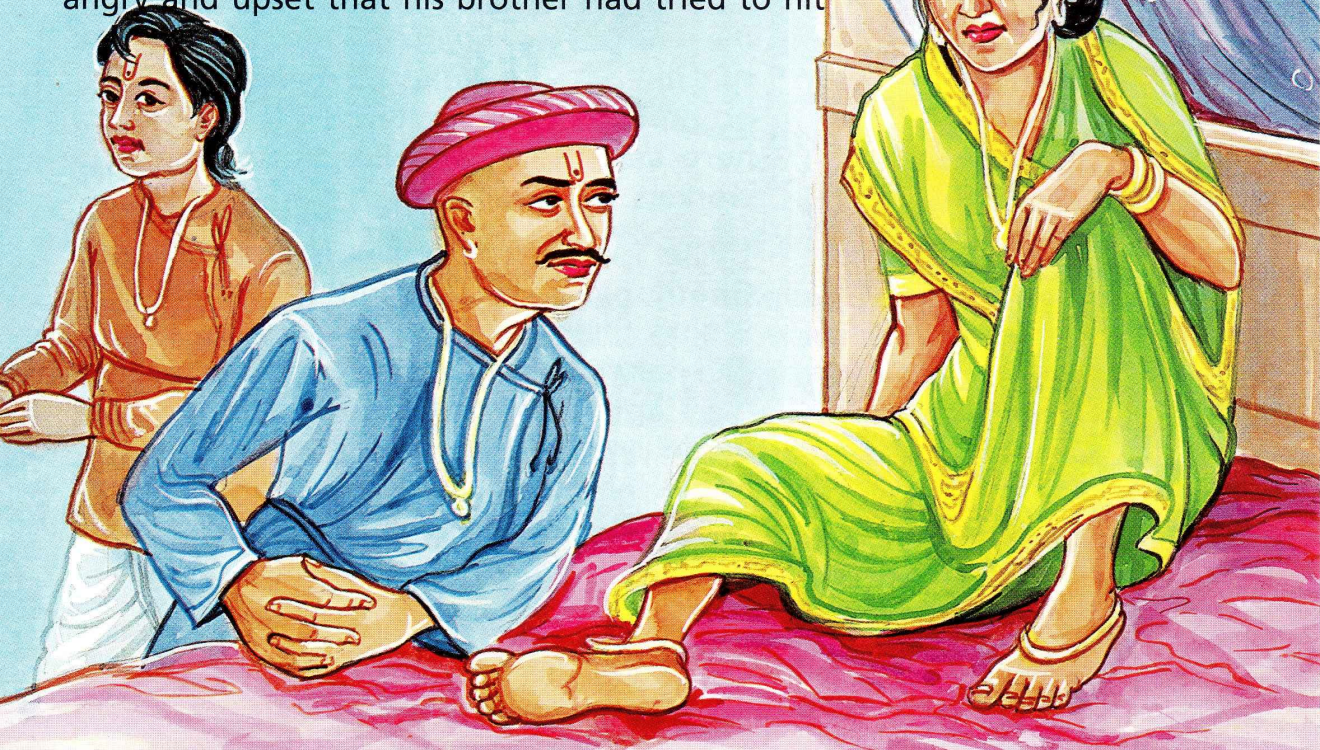
The workers became angry with Ghanashyam, and called for Rampratap. Seeing the mess Ghanashyam was making, Rampratap became angry. He raised his hand to slap Ghanashyam, but Ghanashyam suddenly assumed the form of God. Glowing brightly, he spread his four arms wide.





Rampratap was shocked, and lowering his hand he begged forgiveness. Ghanashyam resumed his boy form, and sulking, went off home.

That night, Ghanashyam couldn't sleep. He was angry and upset that his brother had tried to hit



him. Then very next morning, he rose early, and quietly left the house while everyone was still sleeping.

When the family woke, they were surprised to see that Ghanashyam was not in his bed. They called his name, but there was no answer. Worried, they began to search around the house and the farm. But Ghanashyam was nowhere to be found. Thinking that he might have gone back to Chappaiya, Rampratap went there to look for him. But no-one from Chappaiya had seen the boy, and Rampratap returned to Targam without him. Bhaktidevi was distraught, and began weeping for her lost son.

Just then, a villager came and said he had seen Ghanashyam near an old well. Rampratap rushed to the place, but could see no-one. He called out Ghanashyam's name. There was no answer. He called again. Then Rampratap heard a faint, muffled reply. The sound was coming from inside the well!

Leaning over the edge of the well, Rampratap peered into the blackness.



There, at the bottom, he could just make out the figure of Ghanashyam. "Little brother," he called down, "Are you alright? What are you doing down there?"

Ghanashyam was sulking, and had tears in his innocent eyes. "You were going to beat me," he said, " So I ran away." Rampratap felt very guilty. "I promise I won't do that again," he said. "Please, come out of the well." And he stretched out his arms to his little brother.

Ghanashyam looked up at his brother from the bottom of the well, then, wiping his eyes on his sleeve, he stretched his arms upward. As he did so, his arms grew longer and longer, and finally his hands touched those of his brother. Rampratap grasped his wrists firmly, and using all his strength, pulled him out of the well.

Safe at last, Ghanashyam hugged his brother, and the two boys went arm in arm back home.

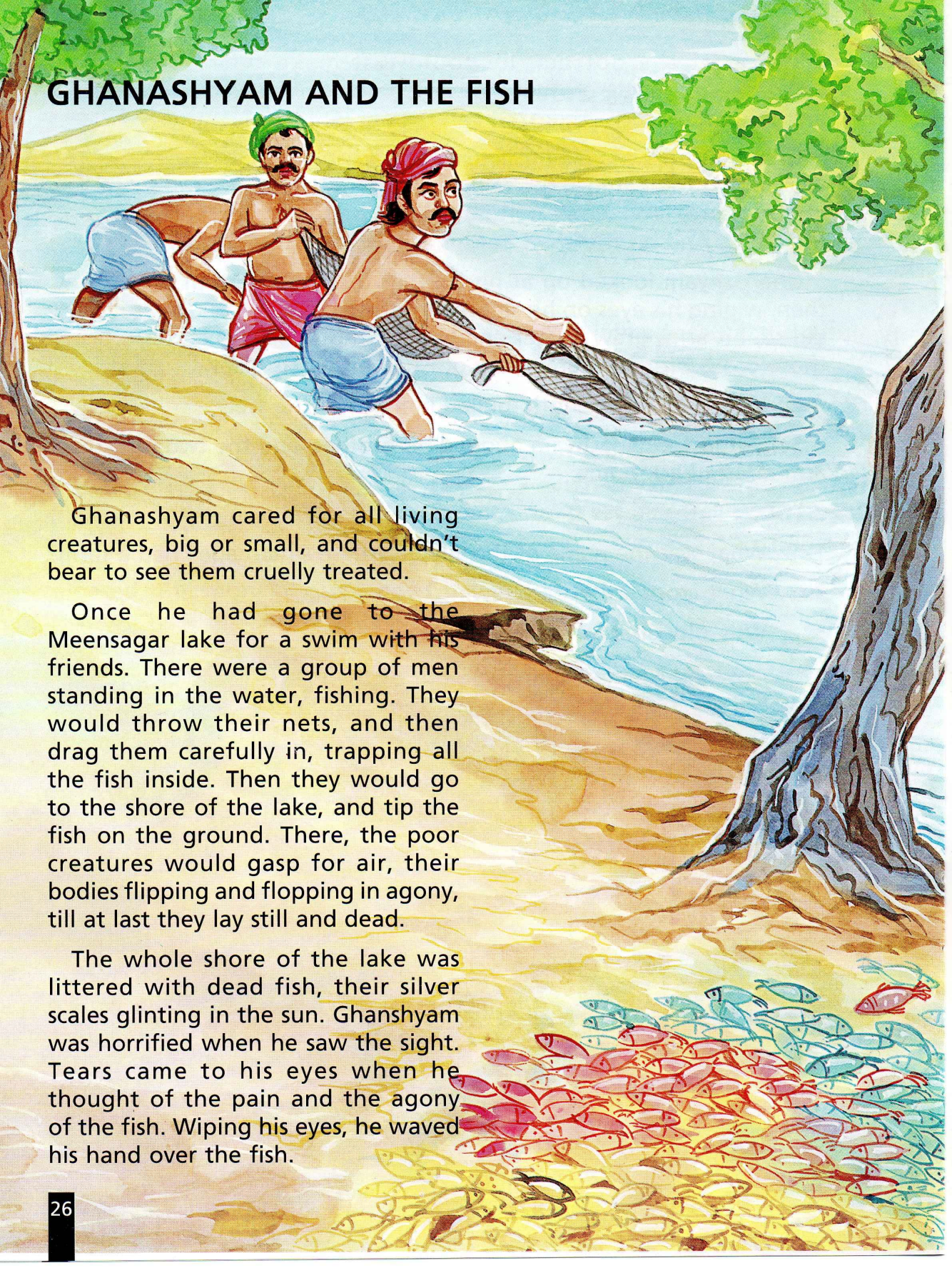
#### STUDY:

1. What was the name of the village where Dharmadev had a farm?
2. What crops were they sowing?
3. Why did Ghanashyam run away?
4. How did Ghanashyam come out of the well?





# GHANASHYAM AND THE FISH

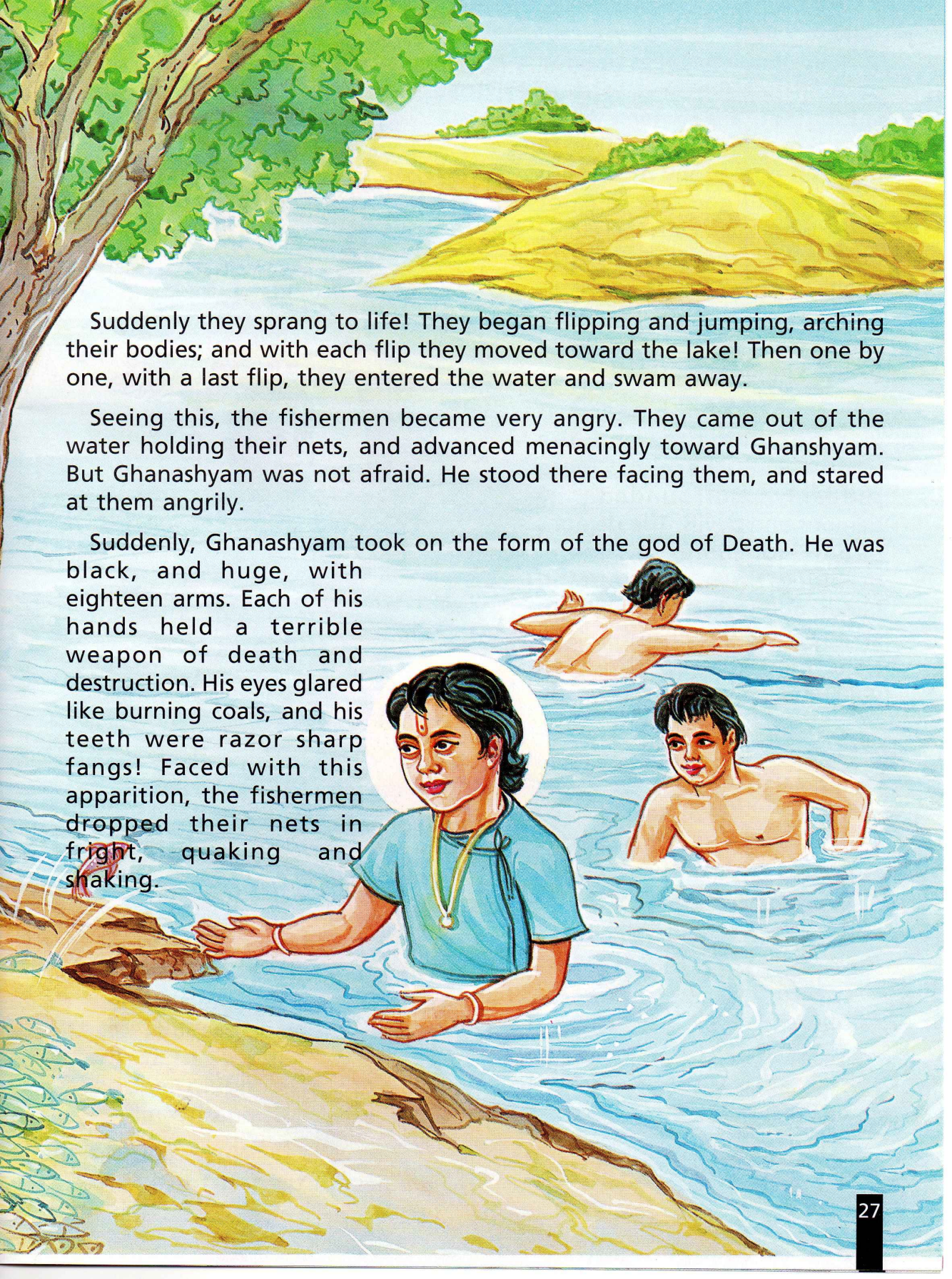


Ghanashyam cared for all living creatures, big or small, and couldn't bear to see them cruelly treated.

Once he had gone to the Meensagar lake for a swim with his friends. There were a group of men standing in the water, fishing. They would throw their nets, and then drag them carefully in, trapping all the fish inside. Then they would go to the shore of the lake, and tip the fish on the ground. There, the poor creatures would gasp for air, their bodies flipping and flopping in agony, till at last they lay still and dead.

The whole shore of the lake was littered with dead fish, their silver scales glinting in the sun. Ghanashyam was horrified when he saw the sight. Tears came to his eyes when he thought of the pain and the agony of the fish. Wiping his eyes, he waved his hand over the fish.





Suddenly they sprang to life! They began flipping and jumping, arching their bodies; and with each flip they moved toward the lake! Then one by one, with a last flip, they entered the water and swam away.

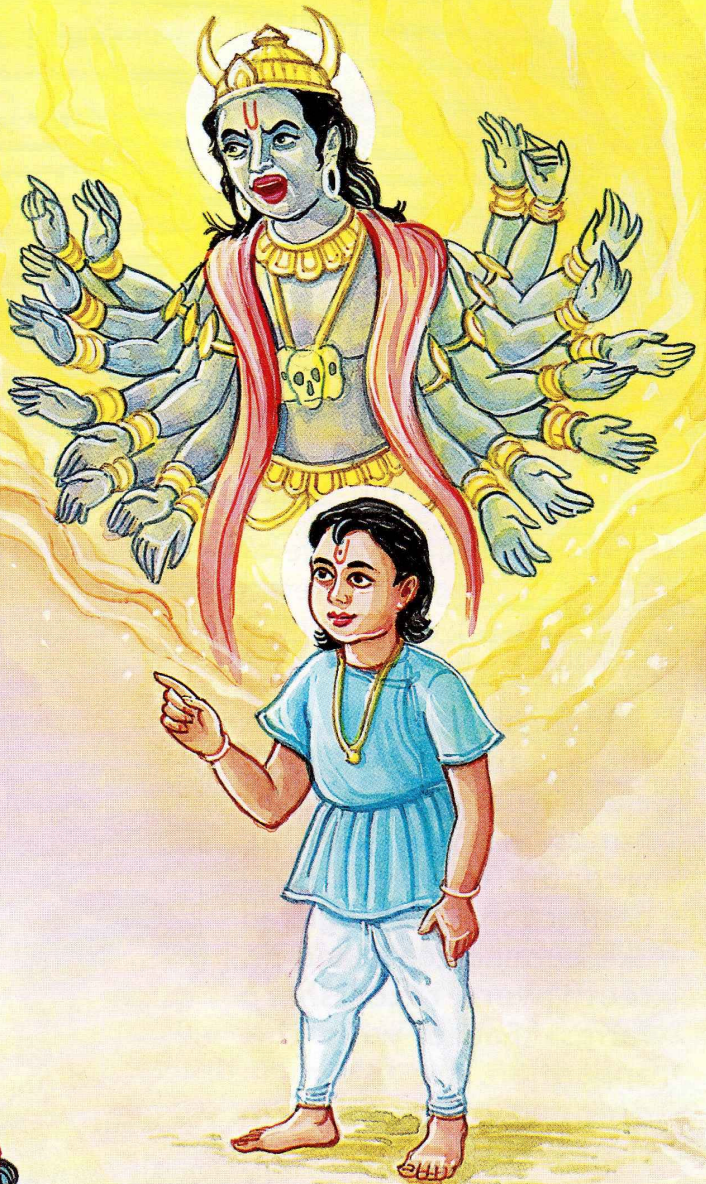
Seeing this, the fishermen became very angry. They came out of the water holding their nets, and advanced menacingly toward Ghanashyam. But Ghanashyam was not afraid. He stood there facing them, and stared at them angrily.

Suddenly, Ghanashyam took on the form of the god of Death. He was black, and huge, with eighteen arms. Each of his hands held a terrible weapon of death and destruction. His eyes glared like burning coals, and his teeth were razor sharp fangs! Faced with this apparition, the fishermen dropped their nets in fright, quaking and shaking.



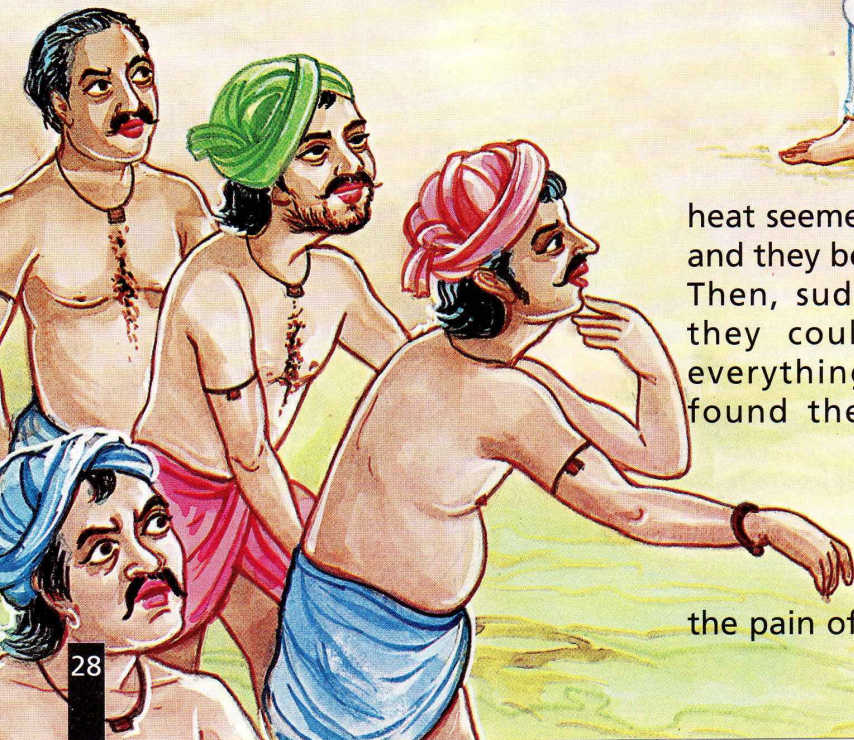
Then Ghanashyam as the god of Death spoke in a terrible voice. "You are sinners! All of you! Are you not sensitive to the pain and agony of the fish you are killing? Do you not know what such pain feels like? Come. Let me show you!" Then, with a gesture from his many arms, the fishermen found themselves transported to the kingdom of Death.

In that terrible kingdom it was hot like fire, and the wretched fishermen were suddenly surrounded by demons and devils. The demons began to jump on them, grabbing them with burning hands, and torturing them with strange weapons. The fishermen were writhing in pain, and yelling for mercy. The

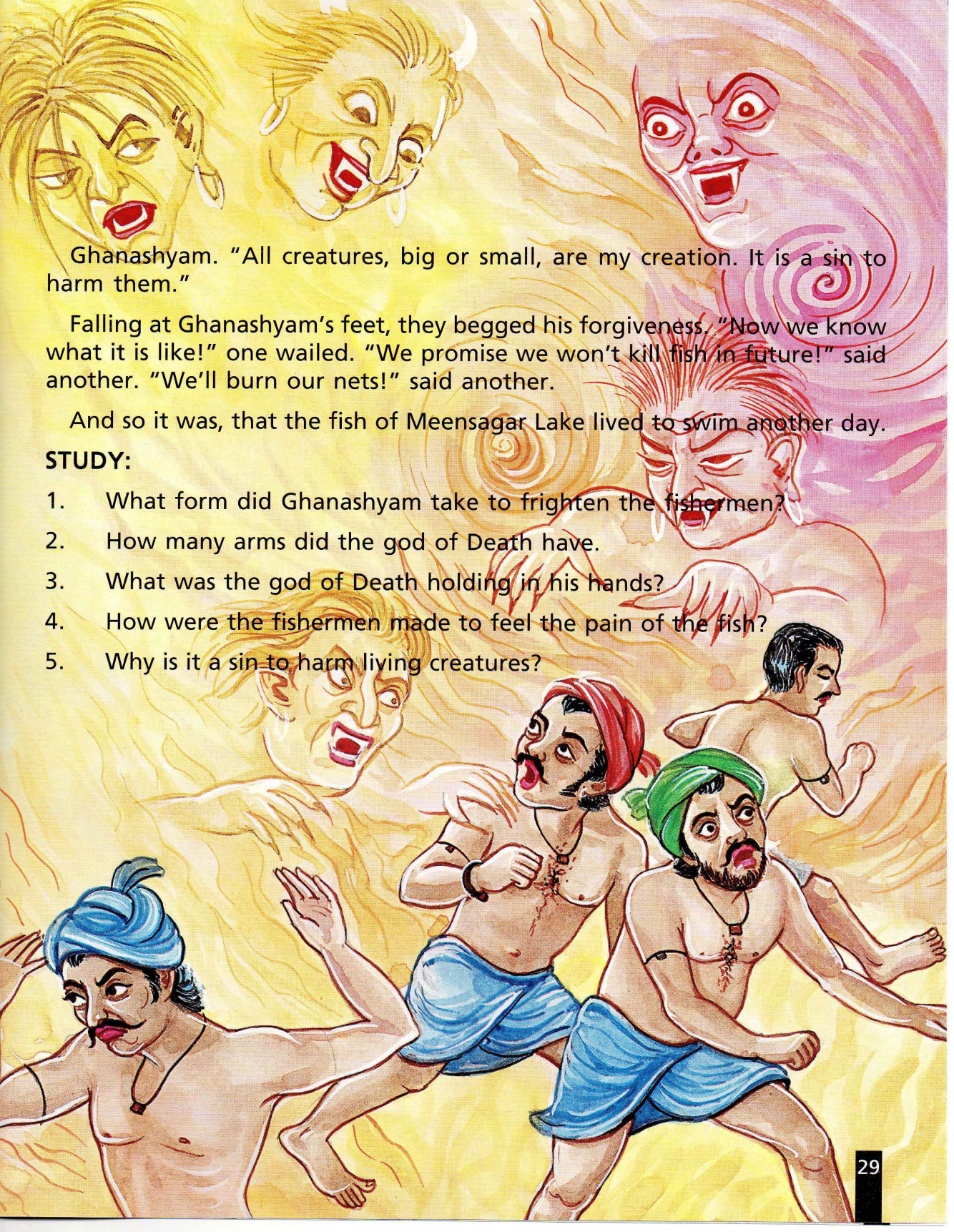


heat seemed to burn up all the air, and they began gasping for breath. Then, suddenly, when they felt they could bear it no more, everything vanished, and they found themselves back on the shores of the lake, standing in front of Ghanashyam.

"Now you know the pain of the fish," said







Ghanashyam. "All creatures, big or small, are my creation. It is a sin to harm them."

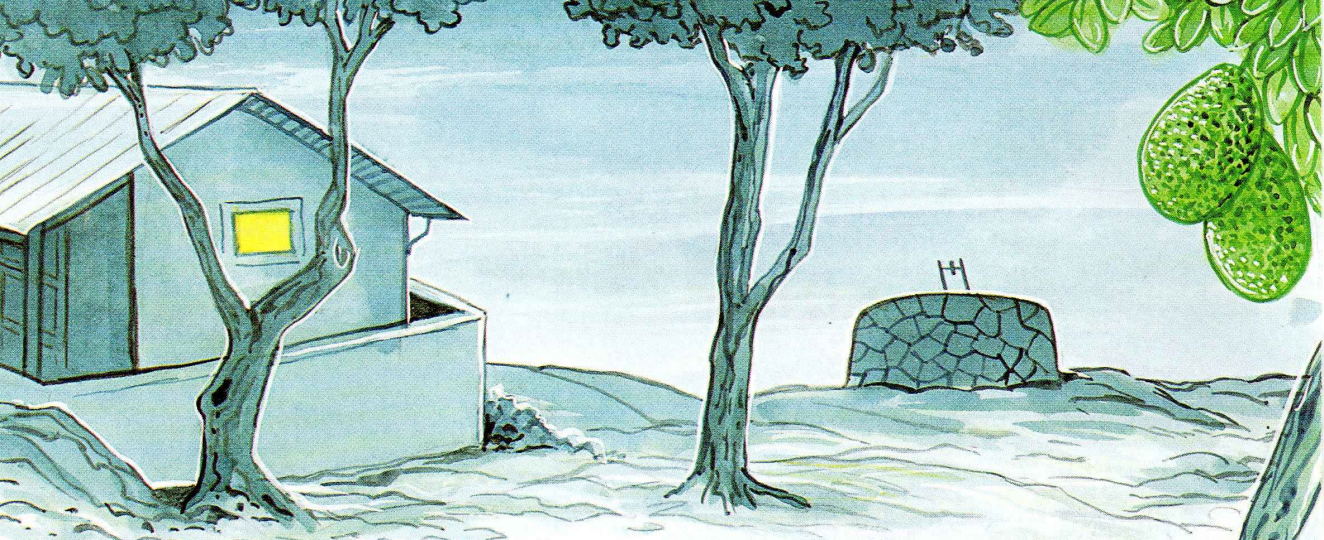
Falling at Ghanashyam's feet, they begged his forgiveness. "Now we know what it is like!" one wailed. "We promise we won't kill fish in future!" said another. "We'll burn our nets!" said another.

And so it was, that the fish of Meensagar Lake lived to swim another day.

### STUDY:

1. What form did Ghanashyam take to frighten the fishermen?
2. How many arms did the god of Death have.
3. What was the god of Death holding in his hands?
4. How were the fishermen made to feel the pain of the fish?
5. Why is it a sin to harm living creatures?





## THE GHOSTS AND THE JACK FRUIT

It was the season when the jack-fruits were ripening on the tree in Ghanashyam's family's garden. The jack-fruit is a giant among fruits, as big as a man's head, and with a rich creamy taste. The fruits on the tree were almost ripe, and Ghanashyam planned to pick them soon.

One night, when all the family were asleep, two thieves crept into the garden and plucked the fruits. Quietly and stealthily they carried the fruits away, and made their way to Narayan lake, where they rested under a tree in the moonlight. They planned to sell the fruits the next day in the market.

But nothing is unknown to our Lord. At home in his bed, Ghanashyam saw the whole





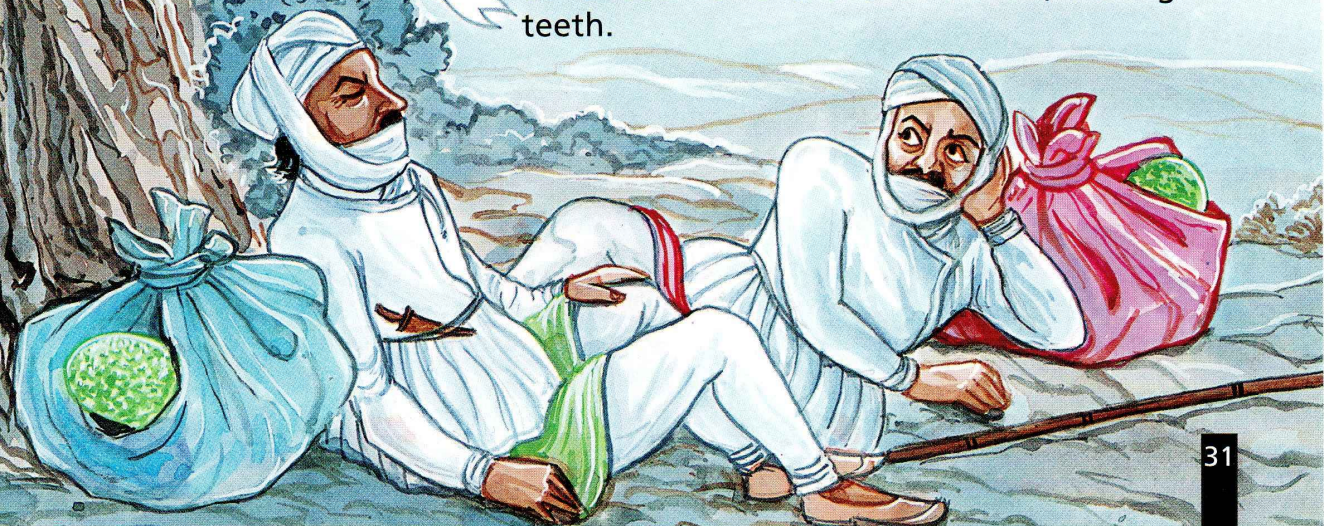


thing in his mind, and he wanted to punish the thieves. With the power of his mind, he called on some ghosts who lived in a peepal tree near the lake, and asked them to teach the thieves a lesson.



As the thieves rested under the tree, ghostly forms began to emerge from its branches, and swirled about the two men. With a start, they jumped up and tried to run away. But the ghosts caught hold of them, and began to torment them. The thieves were terrified. "Who are you?" said one. "What do you want?" said the other, shaking with fear.

"You have stolen our Lord's fruits!" said a ghost in a deathly voice. "You must return them, or else we will eat you up!" and he advanced toward the two men, baring his teeth.





The two thieves trembled in horror, and hastily gathering up the fruits, they ran off in the direction of Ghanashyam's house, with the ghosts trailing behind.

When they reached the house, Ghanashyam was waiting on the verandah. The frightened thieves placed the fruit before him, begging his forgiveness. Then the ghosts surrounded the two thieves, with menacing looks on their faces, and making a horrible sound. The two thieves shrieked in fear, and ran off into the night!

Laughing loudly, Ghanashyam thanked the ghosts. Then, as a reward for helping him, he forgave them their past lives' sins, and released their souls from earth. Touching his feet in gratitude, the ghosts soared upward into the heavens, at last finding peace in Badrik Ashram.

### STUDY:

1. What was the name of the lake where the thieves rested after stealing the fruits?
2. What kind of tree were the ghosts living in?
3. How did Ghanashyam communicate with the ghosts?
4. When the ghosts left this earth, where did they go?

