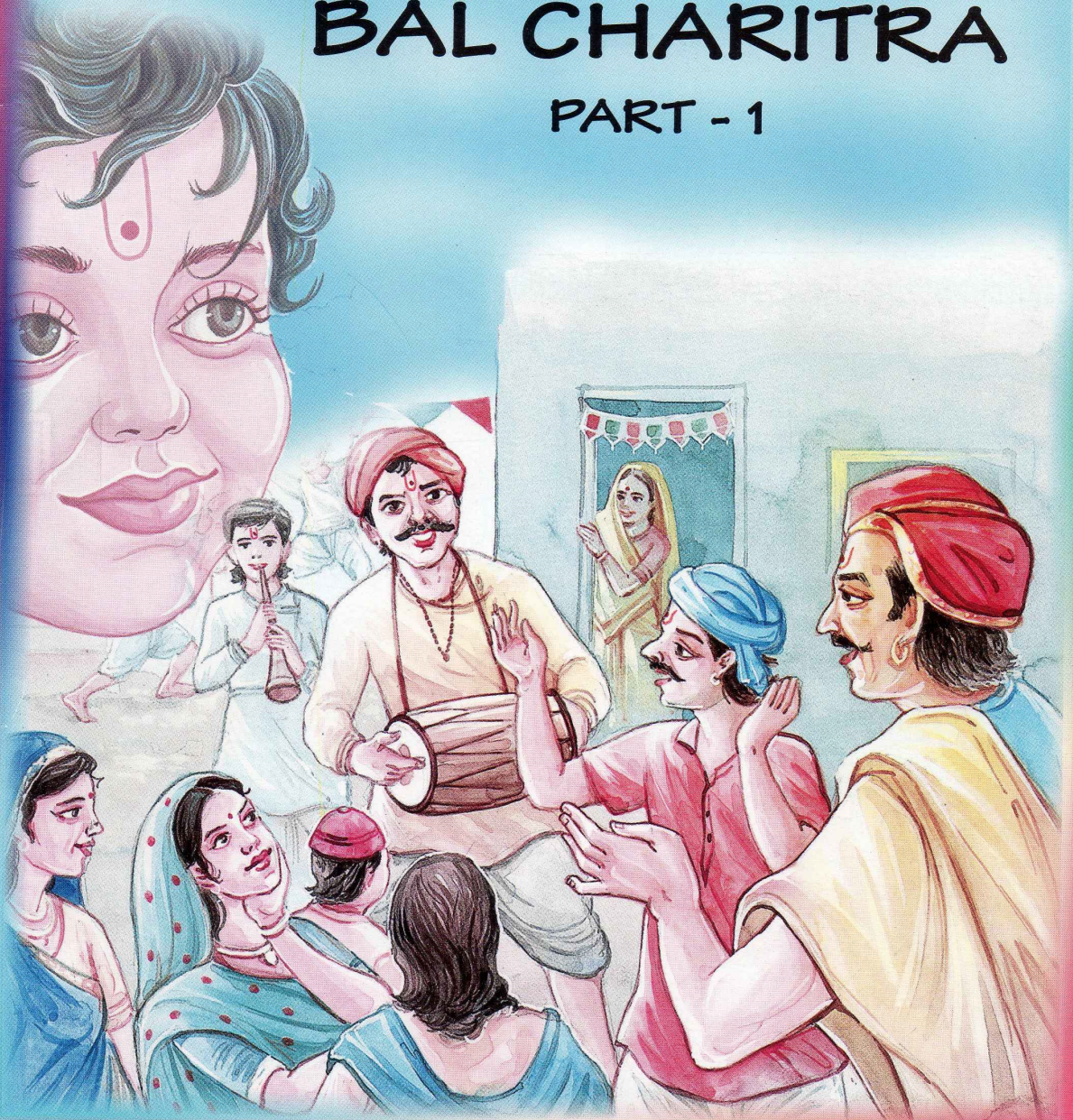
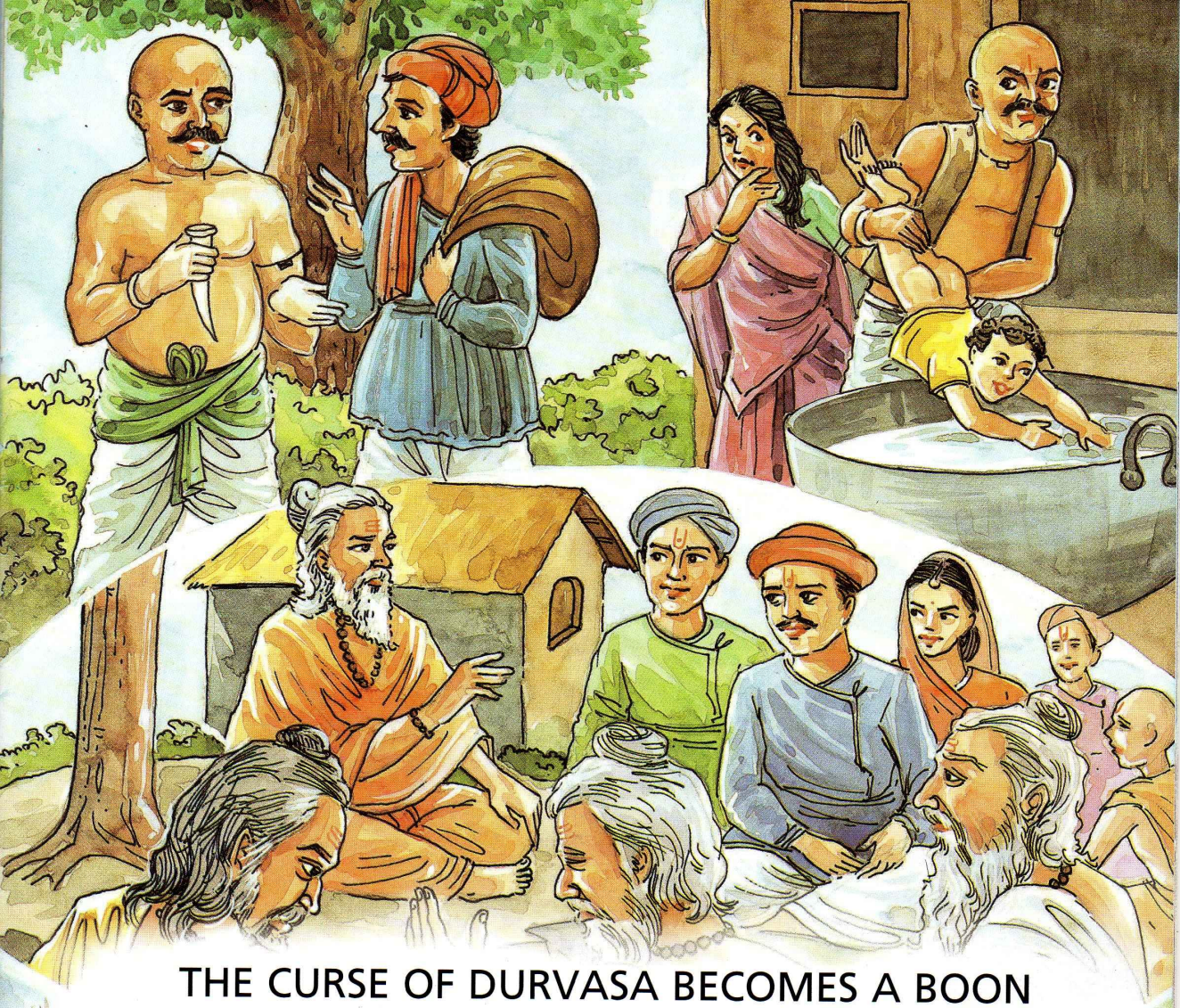


॥ Shree Swaminarayo Vijaytetram ॥

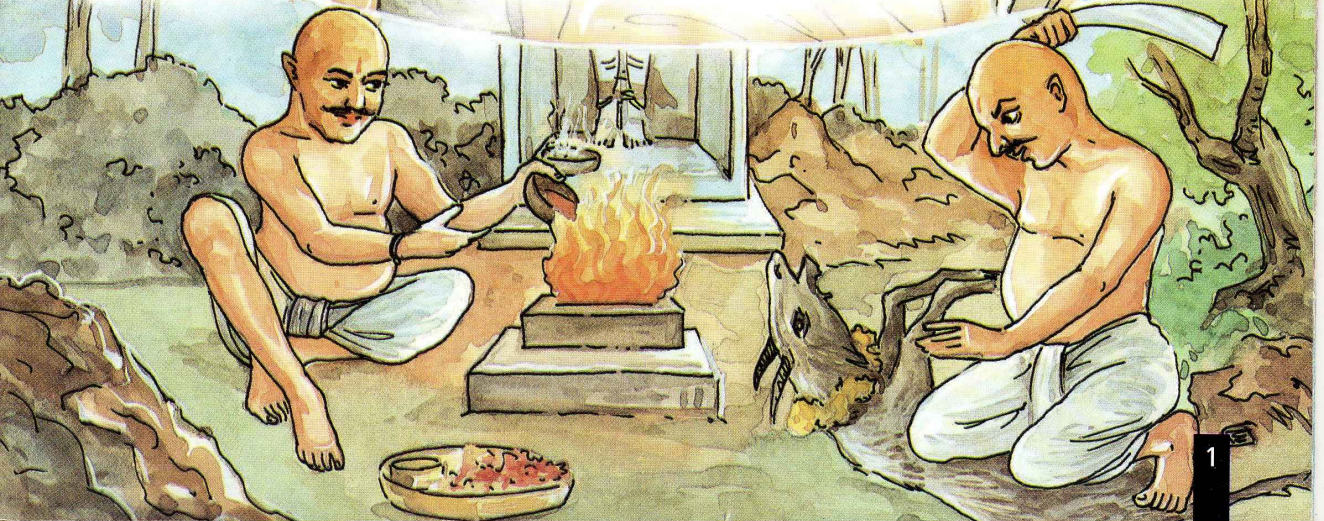
SHREE
GHANASHYAM
BAL CHARITRA
PART - 1





THE CURSE OF DURVASA BECOMES A BOON

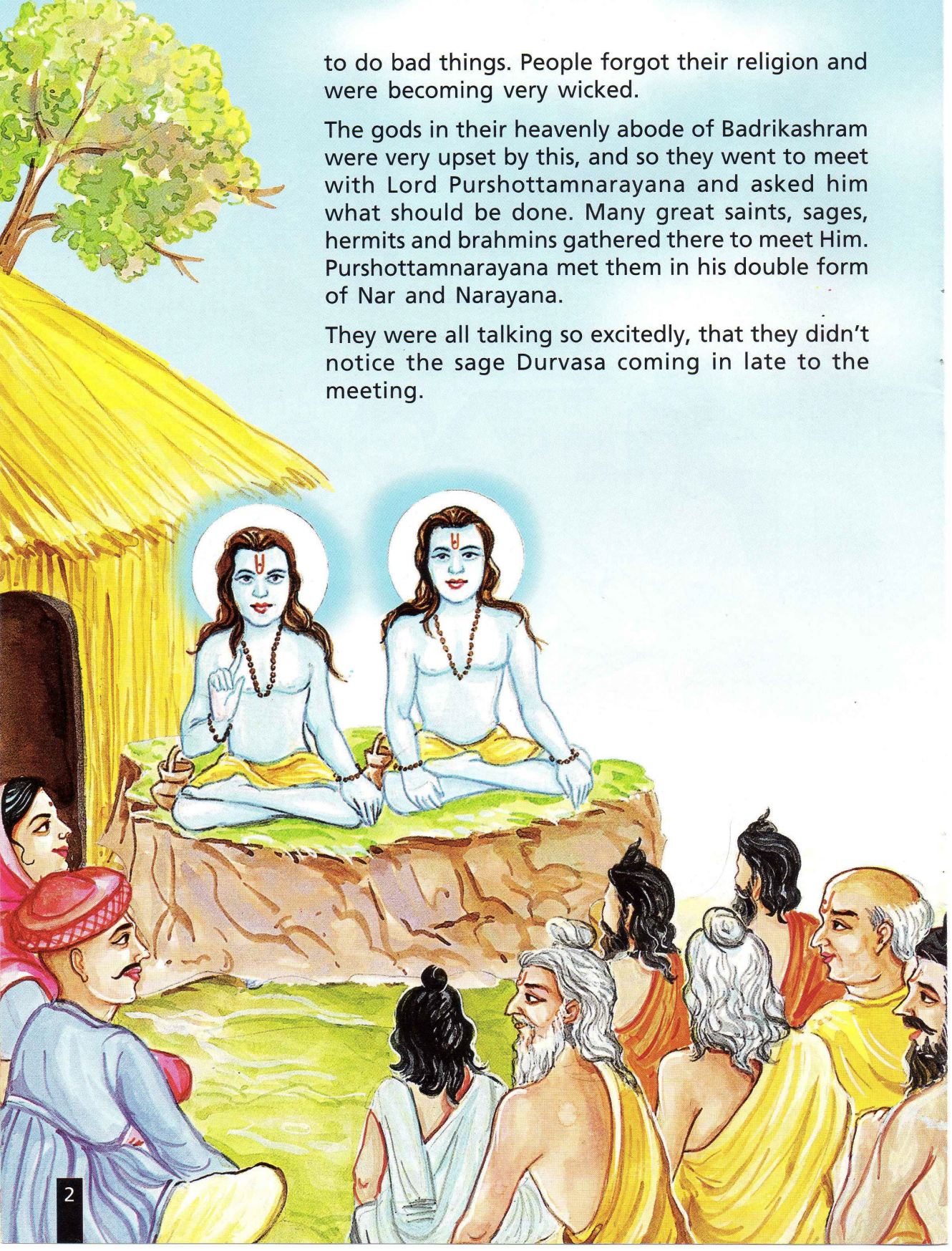
The country of Bharat, also known as India, was in great trouble. Asuras and demons were terrorising the people, and tempting them



to do bad things. People forgot their religion and were becoming very wicked.

The gods in their heavenly abode of Badrikashram were very upset by this, and so they went to meet with Lord Purshottamnarayana and asked him what should be done. Many great saints, sages, hermits and brahmins gathered there to meet Him. Purshottamnarayana met them in his double form of Nar and Narayana.

They were all talking so excitedly, that they didn't notice the sage Durvasa coming in late to the meeting.



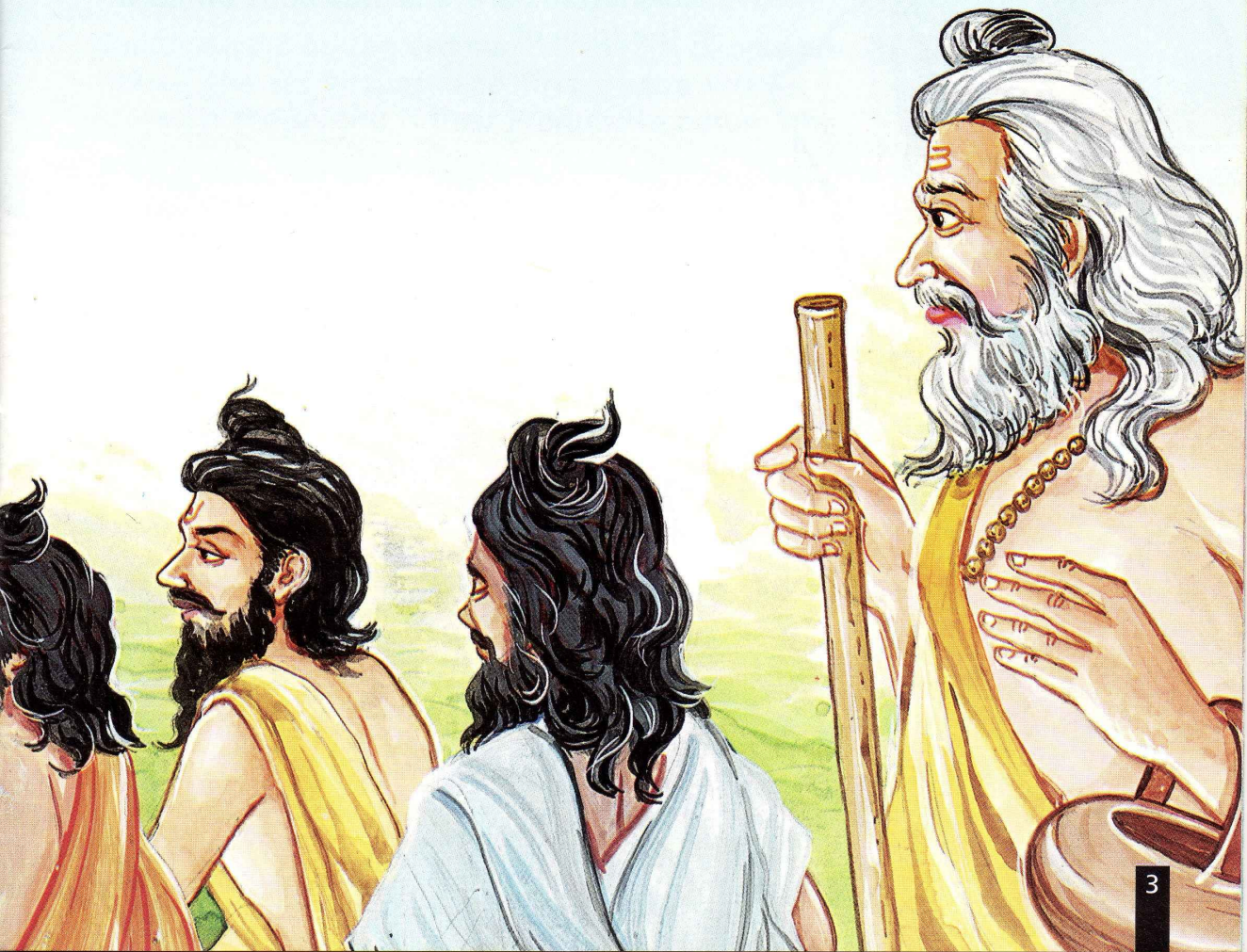
Durvasa became angry because no one noticed him or greeted him. He felt very insulted. Suddenly he burst out in a loud voice. "You have all insulted me by ignoring me! For this I will punish you with a curse! All of you will be born on the earth, to be tormented by the demons and asuras!"

Everyone was shocked, and stood in silence.

Then Dharmadev and Murtidevi came toward him. They begged his forgiveness for not noticing him, and pleaded with him to remove the curse. But a curse given by a sage can never be removed.

Durvasa felt sorry when he saw the sincerity of Dharmadev and Murtidevi. He really wanted to take back the curse. But what could he do? Then in a gentle voice he said,

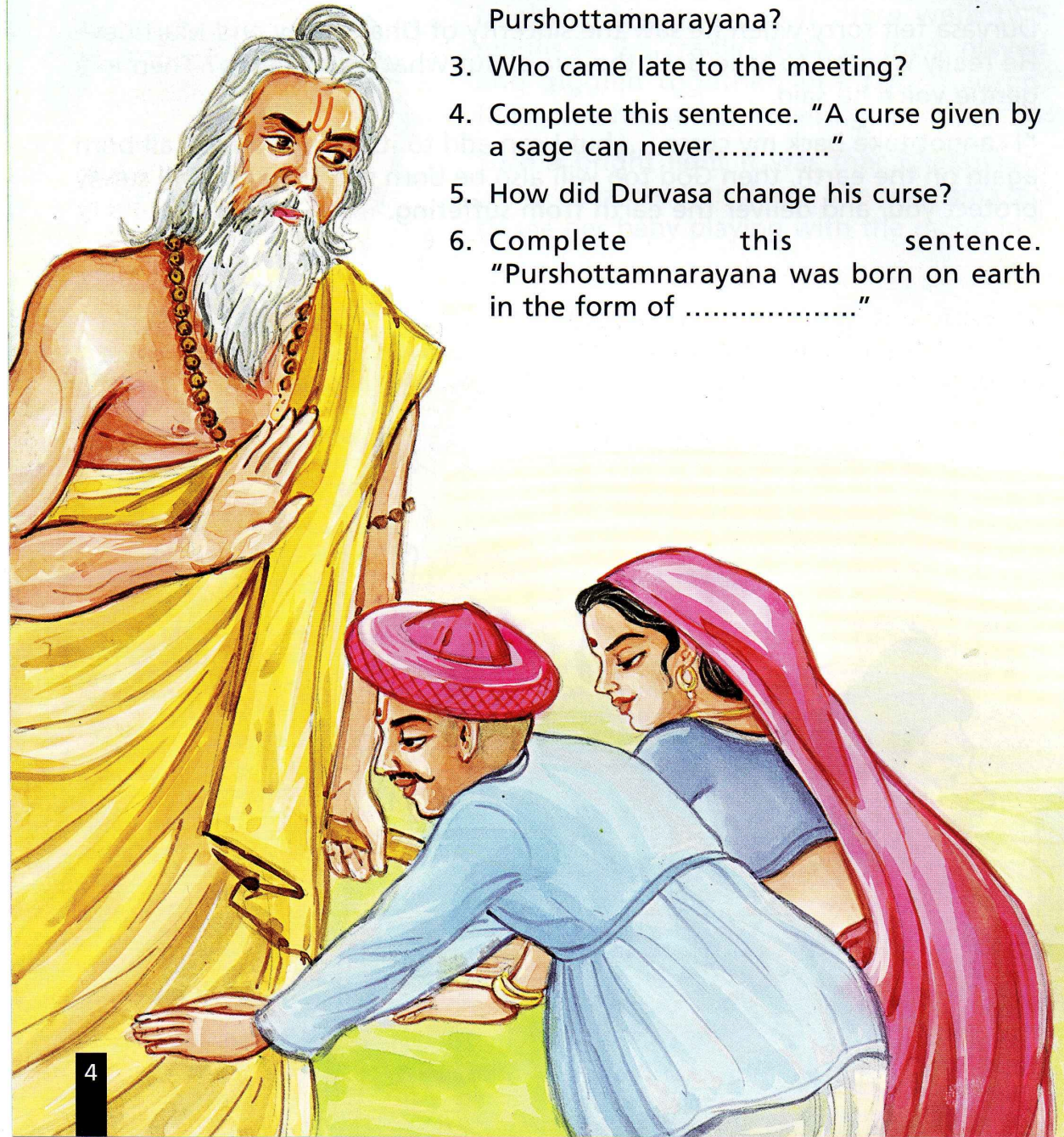
"I cannot take back my curse..... but I can add to it. When you are all born again on the earth, then God too will also be born with you. He will surely protect you, and deliver the earth from suffering."



And so it was that all were born upon the earth. And God also was born among them, taking the form of the baby Ghanashyam. And so it was that the curse became a boon for all Mankind.

STUDY:

1. What is the name of the heavenly place where holy people live?
2. What was the double form of Purshottamnarayana?
3. Who came late to the meeting?
4. Complete this sentence. "A curse given by a sage can never....."
5. How did Durvasa change his curse?
6. Complete this sentence. "Purshottamnarayana was born on earth in the form of"



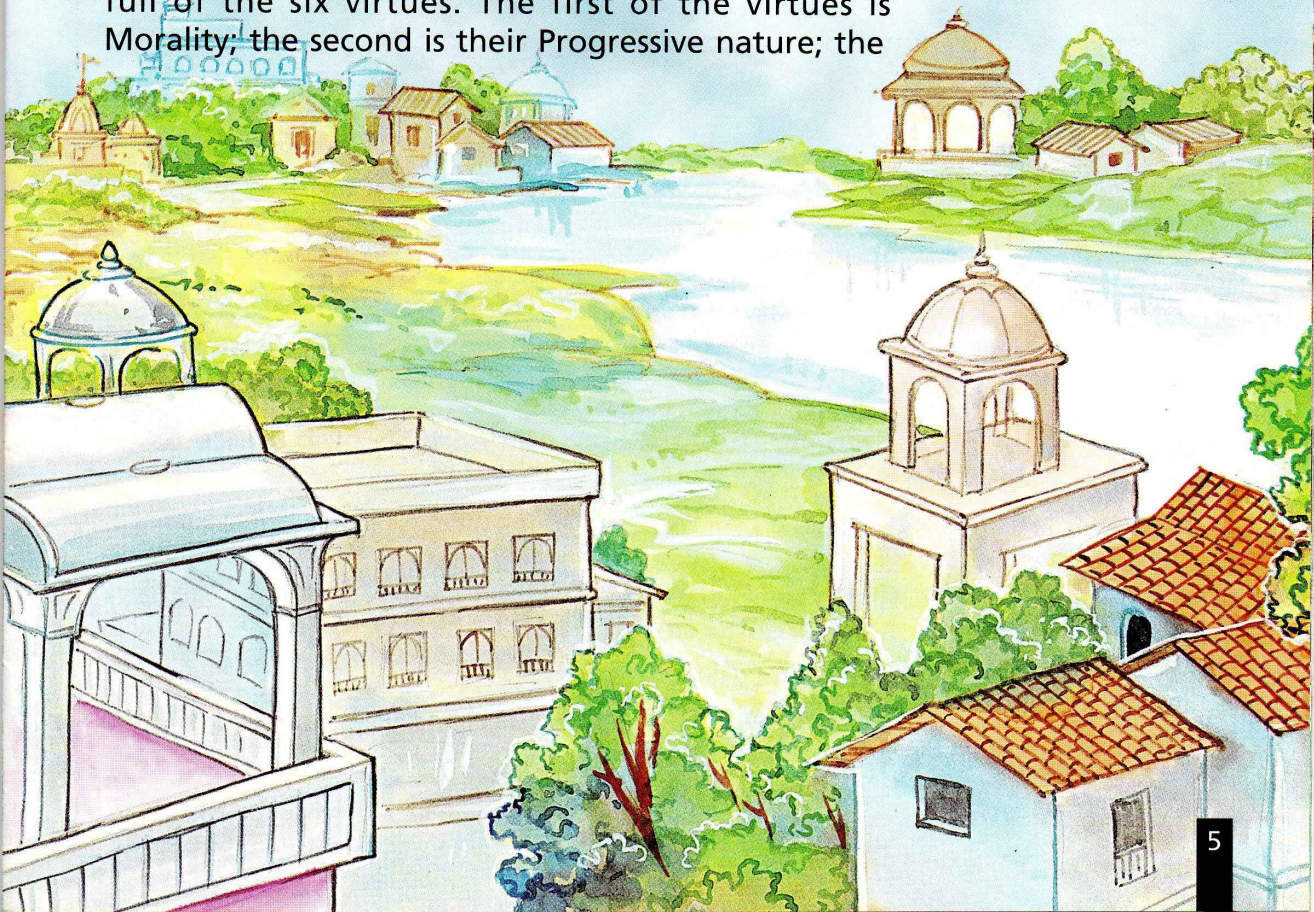
SURBHI THE HEAVENLY COW

Did you know that cows have a special place in heaven? This wonderful place is called Gaulok. Gaulok is filled with the most beautiful, healthy and holy cows that you can imagine, and their milk is sweet like nectar and honey. Just one taste of their milk, and you forget all your troubles and sorrows. All the gods and goddesses, and especially Balagopala, or the little boy Krishna, love to drink the milk of the cows of Gaulok.

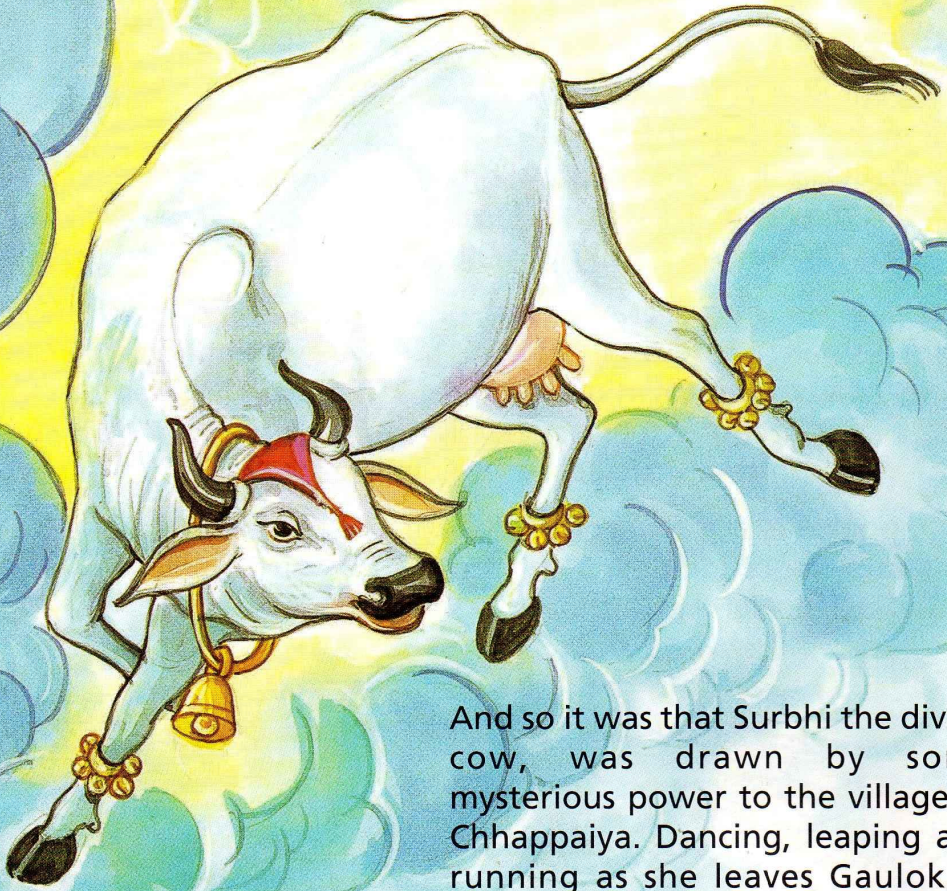
The most beautiful of all the cows in Gaulok is Surbhi. Surbhi's coat is soft to touch, like velvet. And around her neck, and around her ankles are garlands of bells that tinkle as she walks and runs, making heavenly music to delight the ears. Wherever Surbhi goes, the air is filled with song, music and joy.

One day, Surbhi felt drawn by the holy music and divine atmosphere coming from a small village on Earth. This village was Chhappaiya. Chhappaiya is in India, near to the town of Ayodhya. It is a beautiful region, full of greenery and flowing cool streams. The fragrance of flowers fills the air, floating hither and thither, carried by the gentle breezes.

Chhappaiya is not an ordinary village. Its people are full of the six virtues. The first of the virtues is **Morality**; the second is their **Progressive nature**; the



third is their Sanity; the fourth is their Good Sense; the fifth is their Generosity; and the sixth virtue is their Determination. These six virtues are like wheels, and the village of Chhappaiya is like a chariot riding along on the six wheels. And this is how Chhappaiya got its name, for Chha means "six" and Paiya means "wheels".



And so it was that Surbhi the divine cow, was drawn by some mysterious power to the village of Chhappaiya. Dancing, leaping and running as she leaves Gaulok, it seems like she is flying through the skies, drawn by the heavenly music. Can you hear it?

Come, let us fly with the beautiful Surbhi to Chhappaiya, and dance to the notes of the music!

STUDY:

1. What is the name of the heavenly place where Surbhi lives?
2. What does Surbhi have around her neck and ankles?
3. What are the six virtues or wheels on which Chhappaiya stands?
4. Fill in the blanks:-
"Chhappaiya is in the country of _____,
near the town of _____.

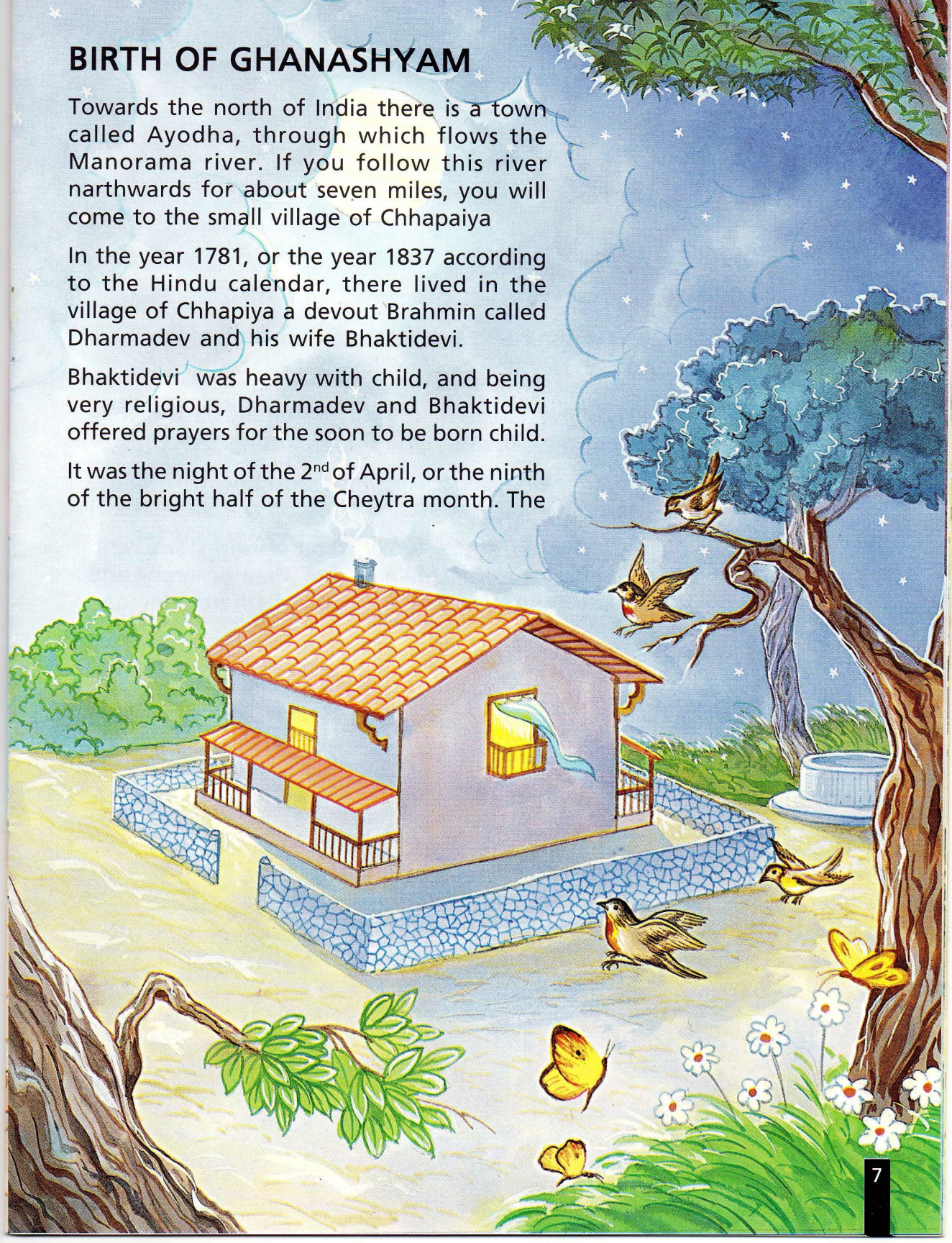
BIRTH OF GHANASHYAM

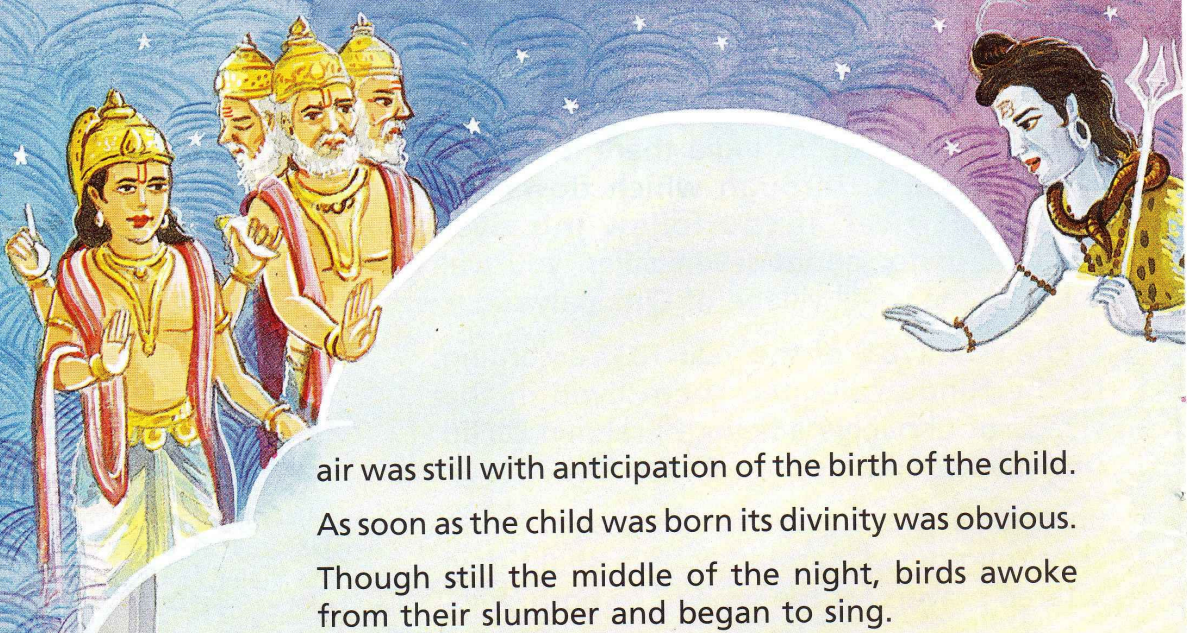
Towards the north of India there is a town called Ayodha, through which flows the Manorama river. If you follow this river northwards for about seven miles, you will come to the small village of Chhapaiya

In the year 1781, or the year 1837 according to the Hindu calendar, there lived in the village of Chhapaiya a devout Brahmin called Dharmadev and his wife Bhaktidevi.

Bhaktidevi was heavy with child, and being very religious, Dharmadev and Bhaktidevi offered prayers for the soon to be born child.

It was the night of the 2nd of April, or the ninth of the bright half of the Chaitra month. The



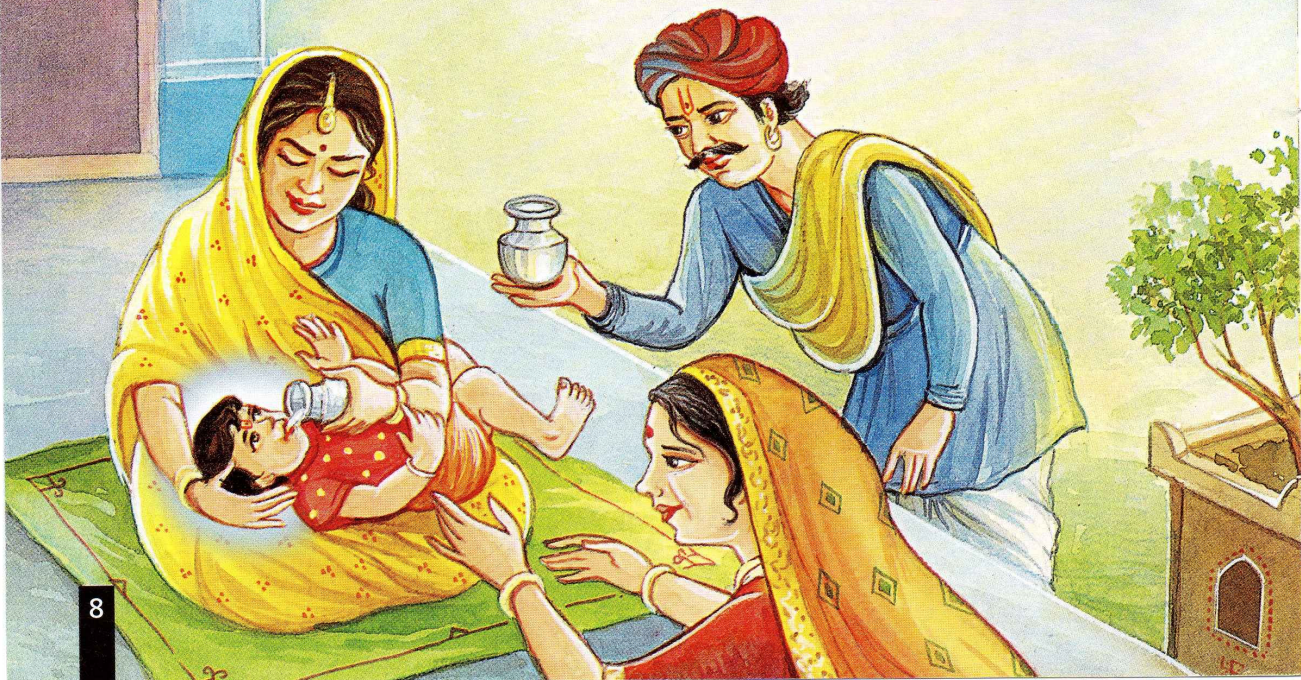


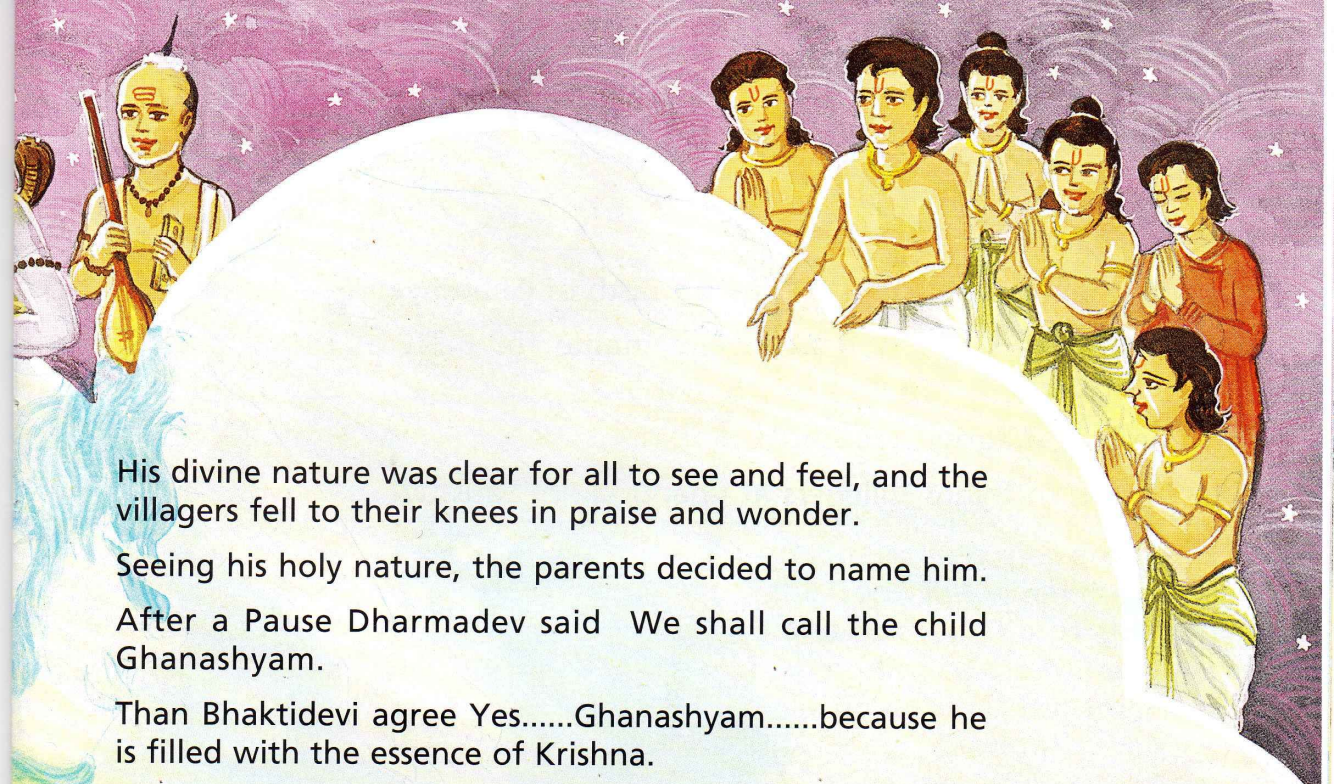
air was still with anticipation of the birth of the child. As soon as the child was born its divinity was obvious. Though still the middle of the night, birds awoke from their slumber and began to sing.

A soft wind began to blow, bringing with it the fragrance of flowers.

All the villegers woke from their sleep and wondered at the phenomena. They lit lamps and made their way to the house of Dharmadev and Bhaktidevi.

There, they crowded round the mother with her new born child.





His divine nature was clear for all to see and feel, and the villagers fell to their knees in praise and wonder.

Seeing his holy nature, the parents decided to name him.

After a Pause Dharmadev said We shall call the child Ghanashyam.

Than Bhaktidevi agree Yes.....Ghanashyam.....because he is filled with the essence of Krishna.

And so it was that Ghanashyam was born.

In time, as Ghanashyam grew up, he would perform many wonderful religious acts, and be of great social service to humanity, bringing fame to the tiny village of Chhapaiya.



But for now, the villagers were content to sing and dance and rejoice at the birth of Ghanashyam.

STUDY:

- (1) Where is Chappiya?
- (2) Write the Right Date & Time of Birth of Ghanashyam?
- (3) Who suggest the "Ghanashyam" name for Baby at Dharmdev & Bhaktidevi?
- (4) Bhaktidevi agree
- (5) For Which things Villagers at Chappiya are Satisfied?



KALIDUTT THE EVIL ONE

In the Universe there are three basic kinds of beings. These are Gods, demons and humans. Gods are also known as Sura. Demons are known as Asura. Humans come in many types - very good, very bad and average.

Humans live life constantly between the Gods and the Asuras. When they live a life of goodness, then they are closer to the Gods. But when they do evil and wicked things then they become like the Asuras. People who do not keep thinking of God, gradually become tempted to do bad things, and then more bad things, until finally they are just like an Asura. So it is always better to keep thinking of God.



Once there was a very Asura, and his name was Kalidutt.

Kalidutt is evil,

His face is black as night.

He loves to torment humans,

And give them all a fright.

Kalidutt is evil,

His heart is full of rage.

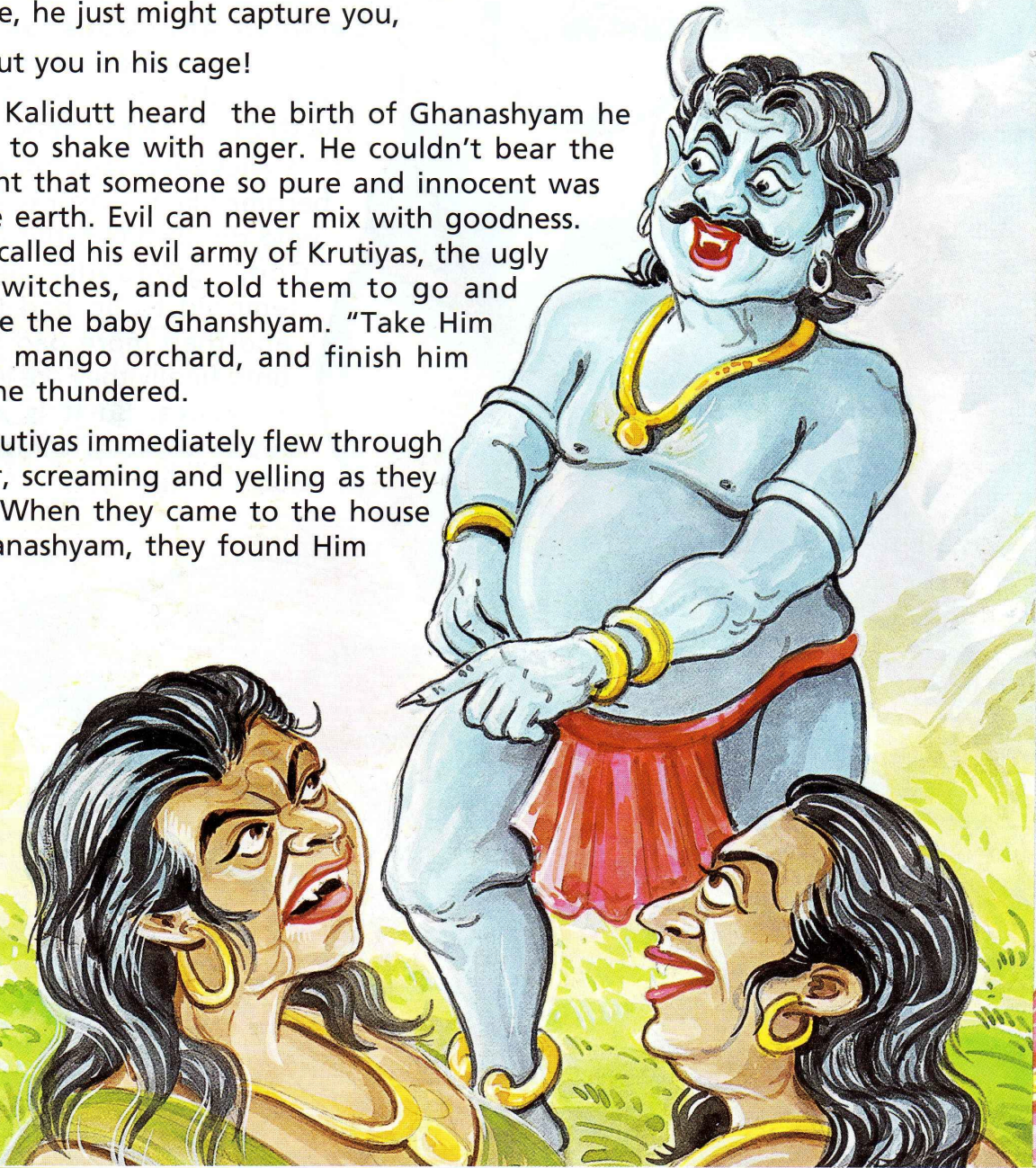
Beware, he just might capture you,

And put you in his cage!

When Kalidutt heard the birth of Ghanashyam he began to shake with anger. He couldn't bear the thought that someone so pure and innocent was on the earth. Evil can never mix with goodness.

So he called his evil army of Krutiyas, the ugly black witches, and told them to go and capture the baby Ghanashyam. "Take Him to the mango orchard, and finish him off!" he thundered.

The Krutiyas immediately flew through the air, screaming and yelling as they went. When they came to the house of Ghanashyam, they found Him





laughing and smiling innocently. He had no fear of the ugly Krutiyas, and even opened his arms and invited them to play with him.

So it was easy for the Krutiyas to simply pick Him up and fly away with him. Making a terrible noise, they carried him off above the roof tops, towards the mango orchard.

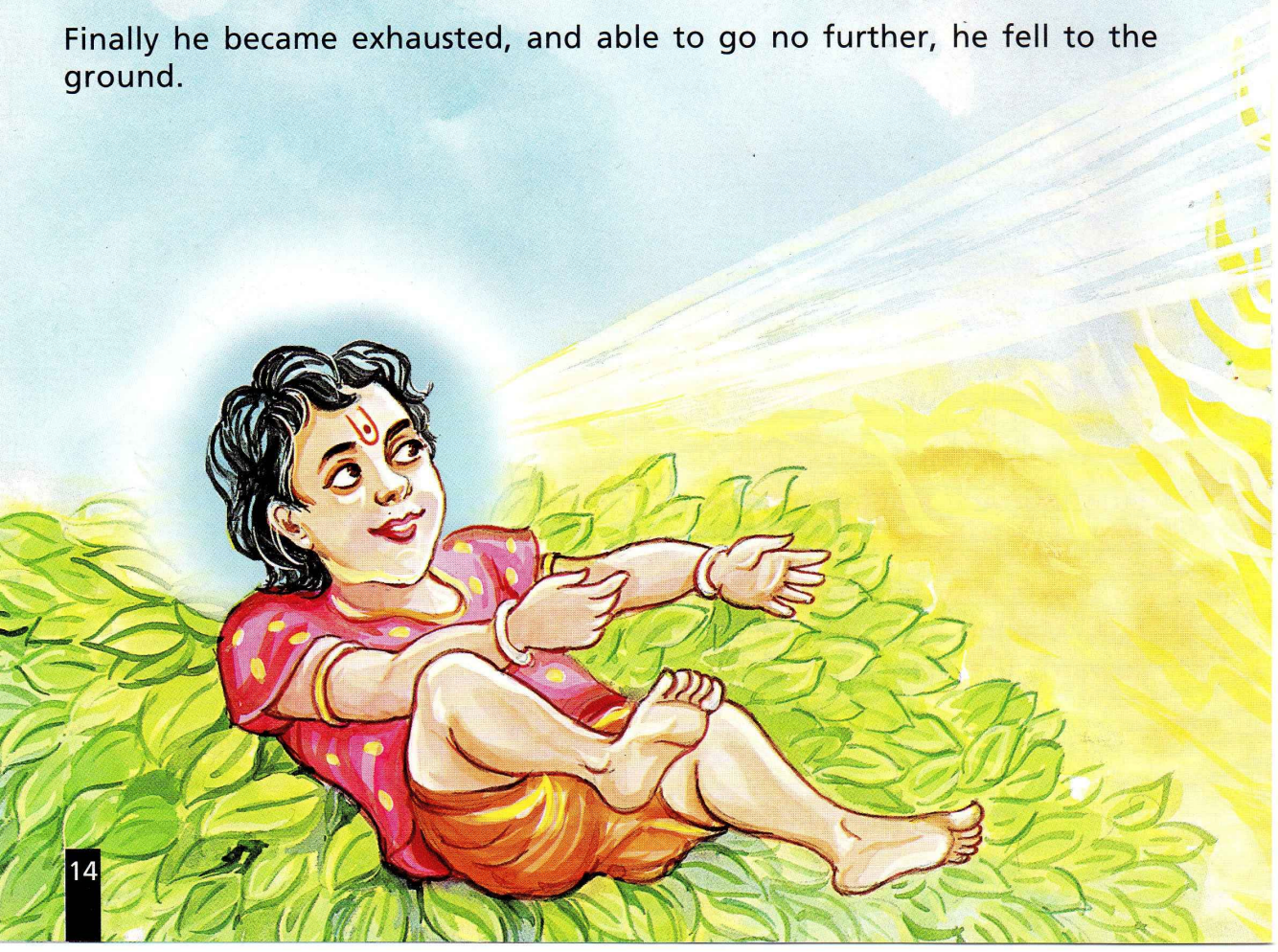
Now, as Ghanashyam sat on the pile of mango leaves deep inside the orchard, smiling innocently as the Krutiyas writhed and burnt all around him, the sound of their cries reached up to the skies.

At that moment Hanuman was flying overhead, and heard the terrible screams.

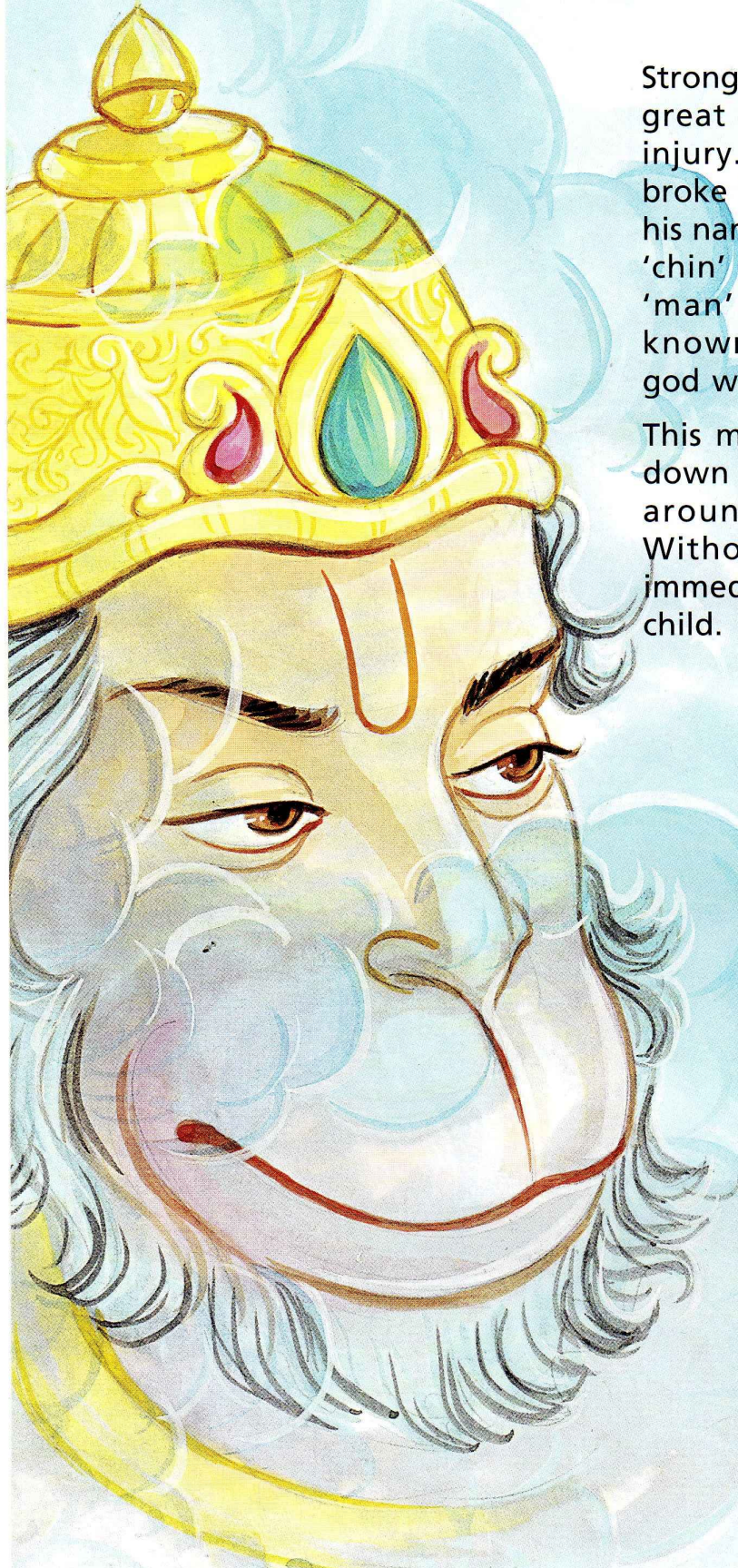
Hanuman the monkey god was the son of Pawan. Because Pawan was the God of the Wind, Hanuman was born with the ability to fly through the air. Do you know how he got his name?

One morning, when Hanuman was a child, he looked up to the horizon and saw the sun rising in the east. He was feeling hungry and in need of his breakfast, and to his young eyes the sun appeared like a big red apple. He licked his lips, and immediately took off through the air to grab the delicious fruit. But, as you know, the sun is very, very far away. So Hanuman flew for hours and still could not reach the tempting sight. As he flew, the sun rose higher, and soon it was directly overhead in the noon-time sky. Still Hanuman flew higher and higher, but still the sun seemed as far away as when he started.

Finally he became exhausted, and able to go no further, he fell to the ground.





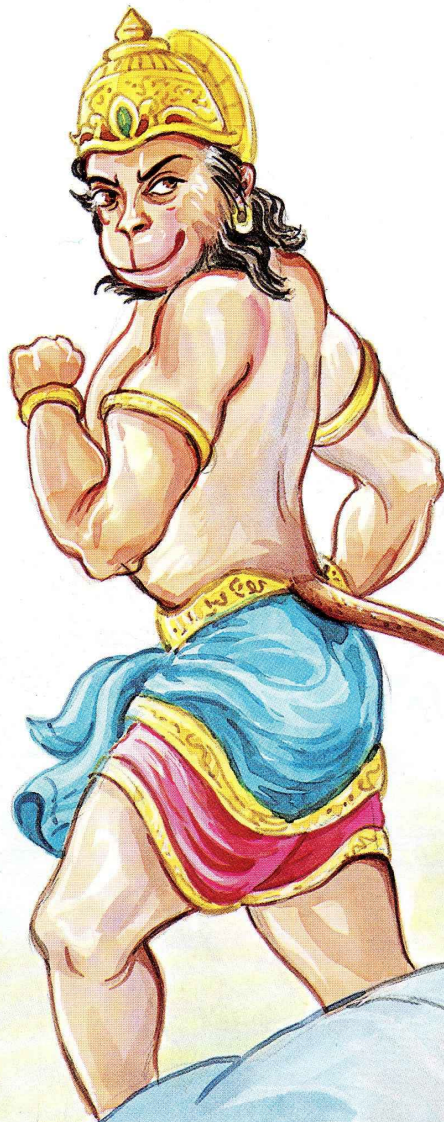


Strong as he was, falling from such a great height, he could not escape injury. As he fell on the earth, he broke his chin. And that is how he got his name, for in Sanskrit the word for 'chin' is 'Hanu', and 'to be hurt' is 'man'. From then on he became known as Hanuman, the monkey god with the broken chin!

This monkey God Hanuman looked down and saw the evil Krutiyas all around the baby Ghanashyam. Without pausing for thought, he immediately flew down to help the child.

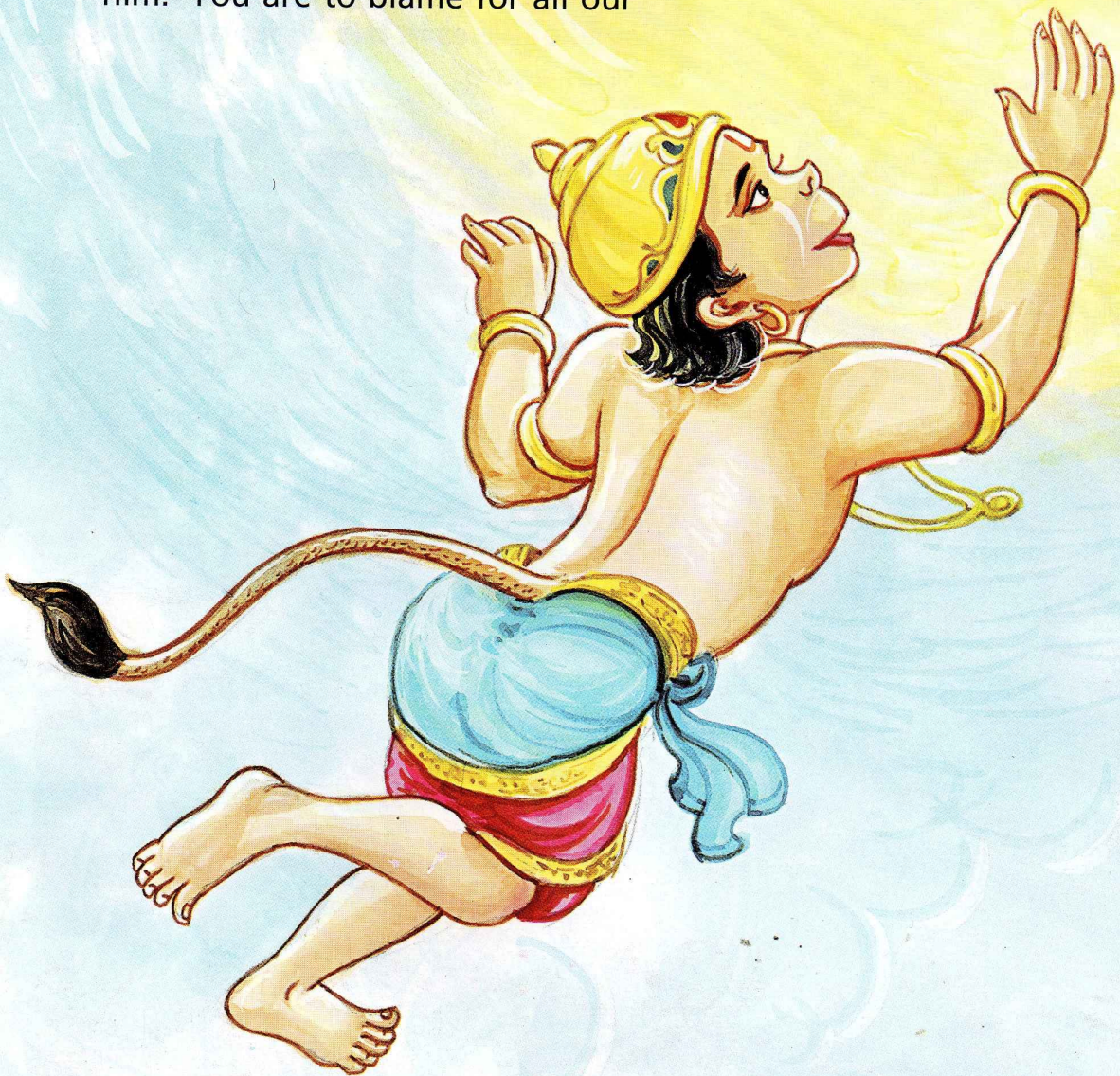
pain! Because of your evil plans, we had to suffer burning! Now it is your turn to suffer!" they said. And they beat and tortured Kalidutt very badly. Sin is always rewarded by its own hands.

Then, filled with remorse, the Krutiyas went back to Ghanashyam and Hanuman to beg forgiveness. The Krutiyas vowed that they would never set foot in Chhappaiya village again. Hanuman laughed, and then he puffed up his cheeks, and with another mighty breath he blew them away like leaves in the wind, never to be seen again.



Taking a giant breath, he blew on the Krutiyas to put their fire out. Then picking them up with his hands and his tail, he dashed them this way and that way, and then with his mighty strength he threw them all the way back to where they had come from.

The Krutiyas landed at the feet of the evil-hearted Kalidutt, yelping in pain. Angry at Kalidutt for sending them on the mission to kill Ghanshyam, they set upon him. "You are to blame for all our

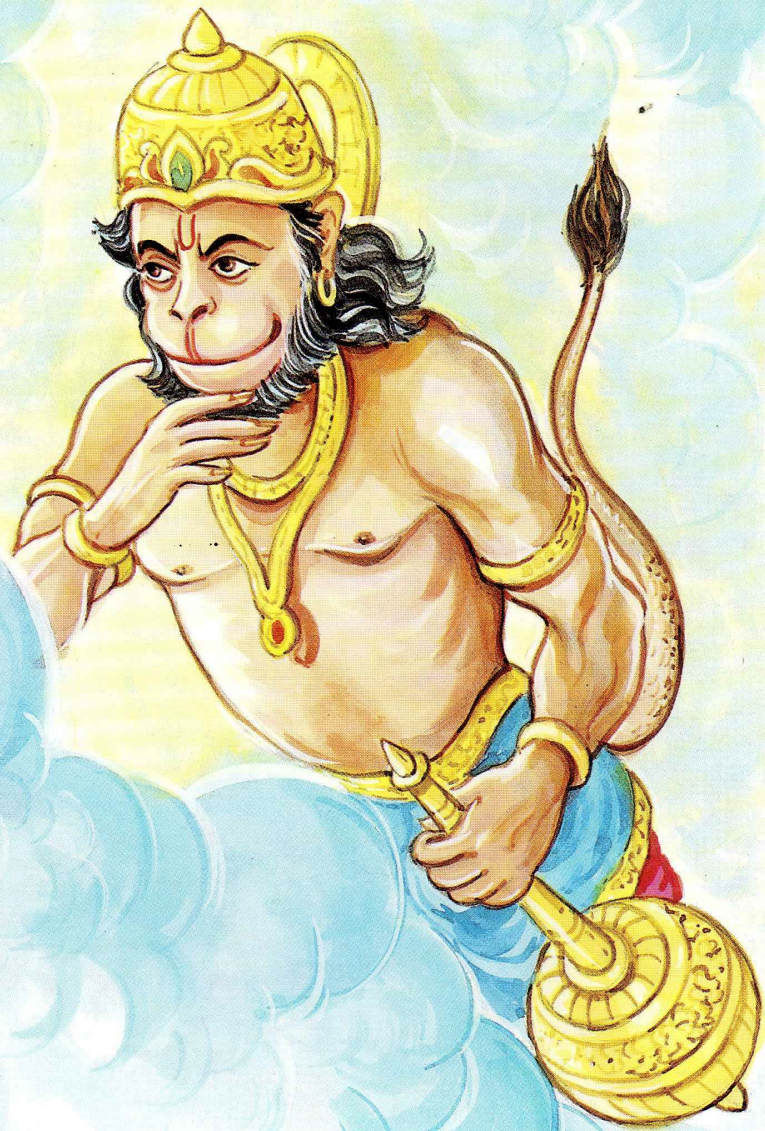




Then Hanuman gently picked up the little Lord Ghanashyam, and carried him back home to his mother. Bhaktimata was overjoyed to see her baby son back safe and sound. As he handed Him to her, Hanuman asked

her to take good care of him.
"He is God incarnate" he said.
"He has come to earth to help
us all. If ever you need me, just
remember me, and I will be
there."

So saying, he flew off into the
skies, while Bhaktimata
cradled her still smiling
Ghanashyam.



STUDY:

1. What are the three kinds of beings?
2. Fill in the blank. "When people are bad they become like _____."
3. Why did the evil Kalidutt want to destroy Ghanashyam?
4. Fill in the blank. "An _____ child has no fear."
5. Fill in the blank. " Ghanashyam's looks were like _____ _____ to the Krutiyas.
6. Who was Hanuman's father ?
7. What did the sun look like to the young Hanuman?
8. How did Hanuman get his name? Write in your own words.
9. Describe in your own words how the evil Kalidutt was tortured.
10. Fill in the blank: " _____ is always rewarded by its own hands."



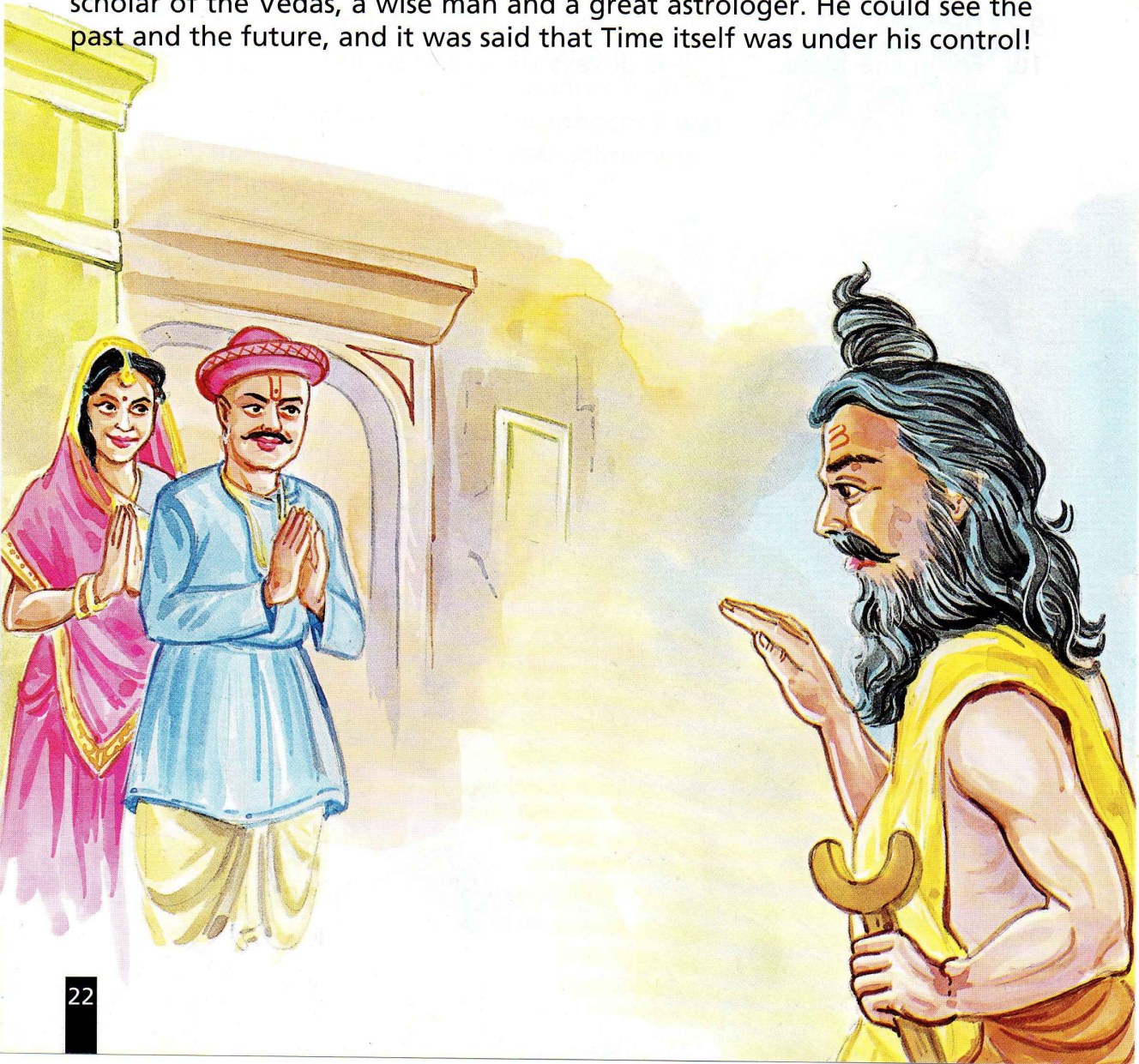
THE NAMING OF GHANASHYAM

Do you know that people's names have real meanings? The same was no less true for Ghanashyam, and this is how He got his name.

Ghanashyam's father's name was Dharmadev. Now, Dharma means religion, or the righteous way of living.

The wife of Dharmadev, and Ghanashyam's mother, was called Bhaktimata. Bhakti means devotion, or the path of divine love.

When the child was born, Dharmadev and Bhaktimata called Muni Maharaj Markandeya to bless the baby boy. Muni Markandeya was a scholar of the Vedas, a wise man and a great astrologer. He could see the past and the future, and it was said that Time itself was under his control!

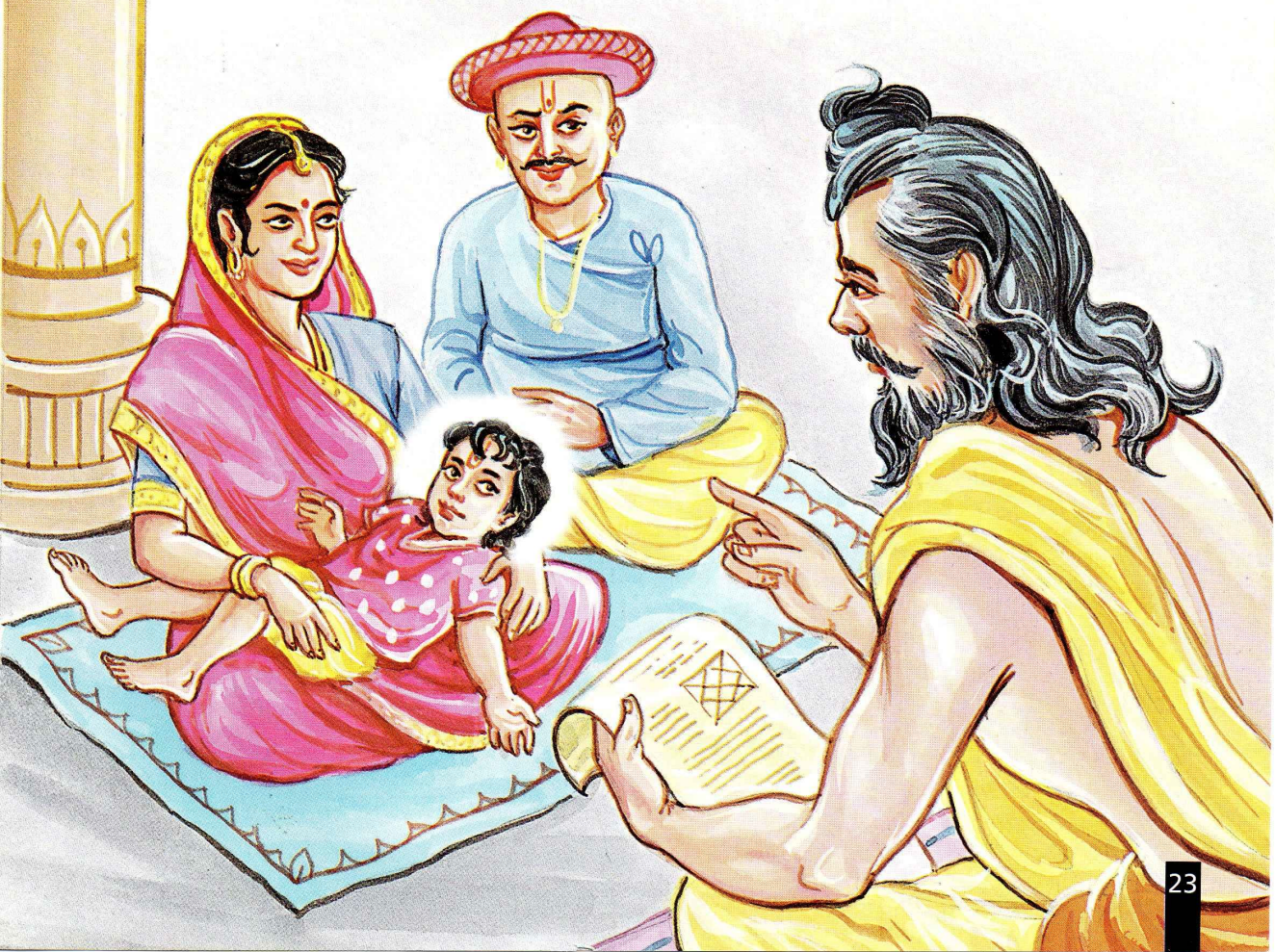


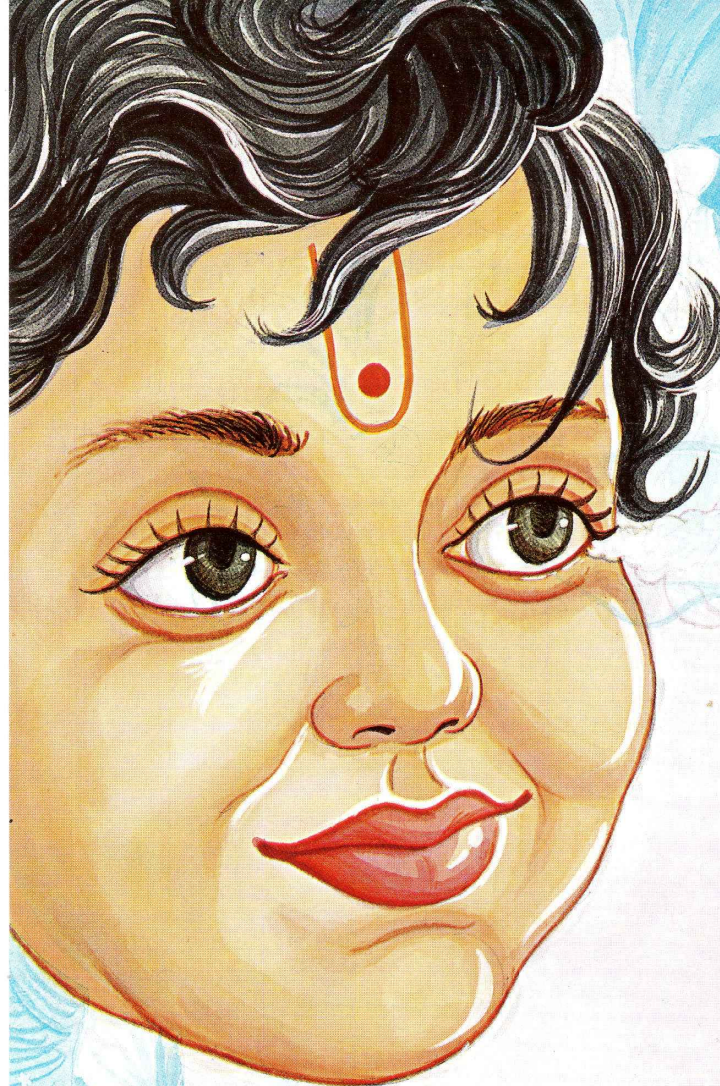
Dharmadev wanted Muni Markandeya to make his child's birth-chart, and to tell him what kind of future life He would have. Bhaktimata also wanted him to choose an appropriate name for the boy.

Muni Markandeya set about the task. He began making calculations on his fingers. From time to time he would pause and say "Excellent!", or "Splendid!". After some time he announced that the child's moon sign was Karka, which is the same as the fourth Zodiac sign, Cancer. "So, the name of Hari would be very appropriate.", he nodded wisely.

Then, looking at the smiling child he said, " He has the colour of Lord Krishna, so he could be called HariKrishna."

Then, looking into His innocent eyes he said, "His eyes are so deep - just like the skies. He will be able to see so far that heaven will hold no mysteries from Him. Words of wisdom will flow continuously from His mouth, like water from the Himalayan streams. Therefore, the name Neelkantha would suit Him very well."



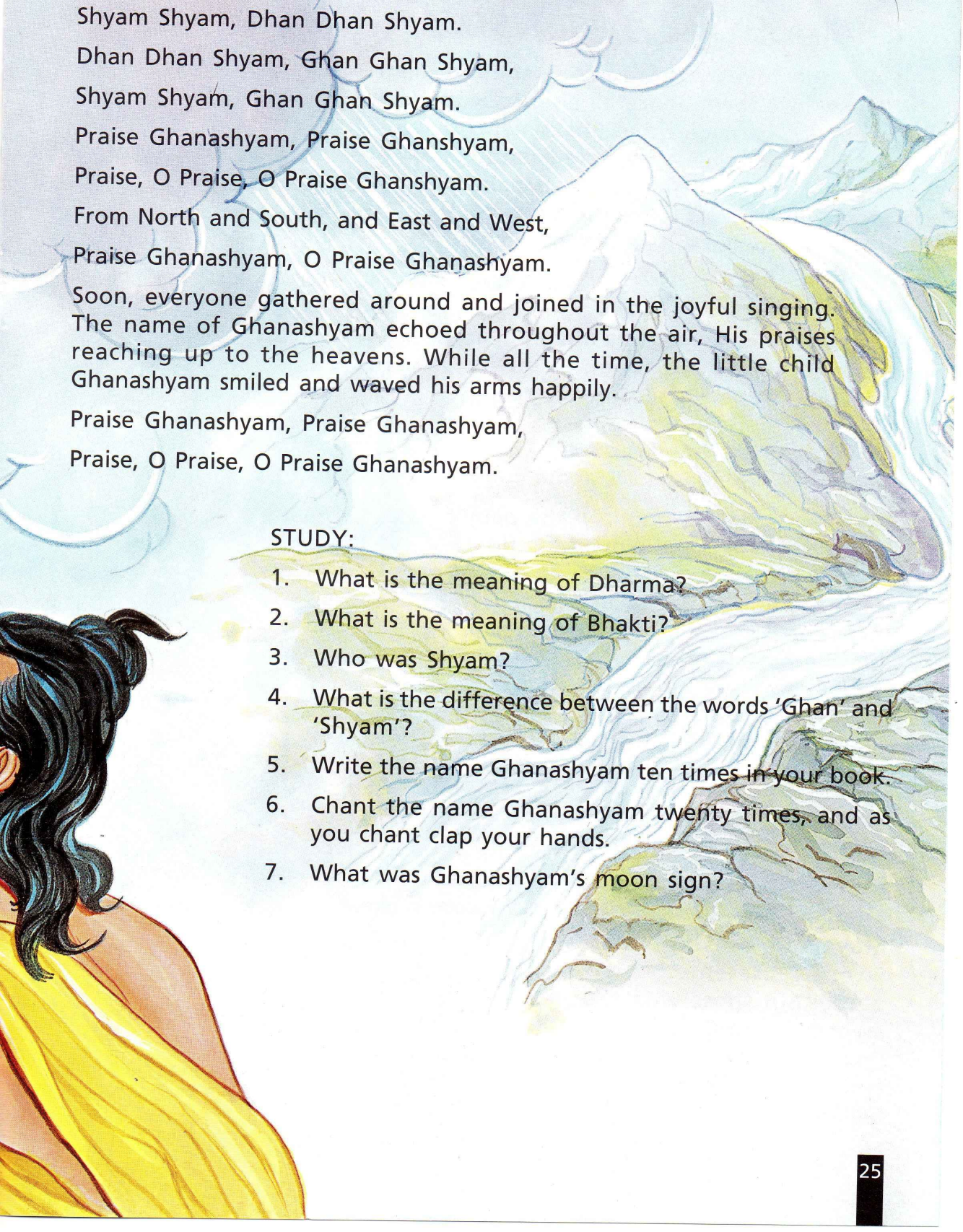


Seeing the holiness shine from the baby's eyes, he remarked, "He is dark, like the rain clouds. And just like the clouds, His divine presence shall shower blessings on this earth, bringing peace and goodwill to all Mankind. Therefore the name that will embody all these qualities, is Ghanashyam. Forever after, He shall be known by this name!"

And saying this, Muni Maharaj broke into a joyous chant.

Shyam Shyam, Ghan Ghan Shyam,





Shyam Shyam, Dhan Dhan Shyam.

Dhan Dhan Shyam, Ghan Ghan Shyam,

Shyam Shyam, Ghan Ghan Shyam.

Praise Ghanashyam, Praise Ghanshyam,

Praise, O Praise, O Praise Ghanshyam.

From North and South, and East and West,

Praise Ghanashyam, O Praise Ghanashyam.

Soon, everyone gathered around and joined in the joyful singing. The name of Ghanashyam echoed throughout the air, His praises reaching up to the heavens. While all the time, the little child Ghanashyam smiled and waved his arms happily.

Praise Ghanashyam, Praise Ghanashyam,

Praise, O Praise, O Praise Ghanashyam.

STUDY:

1. What is the meaning of Dharma?
2. What is the meaning of Bhakti?
3. Who was Shyam?
4. What is the difference between the words 'Ghan' and 'Shyam'?
5. Write the name Ghanashyam ten times in your book.
6. Chant the name Ghanashyam twenty times, and as you chant clap your hands.
7. What was Ghanashyam's moon sign?

GHANASHYAM'S FIRST TEST

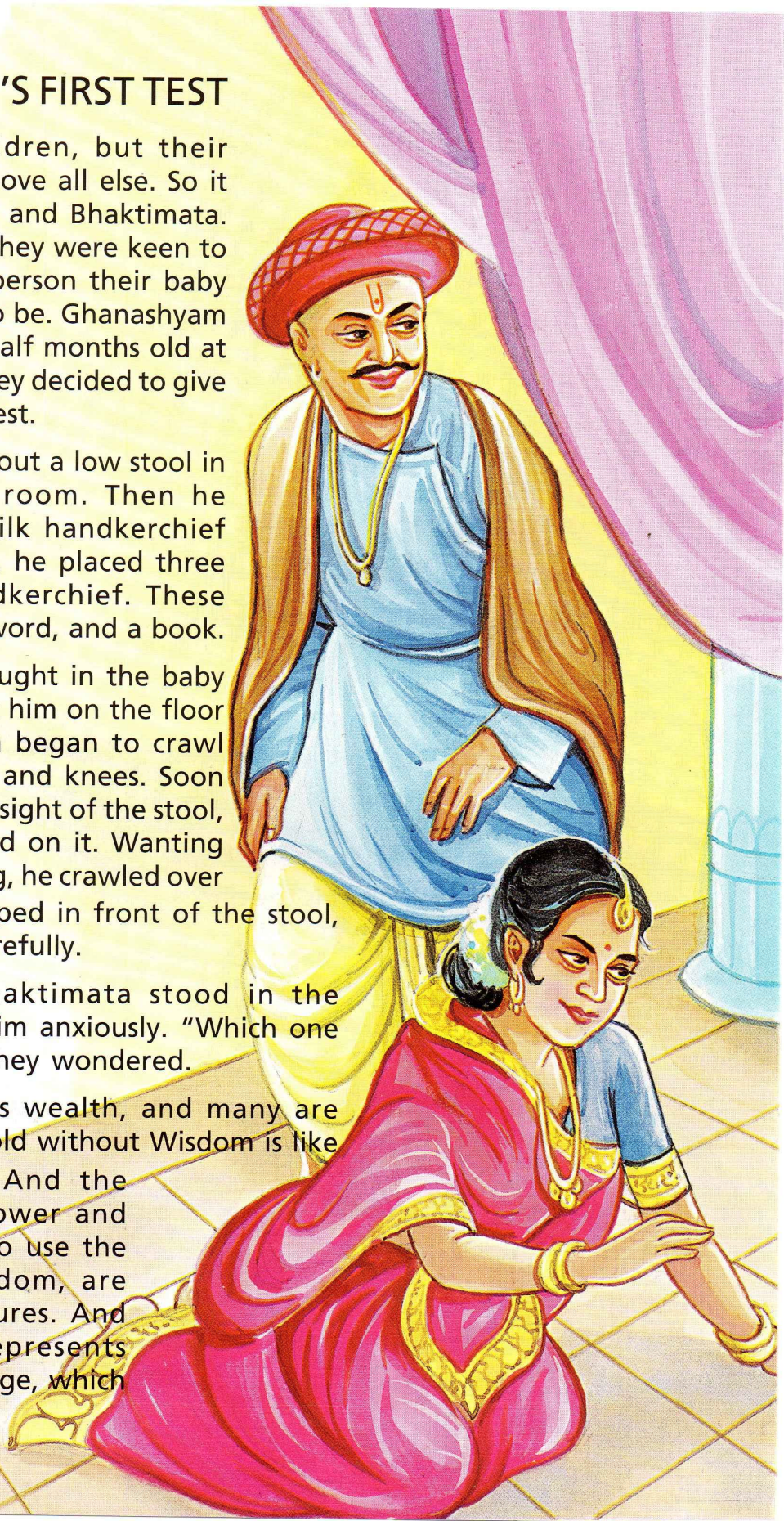
Everyone loves children, but their parents love them above all else. So it was with Dharmadev and Bhaktimata. And like all parents, they were keen to know what kind of person their baby boy would grow up to be. Ghanashyam was only two and a half months old at that time. One day, they decided to give their darling child a test.

First, Dharmadev put out a low stool in the middle of the room. Then he carefully draped a silk handkerchief over the stool. Lastly, he placed three objects on the handkerchief. These were a gold coin, a sword, and a book.

Then Bhaktimata brought in the baby Ghanashyam, and put him on the floor to play. Ghanashyam began to crawl around on his hands and knees. Soon his bright eyes caught sight of the stool, and the objects placed on it. Wanting to play with something, he crawled over to the stool. He stopped in front of the stool, eyeing the objects carefully.

Dharmadev and Bhaktimata stood in the doorway, watching him anxiously. "Which one would He choose?" they wondered.

Now Gold represents wealth, and many are attracted to it. But Gold without Wisdom is like Maya, an illusion. And the Sword represents power and battle. But those who use the Sword without Wisdom, are merely violent creatures. And finally, the Book represents learning and knowledge, which



lead to Wisdom, the greatest gift.

As Ghanashyam gazed on the objects, the glitter of the gold only held his attention for a fraction of a second. Similarly, the power of the sword did not interest him. He only had eyes for the wondrous book. Smiling with joy, He reached forward with both his arms, picked up the book, put it on the floor in front of him, and began leafing through the pages!

Dharmadev and Bhaktimata were amazed and happy. "Ghanashyam shall certainly grow up to be a devotee of Saraswati, the goddess of learning." he exclaimed. "He will be a great scholar, just like Muni Markandeya." cried Bhaktimata.

From that moment, Ghanashyam's parents knew that He would be a great teacher for all of mankind, and that He would lead them out of the darkness of ignorance, into the glowing light of eternal knowledge.

Ghanashyam had passed his first test, and his parents were the happiest people on earth. Joyously they sang his praises -

Lead us Lord from darkness into light.

Lead us Lord from untruth to truth.

STUDY:

1. What were the three objects that Dharmadev placed on the stool?
2. What was the meaning of the three objects?
3. Why is wisdom the greatest gift? Explain in your own words.
4. Who is the goddess of knowledge?
5. How old was Ghanashyam when he passed his first test ?

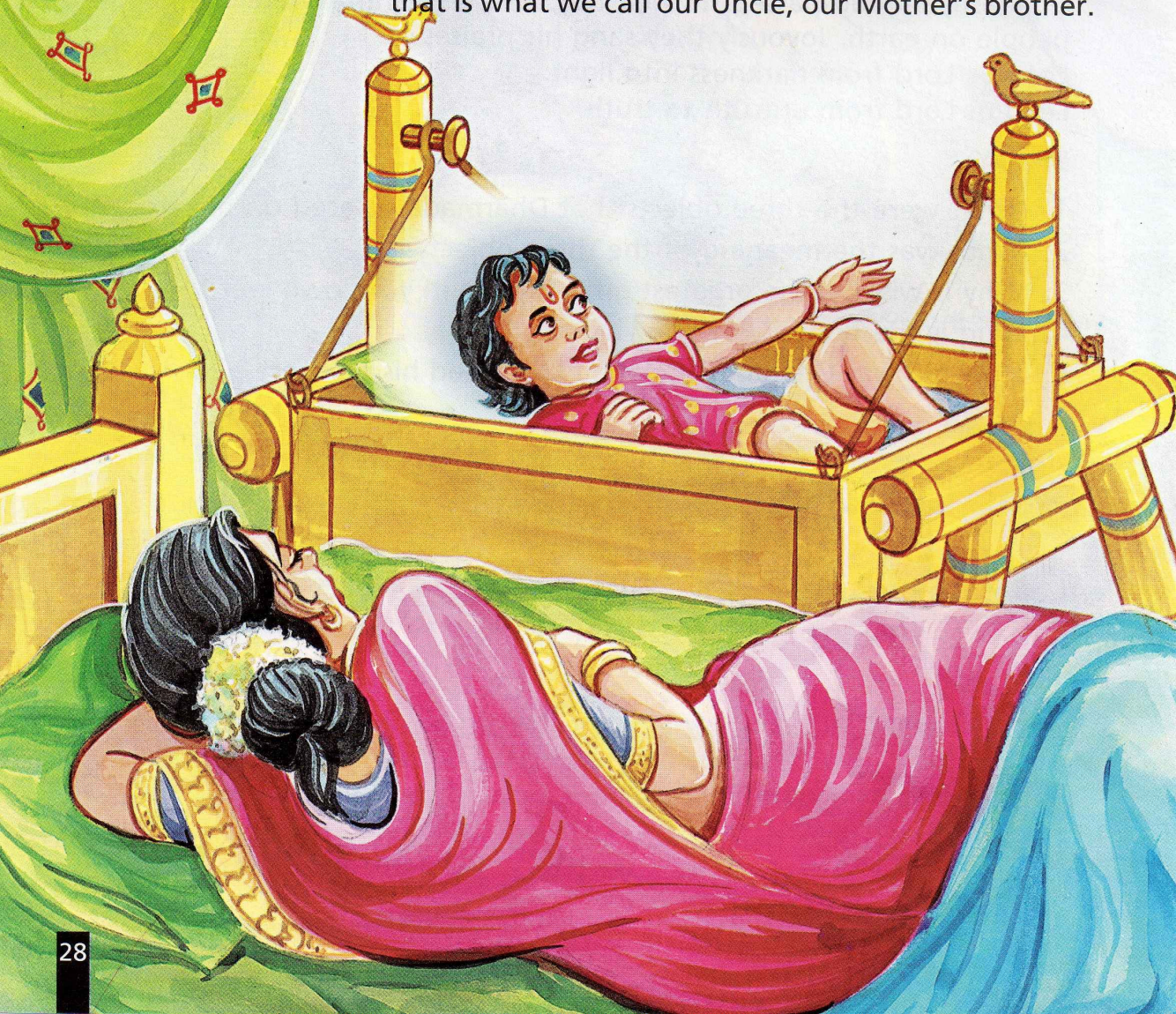


GHANASHYAM AND MOON UNCLE

Now we all know that the first word that a baby utters is "Uwah". But after that, one of the first words he learns is "Ma".

Ma is more than just a word. It is a whole sentence. Because Ma is the whole world for a baby. Ma is his eyes, his protector, his teacher. Ma gives him food, and provides him warmth and comfort. It is Ma's heart that he hears beating. It is Ma's voice that he hears gently singing. So, one mother is quite enough for any baby.

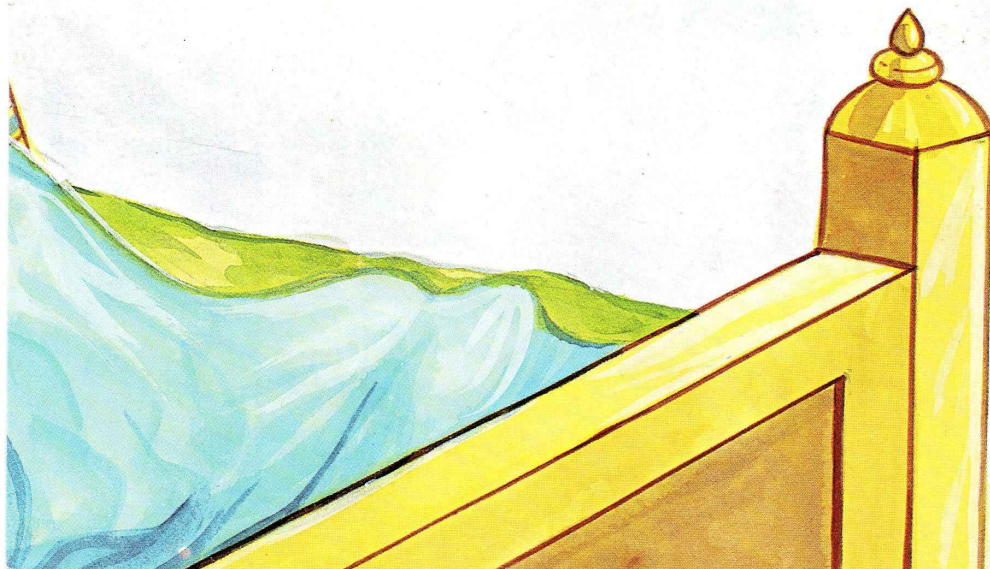
But if we double the word Ma, we get Mama, and that is what we call our Uncle, our Mother's brother.



So perhaps having a Mama, is like having two Mothers! There are many sayings and songs about Ma, and about Mama. Perhaps you know some of these?

Do you know that all the children of the world have one special Mama? His name is Chandamama, the Moon Uncle. Chandamama loves children, and they love him too.

One day, Bhaktimata had gone to sleep after putting the baby Ghanashyam in his cot. But Ghanashyam Himself was not asleep. He lay there, with his eyes wide open, gazing through the window at the moon, His Chandamama. Chandamama smiled down



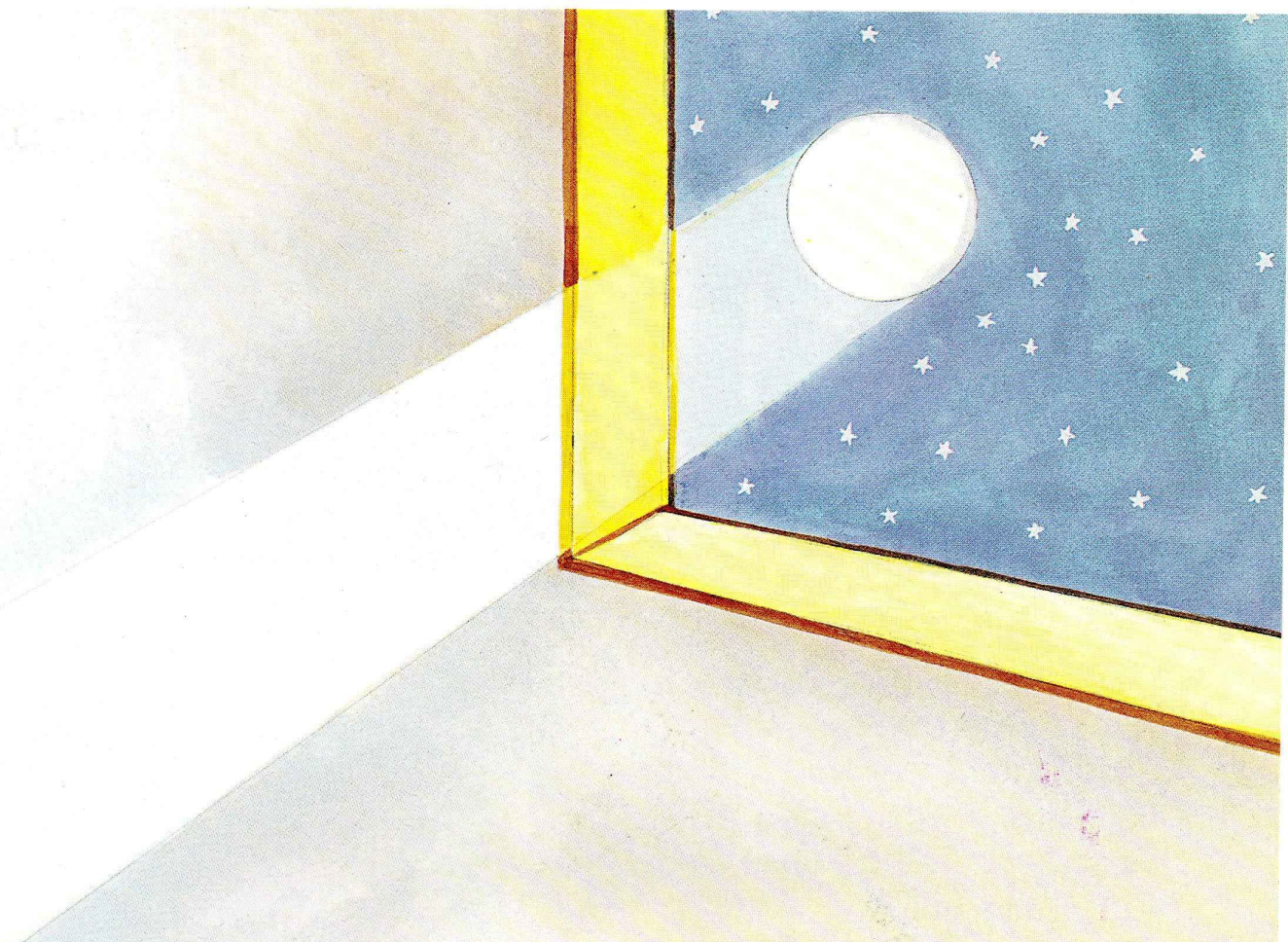
at the baby, and Ghanashyam lifted up His arms, inviting him to come and play with Him.

How could Chandamama resist such an offer, from such an innocent child?

Suddenly Ghanashyam's cradle was filled with the light of Chandamama. Both Ghanashyam and Chandamama glowed brightly. It was just as if there were two moons in the cradle! Both of them played and giggled together, like two children, filling the house with their light.

Such a bright light it was that Bhaktimata woke up from her sleep. She was amazed to see her baby playing with the moon in





his cradle. Without speaking, Ghanashyam told her, "See Ma, Chandamama has come to play with me. We are having lots of fun!"

Smiling, Bhaktimata got up, went to the cradle, and lovingly picked up her son. "Ghanashyam dear," she said, "You must let Chandamama go now. If you keep him here, then the rest of the world will be dark, and other children will not be able to play with him."

So, Ghanashyam let Chandamama go. As he was leaving, Chandamama said to Bhaktimata, "Never fear Ma. I shall always watch over the children. Sing your lullaby to your baby Ghanashyam, and I will shower him with my silvery rays, and send him to the world of dreams."

As Bhaktimata sang gently, Chandamama soothed the baby with

his rays, and Ghanashyam's eyes closed gently as He fell asleep.

STUDY:

1. Of all the people in the family, who is most loved by a baby?
2. How would you describe your Mother?
3. What word do we get when we write Ma twice? What does it mean?
4. Who is the Uncle of all the children in the world?
5. What was it that woke up Bhaktimata so suddenly?
6. What was Ghanashyam doing with Chandamama?

