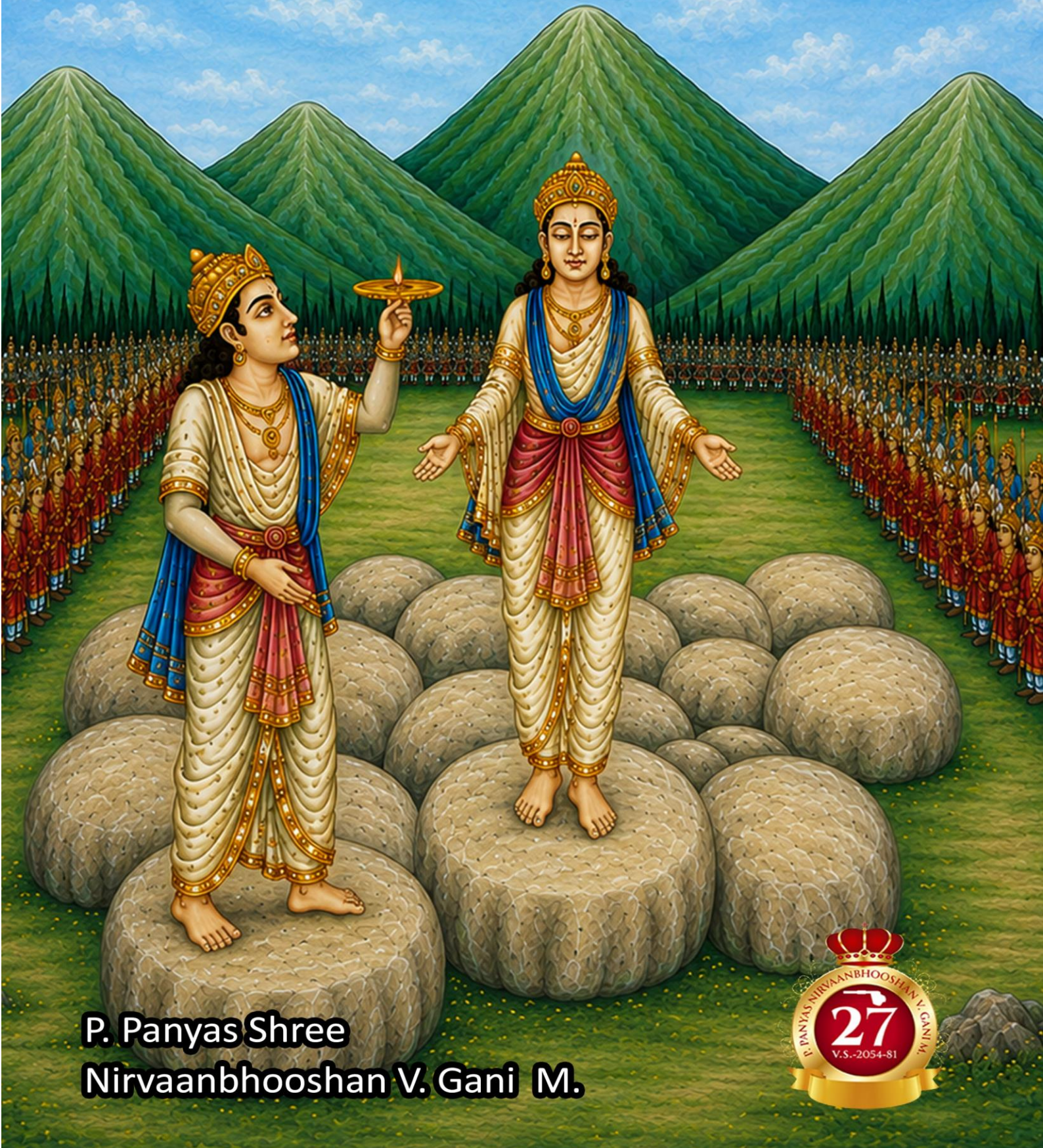


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Since P. Muniraj Shri Nirvaanbhooshan Vijayji has a good command over English language, even before this book, the English books written by him have been welcomed. In the same style and words, Mayanasundari's life events have been illustrated in English language. The pictures are stunning. English speaking readers will find such English publications useful. The most popular talks of Jain Ramayana are included with exclusive pictures. ‘Bhadrabahu’ is also too good. Pradyumna & Shamba with exclusive pictures is also best. Each book will inspire new generation, to walk on the path of humanity and Jainism

(Kalyan Magazine – Top magazine of Jainism) Yr.- 79/81. Volume -12/12

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This is the experience of years that the children learning in English medium don't have full understanding of Gujarati language. Gujarati discourses pass over their heads; even they feel Gujarati books boring. This is the condition of whole new generation. The age of cultivating moral values is being wasted in education and entertainment. This is the great matter of concern for the well-wishers of Shri Jain Sangh. All of them are concerned about how to make children virtuous, cultured, pious and afraid of sin .

Among many solutions, one solution, perhaps most simple and successful, is : tell the children the stories of Tirthankars, ascetics, great men and great women of virtue. All like stories; children like the most. In addition, it is a matter of experience that an inspiring life-character is more effective example than an inspiring preaching. The horrible results of sins and the sweet fruits of *dharma* can be explained in a simple way through stories.

The learned Muniraj Shri Nirvaanbhooshan Vijay understood this thing years ago and started right efforts in this direction. As a result, today 27 books compiled by him have been published. As these stories of Jain history is reaching to people, their demand is ever increasing. New editions of many books are being published.

It is a matter of delight that Munishri is making his contributions in this great *yagna* for familiarizing lakhs of children of Jain families with the best conduct, thinking, philosophy and history of Jain religion. May Munipravarshri continue to get more and more success in this challenging task – this is my heartfelt greetings!

Vijay Mokshrati Suri

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Thanks for Appreciable Letters / Opinions/ Guidance
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1. Pundarik and Kandarik

He who pays homage and bows down to the twenty-four Jineshwaras on Mount Ashtapad attains liberation (Moksha) in that very lifetime. Having heard this from Lord Vir Prabhu, Gautam Swami went to Mount Ashtapad to pay homage to the Jineshwaras. After paying his respects to the Jineshwaras there, as he sat in the outer courtyard, the deity Vaishraman arrived. After paying homage to the Jineshwaras himself, and while listening to the discourse on Dharma, he developed profound faith in the 'Pundarik Adhyayan' as expounded by Gautam Swami. Subsequently, upon completing his celestial lifespan, that deity descended from the heavens and was reborn as Vajraswami. That Pundarik Adhyayan is as follows:

The living being who observes pure self-restraint through the control of mind and speech becomes liberated from sin, just like the sage Pundarik.

The human being who, having attained the path of self-restraint, continuously violates or transgresses it, suffers misery in a wretched state of existence, just like the sage Kandarik.

In the Pushkalavati region of the Mahavideh zone, there existed a city named Pundarikini— a place as magnificent as Devlok. There, King Mahapadma ruled his kingdom with absolute justice and righteousness. He had a virtuous and chaste wife named Padmavati. To this royal couple were born two sons, named Pundarik and Kandarik.

On one occasion, sages arrived at the Nalini Van gardens. King Mahapadma went there to pay his respects to them. The Guru delivered a religious discourse in the following manner:

"In this ephemeral and insubstantial world, there is no true happiness; rather, it is rife with affliction. Yet, despite knowing this truth, people make not even the slightest Purusharth (effort to strive for spiritual upliftment).

In this transient world filled only with disease and suffering there is no happiness. Even while knowing this, the soul often fails to practice the Dharma expounded by the Jineshwaras.

Upon hearing such religious discourse, the King entrusted the kingdom to Pundarik and embraced the wealth of self-restraint. Pundarik then began to rule the kingdom, alongside Kandarik.

Once, Pundarik said to Kandarik, "O dear one! I developed a sense of detachment from this worldly existence a long time ago. Therefore, you should take charge of the kingdom. Just as a sickle is grasped to cut down grass, so too shall I embrace the character of a sickle to sever the accumulated sorrows of this world." Kandarik replied to his elder brother, "O Elder Brother! Why do you speak in this manner,

seeking to cast me into this boundless ocean of worldly existence? One ought to bring happiness to those they hold dear; indeed, virtuous souls are inherently sources of happiness."

"The Jineshwaras— who desire the welfare of all living beings— have described kingship as a gateway to hell and a source of profound suffering."

Hearing this, Pundarik responded, "I harbor not even the slightest interest in the pleasures of the senses." As it has been said:

"O dear one! Regard sensual pleasures as your adversaries; for the senses— which are the very embodiment of poison— cast living beings into the cycle of worldly existence for a long time."

Kandarik replied, "It is the eldest son who bears the burden of the kingdom. Therefore, offer no further objection." Having thus persuaded Pundarik, Kandarik took initiation.

While Pundarik, governing the populace with a sense of duty, experienced the joys of kingship without attachment or desire, Kandarik diligently observed the vows of self-restraint, engaging earnestly in various forms of ascetic austerities and penance.

Once, while practicing the restraint that is akin to the Goddess of Wealth herself, Kandarik, upon observing the royal opulence of a certain kingdom, reflected: "I have renounced my own kingdom in vain; that is why I am compelled to endure such hardships. While it is said that ascetic discipline yields the bliss of heaven and similar realms, such rewards are not immediately visible to anyone; a kingdom, however, is a giver of immediate happiness. I am enduring these physical austerities for no purpose." It has been said:

"Engaging in severe penance and attempting to control the five senses— along with the mind— serves only as a source of extreme suffering for living beings."

Constantly harboring such thoughts— and possessed of a base and ignoble intent— Kandarik began to commit Viradhana (violation) of one-sensed organisms.

Having resolved thus, and desiring to reclaim his paternal kingdom from his brother, Kandarik set out toward his home city. Upon reaching a garden situated near the city of Pundarikini, he hung his ascetic accoutrements upon the branches of a tree and sat down upon the lush green grass. He then sent a message to Pundarik— conveying news of his arrival— through the mouth of a gardener. Thereupon, King Pundarik, filled with joy, came to his brother and bowed reverently at his feet. However, upon observing his brother's ascetic gear hanging from the tree branches, he reflected: "Alas! That a mind so deeply imbued with the spirit of renunciation could engage in such actions— acts involving the violation of Sachitt (sentient life)— is surely nothing but the capricious play of Mohaniya Karma (the Karma of Delusion)." For it has been said:

"Attached one moment, detached the next; consumed by anger one moment, forgiving the next– in this manner, through its playful machinations, Moha (delusion) renders human beings as fickle and restless as monkeys."

"The allure of worldly pleasures holds sway over the wicked men, but never over the virtuous. One may bind a mosquito with a thread, but never an elephant."

At that moment, Kandarik spoke, declaring: "I am no longer capable of observing the vows of restraint. Therefore, give me the kingdom." The king said, "Earlier, you stopped me from taking a vow of abstinence, and you practiced restraint. Now, if you desire to take the kingdom, we will exchange the kingdom and restraint." The king then accepted the symbols of initiation – the Rajoharan and Muhapatti, and Kandarik accepted the royal symbols, the umbrella etc.. Then, the sage Pundarik, who had no other company, went on a Vihar. After Kandarik received the kingdom, his servants laughed at him for eating too much food. He decided to punish those who were laughing at him. Due to his karma, Kandarik contracted Visuchika (disease of dysentery) that very night. Despite his servants' medication, he did not recover. Enraged, Kandarik thought, "These servants and secretaries are looking for a way to kill me. If I am cured of my illness, I will throw everyone into the fire pit and take their lives." Thus, Kandarik, engaged in Raudra meditation, died that very night and went to the seventh hell. It is said that -

Aartdhyan leads a living being to the Tiryanch gati (animal state), Raudradhyan leads to hell, Dharmadhyan leads to Deva gati, and Shukladhyan leads to Moksha (salvation).

Pundarik, who had himself adopted restraint and desired to follow pure restraint as per Jineshwar's teachings, decided to go to his Guru and receive self- restraint from his hands and follow pure self- restraint. While on his way, Pundrik obtained rough food from someone's house, ate alone, and slept on a haystack in a village. Pundrik, who was suffering from cold at night and sudden pain, thought that he was unfortunate that he had not paid obeisance to his Guru, and hence this self-control would also be of no use. If I go to the Guru, I shall attain pure self-restraint by following the path prescribed by him." Thereafter– having sought forgiveness from all subtle and gross living beings– upon the completion of his lifespan, he attained the Sarvarthasiddh Viman (a celestial abode). For it has been said:

"The aggregate of karmas– which a human being cannot exhaust even by performing intense asceticism over millions of lifetimes– is utterly destroyed in a mere moment by taking recourse to the attitude of equanimity."

The story of Shri Pundarik and Kandarik within 'Auspicious and Inauspicious Sentiments' concluded.



2. Keshi Ganadhar

Any being who renounces the arrogance born of caste, lineage, wealth, and worldly gain attains happiness in liberation, just like Keshi Ganadhar.

When Lord Vir Prabhu arrived in the city of Amalkalpa, the deity Suryabh bowed before the Lord and submitted: "O Lord! Today, I wish to present a divine theatrical performance before Shri Gautam Swami etc. sages. Therefore, I humbly request your permission." To this, the Lord neither gave an affirmative reply nor a negative one. Turning his back toward the northeast corner, the deity utilized his right and left hands to miraculously manifest a host of gods and celestial nymphs (Apsaras). With divine splendor—displaying feats impossible in the human realm—he performed dances and dramas across all eight directions. Having thus presented his performance, the deity bowed before the Lord and returned to the Devlok. Thereupon, Gautam Swami bowed before Lord Vir Prabhu and asked: "O Lord! Who is this deity? How did he attain Right Faith (Samyaktva)? And through the practice of which religious virtues did he acquire such divine powers?" Lord Vir Prabhu replied: "This soul was originally destined for the hell realms; yet, through the spiritual guidance and awakening provided by a Guru, he attained the Devlok . His life story is as follows:

In the city of Shvetambi, there reigned a king named Pradeshi; his wife was named Suryakanta, and together they had a son named Suryakant. A minister named Chitra—who was ever obedient to King Pradeshi's commands—traveled to the city of Shravasti for a certain task to meet King Jitshatru. Upon his arrival there, he received news that Keshi Ganadhar—the chief disciple of Lord Parshvanath, who bore the responsibility of the Gachchh and was endowed with the four forms of spiritual knowledge—had arrived in the city. Hearing this, the minister proceeded to pay his respects and offer salutations to the Guru. There, the Guru delivered a religious discourse in the following manner:

"Through the practice of Dharma (righteousness), one attains birth in a noble lineage, a healthy physique, good fortune, longevity, and strength. A pure intellect, spiritual wisdom, and material wealth are also attained through the practice of Dharma. It provides constant protection against the immense terrors of the jungle-like world. Through the proper practice of Dharma, one attains both Heaven and Salvation (Moksha) ".

Having listened to these and other such religious teachings, Minister Chitra spoke: "O Acharya Keshi! Please grace the city of Shvetambi with your presence to enlighten my master."

The Acharya replied: "In this world, your king is cruel in intellect, averse to the concerns of the afterlife, singularly focused on daring exploits, and prone to anger; how, then, is he a fit candidate for spiritual instruction?"

Hearing this, Chitra responded: "There are other wealthy individuals in our city— men who consistently offer hospitality, respect, charity, and affection to ascetics. How could it be impossible to give preaching to such individuals? Therefore, please come there and, through the power of your religious discourse, rescue my master who is drowning in the ocean of worldly existence." Thereupon, taking into account the prevailing circumstances, the Guru acceded to the Minister's request. Subsequently, wandering across the land, the revered Ganadhar Keshi arrived at a garden situated just outside the city of Shvetambi. Upon learning that the Guru had arrived at the garden outside the city, Minister Chitra reflected within his heart:

"If my master were to descend into hell despite my position as his minister, how could I ever discharge the debt of gratitude I owe for his benevolence?"

"Therefore, I must, by any means necessary, bring the King into the presence of the Guru; for just as a physician is the cure for physical ailments, a spiritual Guru is the remedy for the consequences of evil deeds."

Thus, under the pretext of engaging in equestrian sports, the Minister led the King to a spot within the garden— just near the place where the Guru was delivering his discourse. After riding his horse, the King sat down in the shade of a tree to rest and recover from his fatigue. Hearing the profound and resonant voice of the Acharya, the King asked: "O Chitra! Whose voice is that which I hear?" To this, the Minister remarked that the exact source of these words is unclear. Upon hearing this, the King— prompted by his minister— approached the Guru and seated himself before him. At that moment, the Guru spoke in following manner:

"O noble souls! If, having attained this human birth— which stands as lofty as a mountain peak— you become complacent and remain seated in lethargy, how then do you expect to escape this wild forest known as worldly existence?"

How is it that sinful men can sleep so fearlessly at night? For them, this night— which serves as the vehicle leading them toward hell— has become interminably long. In other words, it is this very passage of time, embodied by the night, that will ultimately take them to the hell.

If you refuse to acknowledge the existence of the Soul, Karma, or the Aloka (non-universe) simply because they are imperceptible to the senses, then— by that same logic— you ought to deny the existence of your own grandfather and his ancestors, for they, too, are no longer perceptible to you.

When ascetics speak of supersensory realities in an effort to enlighten others, it is futile to address such discourse to those who accept only direct sensory perception as valid proof. For the devout, the Soul is acknowledged as the true abode of attributes such as desire, happiness, and suffering. It is solely through the manifestation of its inherent spiritual nature (Dharmatva) that the conscious essence (Chaitanyata) of the Soul is substantiated; otherwise, it would remain unsubstantiated (a concept rejected by materialists/atheists).

Having listened to these spiritual arguments substantiating the existence of the Soul, King Pradeshi– a proponent of the materialistic (Nastik) philosophy– said: “Since the Soul is not visible to the eye, it does not exist.” To this, the Guru replied: “The inner conviction that allows one to declare, "I am happy" or "I am suffering," cannot arise in the absence of a conscious subject (Dharmi). Therefore, wherever such a conscious subject exists, there– and only there– resides the Soul.”

The King then responded: 'O Revered One! I once confined a thief inside a completely airtight earthen jar, sealing its mouth firmly with my own hands. After a certain interval, I observed his corpse; it was lifeless and teeming with living organisms. From where, then, did that thief's soul depart? And from where did these other living organisms enter his body? When I ground a second thief into a fine powder and examined it, I perceived no living entity within it. I killed yet another thief by constricting his breath. I weighed him before killing him and weighed him again after his death; at that time, I couldnt discern no difference between the living and the non-living. This observation leads to the conclusion that the soul and the body are not distinct entities.

The Guru replied: "If a man residing inside a sealed, airtight earthen jar blows a conch shell, how can the sound be heard outside? This demonstrates that sound is a material substance– a form of Pudgala (matter)– and matter is inherently corporeal. If even corporeal sound, by virtue of its subtlety, can escape from a sealed, airtight vessel, then why should the incorporeal soul not be able to depart? Just as fire, latent within a piece of Arani wood, remains invisible even when the wood is reduced to sawdust– yet undeniably exists within it– so too did the soul continue to exist within the body of the thief even after it had been ground into powder. Just as there is no difference in weight between an empty leather bag and one filled with air, so too is there no difference in weight between a lifeless body and a body inhabited by a soul. If one cannot discern the distinction between various subtle corporeal objects, then what is there to say regarding the incorporeal soul? O King! Acknowledge the existence of the soul– which is subtle and bound by Karma– and thereby establish yourself firmly in the path of Dharma (righteousness)."

Through the practice of Dharma, one attains birth in a noble lineage, a healthy body, good fortune, and longevity. A pure intellect, knowledge, and material wealth are also acquired solely through Dharma. Dharma provides constant protection against the perils of the world– likened to a dense forest– and shields one from great fears. Through the sincere and proper practice of Dharma, one attains the heaven and, ultimately, liberation (Moksha).

"O King! Instantly cast aside the atheistic views that you have inherited through tradition. Embrace the wealth of true knowledge that now stands before you; what benefit can you possibly derive from clinging to this poverty of ignorance?"

There are indeed many individuals who provide sustenance and care for thousands of people, many people sustain the lives of hundreds of thousands, while countless others

cannot even sustain themselves? All of this is the fruit of past virtuous and sinful deeds.

Having heard such religious teachings, King Pradeshi embraced the twelve vows, which are rooted in Samyaktva (Right Faith). Firm in his vows and diligently observing the duties of a Shravak (lay devotee), the King soon became imbued with a deep sense of detachment (Vairagya).

On one occasion, his Queen, Suryakanta— who had become enamored with another man— administered poison to King Pradeshi in his meal during the Parana (breaking of the fast) on the second day following the Paushadh. Having thus completed his spiritual practice, the King— while reciting the Namaskar Mantra at the moment of his passing— concluded his earthly life and was reborn as a Dev in the Suryabh Viman within the first Devlok. This Suryabh Dev— who possesses a lifespan of four Palyopamas— has now descended here, driven by his devotion, to pay homage to me and to the ascetic monks, and to offer us his spiritual worship. Upon concluding his celestial existence, this Dev will be reborn as a human being in the Mahavideha region; there, having liberated himself from the bondage of all karmas, he will ultimately attain Moksha.

Meanwhile, having paid his obeisance to Prabhu Vir, Gautam Swami set on Vihar to another region. As he arrived at a garden on the outskirts of a certain village, Keshi Ganadhar arrived at a different location within that very same village. Keshi Ganadhar said to Gautam Swami, "O Gautam ! Why does your attire appear in this manner?" In response, Gautam Swami expounded upon the nature of the ascetic conduct prescribed by the twenty-fourth Tirthankar. Keshi Ganadhar, in turn, described the nature of the ascetic conduct and traditions established by Lord Parshvanath. (Readers should refer to the twenty-third chapter of the Uttaradhyayana to gain a deeper understanding of the philosophical discourse exchanged between them.) Ganadhar Keshi— a disciple of Lord Parshvanath who was deeply averse to any division within the Shasan (religious order)— accepted the ascetic code of conduct as expounded by Gautam Swami, adopted the white robes, and, in due course, attained Moksha. It is said:

"There has never been, nor will there ever be, a monk like Keshi Ganadhar. Having uprooted the tree of ego, he cast it aside; and—out of concern that any discord within the Shasan might arise—he agreed with the words of Gautam Swami, who was junior in the monastic hierarchy, and accepted him as his Guru.

(The individual who enlightened King Pradeshi and the one who engaged in dialogue with Gautam Ganadhar were two distinct persons.)

The Story of Shri Keshi Ganadhar Concludes.



3. Karakandu Muni

Upon observing the transient nature of the three worlds, it is a rare and noble soul indeed—much like King Karakandu—who swiftly embraces the path of restraint.

In the city of Champapuri, adorned by the magnificent temple of Shri Vasupujya Swami, reigned a king named Dadhivahan. The King's queen was Padmavati, the daughter of King Chetak. While she was pregnant, Padmavati experienced a peculiar Dohad (pregnancy craving or longing), desiring thus:

"I wish to sit upon the shoulders of an elephant, with the King holding a royal parasol over me, and—adorned in the King's own jewelry—set out for a leisurely excursion."

Overcome by shyness, she could not articulate this craving before the King. However, as her body grew frail, the King eventually inquired into her condition, and she revealed her Dohad to him. Acceding to her wish, the King seated his wife upon an elephant, and—holding the royal parasol himself—led her into the forest. At that moment, seized by a sudden fit and driven by an urge to feed on the Shallaki vegetation found within the Vindhya forest, the elephant abruptly bolted and galloped away toward a distant region. Distraught, the King and Queen wondered, "What are we to do? This elephant shows no signs of stopping!" Spotting a cluster of large banyan trees at a moderate distance, the King instructed the Queen, "Hold fast to a branch of that banyan tree; I, too, shall grasp a branch. If we both manage to hang from the branches, the elephant will continue on its way, and from there, we can make our way back home." As they reached the tree, the King successfully grasped a branch; however, the Queen failed to secure her hold, and consequently, the elephant carried her far away into the distance. Once the elephant had vanished from sight, the King descended from the banyan tree and fell into deep lamentation, overwhelmed with grief over his separation from his beloved wife. Driven by the karmic fruition of past misdeeds, the elephant carried the Queen deep into a desolate, uninhabited forest. As it is said:

When fortune is favorable, remedies for peace are readily suggested ; yet, when fortune turns adverse, those very same remedies serve only to plunge one deeper into calamity.

Blinded by thirst, the elephant, upon sighting a pond, paused to drink. As the elephant quenched its thirst, the Queen slowly and gently dismounted. Then, trembling with fear, she departed from that forest; beholding that wilderness—a place more cruel than the cruelest of beings and more terrifying than the most dreadful of sights—she reflected within her heart:

"Under the dominion of misfortune, a scholar becomes a fool, a warrior is overcome by fear, Chandal (an outcast) assumes the role of a commander, and a king is reduced to a pauper; truly, the misfortune is utterly astonishing.

An object visible in one place one moment appears elsewhere, in a completely different location, the very next. Alas! The manifold workings of this wretched fortune are as fickle (unsteady) as a swinging cradle."

To design us from the 'clay' of our karmic constitution—specifically the Nirman Nama Karma (the Karma of physical formation)—this fortune, much like a potter, spins the 'wheel' of the world using the stick of destiny.

She thought: "Where is that city? Where is my husband? And where is this forest into which I have now wandered? Of what use are reproaches now? No one can escape the grasp of destiny. I have brought this calamity upon myself; whom, then, shall I blame?" Thus, steeling her heart with patience and the resolve of adamant, Padmavati—while reciting the sacred four verses of the Charan Aradhana and rejoicing in the merit of virtuous deeds—undertook the Sagarik Anashan (a vow of limited fasting). Traversing that perilous path fraught with wild beasts, and constantly meditating upon the Panch Parmeshthi Namaskar (the obeisance to the Five Supreme Beings), she eventually arrived at the hermitage of the ascetics. Upon seeing her approach, the ascetic inquired: "Who are you? Whose daughter are you? Whose wife are you? And how have you come to be in such a plight? If you remain within this hermitage, you shall surely attain spiritual tranquility." Hearing this, Padmavati recounted her entire story to the ascetic. That ascetic, with words as sweet as nectar, said to King Chetak's daughter Padmavati to stay right there. Thereafter, Padmavati sustained herself on the fruits she had gathered herself and asked the ascetic: "Where does this path lead?" The ascetic replied, "This is the road to Dantpur; King Dantvakra reigns there. Once you reach Dantpur, you may proceed to Champapuri without fear." Thereupon, Padmavati paid her obeisance to the ascetic, traveled to Dantpur, and went to the Sadhvis (Sadhvis). After paying her respects to the Sadhvis and taking her seat, they asked her, "O Shravika! From where have you come to be here?" Upon being asked this, Padmavati recounted her entire life story to the Prawartini (the head nun). The Prawartini then offered her the following preaching:

"In this world, which is rife with suffering, the semblance of happiness is merely an illusion—much like the delusion of attaining a kingdom in a dream.

Fate — which renders the impossible possible, and causes that which has been accomplished to fall apart—never ceases its relentless course.

Apart from Lord Jineshwar, the scriptures of the Jineshwar, and the monks who have taken refuge in the Jineshwar's path, the rest of the world is as worthless as garbage."

Having heard this preaching and attaining a state of profound detachment, Padmavati immediately embraced initiation. She made no mention of her pregnancy—a condition that would have served as an impediment to her initiation. When her pregnancy became visibly apparent, the Prawartini rebuked her, asking, "Why did you not disclose the nature of your condition earlier? This will bring ridicule upon our Shasan (religious order)." Hearing this, Padmavati replied, "O Revered Mother! Had I

revealed the truth of my pregnancy to you, you would not have granted me the vows of restraint; it was out of this fear that I chose to remain silent." Consequently, the Prawartini kept the nun in a secluded place.

One day, Padmavati gave birth to a son. The Prawartini then declared, "If we keep this child here, it will bring disgrace upon our religious order. However, were we to entrust the child to the care of another, it would only be a sin of perpetuating the worldly existence." Therefore, let's placed the infant outside the city gates. Then, her mind free from all worldly attachments and recognizing the transient nature of this world, Padmavati secretly slipped her jeweled signet ring bearing her name onto the child's finger, and left him in the cremation ground. Upon finding the child abandoned in this manner, a Chandal (an outcast) secretly took him away to his own home. The Chandal presented the child to his wife, who was childless. The Chandal's wife then began to nurture and raise the boy. Padmavati, having witnessed all these events while standing in seclusion, returned to her monastery with tears welling in her eyes. Thus, in the Chandal's household, the boy started growing.

As he played amidst the other children, the boy radiated a regal aura. He stood out in his splendor, much like a precious gem lying amidst a heap of ordinary stones.

While at play—often mimicking the role of a king—the boy would have the other children scratch his body for him. Consequently, he acquired the name 'Karakandu' (meaning 'one whose body is scratched'). Possessing the figure of a king, the six-year-old boy, acting upon his foster father's command, served as the guardian of the cremation ground. Alas, what a cruel twist of fate!

On one occasion, two sages visiting there observed a bamboo thicket and began conversing with one another: "Whosoever cuts this bamboo, leaving four finger-widths at the root while taking only a four-finger-width section from the joint, shall undoubtedly attain kingship." At that very moment, these words spoken by the sages were overheard by the Chandal's son and a certain Brahmin. As the Brahmin, having withdrawn to a secluded spot, began to execute the task exactly as the sages had prescribed, Karakandu arrived on the scene and confronted him: "O Brahmin! Why have you taken my bamboo?" Thus quarreling, the two proceeded to the royal court, where each presented his respective account of the incident. Laughing, the people said to that son of a Chandal: "O son of a Chandal! When you attain kingship, grant this Brahmin a village. Keep this piece of bamboo with you." Thereupon, acting according to the inherent nature of his caste, the Brahmin began to contemplate killing the Chandal's son. Sensing the nature of that Brahmin, and desiring to preserve his life, the Chandal—along with his family—departed for Kanchanpur. There, following the death of the childless king, the ministers—accompanied by five auspicious omens—emerged from the city, circumambulated Karakandu, and performed his royal consecration. At that moment, the citizens raised a resounding chorus of victory chants, and musical instruments began to play. Then, clad in the royal garments brought by the ministers, the boy mounted a horse with the poise and skill of one who

had been trained earlier. As the boy—accompanied by the citizens, like an ocean of affection—was about to enter the city gates, the Brahmin said, "This fellow is a Mleccha!" Enraged, the Brahmins attempted to bar the boy's entry and moved to punish him; however, as the boy was under the divine protection of a deity, fire began to rain down from the heavens. Terrified by this spectacle, the Brahmins cried out: "O Divine One! You alone are the King! You are the King; You are the Brahmin; You are the Acharya of all Ahramas; You are the Embodiment of Glory!" It has been said:

"You are Mahendra; You are Mahesh; You are Vishnu; and You alone are Prajapati. The pure intellect of the Kshatriyas and the very essence of Kshatriya valor radiates brilliantly within You."

One's social class (Varna) is determined solely by one's deeds (Karma), and it is through deeds alone that one's status is elevated or diminished; one's birth into a specific caste—such as that of a Brahmin—is not the determining factor.

For a man whose actions are wholly absorbed in the Parabrahma (Supreme Reality), can he be perceived through his caste as a wicked? In other words—certainly not. One must not disregard this soul, whether it currently resides in hell, in the animal realm, among humans, or among the gods; for at any given moment, it may be dwelling somewhere in the form of a deity.

For this very reason, Trikal Gyani(those who possess knowledge of the three realms of time) declare that through violence, a living being accumulates sin, whereas through non-violence, it becomes liberated from sin.

For us, who remain immersed in the depths of dense darkness, you alone serve as the Supreme Guru; it is solely through the radiance of your brilliance that we are able to attain this knowledge.

In a land devoid of a king, even fire can't burn the offerings of a Yagya; neither the people engage in righteous conduct nor does the rain descend.

If a king—who embodies the essence of all deities and serves as the ultimate protector—fails to nurture and sustain his subjects, how then can those people hope to attain wealth, find a spouse, or even preserve their physical bodies?

A true king is akin to the Sun in his capacity to illuminate and enlighten; akin to Yama (the God of Death) in his power to restrain and punish the wicked; akin to Kubera (the God of Wealth) in his ability to provide sustenance and nourishment; and akin to Fire in his role of purifying through penance and atonement.

O King! Dispel the ignorance that resides within us and thereby purify our souls; for you are like a sacred pilgrimage site—a holy ford capable of washing away the impurities of sin that have accumulated upon your subjects.

Upon being extolled in this manner by the Brahmins, the King—who was consumed by intense envy and malice—declared: "All those who obey my commands shall be

deemed worthy and acceptable to me; however, any Brahmin who defies my orders shall be deemed fit only for execution." Hearing this, the Brahmins unanimously replied, "We accept you as our King." Upon hearing their response, the King issued a further command: "Now, take these Chandals (outcasts) and, through the performance of sacred rites and rituals, transform them into Brahmins." Terrified by this decree, the Brahmins humbly said to the King:

"O King! What you have stated is indeed the truth: the status of a Brahmin is attained solely through the performance of sacred rites and rituals—not merely by the accident of birth within the Brahmin lineage."

For a child of eight years who has not yet undergone these sacred rites is not entitled to be called a Brahmin. It is only after the passage of eight years—and upon undergoing the rites of purification administered by eminent Brahmins—that one is truly recognized as a Brahmin.

"Therefore, O Dev! Do whatever you deem appropriate at this moment; for in the affairs of the world, custom and convention hold supreme authority." Upon deep reflection, the King said to the Brahmins: "Let the Chandals residing in our region of Vatdhan be elevated to the status of Brahmins." No sooner had the King uttered these words than a shower of flowers rained down from the heavens, accompanied by an ethereal voice resounding from the sky: "Victory to the King! Victory to the King!" Acting upon the King's command, the Brahmins thereupon performed the necessary rites of purification, thereby transforming those Chandals into Brahmins. Having thus attained the status of Brahminhood, they came to be revered with exceptional honor by both gods and humans alike. As it has been recounted:

It was King Karakandu—the son of King Dadhivahan—who elevated the Chandals dwelling in the region of Vatdhan to the status of Brahmins.

Thereafter, entering the city amidst grand festivities and having undergone the royal consecration ceremony administered by his ministers and officials, King Karakandu commenced his reign.

Meanwhile, the contentious Brahmin—upon hearing that Karakandu had ascended to the throne—returned to the court and began demanding the grant of a village. The King thereupon instructed his royal doorkeeper to convey the following message to the Brahmin: "O Brahmin! Proceed to the city of Champa; there, in accordance with my royal decree, a village shall be granted to you." Upon reaching his destination, the Brahmin approached the King of Champa and, citing Karakandu's order, requested the grant of a village. At this, King Dadhivahan of Champa thought: "Alas! This King Karakandu is a fool to issue such directives to me." Then, King Dadhivahan said to the Brahmin:

"Just as a fledgling pigeon never dares to take enmity with a falcon—the king of birds, why does this Karakandu—the son of a Chandala, who stands before me as nothing more than a mere foot soldier—is harboring hostility toward me."

You are invulnerable in battle as a messenger and a beggar. I will give you the village after killing Karkandu. Then the Brahmin went and told Karkandu the story told by King Dadhivahan. Hearing this, Karkandu immediately prepared his army and set out for Champa City.

Hearing that Karkandu has arrived, King Dadhivahan prepared the fort and set out to fight with him. He prepared the battlefield for battle. Then, knowing of the fierce battle between the two kings and the slaughter of lives, Sadhvi Padmavati, seeing the husband and son's war, came to Karkandu to stop it and said, "I am your mother, and this King Dadhivahan is your father." Reading the inscription on the gemstone ring, Karkandu recognized Dadhivahan as his father and Sadhvi Padmavati as his mother. Karkandu was overjoyed to see them both. Then, Sadhvi Padmavati went to the city to enlighten the king and informed him of her arrival through her maid. The king arrived and bowed to Sadhvi Padmavati with joy and asked her how she had adopted restraint and what had happened to the fetus. The Sadhvi replied that the one who has laid siege to your fort is your son. Then, in the morning, when the king walked out of the city, his son also came on foot and bowed at his father's feet. After welcoming his son into the city with great ceremony, King Dadhivahan, who had attained renunciation, gave him the kingdom and accepted initiation. Karkandu then became the king of two kingdoms and began to rule the people of Kalinga with justice. The king had many cow farms, among which was a powerful bull, which had injured many bulls with its blow; yet, that bull was exceedingly dear to the King.

Once, the King heard that the bull had died; and by the time he went to see him, he indeed found him dead. Beholding that mighty bull in such a state, the King recited the following verses:

"He whose roar, heard from afar, would send even the most arrogant bulls fleeing in terror—even he, before whom no one could stand their ground, has inevitably met his death.

Alas! This great sinner, Time, ceaselessly creates and then devours both the animate and inanimate realms; yet, this insatiable, 'big-bellied' Time remains forever unappeased.

Through various ways, one may protect many objects from the hands of fools; but against this 'fool' in the guise of Time, there exists absolutely no defense.

The very objects that appear before our eyes today vanish from our sight tomorrow; for this Time—ever fond of such spectacles—plays its games with the three worlds as if they were mere clusters of flowers.

That which, though lacking essence, attains the essence —and which, having attained that essence, eventually reverts to non-essence—how can such an entity, marked by absence at both its beginning and its end, ever attain true reality?

Family, body, wealth, spouse, and all other cherished possessions—all appear to be as impermanent and fleeting as wisps of cotton."

While thus immersed in contemplation—and as his mind, imbued with a spirit of detachment, through the knowledge of Jatismaran (recollection of past lives) recalled his previous existence—the deities appeared and bestowed upon him the ascetic garb and the Rajoharan (ritual whisk) etc.

Renouncing the splendor of kingship—which he deemed as insignificant as a blade of grass—and adopting the ascetic garb bestowed upon him by a celestial being, Muni Karakandu attained the state of a Pratyek Buddha.

Upon observing, within his own cow farm, a white, pure, and majestic bull—distinguished by its well-formed horns—suffering the infirmities of old age, and realizing through spiritual insight that all worldly attainments are inherently transient, King Karakandu of the Kalinga kingdom embraced the path of ascetic discipline.

The Story of Shri Karakandu Concludes.



Halla-Vihalla, Sudarshan Sheth, Shal-Mahashaa, Shalibhadra;

Bhadrabahuswami, King Dasharnbhadra, Royal Sage Prasannachandra and
Yashobhadrasuri.

4. Halla and Vihalla

In this world, any object or event can serve as a means for the awakening of Vairagya (dispassion) in an individual; for instance, Halla and Vihalla attained dispassion upon witnessing the death of an elephant.

Out of deep affection for his sons, King Shrenik gifted the magnificent elephant Sechanak to his two sons, Halla and Vihalla. This act enraged Kunik, who subsequently began subjecting King Shrenik to punishment at the hands of his servants.

One day, as Kunik sat down to eat, his own son urinated into his food platter. Repulsed, Kunik wrinkled his nose and pushed the child away. At that moment, Chellana spoke up: "When you were born, I abandoned you on a heap of garbage because I had experienced ominous dreams. It was your father who retrieved you from there. While you lay amidst the garbage, an insect bit one of your fingers, causing you excruciating pain. To soothe your suffering, your father would place that injured

finger inside his own mouth. Thus, driven solely by paternal affection, he would constantly hold your finger in his mouth. Yet now—look at you—you are subjecting your own father to the brutal lashes of a whip!"

Upon hearing these words, Kunik rose instantly, took a stick in his hand, smashed through the wooden cage in which his father was confined, and contemplating to bring his father out of the cage, he came out. As Shrenik saw his son approaching with a stick in his hand, he thought that his son will kill him. Then, Shrenik consumed a deadly poison known as Talaput. Consequently, he died and was reborn in the First Hell. Subsequently, Kunik's wife, Padmavati, requested the elephant Sechanak from Halla and Vihalla as a gift for her son, Udayan. Terrified, the two brothers fled and sought refuge in the city of Vishala, under the protection of their maternal grandfather, King Chetak.

Thereupon, King Kunik mobilized his entire army and laid siege to the city of Vishala. In the ensuing battle between Chetak and Kunik, thousands of soldiers perished. Mounted upon the elephant Sechanak, Halla and Vihalla began to drive back Kunik's forces; being extremely difficult to subdue, they proceeded to slaughter the enemy soldiers. Witnessing his army being decimated by the two brothers, Kunik secretly ordered the excavation of a trench surrounding his troops, which was then filled with burning embers. Upon reaching the edge of this trench—and despite being urged forward by Halla and Vihalla—the elephant Sechanak (who possessed the supernatural vision known as Vibhanga-jnana) dismounted the two brothers from his shoulders, plunged into the trench himself, and died, subsequently being reborn in the First Devlok. Inspired by this profound detachment, Halla and Vihalla became eager to embrace initiation.

Consequently, Shasan Devi (Guardian Goddess of the Order) lifted them up and transported them to the presence of Lord Vir Prabhu. There, the two brothers formally embraced restraint under the guidance of the Lord. Devoted to the practice of penance as prescribed by Vir Prabhu, Halla and Vihalla eventually passed away and were reborn in the Sarvarth Siddha Vimana (the highest celestial abode).

The Story of Halla and Vihalla Concludes.



5. Sudarshan Seth

Any noble soul who reverently upholds pure Right Faith (Samyaktva) and virtuous conduct—the means to attain the bliss of liberation—ascends to the palace of Moksha, just like Sudarshan Seth.

Situated in Bharat Kshetra—the jewel-like southern region of Jambudvipa—lies the city of Champapuri. There, King Dadhivahan—son of King Ransinh—ruled his kingdom with unwavering adherence to the path of justice. Having successfully accomplished the feat of Radhavedha (piercing the target), King Dadhivahan married Abhaya Devi. Residing in that city was a wealthy merchant (Shreshthi) named Arhaddas, a man of incomparable strength and prosperity. His wife was named Arhaddasi. Both of them diligently practiced the religion expounded by the Jineshwar (the Victorious Ones). Into the womb of Arhaddasi, a soul of immense merit and virtue descended. Arhaddasi remained ever-devoted to the worship of the Jinas and to the steadfast observance of pure Right Faith. In due course, a son was born to them. On an auspicious day—having honored his kinsfolk and bestowed various forms of charity upon supplicants—the merchant Arhaddas named his son Sudarshan. As he grew up, Sudarshan became a profound scholar of the religious scriptures. As it is said:

Just as the Kinshuk flower, devoid of fragrance, holds no true beauty, so too does a man—though endowed with physical charm and youth, and born into a noble lineage—fail to shine if he lacks the wealth of knowledge.

Scholars possess every virtue, whereas the ignorant possess nothing but flaws. Thus, amidst a multitude of a thousand fools, one would struggle to find even a single wise man.

Subsequently, Sudarshan's father arranged his marriage to a maiden named Manorama, the daughter of a prominent merchant. Living a life of religious observance alongside his wife, Sudarshan remained steadfast in his practice of Right Faith (Samyak Darshan). For:

This Right Faith (Samyaktva) is the root of the tree of Enlightenment (Bodhi), it is the gateway to the city of virtue (Punya), the foundation of the palace of liberation and the repository of all forms of wealth.

Just as the ocean is a storehouse of gems, so too is this Samyaktva (Right Faith) the bedrock of all virtues and the vessel containing the wealth of Charitra (Right Conduct); therefore, who would not sing the praises of such Samyaktva?

Deeming his son capable of bearing the responsibilities of the household, the merchant-prince Arhaddas renounced worldly life and embraced asceticism in the

presence of his Guru. Thereafter, Sudarshan became a particularly esteemed figure in the King's court, surpassing even his father in virtue. For it is said:

Just as Agastya—born from an earthen pot—drank up the ocean's waters as if they were merely the contents of a pot, so too does a son occasionally surpass his father in virtue.

There, the King's royal priest—named Kapil—became a close friend of Sudarshan. One day, Kapil's wife, named Kapila, asked him, "O my master! Where is it that you spend your time sitting each day?" The priest Kapil replied, "I sit in the company of my friend, Sudarshan. I sit and converse with him. Do you not recognize him? In physical beauty, he resembles Kamdev (the God of Love); in eloquence, he is like Vachaspati; in intellect, he is akin to the Buddha; in radiance, he is like the Sun; in gentleness, he is like the Moon; in the fierce resolve to sever karmic bonds, he is like Mars; in wisdom, he is like Venus; and in his ability to subdue evil deeds, he is like Saturn. The Creator has fashioned this Sudarshan as a veritable mine of all virtues." Hearing of Sudarshan's virtues from her husband's own lips, Kapila became enamored with him. For it has been said:

Through laughter, gestures, intoxication (of passion), modesty, averted glances, sidelong glances, speech, jealousy, discord, and playful coquetry—there exists no snare or bond in the world like women.

Kapila—a woman of deceitful and twisted intellect who constantly harbored a desire for intimacy with Sudarshan—waited until her husband had gone to another village. One day, she went to the home of the merchant Sudarshan and said, "Your friend has come down with a high fever, and he is calling for you. I have come here specifically to fetch you. Therefore, do not delay; come quickly." Upon hearing this, Sudarshan replied, "I was unaware of this news." Saying this, he abandoned all his tasks, rose immediately, and went to his friend's house. As Sudarshan proceeded deeper into the interior parts of the house, Kapila went behind him and locked all the rear doors. Then, stepping further inside, Kapila said, "O Master! For a long time, I have yearned for intimacy with you. This bed, and indeed my very body, are entirely at your disposal. Therefore, indulge in the pleasures of the senses as you desire." When Sudarshan heard this but refused to yield, Kapila attempted to force herself upon him physically; yet, Sudarshan remained completely unmoved, his mind entirely free from any carnal agitation. Sudarshan said, "Has someone misled you? I am, in fact, impotent. You must not reveal this fact to anyone." Hearing this, Kapila replied, "In return, you must also promise not to reveal this shameful deed of mine to anyone." Having thus secured his silence, Kapila released the merchant. Upon returning home, Sudarshan took a solemn vow: "From this day forth, I shall never again visit anyone's home without a specific, necessary purpose."

Once, during the spring season, the King—accompanied by the citizens of the city—proceeded with great pomp and ceremony to the royal gardens for recreation. Queen Abhaya, seated upon a royal palanquin alongside Kapila, also set out for the gardens.

Meanwhile, Sudarshan's wife, Manorama—accompanied by her six sons—also made her way there, and shortly thereafter, Sudarshan himself arrived at the scene. Upon seeing Manorama surrounded by her children, Kapila turned to Queen Abhaya and asked, "Who is this woman? And to whom do these children belong?" To this, Queen Abhaya said that this woman is the wife of Sudarshan Shreshthi, and these are his sons. Upon hearing this, Kapila remarked, "One day, when I put this Shreshthi to the test, he told me that he was impotent." Abhaya replied, "You have been misled and deceived by the Shreshthi." Hearing this, Kapila said, "O friend! If that is indeed the case, then if you can enjoy sensual pleasures with him, I will acknowledge that you are truly clever." Abhaya then declared, "Let me bring this Shreshthi under my control; only then should you believe me."

One day, Abhaya's friend, Pandita, asked her, "What is weighing on your mind?" Abhaya then recounted the entire story to her. Her friend replied, "Mount Meru itself might one day waver, but Sudarshan will never waver from his vow of chastity. To other women, Sudarshan is like a brother." Abhaya insisted, "Bring that Sudarshan Shreshthi here to me, just once." Hearing this, Pandita replied, "I shall bring him here by trickery on a festival day."

Once, during the Kaumudi Festival, the King issued a public proclamation via drumbeat and, accompanied by the residents of the inner palace and the city, departed for the forest. Abhaya, feigning a severe headache, remained behind at home. Sudarshan Shreshthi, recognizing that it was the holy day of the Chaturdashi (fourteenth lunar day), informed the King of his intent and went to a Jain temple to engage in Kayotsarg. Pandita—who was accustomed to regularly bringing a potent idol of a Yaksha deity to the palace in a palanquin amidst musical accompaniment—employed this very ruse. Deceiving the trusted guards of the inner palace with the pretext of the Yaksha idol, she transported Sudarshan Shreshthi—who remained absorbed in his Kayotsarg meditation—to the royal palace, placing him before the Queen. Abhaya then said, "O Sudarshan! Come, enjoy the pleasures of the senses with me." Although Abhaya repeatedly entreated him with sweet words, Sudarshan remained silent. Abhaya then threatened, "If you do not heed my words, I shall take your life!" When Sudarshan Shreshthi refused to heed her words, she cried out in a loud voice: "O people! Come here quickly! This wicked sinner has come here to violate my chastity!" Upon hearing this, the royal guards arrived and took the merchant before the King. Even when questioned by the King, Sudarshan remained silent, fearing that speaking would interrupt his Paushadh vow. Enraged, the King ordered: "Impale this sinner upon the stake (Shuli)!" Consequently, the royal guards paraded Sudarshan throughout the city before taking him to the cremation ground to carry out the execution.

Meanwhile, Manorama, knowing the true character of her husband—and convinced that "my husband could never commit such an act"—entered into a state of Kayotsarg meditation. She took a solemn vow (Abhigraha): "I shall not break my Kayotsarg until this calamity befalling my husband has been averted." Then, just as the royal guards

were about to impale him on the stake, the Shasan Devi (Guardian Goddess) transformed the execution stake into a golden throne. When the King arrived at the scene and beheld the merchant seated upon a golden throne, he was struck with awe and wonder. The Shasan Devi then declared: "If anyone harbors ill thoughts against this merchant, I shall take their life." Thereafter, the virtuous merchant returned to his home amidst great celebration. Inspired by this event and imbued with a spirit of detachment, the merchant embraced the path of asceticism; having annihilated all his karmic bonds, he attained Keval Gyan and ultimately attained Moksha (Liberation). Manorama, too, in due course, embraced initiation; having exhausted the entire accumulation of her karmic matter, she attained liberation.

The Story of Shri Sudarshan Shreshthi Concludes.



6. Shal - Mahashal

By feeling the eternal consciousness, humans attain Keval Gyan like the sages Shal and Mahashal.

There was a beautiful city called Prishtchampa, a city resembling heavenly palaces. King Shal ruled the earth with justice. His younger brother, Mahashal, was the crown prince. Previously, Shal and Mahashal's father had married his daughter, Yashomati, to King Pithar of Kampilya. Through this virtuous act, they had a son named Gangali.

Meanwhile, Shri Vir Prabhu, radiant like the sun, arrived at the garden called Subhubhag in the city of Prishtchampa, enlightening the entire world with his words. The deities then constructed a Samavasaran (congregation) three yojanas across, using silver, gold, and gemstones. Shri Vir Prabhu sat on the throne to preach the Dharma. At that time, both brothers Shal and Mahashal came there to listen to the Dharma. Lord Vir began preaching the Dharma in his Yojana-traveling voice, enlightening all beings. Because -

Gods and goddesses, men and women, Bhils and Bhil women, and Tiryanth and Tiryanthi, all understood the Lord's words in their own languages.

Just as the number of the sky way, the milky way (Aakash Ganga), the waves of a snake, and the dust particles of the Ganges River cannot be counted, similarly, a person desirous of Dharma should practice so much Dharma that the evidence of that Dharma cannot be counted, and by doing so much Dharma, he should attain fulfillment.

Wise men should take the opportunity to practice Dharma and should not delay in practicing it, for when Lord Rishabhadev arrived in Takshashila, Bahubali thought to

himself, "I shall go to offer my morning salutations tomorrow," and consequently, he was deprived of the opportunity to pay his respects.

Intoxicants, sensual pleasures, passions, slumber, and idle talk (Vikatha)—these are cited as the five forms of spiritual negligence. Through these five forms of negligence, the soul wanders endlessly within the arduous cycle of worldly existence.

Just as fire is never satiated by grass and wood, and the Ocean of Salt is never filled by thousands of rivers, so too is the soul never truly satiated by the pleasures of sensual gratification. One should earnestly and correctly practice the path of righteousness before old age sets in, before the body becomes afflicted by disease, and before the senses begin to fail.

Having listened to such religious preaching and attained a state of spiritual detachment, Shal spoke to Mahashal: "You must assume the burden of the kingdom, for I desire to embrace the ascetic life. To me, the pleasures of kingship now appear as insignificant as a blade of grass; for the pursuit of a kingdom leads ultimately to the torments of hell." Hearing this, Mahashal replied, "I, too, harbor the very same desire as you! O Brother, by handing the kingdom over to me, you seek to cast me into the depths of hell, while reserving the bliss of liberation solely for yourself—you wish to inflict the agony of hell upon me! What manner of brotherly love is this?" It has been said:

Neither a physician, nor medicine, nor a father, brother, or beloved son; neither a family deity, nor a mother bound by ties of affection; neither wealth, kinsmen, or attendants; neither physical strength, nor even the gods or demons—none possess the power to restore a life whose allotted span has reached its end.

If a soul, with a mind focused in perfect concentration, embraces Pravajya (the ascetic life) and faithfully observes its vows for even a single day, that soul attains liberation; and should it not attain liberation, it is assuredly reborn as a Vaimanik Dev (a deity in the heavenly realms).

Thus conversing with one another, and sharing a mutual desire to embrace the ascetic life, the two brothers summoned their sister's son, Gangali—along with his parents—from the city of Kampila. Thereafter, amidst great festivities, King Shal—accompanied by Mahashal—installed Gangali upon the throne of their kingdom. Subsequently, Shal and Mahashal observed the Ashtanhika festival at a Jain temple, distributed wealth across the seven meritorious fields, and then embraced the path of asceticism under the guidance of Lord Vir Prabhu. Thereafter, while continuously observing their vows in the presence of their Guru—and remaining ever-diligent in penance, religious rites, and spiritual practices, as well as in the study of the Agamas (scriptures)—both brothers attained the status of Bahushrut (profound scriptural scholars).

On one occasion, Lord Vir Prabhu dispatched Gautam Swami—accompanied by Shal and Mahashal—from Rajgrih to Champapuri to spiritually awaken Gangali. Upon

arriving in Champapuri, Gautam Swami took up residence in a garden. Gangali, accompanied by his parents, came there to pay his obeisance to Gautam Swami and the two brothers, Shal and Mahashal. It was then that the following religious discourse was delivered:

"This life is as transient as the crimson hues of the twilight sky and as fickle as a drop of water; furthermore, this youth is as swift and fleeting as the current of a river. Yet, O living soul! Why do you not awaken to this reality?"

"Wealth is as restless and unstable as the ripples on water; youth lasts but for three or four days; and one's lifespan is as momentary as the clouds of the autumn season. Therefore, O noble souls! Of what use is wealth to you? Instead, practice that flawless and praiseworthy religion."

Having heard this religious discourse from Gautam Swami, King Gangali—filled with a spirit of renunciation—installed his own son upon the throne and, together with his mother Yashomati and father Pithar, embraced the ascetic life. Thereupon, Gautam Swami remarked, "You have indeed taken initiation; however, you must observe these vows with absolute purity, for without pure asceticism, there can be no liberation. Some individuals take initiation with the courage of a lion, yet observe their vows with the timidity of a jackal. Conversely, some individuals embrace the ascetic path with the cowardice of a jackal, yet observe their vows with the valor of a lion. Some individuals, adopting a discipline akin to that of a jackal, observe their vows in the manner of a jackal. Others, becoming as courageous as a lion, accept initiation and practice pure self-restraint with the valor of a lion. Therefore, you should cultivate moral conduct with such diligence and care that the Goddess of Liberation comes to rest within the very palm of your hand.

If a soul, with a mind focused and undivided, embraces the ascetic life and observes its vows for even a single day, that soul attains liberation (Moksha). And if it does not attain liberation, it is certain to be reborn as a Vaimanik Dev (celestial being). "

Thereafter, as Gangali Pithar, Yashomati, Shal, and Mahashal walked alongside Shri Gautam Swami, they began to engage in the following spiritual contemplation:

The soul is born alone, and the soul dies alone; likewise, the soul performs religious duties and spiritual practices in absolute solitude. With whom does the soul journey to the heavens or to the hells? It means: with no one at all; it travels entirely alone.

Those deluded individuals who cling to their bodies, sons, homes, and possessions—claiming "these are mine, these are mine"—are ultimately compelled to abandon them all, only to drown in the deep and turbulent ocean of worldly existence (Bhavasagar).

Since the soul is recognized as distinct and separate from the body, why then do the wise—those who truly comprehend the ultimate reality—continue to regard their homes and material possessions as their own?

Family members, wealth, grains, and all such material things are merely sources of suffering; the person of misguided intellect who identifies the body as their true self inevitably accumulates karmic bonds.

A wise individual, having accumulated Dharma, ascends to the heavens. Conversely, another—having personally accumulated sinful karma—is reborn in the abysmal depths of hell, a veritable mine of suffering.

Those who renounce this transient and insubstantial world attain the true abode: the home of Liberation. Therefore, O Soul! Abandon your attachment to your worldly home, for in the end, only Dharma can serve as your true refuge.

As they thus engaged in this profound spiritual contemplation, in due course, Keval Gyan emerged in them. When they went to pay homage to Lord Vir Prabhu, Gautam performed three circumambulations; however, Shal, Mahashal, and their companions did not. Thereupon, Gautam Swami instructed them, saying, "Perform three circumambulations around the Lord and offer your obeisance."

After paying homage to the sacred shrine, the five of them entered the assembly of the Kevalis (Enlightened Ones). At that moment, Gautam Swami once again urged them, "Offer your homage to the Lord."

Then Lord Vir Prabhu spoke: "O Gautam! Do not commit any act of disrespect toward the Kevalis." Gautam Swami replied, "Where have I shown any disrespect toward the Kevalis?" Lord Vir Prabhu then revealed, "These individuals—Shal, Mahashal, and the others—have attained Keval Gyan." Thereupon, Gautam Swami—who had himself initiated these Keval Gyanis—offered them his reverent homage with deep devotion, while simultaneously reproaching himself. Subsequently, Gautam Swami said to Lord Mahavir Prabhu: "O Lord! I am truly unfortunate; whomever I initiate attains Keval Gyan, yet I myself remain devoid of it." The Lord replied, "Do not despair; you, too, shall attain Keval Gyan. Whosoever, utilizing their spiritual powers (Labdhi), travels to the sacred shrine of Ashtapad to pay homage to the twenty-four Jineshwaras residing there, shall attain the wealth of Keval Gyan within that very lifetime." Hearing these words from Lord Vir Prabhu, Gautam Swami traveled to Mount Ashtapad, paid homage to the twenty-four Jineshwaras, and—after spiritually awakening fifteen hundred and three ascetics—initiated them into the monastic order. Through the merits of taking a meal of Kheer (sweet rice pudding), beholding the divine assembly (Samavasaran), and gazing upon Lord Prabhu Vir, those monks attained Keval Gyan. Meanwhile, Shal, Mahashal, etc.—upon the completion of their lifespans—attained the supreme state of Liberation (Moksha).

The Story of Shri Shal and Mahashal Concludes.



7. Shalibhadra

Any living being who, even once, offers pure alms to ascetics with sincere devotion attains boundless wealth, just like Shalibhadra.

Deluded people compete for worldly pleasures, whereas the wise strive for liberation—free from attachment and aversion; this is how the blessed Shalibhadra understood the nature of things.

In the city of Rajgrih—situated in the central region of Bharat, within the southern half of Jambudvipa—King Shrenik reigned with justice and righteousness. His chief minister was a Shreshthi (wealthy merchant) named Gobhadra. Gobhadra had a wife named Bhadra, who adhered to pure moral conduct.

One day, after seeing a rice field in a dream, Bhadra subsequently gave birth to a son. Because she had envisioned a field of Shali (rice) in her dream, the child was named Shalibhadra. Upon reaching the age of eight, his father ensured that he mastered all the arts and sciences. For it is said:

"He who fails to acquire knowledge in the first stage of life, fails to earn wealth in the second, and fails to practice righteousness in the third—what, then, shall he do in the fourth?"

In due course, as the merchant's son Shalibhadra attained the bloom of youth, his father arranged his marriage to the thirty-two daughters of prominent merchants. Living in a home as magnificent as a Dev Viman (celestial palace), and enjoying worldly pleasures with his wives, Shalibhadra remained utterly oblivious to the passage of time—which was slipping away in vain. Just as Indra, the King of Gods, experiences bliss in the heavens amidst the celestial nymphs, so too did Shalibhadra was experiencing such supreme happiness.

One day, the merchant Gobhadra experienced a profound sense of detachment from the world (Vairagya). Consequently, he sought initiation from Lord Vir Prabhu diligently observed the vows of restraint, embraced Anshan (fasting unto death) and ultimately after his death, he became a deity. Due to Shalibhadra's great fortune, that deity, deeply in love with his son, daily gifted divine jewelry and other items from the Devlok to his son and his wife Bhadra.

The smell of the human world travels up to four hundred to five hundred yojanas, but it does not bring the gods to earth. However, during the five Kalyanakas (auspicious events) of the Jineshwaras, the gods come to earth through the influence of the penance of great ascetic sages and the love of their past lives.

Meanwhile, in the city of Rajgriha, merchants came to Shrenik with gem blankets to sell. When the king asked the price of the gem blanket, the merchants quoted a price

of one lakh twenty-five thousand gold coins. Hearing this, the king said, " With one lakh twenty-five thousand gold coins, one could buy many horses. Therefore, I will not buy such gem blankets." Then the merchants went into the city to sell the gem blankets. Upon learning of the gem blanket's nature, Queen Chellana said to the king, "My master! Please buy a gem blanket for me." Thus, the queen insisted. The king then summoned the same merchants and asked for a gem blanket worth one lakh gold coins. They said they had already given all the gem blankets to Bhadra for one lakh gold coins each. Hearing this, the king sent a servant to Bhadra to ask for the gem blanket worth one lakh gold. The servant asked Bhadra to give the gem blanket for one lakh gold coins. Bhadra then replied, "I had sixteen blankets cut into two pieces each and given them to Shalibhadra's thirty-two wives. They had wiped their feet with the pieces and thrown them in the garbage bin. How could I return those pieces?" So he sent the servant back to inform the king. The servant told the king what Bhadra had said. Hearing this, the queen said, "These merchants are excellent, whose wives use such gem blankets."

If Lakshmi (wealth) is not useful for enjoyment, then what is the use of such Lakshmi, which is as fickle as the speed of a river, the ears of an elephant, and the flag? It is said that -

Life is like evening melody and bubbles of water, she is as fickle as a drop of water, and youth is like the speed of a river, yet you are a sinful creature! Why don't you attain enlightenment?

Wealth is as unstable as waves of water, youth is for three or four days, and life is like autumn clouds, so what will you do with wealth? Follow the path of Dharma, free from slander.

Then, wishing to see Shalibhadra, Shrenik sent his servant to summon him. When the servant told Shalibhadra the king's orders, Bhadra herself came to the king and requested, "

O King! My son does not go out anywhere, so please come to my courtyard today and purify my house.

Surprised King Shrenik said Bhadre! I will definitely come to your house to see Shalibhadra. Hearing this Bhadra said please wait for a while, saying this she came home and got pictures of unique elephants, horses, banana trees etc. painted in her house near Gobhadra Dev, got unique designs of special and unique divine clothes etc. decorated and shops decorated on the highway from her palace to the king's palace and called the king. Then the king came out of his palace and beholding the splendor of the unique decorations of shops done at various places on the highway and at various places gold, sapphire, gemstones, peacocks and pearls, and the decorative arches adorned with auspicious symbols, jewelry, and divine fabrics, and observing all directions, which were permeated everywhere with divine fragrances, the King arrived at Bhadra's residence. After seating the King upon a divine throne on the fourth floor,

Bhadra ascended to the seventh floor and addressed Shalibhadra, saying: "Shrenik has come here to see you." Upon hearing this, Shalibhadra replied: "O Mother! Simply purchase whatever provisions have come." Bhadra then responded: "This is not a grocer from whom provisions can be purchased with money; rather, he is Shrenik—the King of the land of Magadh and the protector of all its subjects." Hearing these extraordinary words from his mother, Shalibhadra reflected with a heavy heart: "Woe unto my existence that there is yet another master above me!"

"I have had my fill of pleasures that are subject to the will of others. Now, I shall embrace the supreme path of spiritual conduct at the lotus feet of Lord Vir Prabhu."

Harboring these thoughts, and out of respect to his mother's wishes, the delicate-bodied Shalibhadra reached to the King and offered him a respectful salutation. The King embraced Shalibhadra and seated him upon his lap. Just as butter melts upon contact with fire, so too did Shalibhadra's body react to the King's touch; observing him drenched in perspiration, the King inquired: "Why does he appear so soaked in sweat?" Hearing this, Bhadra replied: "His father, having embraced the path of spiritual discipline, has ascended to the celestial realm. From there, out of affection, he fulfills every desire of both my heart and his. Consequently, my son is distressed by the scent, clothing, and blood etc. of other human beings; therefore, please release my son." Thus released by the King, Shalibhadra ascended back to the seventh floor—much as a soul liberated from the bonds of karma ascends to the state of ultimate liberation.

Thereafter, Bhadra bathed the King using divine, fragrant waters. While bathing, the ring slipped from the King's finger and suddenly fell into the stepwell. Having completed his bath, the King looked around anxiously, remaining in a state of distress until—at Bhadra's command—a maidservant pointed out the ring that had fallen into the well. The King then compared his own ring with the one Shalibhadra had previously cast into the stepwell during his bath, observing: "The luster of my ring is like that of a glowing ember, whereas the radiance of his ring is like that of a precious gem. The value of my ring is akin to a mere mustard seed, while the worth of his ring is comparable to Mount Meru." Upon witnessing this, the King inquired, "To whom do these rings belong?" The maidservant replied, "These ornaments belong to Shalibhadra and his wives; the jewelry they discard daily is cast into this very place. Every member of Shalibhadra's family adorns themselves daily with fresh ornaments bestowed upon them by the deity Gobhadra." Thereafter, Bhadra served the astonished King a divine meal and adorned him with exquisite jewelry. Reflecting upon this, the King thought, "How vast is the difference between my own comforts and the luxuries enjoyed by him!" Subsequently, dwelling upon the sensual pleasures and opulence of Shalibhadra, the King returned to his own palace.

Meanwhile, having learned of the arrival of the revered Guru Shri Dharmaghosh, Shalibhadra proceeded to his presence and paid him a humble and reverent obeisance. Thereupon, the Guru delivered the following religious discourse:

"Even a man whose home is dilapidated and riddled with rat-burrows; whose clothes are infested with lice; whose bed is swarming with bedbugs; whose body is racked by disease; whose food is coarse and unpalatable; who bears the heavy burden of earning a livelihood; whose speech is harsh; and whose wife is ugly—even such a man, in his utter delusion, does not renounce his attachment to domestic life."

"Deluded individuals harbor the belief that material wealth and prosperity are bound to come their way—be it today, tomorrow, or the day after; yet, people fail to perceive the precious span of life slipping away from them, just as water held within cupped palms inevitably slips away, drop by drop."

Those who steadfastly observe the discipline of pure self-restraint with reverence always hold the Devlok and the wealth of liberation(Moksha) within the palms of their hands.

Having heard these teachings, Shalibhadra declared, "I shall seek my mother's permission and then embrace the wealth of self-restraint under the guidance of Lord Vir Prabhu." Thus, with a heart imbued with the spirit of renunciation, Shalibhadra bowed to his Guru and returned home. With folded hands, Shalibhadra addressed his mother: "Mother, I have listened to the sacred discourse on Dharma delivered by Shri Dharmaghosh Suri. Consequently, I wish to embrace the path of self-restraint; I humbly request your permission to do so." Bhadra replied, "My son, your body is exceedingly delicate; the observance of monastic vows is an arduous undertaking. Your body will not be able to endure such physical rigors."

Shalibhadra responded, "Mother! Those delicate individuals who lack the fortitude to endure the hardships of initiation are, without a doubt, cowards."

"Just as an infant, sucking its own thumb, has the illusion that it is being breastfed, so too do living beings harbor the illusion of finding true happiness within this transient and insubstantial world."

Having thus convinced his mother through these compelling arguments, Shalibhadra began to renounce his one wife each day upon enlightening them and spend his vast wealth in the seven fields of merit. Meanwhile, Shalibhadra's younger sister, while assisting her husband Dhanya with his bath, began to shed tears from her eyes. Sensing the teardrops falling upon his shoulders, Dhanya asked, "My beloved, why are you weeping?" His wife replied, "My brother Shalibhadra, intent upon embracing the initiation, is renouncing one of his wives each day. It has caused these tears to flow from my eyes." Dhanya retorted, "Your brother is utterly devoid of true inner strength." His wife challenged him, "If you truly possess such strength, then why do you not renounce your wives?" Stung by these piercing words, Dhanya declared, "From this day forth, I shall have no further conjugal relations with you." Perceiving his mind to be eager to embrace initiation, all those distressed wives addressed their husband, Dhanya, saying: "O Lord! This wife is merely deluded; that is why she is speaking such incoherent nonsense. It is not befitting for you to act in this manner, as

if you were utterly devoid of all worldly attachment." Then Shalibhadra's sister spoke up: "O Master! Whatever I may have uttered out of delusion, please forgive this transgression of mine. From this day forth, I shall never commit even the slightest offense; indeed, noble souls such as yourself ought only to bestow their grace upon humble beings like us. It is not appropriate for exalted men like you to act in such a way. If you choose to embrace restraint then:

We shall all follow in your footsteps; for to a woman, the renunciation of her husband is an act of supreme difficulty to endure." As she spoke these words, Prince Dhanya began to regard her with the utmost admiration and reverence.

Thereupon, Dhanya rose, approached Shalibhadra, and said: "O Shalibhadra! Why do you act like a coward, renouncing your wives one by one? I have renounced all my wives simultaneously; now, let us both embrace the ascetic life together." At that very moment, Lord Vir Prabhu arrived upon Mount Vaibhargiri. While Shalibhadra was still in the process of renouncing all his wives, Dhanya performed acts of charity and, with deep reverence, received initiation at the lotus feet of Lord Vir Prabhu. Upon hearing that Dhanya had embraced the ascetic life, Shalibhadra, too, sought and received initiation in the presence of Lord Vir Prabhu.

Constantly wandering in the company of Lord Mahavir Swami, both ascetics—Dhanya and Shalibhadra—gradually attained the status of Bahushrut (profoundly learned in the scriptures).

Having observed rigorous penance such as fasting for one, two, three, or four months, the two ascetics would return from the outskirts of the city, pay their obeisance to Lord Vir Prabhu, and listen to his sacred discourse on the Dharma.

Born within the realm of human existence, into the human species, of high lineage, possessing a handsome physique and a body free from all disease, longevity, keen intellect, the opportunity to listen to religious teachings, the capacity to grasp them, faith, and self-restraint—these are indeed rare treasures in this world.

One day, as they set out to seek alms for their Parna (the breaking of a fast) following a month-long penance (Masakshaman), Dhanya and Shalibhadra bowed down before Lord Vir and asked, "O Master! At whose hands shall our Parna take place today?" The Lord replied:

"O noble Shalibhadra, leader of the ascetics! Today, your Parna—together with Dhanya—shall soon be accomplished at the hands of your own mother."

"Dhanya and I, Shalibhadra, harbor that same desire." Having thus expressed their wish to the Lord and offered him their obeisance, they entered the city to seek alms.

Endowed with virtues such as forgiveness and patience, the two ascetics—Dhanya and Shalibhadra—arrived at the doorstep of Mother Bhadra's home, appearing as complete strangers; indeed, Mother Bhadra herself failed to recognize them. Deeply absorbed in the contemplation, "Today, I shall offer my homage to Lord Vir Prabhu, as well as to

the ascetics Shalibhadra and Dhanya," Mother Bhadra did not even recognize her own son, Shalibhadra, who stood right before her. After waiting but a moment, the two ascetics departed from that house and proceeded toward the city's main gate.

Meanwhile, an elderly woman entering the city carrying a pot of curd caught sight of Shalibhadra; at that very instant, milk began to flow spontaneously from her breasts. Overjoyed and filled with deep affection, the elderly woman offered Shalibhadra as much curd as he desired. Thereafter, returning to the feet of Lord Vir, Shalibhadra—the son of Mother Bhadra—performed the Iriyavahi ritual (a purification rite) and, with folded hands, addressed the Lord: "O Master! You had foretold that my Parna would take place at the hands of my mother; why, then, did it not come to pass?" The Lord replied: "What I foretold remains the absolute truth."

In a previous life, in a town called Shaligram, there lived a widow named Dhanyaa. She had a son named Sangam; following his father's death, the boy earned a living by grazing the villagers' calves. On the day of a festival, seeing kheer (sweet rice pudding) being prepared in every household, Sangam asked his mother for some. His mother replied, "I am poor; how can I possibly prepare kheer?" Hearing this, the boy became extremely insistent in his demand for the kheer and began to weep loudly. It is said that:

A thief, a child, a wicked person, a Brahmin, one who habitually seeks hospitality at others' homes, a courtesan, a cunning fellow, and a king—none of these individuals truly comprehend the suffering of others.

Recalling the wealth she once possessed and her late husband, the old woman began to weep bitterly. Seeing her in such distress, the women living in the neighborhood gathered around and asked her the cause of her sorrow; the old woman then recounted the story of her son's weeping. Moved by compassion, some of the women brought milk, others brought rice, and still others contributed ghee and sugar; one woman even brought a plate for the old woman to serve the meal to Sangam. The mother then prepared the kheer, served the rich, ghee-and-sugar-laden kheer onto the plate for her son, and stepped out to a neighbor's house to attend to some work.

Meanwhile, at that very moment—and by a stroke of good fortune—a ascetic monk arrived at Sangam's home; it was the day he was breaking his Masakshaman (month-long fast). Sangam was overjoyed upon seeing the monk—a worthy vessel of spiritual conduct whose body had become frail from the rigors of asceticism—and he thought to himself:

"Oh! What a worthy recipient—a holy ascetic who upholds the Five Great Vows! Oh! What an excellent offering—this kheer! Oh! What noble sentiments have arisen within my heart! These three blessings are rarely attained by beings of meager fortune. Yet, thanks to the arrival of this monk, today has truly become a grand festival for me!"

Reflecting thus, and with a mind filled with delight and a heart overflowing with joy, Sangam lifted the plate of kheer and offered the entire portion to that ascetic sage. The sage, having accepted the pure food, felt himself truly blessed and returned to his monastery. Later, when his mother returned and looked, she assumed that due to intense hunger he must have consumed the entire kheer himself; she therefore served a fresh portion of kheer onto her son's plate. This time, driven by intense hunger, Sangam ate the kheer until his stomach was full. Consequently, suffering from sudden indigestion during the night, the soul that was formerly Sangam departed from that body and was reborn as Shalibhadra, the son of the wealthy merchant Gobhadra. That very mother from your previous life is the one who offered you curd today.

Upon hearing this account and realizing the ephemeral nature of this worldly existence, Shalibhadra, feeling truly blessed, completed his parana. After seeking guidance from Lord Vir Prabhu, he ascended Mount Vaibhargiri, selected a pristine patch of ground, and undertook the vow of Padapopagaman Anashan (a specific form of ascetic fasting unto death). At that time, Mother Bhadra arrived at the Samavasaran (the divine assembly hall) and, after paying homage to Lord Vir Prabhu, inquired: "O Lord! Why did the blessed ascetics Shalibhadra and Dhanya not come to my home for alms today?" When the Lord recounted the full story of the two ascetics, Mother Bhadra was overcome with grief. She proceeded to Mount Vaibhargiri, and upon beholding them in their ascetic state, she began to weep so profusely that her lamentations moved many others present to tears as well. "Wretched and ill-fated am I, who failed to recognize these two ascetics even when they came to my very doorstep seeking alms! At least look at me now—turn your gaze toward your mother!" Yet, they offered not even a single word in response. Then, King Shrenik intervened, saying, "O Shalibhadra! At least once, turn your face and look upon your mother; for there is no pilgrimage site more sacred than one's own mother." Still, they did not look. Thereupon, King Shrenik turned to Mother Bhadra and said, "O Bhadra! Truly blessed are you to have such a son." King Shrenik spoken these words to console and pacify her. Then Mother Bhadra—accompanied by her daughters-in-law—went back to her home. King Shrenik then returned to his own palace. Thereafter, having firmly established themselves in pure meditation, the ascetics Dhanya and Shalibhadra completed their lifespan and were reborn as deities in Sarvarth Siddha Viman. Subsequently, Mother Bhadra, too, developed a sense of detachment; consequently, she embraced the ascetic path under the guidance of Lord Vir Prabhu, performed intense penance, and ascended to the heavens. From there, she will descend to attain final liberation.

[The Story of Shri Shalibhadra Concludes.]



24. Bhadrabahuswami

Any human being who strives daily for the advancement of the teachings of the Lord Jineshwar attains spiritual knowledge and wealth comparable to that of Bhadrabahuswami and Varahmihir.

In the southern region, in the city of Pratishtanpur, there lived two impoverished Brahmin brothers named Bhadrabahu and Varah. While wandering on his spiritual journey, Acharya Yashobhadrasuri arrived in that city. Bhadrabahu and Varah came to him to listen to his religious discourse.

"All forms of worldly pleasures are transient; it is through these very pleasures that the cycle of Sansar (worldly existence) perpetuates itself. Therefore, strive for true happiness and put an end to the endless cycle of rebirths! If you place your faith in our words, then—by calming the bondage of desire—accumulate within your soul that pure consciousness which has the power to annihilate all worldly cravings (Kam)."

Having listened to this religious counsel, the two brothers returned home and reflected: "To make our human birth truly fruitful, let us embrace the path of self-restraint and asceticism." Having resolved this, both brothers took initiation into the ascetic order. In due course, Bhadrabahu mastered the Fourteen Purvas (ancient scriptures) and became endowed with the thirty-six virtues characteristic of an Acharya (spiritual preceptor). Bhadrabahuswami authored commentaries (Niryuktis) on various scriptures—including 1.Dashavaikalik, 2.Uttaradhyayan, 3.Dashashrutaskandh, 4. Kalpa, 5. Vyavahar, 6. Avashyaka, 7.Suryapragyapti, 8. Sutrakritang, 9. Acharang, and 10. Rishibhashit etc.—and also composed the Bhadrabahavi Samhita. At that time, Arya Sambhutivijaya was also a master of the Fourteen Purvas. Eventually, Acharya Yashobhadrasuri passed away and ascended to the Devlok. Bhadrabahu and Sambhutivijaya, bound by mutual affection, traveled together on their spiritual journey. In time, Varah, too, became a scholar; however, he remained mounted upon the mountain of arrogance" and began demanding the title of Acharya from his brother, Bhadrabahuswami. Bhadrabahuswami said to him: "O dear one! You are indeed a scholar; you are diligent in your spiritual practices, and you possess true insight into the nature of reality—yet, you remain tainted by arrogance, and a monk who is filled with pride is not granted the rank of Acharya (spiritual preceptor)". Varah was displeased by this pronouncement made by Swami Bhadrabahu. For certain monks, even the words of a noble Guru can feel like poison; similarly, for an Abhavya (one incapable of attaining salvation), even the gentlest words can feel like a piercing spike in the ear. Consequently, Varah renounced his initiation, embraced Mithyatva (false belief), and once again adopted the guise of a Brahmin. He then composed new scriptures, such as the Varah Samhita. Varah rose to become a renowned astrologer. He began to cultivate his fame among the people by

claiming: "I began studying the science of Lagna (ascendants) in my very childhood and remained constantly immersed in astrological contemplation."

"One day, I was casting lagnas (astrological charts) just outside the city of Pratishtanpur. I returned to my quarters without having erased the lagnas I had drawn. Later that night, while resting at home, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten to erase the lagnas. I immediately returned to the site to erase them; upon arriving, I found a lion seated right upon the spot where the lagnas lay. Yet, casting aside all fear—and driven by my deep reverence for the lagnas—I reached my hand beneath the lion to erase them. At that very moment, the Sun God manifested before me and spoke: 'O Child! I am immensely pleased by your unwavering devotion to the Lagna and the celestial planets. Ask of me a boon.' I replied, 'If you are truly pleased with me, then take me aboard your celestial chariot and reveal to me the entire astrological cycle.' The Sun God then took me aboard his chariot, revealed the complete astrological cycle to me, and imparted knowledge regarding its motion, measurements, and dynamics. Feeling that my life's purpose had been fulfilled, and having sought the Sun God's permission, I returned to Earth with the sole intention of serving the welfare of the world. Now, I wander the Earth, dedicating myself to the betterment of humanity. The Sun God himself bestowed upon me the name 'Varahmihir,' and I have since attained a position of high honor and reverence among the people." Upon hearing this account, King Jitshatru of Pratishtanpur appointed Varah as his royal priest.

Varahmihir invariably condemned the Shvetambaras, asserting that these Shvetambara monks—much like crows—uttered inauspicious sounds under the guise of delivering religious discourses. Hearing this caused deep anguish to the Shravakas (lay followers). They began conversing amongst themselves, lamenting: "Woe unto our lives! Even while we are still alive, these people are treating our Guru with such disdain."

"Alas! It is truly distressing that Varahmihir—a man of great artistic and intellectual prowess—enjoys the King's favor, yet persists in slandering our Guru. What, then, should be done?" "Even if he is the King's favorite, this entire matter must be brought to the Guru's attention."

Having resolved this, the Jains invited Bhadrabahu Swami. They welcomed him with great pomp and ceremony, and the Guru took up residence in the Upashraya (monastic retreat).

Many wealthy merchants and princes regularly attended his religious discourses. Upon learning of Bhadrabahu Swami's arrival, Varahmihir voiced his strong objections; however, he could not prevent people from attending the Guru's discourses and sermons.

Meanwhile, a son was born in the King's household. The King commissioned Varahmihir to make a birth chart (horoscope) for his newborn son. Varahmihir

predicted that the child would live to be a hundred years old. Delighted by this prediction, the King bestowed lavish gifts and alms. People from all walks of life began flocking to the royal palace to offer their congratulations on the birth of the prince. The King honored Varahmihir with a generous reward of wealth. Seizing the opportunity to disparage the Guru, Varahmihir said to the King: "Everyone has come to your palace to offer their congratulations. Yet, Bhadrabahu Swami—an Acharya who is currently residing here—has not come to offer you congratulations. He ought to be punished by being exiled from the kingdom." Consequently, the King dispatched his minister to inquire of Bhadrabahu Swami: "Why did you not come to the palace?" Bhadrabahu Swami replied, "I shall come on a subsequent occasion." The King then asked, "O Bhadrabahu! Why do you speak thus?" Bhadrabahu Swami replied, "If I were to speak the truth in the King's presence, it would cause him great distress and mental agitation."

Then the King said, "Have no fear; simply speak whatever you know." Thereupon, Bhadrabahu Swami replied, "Seven days from today, during the night, this child will meet his death at the jaws of a cat. I shall return to console you and alleviate your grief over the loss of your son." Upon hearing this, the King ordered that all the cats within the village be driven out beyond the city limits. On the night of the seventh day, the Dhatri (nursemaid) sat upon the threshold of the doorway to breastfeed the infant.

At that very moment, the heavy wooden bolt of the door suddenly crashed down upon the child's head, killing him instantly. The people then remarked, "This Varahmihir is ignorant; it is the Guru alone who possesses true wisdom." Witnessing all this, the King looked upon Varahmihir with disdain. Subsequently, accompanied by hundreds of Shravakas, Bhadrabahu Swami went to the King to offer him solace. There, to help the King overcome his grief, Bhadrabahu Swami recited numerous verses of wisdom. The King then asked, "How did you come to know that the child's lifespan was limited to just seven days? And what is the reason that his death did not occur at the jaws of a cat, as you had predicted?" Bhadrabahu Swami replied, "The tip of the door-bolt (argali)—bears the likeness of a cat's face. I had ascertained the precise moment of your son's birth through the application of subtle, profound intellect; it was through this precise calculation that I was able to determine the duration of the child's life." Following this incident, a despondent Varahmihir began to throw his books on astrology into the water; however, Bhadrabahu Swami intervened and stopped him, saying, "The scriptures composed by the Sarvagyas (Omniscient Ones) contain nothing but the absolute truth; yet, those capable of truly comprehending that truth are exceedingly rare to find." As it has been said:

"There is no mantra without a syllable; there is no medicinal root without healing properties; there is no land without a king to govern it; yet, those capable of truly recognizing them are indeed rare."

In this instance, the reason for Varahmihir's failure to comprehend the truth lay in the arrogance on his knowledge. For arrogance alone is the root cause of ignorance—nothing else. It has been said:

The Lord's grace, youth, wealth, beauty, noble lineage, valor, and erudition—all these are the primary causes of arrogance.

Just then, a Shravak stepped forward and addressed Varahmihir:

"The era of that night—during which worms like you appeared to shine—has now come to an end. For now, the Sun—illuminating all ten directions with its radiant beams—is shining forth. In the presence of this Sun, even the Moon appears as a mere insect; what, then, is your standing?"

Having uttered these words, the Shravak fled, leaving Varahmihir seething with rage. Upon learning of this entire incident, the people condemned Varahmihir, causing him deep distress.

On one occasion, the King asked both Varahmihir and Bhadrabahu Swami: "What significant event will occur here today?" Varahmihir replied, "During the final watch of the day, amidst a rainfall at a specific location, a fish weighing exactly fifty-two pals will suddenly fall within a circular enclosure." Bhadrabahu Swami, however, stated, "A fish weighing fifty-one and a half pals will fall outside that circular enclosure, towards the eastern direction." Later that evening, when the rains suddenly began, a fish—weighing exactly as Bhadrabahu Swami had predicted and landing precisely at the spot he had indicated—fell to the ground. Consequently, Bhadrabahu Swami was accorded great honor, while Varahmihir suffered humiliation. Witnessing all this, the King embraced the Jain faith as expounded by the Jineshwar (the Conqueror). Humiliated and embittered, Varahmihir renounced the world to become an ascetic; yet, while enduring the physical rigors of his penance, he harbored deep malice toward Bhadrabahu Swami until the very moment of his death. Upon dying, he was reborn as a Vyantar (a celestial being of the intermediate realm) having animosity toward the Jain faith. Despite his intense hatred for the Jain monks, he could not inflict any harm upon the monks who were like the impenetrable armor due to their penance. Consequently, he began to act maliciously toward the Shravaks and started inflicting diseases upon every household. The Shravaks expressed their distress—arising from the outbreak of these diseases—to Bhadrabahu Swami, saying, "O Lord! How is it that the Sangh is suffering, even while you—the one revered by the entire world—are present among us?" The Guru replied, "Do not fear. It is none other than Varahmihir who, having died and been reborn as a Vyantar, is tormenting the holy Sangh out of enmity carried over from a previous life." The Guru further reassured them, "Do not grieve; all will be well." Having said this, Bhadrabahu Swami composed the Upasargaharam Stotra—a hymn consisting of six verses—presented it to the Shravaks, and instructed them to recite it daily.

The Shravaks began to recite this Upasargaharam Stotra, rendering the Vyantar utterly powerless to inflict even the slightest harm upon them. Consequently, the disease subsided. Subsequently, the Shravaks began to invoke Dharanendra by reciting this hymn whenever they undertook any task, whether great or small. Observing this, Dharanendra caused the final verse of the hymn to vanish from Bhadrabahu Swami. Even in the present age, the mere remembrance of this hymn serves to pacify and resolve all obstacles. Shri Bhadrabahu Swami—the possessor of the Fourteen Purvas (ancient scriptures)—continued to enlighten and guide spiritual seekers for a great length of time before ascending to the celestial realm. From there, upon the completion of his celestial existence, he is destined to attain final liberation (Moksha).

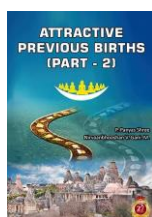
The Story of Shri Bhadrabahu Swami Concludes.



Some Books Edited / Translated / Written By P. Panyas Shree Nirvaanbhooshan V. Gani M.

1.

Attractive Previous Births- Part-2



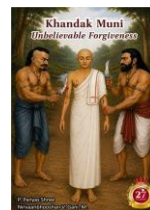
No. of pgs.: 81

Published:2026

This book is a collection of 30 previous births, explained in a lucid manner.

2.

'Khandak Muni – Unbelievable Forgiveness



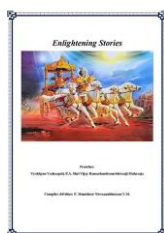
No. of pgs.: 18

Published:2026

To know the height of forgiveness, read 'Khandak Muni– Unbelievable Forgiveness

3.

Enlightening Stories



No. of pgs.: 140

This book is a collection of small stories, narrated by world's best preacher. This book will enlighten your whole life, family, nation, continent & world. How? To get this answer, read 'Enlightening Stories'.

4.

Children's Stories



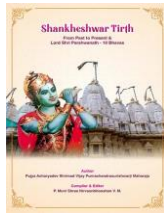
No. of pgs.: 36

Published:2025

This book will inspire children for adopting honesty, generosity, modesty, human values, etc., in their lives. How? To get this answer, read 'Children's Stories'.

5.

Shankheshwar Tirth From Past to Present & Lord Shri Parshwanath – 10 Bhavas



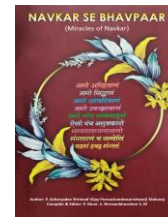
No. of pgs.: 72

Published:2025

How Krishna achieved magical idol of Lord Shri Parshwanath? Why the town was named 'Shankheshwar'? To get the answer and to know about past lives of Lord Shri Parshwanath, read this book.

6.

Miracles of Navkar



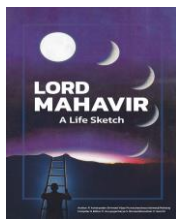
No. of pgs.: 64

Coming Soon

This book is a collection of 16 miraculous incidents. It will help readers to know the magical powers of 'Navkar', in their life also.

7.

Lord Mahavir – A Life Sketch



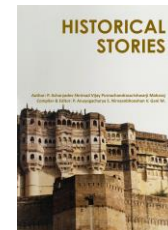
No. of pgs.: 54

Coming Soon

This book is a collection of the main events of 27 Bhavas of Lord Shri Mahavir swami. It will inspire new generation for adopting morality, honesty, human values and Jain religion in their lives.

8.

Historical Stories



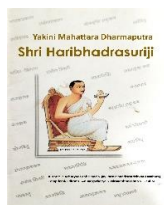
No. of pgs.: 64

Coming Soon

23 historical events are depicted in a very simple and lucid style, which will inspire new generation for adopting moral values.

9.

Shri Haribhadradasuriji



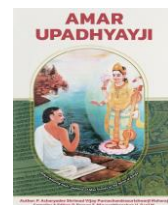
No. of pgs.: 54

Coming Soon

How a brahmin scholar, who hated Jainism, not only became devoted but also the top-most leader of Jainism? To know this, read 'Shri Haribhadradasuriji Maharaj'.

10.

Amar Upadhyayji

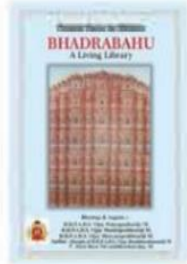


No. of pgs.: 72

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Read this book to know how to become 'World's Best Teacher'.

Books



Bhadrabahu

(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)

This book is a collection of pictorial stories on Acharya Bhadrabahu, to educate children on Jain values and practices for self-development and leading a better life.

No. of Pages: 16

Published: 2023

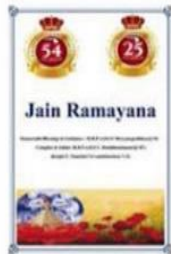


Golden Path Towards Nirvaan

This booklet explains many key terms like 'Dharma', 'Atma', 'Sin', 'Samyak Darshan', 'god', 'guru' etc., and their significance from the point of view of Jain religion.

No. of Pages: 56

Published: 2023



Jain Ramayan

(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)

This book is a collection of small stories on different characters of the era of Lord Ram, from the perspective of Jainism. Reading this book will inculcate high moral and cultural values among the present generation.

No. of Pages: 200

Published: 2023



Maynasundari

(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)

This story book gives knowledge of Jain values to children through interesting pictorial stories on a famous Jain character Maynasundari. Reading this book will cultivate and develop high moral values among kids and teenagers.

No. of Pages: 25

Published: 2023

Books



Chicago Prashnottar

This book Includes Questions and Answers on Jainism for the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago 7U.S.A. in 1893. It will help readers know the eternal truths of Jainism.

No. of Pages: 214

Published: 2018

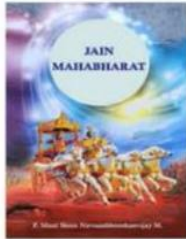


Our Great Persons

This book is a collection of small stories of great Jain persons in order to inspire new generation for adopting morality, human values, Jain religion and culture in their lives.

No. of Pages: 25

Published: 2023

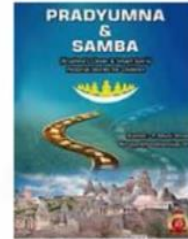


Jain Mahabharat

This book is a collection of small stories on different characters Kaurava and Pandavas, from the perspective of Jainism. Reading this book will inculcate high moral and cultural influencer for present generation.

No. of Pages: 165

Published : 2024



Pradyumna & Shamba

This book is all about Krishna's clever sons - Pradyumna & Shamba. Read this book to know more.

No. of Pages: 20

Published : 2024

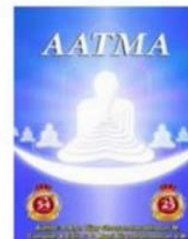


Life Changer

This book will change your life, how? To get this answer, read this book "Life Changer".

No. of Pages: 40

Published : 2024



Aatma

This book gives you knowledge in order to attain moksha (liberation), a human being must acquire self-knowledge (Atma Gyaan or Brahmajnana).

No. of Pages: 120

Coming Soon

About the Compiler

The compiler Puja **Panyas Shree Nirvaanbhooshanvijayji G. Maharaja**, before monkhood was studying in Jai-Hind college, (Mumbai), one of the top most college of India. Though staying in Walkeshwar, one of the richest areas of India, left all the comforts & luxuries, to achieve high level of spirituality. When he was a teen-ager boy, influenced by the western culture started hating, not only Indian cultures & traditions but Jain religion also. He often went to Jain upashray, just to listen & read Jain stories. This also, helped him to give up his dream of going to abroad. Stories became a turning point in his life. After becoming monk, once he was suggested by his preacher, Guru **H.H.P.A.D. Shrimadvijay Hembhushansurisaraji Maharaja**, to make his English powerful.

He was too obedient to follow each & every order of his Guru. Hence, he was given responsibility of giving 'pravachans' to children & teen-agers, during sanskar-shreni in just one year after attaining monkhood. Due to the grace of Guru-Bhagawants, he achieved mastery in English also. He gave many 'pravachans' created several poems e.t.c. in English also. He became able of compiling books & translating pravachan in English. He also helped his Guru M. in translating case papers of sammet-shikharji, Antarikshji e.t.c. He has a mastery of converting hearts of children, teen agers & young stars too. We have also experienced in our life. He brought us, near to Jainism.

We hope this story which is written in simple & lucid language, would help children, teen agers etc. to study Jainism, who are facing language barriers.

Ketanbhai (C.A.), Hemang (C.A.)
Sagar (C.A.), Jinal (C.A.)
Arham. Aarya, Vinaybhai
Devangbhai

