

# HISTORICAL STORIES

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Book Donation: 70/ Rupees.

Publication year: 2025-V.S. 2081

Edition: Third (English) (1st-Guj.; 2nd- Hindi)

Copies: 1000

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**Occasion for publication:** Celebration of Gani-Anuyog Acharya Post of P.M.S. Nirvaanbhoosan V.M.

**Book donated by:** Gurubhaktas of P.A.S. Nirvaanbhoosan V.G.M. & P.M.S. Niraagbhoosan V.M. (Ketan, Devang, Aarya, Arham, Drusti, Ranjan, Bharat)

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## **Publisher's Note**

The literary journey of Suridev begins as soon as the Sun's chariot arrives. When the evening falls and the Sun goes towards the horizon, the pen is forced to stop and Suridev's literary journey takes a pause. We are extremely happy and pleased to publish the book 'Historical Stories' written by such a great writer, accomplished literary creator, P. Acharyadev Shrimad **Vijay Purnachandrasurishwarji** Maharaja in the international language English today as the third edition in front of the readers.

With the holy inspiration of P. Gurudev Shrutraksha Prerak Acharyadev Shrimad **Vijay Yugchandra Surishwarji** Maharaja, Shri Anuyog Acharya Nirvaanbhooshan V. Gani M's Gurubhaktas have taken the advantage of publishing this book on the occasion of **Gani – Anuyog Acharya Post** of Muni Shree **Nirvaanbhoosan V.M**, for which they too deserve praise. We express our heartfelt gratitude to them. 170 books have been written by Pujya Shri out of which this is the fifth English book. If we continue to get such support from the entire Jain community, then it is certain that our literary journey will continue to move forward rapidly.

**L. Panchprasthan Punyasmriti Prakashan, Shankheshwar**

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## ‘Golden Blessings for Nirvaan’

**Mayanasundari/ Jain Ramayana/Bhadrabahu – a living library/ Pradyumna & Shamba**

Publisher: Smritimandir Prakashan Trust, Ghanshyam Park, Anandnagar, Bhatta-Paldi, Ahmedabad-7

Mobile: Dineshbhai – 9426382003/ Ketanbhai – 9820012570/ Devangbhai - 9825031523

Page-44 / 112/ 16. Price Rs. 25 / Rs. 250 / Rs. 25.

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.

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

Guide: H.H.P.A.D.S.V. Purnachandra S.M.

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 16 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

V.S.2081 Mahasud 10, Akota, Vadodara

**Thanks for Appreciable Letters / Opinions/ Guidance**  
**which will give us the most potent force.**

• H.H.P.A.D.S.V Latitshekhar S.M.	• H.H.P.A.D.S.V Punyapaal S.M.
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We have published names of few Jain Acharyas – Monks – Sanghs & libraries. We are thankful to other well - wishers also. We will publish their names in future.

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## 1. Donation from the Heart

The wrath of time had already fallen upon the divine city of Shatrunjay. The divine city was awaiting a saviour. The dilapidated spires of the temples of that divine city were standing, holding the remnants of their identity, ready to crumble. It was as if Shatrunjay had awakened them for creation.

The source of emotion (or 'sentiment'/'feeling') is a wonderful thing. Finally, a "son of a mother" (an idiom meaning 'a brave man' or 'a capable person') emerged who accepted that awakening for creation. His name was Mantrishwar Bahad. He expressed the desire for the reconstruction of the divine city.

The Sangh (a Jain congregation) is such a pilgrimage where many sources of emotion gush out from all directions. These water sources of emotion are like subterranean wells that flow continuously. Mantrishwar Bahad respectfully expressed his intention to the Sangh for the construction work of the Yugadi temple of Shatrunjay.

But who would let go of such a fortunate occasion? Under the patronage of Lord Yugadi Jin, the Sangh gathered and decided to contribute emotionally to the bricks of that new construction.

Leaders from village to village and city to city began to gather under the auspicious shade of Shatrunjay. Mantrishwar [Bahad] stood with a pen and a book. In a short while, a sea of prosperity gathered in that blank book. Many billionaires had gathered under the auspicious shade of Lord Yugadi, and the number of millionaires was also not small. The call for *Uddhar* (renovation) was made, and the collection bag started filling up.

The pages of the ledger were being turned rapidly. The Mantrishwar's pen was recording the donations announced in the assembly.

The community was vast. Sources of donations were emerging from the hearts of individuals and transforming into a sea of prosperity before the Mantrishwar.

Donations, and that too, from the heart! The Mantrishwar seemed to be surveying the assembly as if waiting for a generous person who would donate from the heart. That gaze was not in vain. The Mantrishwar put down his pen and walked out, cutting through the assembly, to welcome a generous person with the sentiment of donating from the heart.

A person representing poverty, dressed in tattered clothes, stood outside, harbouring the desire to donate from the heart into the collection bag for renovation. His name was Bhima.

He used to earn seven *dramaks* (silver coins) with great difficulty by selling ghee for his livelihood.

Where the sources of emotion had created a confluence (*Triveni*) and established a *punyaghat* (sacred bank), a grand desire to put all seven silver coins of his day's earnings into the collection bag for renovation surged within Bhima as he approached the assembly. However, where wealthy individuals comparable to emperors had gathered, who would let a destitute person like him, go in?

Everyone was looking at his money, but the Mantrishwar saw his heart. Taking Bhima with him, Mantrishwar came and stood before the stage.

The entire assembly did not like this behavior of the Mantrishwar. The assembly felt that where oceans of wealth were gathering to undertake the great work of renovation, what could this small stream of water do? But the Mantrishwar needed a donation from the heart. Bhima touched the Mantrishwar's feet and said, "Mantrishwar, where the heavy monsoon clouds are pouring down incessantly, what is the value of two drops! Where wealthy individuals like yourself are overflowing with streams of money, what is the significance of two drops of donation from an ordinary person like me?"

Bhima had only seven silver coins of his day's earnings in his hand, and he was eager to put all seven of those silver coins into the collection bag for '*Uddhar*'. The Mantrishwar took the pen, turned the written pages of the book, and wrote the name of that generous person who donated from the heart on the first line of the first page.

As the pages of the book were being turned, astonishment grew in the assembly. The assembly was seeing Bhima's donation of seven silver coins, while the Mantrishwar was seeing his heart. Mantrishwar clearly perceived the surging ocean of heart behind that tiny donation.

Putting down his pen and book, Mantrishwar stood up. He saw that envy was rising in the eyes of every person sitting in the assembly. Therefore, addressing the entire assembly, he said, "Esteemed members of the Sangh! I have not written the name of this generous person who donates from the heart at the very top to humiliate all of you. The reason for writing the name at the top is different. You are seeing a donation of seven silver coins, but I see the sparkling heart behind that donation. The prosperity which cannot be created by the torrential rain of monsoon clouds, that prosperity can only be created by a drop falling into the mouth of an oyster during the Swati constellation, becoming a pearl. We give millions of gold coins to fill the '*Uddhar*' (renovation) bag; compared to that, these seven silver coins from this generous person are of greater value because this donation is from the heart, and he has dedicated his entire day's earnings. For this reason, even though it is a donation of seven silver coins, being a donation from the heart, the name of this donor has been written first and foremost in the list."

A single drop that falls during the Swati constellation is more significant than extremely heavy rainfall. This perspective was new. The assembly understood this new viewpoint and became silent. Mantrishwar again proclaimed, "Is there any 'son of a mother' (a brave and capable person) who would offer his everything? I am still ready to write the name of such a 'son of a mother' in the first line. If an ocean gives a pitcher of water, it doesn't hold much importance. The value lies with the pitcher that empties itself completely to provide coolness to others."

No one in the assembly could pick up this challenge thrown by Mantrishwar. This was because no one else came forward to surrender everything.

The entire assembly continued to bow to Bhima, who was physically frail but generous at heart. The seat of that generous person, who gave seven silver coins with his hand but the prosperity of seven oceans from his heart, remained at the top in that book. No one could change it. The feeling of surrendering all wealth, like Bhima, did not emerge in others.

※※

## 2. Where There is a Will, There is a Way

When the heart becomes a seeker, it climbs upward by turning the stones in its path into steps. As soon as the desire arises, sighs disappear, and the path appears clear before our eyes.

Maharaj Siddharaj had today become a lover of Shatrunjay. The desire for pilgrimage had awakened within him.

Siddharaj was a devotee of Shiva, a worshipper of Shiva. He had set out from Patan for a pilgrimage to Someshwar. After having *darshan* (sacred viewing) and performing worship at Someshwar, while returning towards Patan, he proceeded towards Girnar and Shatrunjay. At that time, Girnar and Shatrunjay were considered like auspicious marks on the forehead of the earth. Many pilgrims would come there with devotion and travel from place to place, singing praises of those pilgrimage sites.

The sound of those songs had also influenced Siddharaj's ears, and as soon as he reached the foothills of Girnar, he expressed his decision to undertake the journey. Hearing this decision, the royal priests were astonished that... 'Death in one's own religion is better; another's religion is frightening.' The flow of this superstition was strong in their blood. Siddharaj's decision to travel to Girnar seemed to cause great upheaval within them. They began to think of ways to stop the journey.

Siddharaj was a lover of *Dharma*. There was respect in his heart for every religion. To convince him, the priests decided to play a cunning diplomatic move. They pleaded with Siddharaj, "Maharaj! This Girnar is an extremely sacred pilgrimage site. We also give importance to the purity of form, and this mountain is shaped like a *ling* (Shiva Lingam), full of water streams. Therefore, how can we even set foot on it? This mountain is as worshipable as a Lingam."

When it came to religious scriptures, Siddharaj suppressed his own thoughts and accepted the wishes of the priests, but as he left, he sent a precious plate of offerings to be dedicated at the feet of the Lord of Girnar, and by this dedication alone, he kept his love for pilgrimage alive.

Thereafter, Siddharaj's caravan reached the foothills of Shatrunjay. The desire to visit this pilgrimage site reawakened within him, and he again expressed his intention to travel to Shatrunjay. At this, the royal priests became furious, burning with rage. They decided in their minds that this time, this matter must be cut off at its roots, so that such a question would not arise in the future. Siddharaj took steps to travel to Shatrunjay, but in that era, the authority of the *Guru* (spiritual preceptor) was strong before the state power, and the state power would bow before it. The priests stopped Siddharaj from going on the pilgrimage and said: "King!



'*Swadharme nidhanam shreyah*'. Death in one's own religion is better. It is best to die for one's own religion; another's religion is frightening. Traveling to Shatrunjay is not our religion."

Will the head bowed at the feet of Lord Someshwar also bow at the feet of Shatrunjay?"

Siddharaj understood that this was a rebellion against his religious sentiments. Remembering the cunning diplomacy played by throwing dust in his eyes at Girnar, he said... "What is the meaning of '*Swadharma*' (one's own religion)? Dharma is not so small that it can be confined within the boundaries of Someshwar. It is extremely vast. Confining it within any boundary makes it *Adharma* (unrighteousness), and *Adharma* is *Pardharma* (another's religion), which is frightening."

Siddharaj clarified his philosophy to the priests. He did not like his priests' intolerance towards other religions. The priests felt that talking in circles like this would no longer work. Therefore, they were ready to adopt a policy of cutting it in two with a single blow and said: "King! We do not understand any of these conspiracies of intellect. We only say that this head should not bow before anyone other than Shiva. This soul should have no other devotion than Shiva."

Siddharaj felt that it would not be appropriate to expand the discussion on *Swadharma* and *Pardharma* now. He remained silent, but the priests were becoming unruly today. They stood with their swords drawn in front of the steps of Shatrunjay, so that Siddharaj could not challenge them and undertake the pilgrimage to Shatrunjay.

Siddharaj heard this news, but in his inner world, a battle of conflicting thoughts was raging today. On one hand, his heart was thirsty for pilgrimage, and on the other hand, blazing swords were drawn against pilgrimage. But where there is a will, there is a way. Where there is interest, there is a path. Siddharaj had today become a lover of Shatrunjay. He devised a trick for the pilgrimage. The desire for Shatrunjay darshan had become strong in his mind today. Therefore, he found a new way.

He changed his appearance. A *kanvar* (a pole with slings for carrying urns) on his shoulder and holy water in it. He wore tattered old clothes over his fair-skinned body. Such a *kanvar* - bearer reached near the stairs of Shatrunjay. The priests standing in the foothills of Shatrunjay with their swords drawn stopped him. Without being frightened in the least, he said, "I am a *kanvariya* (a pilgrim carrying a *kanvar*). I have come carrying a *kanvar* on my shoulder. It contains holy water. I have come from very far with the hope of anointing the Lord with this holy water. Who are you to stop me?"

The *kanvariya* also possessed valor and strength. The priests paled and let him go. With a hidden smile on his lips, that *kanvariya* continued to ascend the steps of the mountain.

The *kanvar* on his shoulder and his soiled attire were merely a disguise. In that dirty attire and as a *kanvariya*, it was Maharaj Siddharaj himself.

Due to his strong desire, Siddharaj found this path. Tricking the priests, Siddharaj ascended the Giriraj (the mountain).

Where construction had begun only a short while ago, and every brick of that city of temples seemed to be smiling, every part of Siddharaj's body danced in the lap of those mountain temples. The tales of glory he had heard about Giriraj seemed incomplete after directly seeing the temples. When Siddharaj performed the anointing of Yugadi Jineshwar with the holy water brought in the *kanvar*, it was as if a tide of joy surged in the ocean of his heart.

After seeing the Giriraj, Siddharaj descended again, wearing the same disguise and carrying the same *kanvar*. The magnificent Giriraj had been absorbed into the subtle world of his eyes.

That traveller, who had set out for Someshwar, reached Patan. The golden memories of that journey undertaken in the guise of a *kavardhari* were still hanging on the walls of Siddharaj's heart. One day Siddharaj signed the order and put the royal seal on it. It was a decree to gift Giriraj Shatrunjay and the twelve villages around it to the pilgrimage.

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### 3. A Saint is Good When Moving

After completing the journey to the King of Pilgrimages, Shatrunjay, when the *Sangh* entered the boundary of Patan, Gurjar King Moolraj himself was present there to honour the Sangh.

Moolraj had heard much praise for the character, conduct, miracles, and cleverness of the Sangh's leader, the revered Acharyadevshri Yashobhadrashurishvarji. The long-cherished thirst for his *darshan* (sacred viewing) was to be quenched today. There, the *Sangh* received a royal welcome.

Moolraj was satiated by drinking the *Ganga* of words from the revered Yashobhadrashuriji. He directly witnessed Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge) in Suriji.

Suriji had to stay in Patan for three days, but it was imperative to continue the *vihar* (journey). A large Sangh was with him. Padliptapur was still far away. Denying Moolraj's inner request the departure time was announced. Moolraj felt the most pain from the announcement. His heart seemed to be weeping. He wanted to stop Suriji by any means, but Yashobhadrashuriji said only one thing, "O King! A saint is good when moving. I understand the desire of your heart, but it is imperative to continue the journey. This vast *Sangh* has been stopped here for three days. It still has to reach Padliptapur. I might be able to stay here longer, but how can this *Sangh* stop? Therefore, our departure is fixed for tomorrow."

Moolraj pleaded in many ways, but the circumstances were not such that Suriji could stop. Finally, Moolraj decided to try a new tactic because his previous attempts had proved unsuccessful. He requested Suriji, "Lord! Please visit my royal palace once."

Accepting Moolraj's affectionate request, Suriji visited Moolraj's palace. Moolraj wanted to stop him by hook or by crook. He arranged for Acharya Yashobhadrashuriji's stay in a large section of the royal palace and had the door of that palace section closed. Suriji immediately understood Moolraj's trick. He began to think, "Will the time of departure pass? No, no, that cannot happen."

The Sangh departed from Patan. Everyone had full faith in Suriji's *mantra* power. Guards were stationed outside Surishvarji's palace section. Moolraj wanted to fathom Suriji's power today.

The next morning, The Sangh departed. The departure of the Sangh without a leader created surprise in the hearts of many people.

Moolraj was standing outside that palace section. He was proud of his power that even though Suriiji didn't stop due to his devotion, his power stopped him.

Moolraj was engrossed in thought. His gaze darted all around. The door of that chamber in the royal palace was tightly shut. Sentries were patrolling vigilantly. Meanwhile, what did he see that Suriiji was standing before him. Moolraj could not believe his eyes: "Oh! How did Suriiji come out?"

Moolraj apologized to him, and then a sweet voice was heard in his ears: "O King! A saint is good when moving. Devotion can bind a saint, not force. Look, the doors of your chamber are shut, yet I have come out through this small hole. Now, only six months of your life remain. Become engrossed in spiritual practice; this is my blessing."

And amidst everyone's astonishment, Shri Yashobhadrasuriiji, taking the Sangh from Patan, proceeded further.

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## 4. The Path of Liberation and Hell

It was the Gir forest. The sun seemed to be raining embers from the sky.

At such a time, Ra' Khengar, the King of Junagadh, was wandering here and there in the dense and terrifying forest.

When he had set out from the palace, he had a whole entourage with him, but in search of prey, Ra' Khengar had gone so far ahead that his retinue was left behind and he lost his way.

First, there was the scorching midday sun, and then the endless Gir forest. Who would be there to show the way? Ra' Khengar was wandering here and there like a pigeon searching for its nest in the darkness of Amavasya (new moon night). When his efforts to find the way by any means failed, he became desperate and sat down in the shade of a tree. A few moments passed in despair. Ra' Khengar became restless from hunger and thirst. The numerous footpaths crisscrossing the forest put him in a dilemma as to which path to take?

Finally, trusting fate, Ra' Khengar guided his horse onto one of the footpaths. After going some distance, he spotted a person approaching from afar. A ray of hope shone in his eyes. His desperate heart began to swell with joy.

The approaching person was a *Charan*. He recognized Ra' Khengar. Seeing the bow and arrow on Ra' Khengar's shoulder, the Charan's heart was troubled: "Is this how innocent creatures are slaughtered for pleasure?". Just then, Ra' Khengar's question reached the Charan's ears: "Brother! Do you know where this path leads?".

The *Charan* thought: "This is a good opportunity. What if I have to endure Khengar's wrath for speaking the words of caution?". "It's a shot if it hits, otherwise a guess!". Without considering his own future safety, the Charan spoke: "Khengar! I know only two paths: one to hell, the other to *nirvaan* (liberation). Killing living beings is the path to hell, and protecting living beings is the path to *nirvaan*. These are the only two paths I know. Now it is up to your will which of these two paths you wish to take".

Seeing such fearlessness and courage, Ra' Khengar felt that this person could not be an ordinary individual wandering in the forest. A person who is lost cannot possess such strength and ability.

He asked the *Charan*: "Brother! You appear to be an ordinary person. Would you please introduce yourself?".

"Ra' Khengar! I am not a person wandering in the forest. I am a *Charan*. It is my duty to show the right path when asked. If you felt bad, please forgive me. You want to go to Junagadh, don't you? Come, I will show you the way"

Ra' Khengar and the Charan both set off on the footpath leading towards Junagadh.

If this world, full of flatterers, were to find a few more Charans like him, many misguided individuals would find the right path. Many people, while walking on their wrong path, would begin to sigh "Ah" instead of "Wah-wah".

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## 5. The Sentinel of the Boundary of Sanctity

Whether a Maharaja adorned the throne, the uncrowned kingdom was run by the 'Maharaj' himself. This is a memoir from such a fortunate era. It was the tenth day of the bright half of Ashwin month. It was midday.

On the day of Vijayadashami, the victory procession of the Rana of Udaipur was moving along the royal road, accepting the greetings of the people. When the Nagarseth (chief of city's businessmen) of Udaipur came to know that the Maharana had abandoned shame and dignity today, and was seated on an elephant with his concubine Nannijan next to him, Seth Virchand's heart cried out. He was the chief Maharaj. If he did not fulfill the duty of warning the Maharana, who was seated on the elephant having abandoned shame, then who would? That the Maharaja keeps a concubine, this was bad; it was worse that she sat openly by his side in the procession. Could the concubine, who sat with him in the procession today, not sit in the queen's place beside the throne tomorrow?

The Nagarseth decided to fulfill his duty, even if it meant incurring the Maharana's wrath. He was sitting inside his shop. Before the procession arrived, he pretended to open his ledger and write accounts.

The procession stopped in front of the Nagarseth's shop, but the Seth did not even lift his eyes from the ledger and failed to offer the customary greeting to the Maharana. Finally, the procession moved on. This insult was unbearable for the Maharana. As the procession moved forward, the thought of the Nagarseth's uncivilized behavior continued to grow in the Maharana's heart. He had received greetings from thousands of subjects, but the absence of the Nagarseth's greeting dulled the joy of the procession and made the experience distasteful.

This very incident seemed to echo in the Maharana's mind throughout the day. As evening fell, he sent for the Nagarseth.

Nagarseth, like an embodiment of fearlessness, bowed to the Maharana and requested: "Maharaj! It is a matter of joy for me that your servant has been called, please command, what duty am I to fulfill?"

The Maharana, without making any background, spoke his heart directly, "Seth! Your behavior today has spoiled the entire taste of my golden procession. The procession stopped in the courtyard of your shop, yet you forgot to even look up from the ledger and follow common courtesy?"

Explaining fearlessly, Nagarseth stated: 'Maharanaji! I had not forgotten. I had deliberately kept my mind engaged in the ledger.'

"What does it mean?" The Maharana became a little agitated.

Without any shame towards authority, the Seth clearly stated, "Ranaji! You were not worth seeing at that time. That is why I had to commit such a discourtesy".

"What are you saying, I was not worth seeing? Seth! Are you thinking before speaking, or are you just blabbering whatever comes to your mouth? Prove how I was not worth seeing?".

The Seth roared like a lion and said, "Even after keeping a trivial courtesan like Nannijan by your side, you are asking me why I was not worth seeing? You are the lord of the subjects. When you start breaking the boundaries of sanctity, then even as an ordinary person of the Mahajan, it becomes my duty to become the sentinel of that boundary".

With downcast eyes, the Maharana endured this righteous wrath of the Nagarseth. Meanwhile, the Seth's powerful voice continued: "Ranaji! You are a participant in the virtue of the public's sanctity. You should be eager to strengthen the boundaries of sanctity and become its sentinel. If I have shown any disobedience, I apologize. Otherwise, why would I abandon courtesy?"

To answer the echo of this question, the Seth bowed down at Maharana's feet. Raising him, Maharana said: "Seth! I am remembering that beneficial teaching of Kalidas: 'He is a bad minister who does not tell the truth to his master, and he is a bad king who does not accept the truth from his minister.' I consider myself glorious to have a good minister like you. The Maharana and Nagarseth looked at each other with a smile for a moment.

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## 6. The First Worship

This world is like a lake. As long as the water of wealth overflows in it, the relatives like birds keep coming and going. But as soon as the water dries up, everything becomes deserted.

The world of Seth Ratnasagar in Ujjain city today reminded him of a deserted lake. As long as the property was not divided, people kept saying '*Khamma-Khamma*' (a respectful greeting) to him. But as soon as the division happened, the Seth's luck turned sour. His sons had now forgotten even to acknowledge him. He was neither here nor there. One night, he wished to receive '*Devi-krupa*' (grace of a goddess). The very next day, he sat steadfastly in the shadow of Devi Chakkesari, and on the third fast, the Devi appeared. The Seth pleaded before the goddess: "Devi! Please be gracious to me. I am of nowhere (lost everything). In this world, a man without '*Vasu*' (wealth) is like an animal".

The goddess said, "Ask, what do you want?".

The Seth expressed his desire for a thousand gems. The goddess said '*Tathastu*' (So be it) and disappeared.

Immediately, a heap of gems sparkled before the Seth's eyes, but even after acquiring a hundred maunds of oil, his life remained in darkness. The Seth did not tell anyone about this divine grace. Even though Devi Chakkesari showered mercy upon him with a thousand hands, the Seth did not abandon his pitiable state of poverty. He had a bed made, in the legs of which he secretly hid those valuable thousand gems.

Then the Seth developed a son-like affection for that bed. He would love the bed all day long. Besides this, he didn't think of any other work.

How are the symptoms of greed? In his last moments, the Seth was lying on his deathbed. He expressed his last wish, saying: "Sons! I have only one wish, that my cremation be performed along with this bed".

No sooner had he said this, than Seth Ratnasagar's lamp of life extinguished, and no one knew anything about the gems hidden in the bed.

In the Seth's funeral procession, the bed was taken instead of a bier. After reaching the cremation ground, a dispute arose, and the '*Antyajas*' (untouchable guards of cremation ground) demanded the bed. The Seth's sons told them about their father's last wish, but some sensible individuals convinced the Seth's sons to give the bed to the *Antyajas*.

On that day, bids were made for that bed worth millions, and finally, a Bohra took that bed for fifteen rupees. Had its secret been known to people that day, that bed would have fetched bids worth millions of rupees. Few days later, Balashah of Ujjain bought that bed.

Balashah was the son of a poor mother. After his father's demise, all they had was gone. Then he started living with his mother in a village. He used to come to Ujjain frequently to buy goods. He was adolescent, but when luck is to open, it does not wait for maturity. He bought that bed, but his dwelling was small. Therefore, his mother said, "Son! You liked the bed and you have bought it. But where is the place to keep it here? So, keep it after disassembling."

When fate wishes to shower nectar, it pours down by tearing the roof. When Balashah opened the bed, wealth showered from all four legs, a heap of jewels accumulated there, and the dark hut became radiant with the sparkle of gems. The mother and son stared with wide eyes at this extraordinary grace of the *Vidhata* (Creator). The Creator sometimes bestows such strange grace that words are unable to describe it.

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Once, in a Jain temple in Delhi, Mahamana Samarashah's wife was moving quickly to behold the Lord. At that time, a hundred-year-old woman was also moving forward with the help of a stick. The old woman's foot got entangled in Mahamana Samarashah Minister's wife's saree, and she stumbled and fell. The old woman complained: "You have the arrogance of a Sanghpati's (leader of a religious congregation) wife. Why are you so haughty? Look, I fell because of your haste."

The minister's wife apologized. Her heart was shattered. Her inner ego said, "It will be true only when I become the wife of a Sanghpati."

She came to her residence. It was mealtime. The served platters were getting cold. Samarashah came near his wife. His wife said, "You should declare the 'Sangh' (a congregation for going on pilgrimage) for Siddhagiri, only then will I eat."

Upon learning the entire story, he agreed to organize the Sangh. The permission of the Delhi ruler was obtained. The Sangh was announced, and the Sangh set out. Traveling from city to city, the Sangh arrived in Ujjain. The Sangh's journey was announced throughout the city. The announcement's echo was also heard in the surrounding villages. Balashah's mother also heard that announcement and told her son, "Son! The end of life is near. My desire is to have a 'darshan' (sight) of the Dada of Siddhagiri. I do not want to lose the auspicious moment of opening that pouch of gems."

Mother and son came from their village to Ujjain to join the Sangh. Despite having gems worth millions of rupees, the mother and son appeared ordinary. Those who saw them felt they were distressed beings. They continued to move forward with the Sangh. After a few days, the Sangh reached the foothills of Siddhachal. Their bodies were tarnished, but their minds were bright. The ocean of mother and son's devotion swelled. The mother said, "Son! I

wish to worship the nine organs of the Lord with these gems. When will such a good opportunity come again?"

Mother and son reached the Lord's court first. As soon as the old woman saw the Lord, she seemed to dance. After worshipping the nine organs of God with priceless gems, the old woman had it written there, "The person who dedicates eighteen gems at the feet of God tomorrow will be able to perform the first puja (worship) of God."

Mother and son moved aside. After some time, the Sangh arrived there. Gems were shining on the nine organs of God. This kind of devotion to the Lord dipped Sanghvi Samarashah in thought. His gaze fell upon the line: "Only the person who offers eighteen gems will be able to perform the first worship."

That day, the first worship did not happen. Sanghvi Samarashah came down after taking a *pachchakkhan* of fasting. A wave of surprise spread throughout the Sangh: "What kind of Lord's worship is this?"

The next day, Sanghvi joyfully came to the Lord's court. The first worship had already taken place. The Lord's court was illuminated by the light of eighteen gems. A line was written nearby: "The fortunate person who offers thirty-six gems at the Lord's holy feet will be eligible to perform the first worship tomorrow." Reading the line, Sanghvi was filled with astonishment. He came down after taking *pachchakkhan* of a second fast. He felt proud that such a fortunate and renunciant traveler was in his Sangh. To have a sight of that fortunate person, he announced: "The fortunate person who has been performing the first worship of the Lord with a heap of gems for two days should accept this '*bida*' (challenge/honor) and give *darshan* (sight) to Sanghvi."

The drum sounded. The entire Palitana continued to hear this announcement. When the announcement reached the old woman's residence, she told her son Balashah, "Son! Take the *bida*."

He went to take the *bida*, but who would let him take it? His soiled clothes and young age! He was not allowed to take the *bida*. The messenger did not believe Balashah, and the *bida* returned as it was to Sanghvi. Sanghvi was informed that "announcement was made throughout the city, but no one came forward to take the *bida*. Yes, a shabby boy came forward, but how could he be given the *bida*? Can such a poor boy ever be the one who worships God with gems?"

Sanghvi decided to meet that shabby boy. He said, "Take me to that boy's residence."

A crowd surged with Sanghvi. They all came to Balashah's dwelling. Seeing the Sangh entering her courtyard, the old woman's eyes welled up with tears of joy. That old woman welcomed Sanghvi. Sanghvi kept looking at the place. A kunda (a type of pot) was laying there. Nearby was a *kanvar* (a shoulder pole for carrying loads). The rest was deserted. How

could such a poor person have the honor of jewel worship? He asked, "Mother! Do you perform the first worship with a heap of jewels?"

The old woman humbly replied, "Sanghviji! What power do I have? This is by the grace of the divine guru, if not a flower, then with a petal of a flower, I am able to worship the Lord."

"Do you perform the first worship?"

Everyone was astonished. Sanghviji, apologizing for his mistaken belief, said, "Mother! Forgive me, I brazenly tried to measure your inner self with external appearances. Today I have realized that to truly assess a heart, external wealth is not successful, but devotion is."

The old woman was shedding tears of joy.

Today was Sanghviji's second fast. The old woman, offering thirty-six gems at his feet, said, "Sanghviji! You perform the first worship tomorrow. When will I get such an opportunity again to be a part of fulfilling your vow? Don't hesitate. Look, this pot is full of gems. The Lord has given it, so what hesitation in offering it at his feet."

The next day the old woman gave honour of the first worship to Sanghviji and Sanghviji performed the *parna* (breaking the fast). The devotion of a mother and son had awakened the power of Samarshah. With their consent, he sought permission from the Sangh for renovation of Shatrunjay. The Sangh granted permission, and the entire atmosphere became joyful.

The mother and son were watching all this. Balashah was immersed in thought. The old mother said, "Son! We did not bring this pot of gems here to take it home again. Get up and ask the Sangh for permission to build a new *toonk* (temple at the peak) here. May the Sangh grant me permission."

Who should be considered superior between the mother and son? Balashah obtained permission from the Sangh to construct a new *toonk*, and a grand *toonk* was built on Giriraj. The eighth *toonk*, which immortalizes his name in the form of Balashah's *toonk*, still exists today.

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## 7. Affection for the Subjects

That was a fortunate era when the sacred stream of affection for the subjects flowed on both banks. A short time ago, the footprints of great personalities on the banks of Kalsagar, especially the footprints of Maharaj Siddharaj, still preserve their existence today, compiling an extremely thrilling history. This is an incident from one night in the life of that same Siddharaj.

Maharaj Siddharaj was returning after watching a play from Karnameru Prasad (Palace). On the way, he saw a magnificent mansion, on the roof of which many lamps were lit. The Maharaja estimated that the Seth of this building was extremely wealthy.

In that era, wealth was not considered something to be hidden. What fear was there in revealing wealth acquired through justice and honesty?. According to accounts worth millions of rupees, a flag was hoisted on the roof of the palace, and that person was known as '*Koti Dhwaj*' (a person having one crore of wealth).

Maharaj Siddharaj returned to his palace, observing the prosperity of his subjects. The next day he summoned that Seth, on whose mansion yesterday he had seen many lamps burning, to the royal court.

Upon the Seth's arrival, Siddharaj asked him, "Seth! You appear to be a millionaire; tell me, how many lakhs are you the owner of?"

The assembly found this question a little strange, but everyone trusted the king. Why hesitate to tell the truth before the king? The Seth fearlessly replied in the next moment, "Maharaj! It is all your grace. At this moment, eighty-four lamps are lit on the roof of my palace."

Siddharaj was not surprised to hear the details of eighty-four lakhs of wealth, but expressing his desire for a *crorepati* (millionaire) to prosper in his city, he ordered the chief minister, "Chief Minister! Give the Seth sixteen lakhs more from the royal treasury. Let the '*Koti Dhwaj*' wave on his mansion. Free the Seth from the hassle of lighting lamps daily and the fear of fire."

After much hesitation, Siddharaj's affection for his subjects prevailed, and on that day, the '*Koti Dhwaj*' was hoisted on the Seth's mansion.

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## 8. Suffering of Others

There were no clouds in the sky and no water on the earth. The dark shadow of famine was spreading its terrifying claws to engulf the entire Gujarat. The state officials, collecting taxes everywhere, seemed like angels of death to the people.

In many places, farmers were being whipped, and in others, intimidation tactics were being employed. The people were being oppressed. On one side, there was a terrible famine, and on the other, not a single cloud was visible in the sky. The future seemed dark. The people's desire was to show their loyalty to the king by paying double the tax demanded by the officials, but at this time, the people were helpless. The ripe grain in the fields had dried up standing.

The bottom of the wells were also visible. The famine had snatched away the power to pay taxes, and everywhere, King Bhim's officials were oppressing the people to collect taxes. Some would give half the tax; some would agree to give a quarter of the tax. Some would tell a tragic story of their difficult circumstances, shedding tears, and the officials would inflict various cruelties on them, saying, "By telling your circumstances in this way, you will not be exempt from paying taxes. You will have to pay the tax."

Considering the people's suffering as his own was a prominent characteristic of Moolraj. He himself felt the injustice being done to his subjects, and was moved.

The scenes Moolraj witnessed on the royal road, his heart was torn apart upon seeing them, and darkness spread before his eyes.

The surrounding atmosphere was extremely sorrowful. The people were tearing their hearts open and telling the officials about the terrible flames burning within, yet tax collection continued. It was as if the state officials had orders to collect taxes even in famine, suppressing their inner compassion.

Moolraj groaned upon seeing the people's suffering: "Such grave injustice? If there are no clouds in the sky, where will water flow on earth? Without water, where will grain ripen? Without ripened grain, how will taxes be paid?"

Moolraj's heart melted. He himself was experiencing the terrible wounds of injustice inflicted upon the people. Experiencing the pain of others' suffering, he mentally resolved that such tear-soaked taxes are not wanted. Even if the royal treasury remains empty, he must stop this injustice.

It was useless to talk directly to King Bhimdev. Firstly, there was famine due to which the income had also decreased a lot. Now if the tax is waived off, then the state treasury will become a dust treasury. Piles of mud were likely to remain in the treasury. Moolraj had no peace at all. He was searching for a way to alleviate the suffering of others.

Bhimdev had organized a competition for skilled horse riders in Patan. Many princes from the surrounding areas had gathered there. It was a huge gathering of people skilled in horsemanship. Everyone could participate without discrimination and try their luck. Crown Prince Moolraj was also an amazing 'horseman'. The entire Patan believed that Moolraj would win today's competition.

The 'horse race' competition began. The hopes of many individuals turned into disappointment. In the end, the trust of the people of Patan proved true. Moolraj won the 'horse race' competition.

Congratulations rained down on the Crown Prince. Precisely at that moment, the heart-wrenching scene of 'suffering of others' appeared before his eyes. He thought that as a token of joy for this victory, he should ask for the alleviation of 'suffering of others'.

Bhimdev was overjoyed by his son's skill. So, with a joyful voice, patting his son's back, he said: "Son! Today you have not only enhanced my glory, not only your own, not only Patan's, but the glory of the entire Gujarat. I wish you to ask me for something. Whatever you ask for in the joy of this victory, I will give it to you."

Moolraj was thrilled with joy, but despair spread within him. He did not hope that his father would abandon such a huge earning from taxes. Nevertheless, he played his part and said, "Father! I have the protection of people like you, so what is left for me to ask for? Does this mean that either I have forgotten my duty, or you have forgotten that I have to ask for myself?"

No son! Still, you must ask for something. Will my word be false?"

"Then, Father! Please keep my boon as a trust for now. I will ask for it when the time comes."

"No son! I want to give you something right now, at this very moment, here. Tell me your wish."

Moolraj, striking at the opportune moment, said, "Father! I have no objection to asking, but I doubt whether you will be able to give me what I need at this moment. So, it is beneficial for your word to remain a trust."

"Son! What are you saying? You ask, and I refuse? How is that possible? It is my misfortune that you doubted me like this. What could be more sorrowful than a son losing faith in his father? Trust me, consider it asked and received."

Now was the opportune moment. So Moolraj said, "Father. The reason for my doubt towards you is my misfortune, not yours. I could not know your heart, that is why such words came from my mouth, isn't it? Should I really ask?"

Everyone was surprised. They wondered what the prince's wish could be that required such a strong preamble before being revealed. Bhimdev said, "Son! Ask. Ask to prove my trust true, otherwise, my own prestige will be diminished."

The public was in a dilemma about what Moolraj would ask for. No one had imagined that he would ask for '*Sanjeevni*' to heal his own wound, to alleviate the suffering of others. Moolraj asked, " Father, I will not ask for one person, but I will ask for the public, I will ask for an end to the suffering of others. There is no cloud in the sky and no water on the earth. So my demand is that in these years of scarcity, no tax should be collected from the public. They should be given a letter of pardon."

All the people were stunned. Maharaja Bhimdev also fell into thought: "The prince asked for such a thing even after asking?" But in keeping his word, he too followed the ideal. Suppressing his emotions, he instantly said, "Moolraj! You are the true king. What kind of king oppresses the subjects? Alright, in these years of famine, no tax will be collected. Kings like me can only rule over the earth, whereas kings like you can rule over the hearts of the people, because the people donate their hearts to the king who knows their sorrows."

Bhimdev patted Moolraj's back. The people danced with joy. Their future seemed very bright, but it is regrettable that a flower with the extraordinary power to attract the world with its fragrance is rare at its root, and its lifespan is also short.

The tax had been waived. The farmers' hearts were overflowing with joy. Everyone was coming to bless Moolraj, but this joy quickly ended. The ink of the 'royal decree' for tax waiver had not even dried, and on the third day, Moolraj suddenly passed away. The flower had not even bloomed before the god of death plucked it. Alas, what misfortune!

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## 9. Night and Dawn

Sometimes, when a crow sits on a branch, the tree's branch breaks. That accident sometimes guides a life's adverse flow in the right direction, and similarly, sometimes it pulls the actual flow in the opposite direction.

One day, an accident created such a '*Tandav*' (dance of destruction) in Dhansar's life. He was a resident of Kusumpur. Many people are owners of immense wealth, but a strong desire to use that wealth for religious purposes is found in only a rare few. Dhansar was such a rare individual. One night, endless cycles of birth after birth appeared before his eyes. He thought, 'If I have wealth, why shouldn't I use it for religious purposes? Even if an elephant's ears and a chameleon's tail remain stable, the stability of wealth in this world has never been known to exist. But Dharma tells such a wonderful way that even from instability, stability can be created.'

Dhansar saw seven areas for the proper use of wealth. He decided in his mind that if there is anything most beneficial for himself and for the world, it is a *Jinalaya* (Jain temple), because it is the divine mirror that directly reveals the form of the formless and the shape of the shapeless. Therefore, I will build such a *Jinalaya* that will act as a searchlight for the many life-boats drifting amidst the destructive storms of the world.

When the eagerness is intense, even a moment becomes like an era. Dhansar got an auspicious time fixed the very next day. Invitations reached the sculptors, and in an auspicious moment, the excavation and foundation stone laying of the temple took place. Dhansar had an intense desire and passion for building a magnificent Jain temple. Money was being spent like water; his family did not like this, but no one dared to speak in front of his influence.

In an auspicious moment, the *Jinalaya* was consecrated, and Dhansar's heart rejoiced. After a few years, it was as if a shadow of bad times fell upon him.

There was a loss in the shop. Accounts from other countries brought tears to his eyes. This news spread throughout the village, and the arrival of tax collectors increased. Dhansar Seth, however, was in high spirits. He would say, "What a good fortune I have that religious work was done with wealth, and after that, storms of misfortune came."

Unfortunately, the family blames the crow for the fallen branch and says that since the time this *Jinalaya* was built, this is the condition due to effect of Saturn. Isn't this the sound of religion? The shop has suffered losses, the foreign accounts are not strong. This is what is called 'trouble comes in a religious person's house'.

Seth Dhansar thought that there was no benefit in answering. My luck has turned bad, so it would be best to endure everything at this time. The flag of *Dharma* should remain high at this time. Dhansar did not shed tears when wealth was lost, but when the criticism of his own *dharma* fell upon his ears, he cried bitterly. Sitting alone, he writhed in tears. Days passed, and Dhansar's *dharma* was criticized more and more.

Even at the end of the dark night of Amavasya, the bright light of dawn comes, so what to say of fate? One day, a Jain Acharya (spiritual teacher) arrived in Kusumpur. When Dhansar heard this news, his heart was eager for a *darshan* (sight) of the Guru. He went to the *Upashray* (monastery). He saw, "Oh! This is the same glorious Guru who consecrated my *Jinalaya*." Gurudev recognized Dhansar, but what was this? There was radiance on Dhansar's face, but where had his splendor and opulence gone? There was no one there. Gurudev asked, "Dhansar! How are things going?" Seeing no one nearby, Dhansar replied, "Gurudev! A crow sat and the branch fell. I have no sorrow at all for the falling of the branch, but how can its blame be placed on the crow? The *Jinalaya* was built. After a few years, misfortune arose, and people started spitting on my *dharma*. If wealth is to go tomorrow, let it go this very moment today, I have no concern about it, but my *Dharma* should not be criticized. You are the helmsman, the navigator; you take control of my boat's rudder."

Gurudev was a visionary. He said, "Even the dark clouds have a silver edge, even after the dark night the dawn arrives. The door of a good future is knocking. You should fast for three days. Start the *sadhna* (spiritual practice) of *Namaskar Mahamantra* by the method of *sadhana* and invoke the *Adhishthayak* (the presiding deity).

The *sadhna* began. This *sadhna* was not for wealth but for the protection of *dharma*. If such a *sadhna* were to fail, the flag of *dharma* would be shamed. Three days of fasting passed. On the fourth day, in the morning, Seth Dhansar was engrossed in the worship of Lord Jineshwar. As he offered a fragrant garland of flowers around the Lord's neck, the Seth began to dance, and his devotional worship commenced.

A moment passed, then two, and Dharanendra appeared in that *Jinalaya* with his divine light. The Seth's unwavering devotion caused his throne to tremble. Raising his boongiving hand, Dharanendra said, "Seth! The power of your devotion has compelled me to come here. I am Dharanendra. Ask for whatever you wish."

The Seth kept staring. After a moment, he said, "Are you Devraj Dharanendra? I offered this garland of flowers around the Lord's neck, and I ask for its fruit from you."

Dharanendra was overjoyed by the jest of this divine devotee, but he was unable to fulfill the petitioner's request. He said, "Seth! This Dharanendra is utterly dwarfed before your begging bowl. I am unable to fulfill your request. Therefore, ask for something else."

"Is that so? Is the fruit of a garland of flowers so immeasurable that even someone like Dharanendra cannot bestow it? Then you can at least grant me the fruit of one flower from this garland, can't you?"



"I am unable, Seth! Forget about me, Even if all the sixty-four Indras join together and pour out the flow of donations, even then the fruit of a single flower of devotion cannot be given."

Oh! So am I the owner of such a huge pile of fruits? Please put just one petal of this flower in the weighing balance and give me the fruit equal to its weight.

The gaze of Devraj (the Lord of the Gods) seemed to lower in shame, it became weak. He said, "Sethji! If I were to give away all the wealth of my heavenly abode, even then the weight of one petal of this flower is so immense that I am unable to grant even this fruit. Please ask for something else."

Dhansar fell into thought. What would the owner of such immense wealth ask for? In his enthusiasm, he said, " Devraj, if you are unable to grant even the fruit of one petal of a flower, then I need nothing else now. I am wealthier than you. Now, please tell me what you need?"

Hearing Sethji's humble and wise words, Dharanendra was extremely pleased, and placing pots of gems everywhere, he disappeared. The sight of a deity never goes in vain. This news spread like wildfire. Kusumpur was ashamed of its mad ramblings. Everyone cheered for Dhansar. Dhansar perceived the honor of *dharma* in this cheer, and thus, due to *dharma*, he felt a sense of fulfillment.

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## 10. Siddhi: Maidservant of the Saint's Feet

*Siddhi* (supernatural power) is the maidservant of a saint's feet. The worldly person, striving to achieve it by considering Siddhi as their master, may regard it as the goal of life. However, in the vision of a saint—whose guide is the Arihant, whose ideal is the end of worldly existence, and whose most rigorous spiritual practice is to break the threads of endless cycles—Siddhi holds no value. The way a traveler who works hard to reach their destination looks at the resting places along the way, the way farmer who sows seeds with the desire for grain looks at the grown grass, a saint looks at Siddhi with even greater disinterest. Their spiritual practice seems to proclaim day and night:

"Why do you keep repeating 'Siddhi, Siddhi'? Siddhi is the maidservant of a saint's feet. It is not the ultimate goal. If flying in the sky is considered a Siddhi, then a *pamar* bird would be considered more virtuous than humankind. Swimming in water is also no great Siddhi; for a fish, it is inborn. Siddhi is its name where there is life without body, where the entire world can be observed even without eyes and where one can reach the edge of the world even without wings."

Such voices used to emanate from the *sadhana* of Siddhayogi Shri Padliptasuriji, but ordinary ears cannot hear them. For that, the ears of the inner world are necessary.

Nagarjun only had ordinary ears, which is why it was no surprise that he could not hear the sound of Shri Padliptasuriji's *sadhana*. Though Siddhayogi and Nagarjun were childhood friends, but in the future, their paths diverged. The Siddhis that revolved around Siddhayogi's feet, Nagarjun had not even seen in his dreams, but his research was strong. Behind that research was a kind of fire, due to which he succeeded in acquiring various Siddhis. And in the end, when '*Swarna Siddhi*' (the power to transmute anything into gold) was attained, he saw a golden dawn in his life. Filling a bottle with 'Swarna-ras' (elixir of gold), he gave it to his disciple and said, "*Vats!* This bottle of golden elixir is to be delivered to my childhood friend Padliptasuriji. The steps I am taking in the field of Siddhi are due to his influence. Offer this bottle of elixir at the feet of that Siddhayogi and give him my message that after wandering for countless days in the caves of the mountains, your humble disciple Nagarjun has attained this Siddhi and offers this bottle as its remembrance."

The disciple set out with the bottle of elixir. Wandering through the forests, one day he came to Dhankpuri. There he met the Siddhayogi. Keeping the elixir -bottle at his feet, he said:

"You are a Siddhayogi, yet this elixir-bottle is definitely amazing. Your disciple Nagarjun has dedicated this first offering of Siddhi at your feet. It contains the elixir of *Swarna-Siddhi*. Iron, this elixir, and blazing fire—that is, shining gold."

Siddhayogi smiled slightly. "Oh! For a saint, Siddhi is just a maidservant who presses his feet. With a slight smile, he took the bottle of elixir in his hand and immediately poured it into the ashes.

Nagarjun's disciple stared at this foolish act with wide eyes. He said, "Yogiraj! Stop, stop! This is *Swarna Ras* (gold-elixir). Why are you pouring it into ashes? Is a liquid with the power to create millions of beauties meant to be poured into ashes? Is this all its worth?"

Without listening to anything, Siddhayogi poured every single drop of the elixir into the ashes. Nagarjun's disciple muttered to himself... "Oh fool! What can I say to you? You have mixed my Gurudev's lifelong spiritual practice's priceless material with dust? Truly, the friendship of a fool is a risk to life. What kind of guru is my guru to consider such a person as a guru?"

Fire ignited in every limb of that disciple, but what more could be said to Siddhayogi? Everyone was witnessing the agony of Nagarjun's disciple. He himself had fulfilled the responsibility of the succeeding seeker in this Siddhi. He was a witness to the continuous and rigorous awakening day and night for this Siddhi, the arduous journey of many days spent on hard rocks, and the spiritual practice performed by risking his life. As he was leaving, he asked with an air of indifference, "I am leaving, do you have anything to say?."

Siddhayogi said, "Yes."

Shri Padliptsuriji went to a deserted corner. When he came out, he had a small glass bottle filled with yellow liquid in his hand.

He gave that small bottle to the disciple and said, "Give this bottle to Nagarjun, and if he wishes to know the message from my side, tell him that I have only conveyed that Siddhi is a maidservant at the feet of saints. This maidservant keeps revolving day and night in the service of the saint. May you benefit from *Dharma*."

The disappointed and disheartened disciple left. The valor of his efforts seemed to have turned into water. Stumbling, he reached Nagarjun. Seeing the Guru's gift in his hand, Nagarjun began to dance. At that moment, the disciple spoke in sheer anger, "The friendship with a naïve person is a risk to life."

Nagarjun said, "Fool! What are you babbling? He is my benefactor. Do you call this friendship the friendship of a naïve person?"

"Yes, of a naïve person." Nagarjun perceived arrogance in the disciple's words. He explained the entire matter in detail and finally said, "Look at the arrogance. He gave a bottle and sent this message that Siddhi is a maidservant at the feet of saints."

"Did he give any offering?"

The disciple took out the glass bottle from the bag and handed it to Nagarjun. Nagarjun opened its lid and said, "It's filled with urine, urine. So much arrogance of own Siddhi? There's a limit to pride, and so much insult to me? I sent gold-elixir, but far from respecting it, he rejected it? And by sending urine, he insulted me so much?."

Nagarjuna's every pore was on fire. Burning with anger, he stood up and in a fit of rage, he poured the bottle of urine towards a rock with disdain. Suddenly a surprise was created there.

The urine-soaked stone seemed to shine, before which the sparkle of gold also appeared dull like coal. In this way, the stone shone brightly.

Nagarjun and his disciple ran towards that golden stone. From their mouths, expressions of respect for Siddhayogi emerged, "Truly, Siddhi is a maidservant at the feet of saints."

Tears continued to flow from the eyes of the Guru and disciple. It was as if the sin of disrespecting Siddhayogi was being washed away by those tears.

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## 11. The True Affection of a Co-religionist

The scriptures mention the extreme rarity of a bond with a co-religionist. In the alleys and streets of this world, worldly relationships must have been formed at every step, whereas a bond with a co-religionist is formed only occasionally, after walking millions of steps.

Many will be found who listen to such verses about co-religious bonds sung in the scriptures, but those fortunate ones who dedicate themselves to those verses and form an affection for a co-religionist will be considered many if they can be counted on fingers.

Among the villages and towns worthy of pride in Gujarat regarding antiquity and influence, Wadhwan is foremost. We will know the protagonist of a true incident that occurred in this very Wadhwan only as a Seth (merchant) here.

We will reveal at the end of the story the name of that Seth, who hated name and fame and despite his old age ran like a youth in his work.

Prosperity and ruin are like a waterwheel. No one can remain prosperous forever, nor can anyone remain ruined forever. In Wadhwan, a *Shravak* (Jain follower) fell ill. At one time, he had amassed millions, but later his condition became such that he didn't even have money for diagnosis, let alone for medicines.

Despite such a dire situation, his family somehow managed to get his disease diagnosed, but now how to arrange for medicine? The doctor just wrote the prescription and left. It is rare to find someone with the humanity to consider the patient's family situation, pay for expensive medicines, and become a compassionate guide. After the diagnosis, the burden of worry on the *Shravak's* family doubled. First, the diagnosis caused worry, and second, the unavailability of medicines due to lack of funds. The devout Seth of Wadhwan, a follower of his own *Dharma*, used to seek out such occasions. He believed in his own religious duties even more than humanity. How could his gaze not fall upon the unexpressed anxious faces of the ailing *Shravak* and *Shravika*? Somehow, the critical situation of the ailing *Shravak* reached the Seth's ears.

The Seth's love for his own *Dharma* boiled over. By hook or by crook, he found the name and address of the doctor who used to visit the ailing *Shravak's* house. This was just the digging of the foundation; the real work was yet to be done. The Seth reached the doctor's house and found out about the medicine. He got pleased.

The medicine was identified. Now, only the act of giving remained, but the Seth did not want to make a donation that would tarnish a person's reputation or auction off their honor. He

chose the night time. He decided in his mind that the medicines should be delivered to the patient in such a way that even his left hand wouldn't know.

At night, Sethji went to the ailing Shravak's house. The darkness in the house made his path easy. Sethji directly entered the house and placed the bundle of medicines under the patient's cot, then turned back. However, the darkness that had been helpful on his way in became an obstacle on his way back. His foot hit something hard, and he stumbled and fell. Hearing the sound of this collision, the family members screamed in fear: "Thief! Thief! Wake up! Wake up!"

People grabbed whatever they could lay their hands on and rushed out. Before Sethji could stand up and leave, everyone mistook him for a thief and pounced on him. It was as if Sethji was being robbed while performing an act of Dharma.

Sethji thought that he was not so weak that he could not defend himself. If he had protected Dharma, it would surely protect him.

Sethji remained silent. Seeing no resistance from him, some people suspected that a real thief would never tolerate all this. This person wasn't making even a peep. It certainly seemed that something untoward had happened. Just then, a person came with a lamp. The light of the lamp rushed to Sethji's rescue. It was as if the protection of *dharma* came running as the light of the lamp to protect Sethji. Sethji, who had silently endured the beating, was recognized in the lamplight. Everyone was stunned. Everyone's hands dropped. Everyone recognized Sethji. Upon seeing the bundle of medicines under the patient's cot, the people understood the reason for Sethji's arrival. Surely Sethji must have come to secretly fulfill his co-religious affection.

Those people who were intent on beating up such a benevolent Seth, accusing him of theft, felt a sense of shame for their ill-considered haste. Everyone held Sethji's feet and asked for '*Michhami Dukkadam*' (a Jain phrase for seeking forgiveness). Sethji replied, "What is there to apologize for? This was my test. If you all had not been the cause, I would not have had the opportunity for this test. Therefore, in this regard, I should gratefully accept your favor."

The name of that Seth from Wadhwan was Shri Ratilal Jeevanlal Ajbibhai.

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## 12. The Curse

The beauty of a flower lies in its fragrance, and the significance of a temple in its idol.

The magnificent temple built by Maharaja Kumarpal, located in Achalgarh on Arbudachal, seemed to be weeping. The sparks that flew from King Prahlanan's eyes melted and destroyed the grand brass idol there.

Without any warning, without any sound, King Prahlanan ascended Achalgarh. He struck like a storm and reduced the grand creation built by Maharaja Kumarpal to ashes.

Many hammers fell upon the grand idol of the temple. The red blood of many fanatics solidified that day in an attempt to dislodge the idol. In the end, that idol was removed from there.

King Prahlanan laughed. His hatred flared up even more upon seeing the removed idol. He ordered, "Use the brass from this idol to adorn the Achaleshwar temple. Oh! What brass it is! It's like pure gold. Use it to create the lingam, flagpole, and *kalasha* (finial) of the Achaleshwar temple. Oh! How our temple will then rejoice!"

King Prahlanan laughed. The echo of his laughter bounced off the rocks of Abu and returned. The weeping of Kumarpal's temple intensified. Kumarpal's temple, which was cheerful and vibrant yesterday, seemed desolate today. Its sanctum sanctorum seemed to be shedding tears.

By destroying the grand idol of Kumarpal's temple, Prahlanan had incurred a terrible 'idol-curse'. At that time, the eyes that witnessed the dreadful emotions arising from the power of the curse seemed to be bound by iron shackles.

Achaleshwar stole the laughter from the brass of that broken idol. After some time, its lingam, flagpole, and *kalasha* shone as if they belonged to heaven itself.

King Prahlanan returned with the invisible curse of the idol. The curse of an idol proves to be more terrible than the curse of a human. After some time, King Prahlanan began to see this truth. The king became trapped in the tragic curse. His entire body became afflicted with leprosy. The whole city was shocked to see him. Peace rituals and chanting ceremonies were rampant everywhere. The king also observed some fasts. The devotion towards the city's deities increased. The king began to worship every deity. He wanted to be free from this disease by any means, but the disease continued to worsen day and night.

Finally, the king accepted that the sin of desecrating the idol must be tormenting him. He told this to the chief minister. "Chief Minister, I have not held back in fulfilling my vows , but this disease still doesn't seem to go away."

The minister took the king to the Jainacharya residing in the city. The king grabbed the Acharyadev's feet and said, "Lord! Please look at my body. Until yesterday, there wasn't a speck of leprosy on it, and today? Today, my entire body is covered in leprosy. I feel that the curse of the broken idol of Achalgarh has fallen upon me, and it will only stop after completely destroying me. Lord! Please show me a way. This black serpent of leprosy is flickering its tongue, ready to drink every drop of my body's beauty."

"The curse of the idol broken at Achalgarh?" Acharyashree asked, feigning ignorance. The king said, "Lord! It's a tearful story."

The king wept. He repented and admitted to breaking the idol. The flowing stream of tears and remorse resonated with every word he spoke. The heat of remorse and the coolness of tears can burn away any sin.

Acharyashree said to the king, "Your Majesty! The curse of the idol is indeed tormenting you. You should adopt the path of obtaining blessings from that curse and becoming healthy."

The king asked, "What does that mean?"

"The dark sin of breaking an idol is washed away by the construction of an idol and a temple. Build a grand Jinalaya (Jain temple) in this very city and consecrate a grand idol of Jina in it. Only good deeds can follow and overcome sin. Light is the only power that can destroy darkness."

"Lord! I will always be grateful for your guidance." The king departed after hearing the solution.

And that was it! Prahlananpur (Palanpur) echoed with the sounds of construction of temple and idol. The work was completed. The temple was consecrated. King Prahlanan was freed from the curse of idol-breaking and became healthy. The idol of that temple became famous as Prahlanan Parshwanath, which exists to this day. And even now, it is worshipped as Pallaviya Parshwanath in Palanpur.

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### 13. The Boundary of Culture

Today, meaningless talks are ongoing regarding women's respect. In past years, how much 'women's respect' had permeated behavior, many proofs of which are famous in history. The essence of these incidents appears capable of revealing the true path of women's respect.

One such example among many is that of Jogidas Khuman. Reading this, one would wish to praise those rebels who, like an agitated tigress, transformed their eagerness to avenge enmity into affection for the sake of protecting a woman's dignity, but who did not violate the boundaries of culture.

Jogidas Khuman's rebel group began creating havoc in the villages around Bhavnagar. The king took harsh steps and confiscated his land and property. Not only that, he also captured and killed his father.

Jogidas Khuman yearned to take revenge on the king of Bhavnagar for his father's murder, but taking revenge on the king of Bhavnagar was no easy feat. After the brutal incident of his father's murder, Khuman's rage knew no bounds. He began a fierce spree of looting in the areas around Bhavnagar. To protect the public from the suffering of this looting, the king announced a large reward for Khuman, dead or alive, but this only further enraged the tigress of vengeance dormant in Khuman's heart, and she began to look for an opportunity to pounce on Bhavnagar.

Once, Khuman was heading towards his destination through a jungle path. As soon as the dense forest began, he heard a woman's mournful cry. Khuman rushed towards the scream. The duty of 'protecting women' was inspiring him to run.

The princess of Bhavnagar was going somewhere through the forest path with her cavalry guards. As soon as the dense forest began, she saw some robbers. They attacked the princess's guards. The cry Khuman heard from an unknown direction was of this princess.

Jogidas Khuman galloped his horse rapidly and reached that spot. He challenged the robbers, "Beware! Do not take another step forward. Are you not ashamed to rob a woman?"

The robbers also retorted, "Who are you to warn us? We are not looting the princess's chastity. We are only interested in these ornaments. If you utter another word, you will have to face the assault of our weapons."

Khuman became angry and said, "Hey! Gunman! Others might be afraid of your gun. This is Jogidas Khuman. Quietly go your way, otherwise, I will have to teach you a lesson."

Hearing Jogidas' name, the robbers were startled, trembled, and ran away with their tails between their legs. The princess of Bhavnagar began to tremble. She knew that Jogidas was looking for an opportunity to take revenge on Bhavnagar. If she escaped the clutches of the robbers, a life-threatening situation of falling into Khuman's trap stood gaping. Now Jogidas understood the situation. He guessed that this princess must belong to Bhavnagar.

Assuring her of fearlessness, Khuman said, "I am a rebel against wrongdoers; I also understand honor and dignity. My principle and resolve are to loot while staying within the boundaries of culture. Do not be afraid. Consider me your own brother."

Hearing Khuman's reassuring words, the princess regained her life. She said, "Khuman! As soon as I heard your name, I had given up hope of life. I was convinced that the fire of revenge for your father's murder would kill me too. I apologize for having inappropriate thoughts about you, having lost faith in humanity matured by the water of culture."

For his fellow rebels, a golden opportunity to exact revenge stood before them. But Khuman, a lover of culture and protector of women, was not ready to transgress the limits of decency. He said to the princess, "Princess! The fire of revenge for my father's murder has not yet subsided. It is still blazing fiercely, yet rushing to protect a woman is the duty of a Kshatriya. And you are a princess. We have enmity with Bhavnagar, but if I allow you to be robbed under its guise, then my mother's milk would be tainted, and if the feeling of enmity harms even a single hair of yours, then my past and future seventy-two generations would be proven impotent. We are your subjects. The salt of this kingdom is mixed in our blood. Please convey my thanks to your father and tell him that the boundary of culture has not yet been destroyed. From me, convey many regards to father in the name of rebels who uphold such culture."

Khuman told his companions, "Our responsibility is not fulfilled merely by freeing them from the robbers' attack. Come! Let's escort the Princess to a safe place."

Such extraordinary proofs of women's respect and goodwill are the boundary and glory of our culture!

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## 14. The Purifying Sand

When Chief Minister Vastupal received news of the departure of a large *Sangh* (congregation of pilgrims) from Nagpur for a pilgrimage to Shri Shatrunjay Tirth, an immense wave of joy surged in his heart. It is only by great fortune that the footsteps of such a *Sangh* fall upon one's home. A *Sangh* praised by the Supreme soul of Tirthankar himself as the twenty-fifth Tirthankar, only arrives in a village and at one's doorstep through immense good fortune.

Vastupal received information that the congregation was about to proceed towards Shatrunjay Tirth from a village near Dholka. Therefore, he immediately instructed Tejpal to go to the head of the *Sangh* and request him to lead the *Sangh* via Dholka. He thought that only the fortunate get the opportunity for *Sangh* Seva (service to the *Sangh*) through great virtue.

Tejpal set out the very next day to serve the *Sangh*. The head of the *Sangh* received this information. He felt that Tejpal's arrival was for taking the *Sangh* to Dholka. Upon Tejpal's request, they would have to go to Dholka with the *Sangh*. Who could refuse Minister Vastupal's invitation?

Within two or three days, Tejpal appeared before the head of the *Sangh*. He chided the head of the *Sangh*, "It is Dholka's misfortune that you forgot it. I have come on behalf of Minister Vastupal to request you to grace Dholka with the *Sangh*."

The head of the *Sangh* said, "Dholka is not a village to be forgotten, nor is Minister Vastupal a name to be overlooked, but Dholka continuously receives benefits. Therefore, we thought that other villages should also receive benefits. Since you have arrived, we will have to come to Dholka. It is the good fortune of the *Sangh* that they will get to see Dholka and Chief Minister Vastupal."

After receiving the hospitality of the *Sangh*, Tejpal departed with a happy expression. Chief Minister Vastupal was confident that it was impossible that if Tejpal goes, the *Sangh* would not accept Dholka's request. Tejpal returned to Dholka with a cheerful face. The Chief Minister understood that the request had been accepted.

Preparations for the reception and honoring of the *Sangh* and devotion to deities, gurus, and fellow followers began. The land of Dholka was blessed. The day of the *Sangh*'s arrival in Dholka came. Minister Vastupal went forth to welcome the *Sangh*. The *Sangh* was not small. There were thousands of pilgrims in the *Sangh*, and it was natural for dust to rise from their movement. The head of the *Sangh* and the minister met. Seeing the dust from their feet, the head of the *Sangh* said to the Chief Minister, "Great Minister Vastupal! The number of

pilgrims in the Sangh is large, and the wind is blowing this way! Therefore, this flying dust cannot be stopped, but if we stand a little far from here, your body will not get soiled."

The Minister used to welcome such dust from the Sangh's feet as if it were saffron, intending to apply it on his forehead. Therefore, when going to see the Sangh, he asked the head of the Sangh, "Do you know what kind of soil purifies us? Do you know what kind of wandering removes worldly wandering? Are you familiar with an expenditure that causes wealth to increase and remain stable? Have you ever even dreamed of such a puja that makes the worshipper worthy of worship?"

Dust clouds were flying everywhere. Still, the minister, advancing towards the Sangh with a happy heart, asked these questions, astonishing the head of the Sangh. The head of the Sangh asked, "Minister! Your questions are extremely unusual. How does dust make one pure? How does wandering stop transmigration? How does the expenditure of wealth lead to its increase and stability, and how does worship make the worshipper worthy of worship?"

Minister Vastupal replied, "Sanghviji, this is the real specialty. The flying soil, touched by the feet of pilgrims, purifies the soul of whoever it touches. Those who wander from village to village for pilgrimage have their worldly wanderings erased. For those who utilise millions of wealth in religious activities, the continuous increase and stability of Lakshmi (wealth) become inevitable. And those who worship the Supreme Soul, those worshippers, one day become worthy of worship by becoming a Lord themselves."

Hearing these answers from the minister, the head of the Sangh's astonishment knew no bounds! At that moment, presenting something that would bring a flood of astonishment, the Minister said, "Sanghviji! Tell me, now should one run away from this dust from the Sangh's feet, or should one rush to embrace it?"

What could Sanghviji reply? By then, the conch shell announcing the Sangh's welcome sounded, and a human tide surged forth, so much so that even the sun was covered by the dust rising from their feet. Everyone, including minister, bathed in that sacred dust and became pure and blessed.

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## 15. Non-violence: The Weapon of the Brave

The first condition for practicing non-violence is valor, which means bravery. A coward can never be a lover of non-violence. In reality, non-violence means protecting other individuals even by risking one's own life. Sacrificing one's life is impossible without a sense of heroism.

To counter the ongoing attack on Patan, Dandnayak (Commander) Sajjan, who held the flag of Maharaja Kumarapal, set out for the battlefield. Thus, they reached the bank of the Banas River to fight.

As they marched, evening fell. The army was ordered to proceed. The Commander dismounted from his elephant. After performing *jayana* (careful movement to avoid harming living beings) for ants and insects, he spread a woolen mat there and began his *pratikraman* (a ritual of repentance). Some soldiers burst into laughter. While proceeding to the battlefield in the morning the Commander covered the elephant's howdah with his upper garment, rendering it lifeless. At that time, the soldiers muttered to themselves, "How can this impotence, which shows compassion for an ant's body, pierce the foreheads of elephants on the battlefield? So, abandon all hope of victory now."

In the evening, when Commander Sajjan sat for *pratikraman*, the soldiers spoke a little loudly, saying, "Now abandon all hope of victory. When such a coward becomes the commander, it's useless even to dream of victory. Non-violence is truly the religion of the impotent."

The last words struck Commander Sajjan's ears, but there was no point in replying. The sun set. The army was ordered to march. The next day, the banks of the Banas River resonated with two fronts. The war drum sounded. Hearing the sound, the warriors drew their shining swords and stood ready. The battle began.

Those soldiers, who considered non-violence the religion of cowards, watched the Commander's valor. In a short time, the Commander stained the battlefield with blood, and the flag of victory continued to bow towards Gujarat.

The Commander wielded a true sword. When an attack came, he brought his shield forward, but there was only one shield and many paths for the swords. His body was covered in blood, but he wanted to show that non-violence is not the religion of cowards; it is the religion of the brave. The path of non-violence belongs to heroes.

The Commander advanced, having sworn to stop the war. His body wore many wounds from which blood was flowing, but it seemed that this man, firmly committed to keeping the Gurjar-nation's flag high, would achieve victory.

Within moments, the war ended. The victory of Gurjar-nation was announced. The commander's blood-dripping body was carried to the camp.

The soldiers touched his feet and said, "Commander! We are guilty in word and spirit. We believed that non-violence belonged to the impotent, but after seeing your combat skills in today's battle, it seems that non-violence is the religion of the brave. Only brave warriors can walk on that path of non-violence."

The Commander, delighted to see the stain on his *dharma* removed, said, "Only a true hero can truly practice non-violence. If a coward covers his cowardice with the cloak of non-violence, it does not make non-violence the religion of cowards."

Then, to congratulate him on the victory, all the soldiers expressed their respect for non-violence and became humbly submissive.

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## 16. Cleansing the Sin with Love

Just as a person can be made to confess a crime by frightening them, similarly, the admission of a crime committed can also be made possible by gaining a person's trust through love. A crime confessed out of fear is not destroyed with its root, whereas a crime confessed through love is not repeated. Thus, love has more power to destroy criminal tendencies than fear. This eternal truth of the greater power of love may be known by many individuals, but the mastery of this truth as a conscious practice is rare.

The name of Harkor Sethani of Ahmedabad, who was rich in such a rare personality in the form of devotion and power, is etched in the pages of history. That Sethani does not exist in the world today, but in terms of fame, that Sethani is immortal even today. Every visitor to Hathi Bhai's Wadi's Jinalaya in Ahmedabad can experience this."

That Sethani, endowed with a brilliant personality, felt more pleasure in making someone confess their crime with love rather than fear.

At that time, the foundation of the temple was laid on the land of the Wadi famous as Hathi Bhai's Jinalaya. The work was progressing at full swing. Sethani Harkor handled the entire accounts of the Jinalaya. From paying wages to the laborers to deciding what kind of stone would be used where in the temple, Sethani's decision was considered final in all matters. She would come and sit before sunrise, and under her supervision, the construction work of the temple was gaining momentum. In the evening, she would pay the wages to all the laborers from the money kept under the cushion, and those laborers, leaving with a satisfied smile, would return to work the next morning, again filled with joy.

This world is covered with a veil of deception. Most people are usually more interested in manipulating things for their own selfish interests. Among the laborers working in the temple, there were also such deceitful and selfish laborers. Sethani used to pay everyone a sufficient wage according to their labor for their livelihood. One day, sin arose in the mind of a laborer named Dhaniya. Dhaniya, caught in that sin, began to think that Sethani pays money daily from under the cushion. Therefore, surely a large amount of money is buried under the cushion. If luck favors me and I can dig out that treasure, then I will have no shortage of money."

"Dhaniya, believing in the proverb 'The work was done, and the pearl was pierced,' broke into the temple that very night to fulfill his desire. He dug the land under the cushion thoroughly, but if wealth was not buried there, how could he find it? Thus, all his labor went in vain.

Sethani Harkor often used to walk around the temple at night. Dhaniya's luck was two steps ahead. She had seen him digging a hole out of greed for money. If she had revealed herself at that moment, Dhaniya would have died of fear and shame. Because of this possibility, Sethani left for her residence without saying a word.

Dhaniya returned home unsuccessful after filling the pit with soil. However, he was a religious person. He was satisfied with the failure of his sinful act, thinking that digging the pit was in vain, and that was good. Otherwise, greed would have no limit, and I might have gradually become a notorious robber. It's good that a fly appeared in the first mouthful of food.

The next morning, Dhaniya reported for work. He had no doubt that his sin would be exposed. The generous Sethani, who believed in making people confess their sins with love, treated him as usual. Evening came. All the laborers took their wages and departed. Dhaniya came last.

Without any change in the seriousness on her face, Sethani gave him a handful of money and said, "Dhaniya! Why did you come last today? Here, take your wages!"

Seeing double the usual amount in his hand, Dhaniya said, "Sethaniji! I haven't done any extra work today, so why am I being given double the usual wages? I don't want unauthorized money. You might have mistakenly given me double the wages. Therefore, please accept half the amount back and free me from sin."

"Taking recourse to love, Sethani said, "Dhaniya! Who says you haven't done double the work? The effort you put in yesterday night, digging a pit here and then refilling it, doesn't that deserve wages? I have given it after careful calculation of today's wages and the wages for your labor last night. I have not given you the money by mistake. Therefore, Dhaniya, you will have to accept this."

Dhaniya was stunned. He wished the earth would swallow him whole. He had intended to rob such a generous Sethani? Who could be a greater sinner than him? Sethani was a paragon of virtue, and he was a bitter sea filled with wickedness.

Dhaniya burst into tears. His tears continued to wash Sethani's feet. He could not speak much. He only said, "Sethani Ma! Do not shame this unfortunate sinful being further by showering the nectar of generosity. I repent for my sin of yesterday and assure you of a virtuous and pure life in the future. You are an incarnation of a goddess. I even doubt if I have the ability to thank you for your seriousness, generosity, and this righteous policy of cleansing sin with love."

He fell at Sethani's feet. Tears flowed incessantly from his eyes like the monsoon rains. He sobbed uncontrollably. Sethani Harkor gently patted him, comforting him with sympathy, and said, "Dhaniya! Making a mistake as a human being is not a big crime, but not accepting it is a grave and unforgivable crime. By accepting your mistake, you have been saved from sin."

This situation is joyful. Confession of a crime brought about by love leads to greater repentance and purity. You have set an ideal by doing that. It is a matter of great joy for me."

Hearing these words of sympathy, Dhaniya returned home. Harkor Shethani lingered before his eyes all night. He continued to offer respectful tributes to Shethani in his heart. What a sacred process this is, to annihilate sin through love and prevent its entry.

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## 17. When a Woman Becomes a Serpent

Just as milk filled in a colorful cup does not become colorful or more delicious, the taste of milk remains the same; the difference is only in the external appearance, the color is different, but the essence is what it is.

Who could explain this to Emperor Akbar? There was no shortage of beautiful women in his harem, but when he heard about the beauty and charm of Liladevi, he became absorbed in creating a mental image of making her his queen. Who could explain to a person who is enchanted by the color of the cup?

A demand is made for a maiden, not for a married woman. Liladevi was already married to King Prithviraj of Jaisalmer, but Akbar wanted to make her his queen by any means. After much thinking, finally he came up with a trick to call Liladevi. His begum Jodha Bai was the princess of the King of Jaipur. If a message will go in Jodha Bai's name, perhaps the queen would come to Delhi!

Finally, an invitation in Jodha Bai's name was sent to Liladevi to come from Jaisalmer to Delhi. As soon as Liladevi received Jodha Bai's message, her joy knew no bounds. They had an inner affection for each other. Immediately, Liladevi set out from Jaisalmer towards Delhi. All travel arrangements were ready from Delhi's side.

The journey was swift. In a few days, the journey was completed, and upon seeing the gates of Delhi, Liladevi was overjoyed. Crossing the highway, a palanquin entered the royal palace. After taking the palanquin to the harem, the maidservants left. Liladevi, eager to meet Jodha Bai, stepped out of the palanquin, but she did not see a single woman around. A royal man, sweetening the silence of the solitude with his gentle voice, said, "Liladevi! The journey was completed easily, wasn't it? I am eagerly awaiting your arrival."

"Liladevi was startled. In the royal man's voice, lust seemed more apparent than affection. That voice was Akbar's. Liladevi began to think to herself, "Oh! It's definitely a deception. Why isn't Jodha Bai present?"

To break the silence of the thoughtful Liladevi, the voice echoed again, "Liladevi! You will like the green gardens here more than the sandy land of Jaisalmer. If Prithviraj is an embodiment of beauty and charm, then this Akbar is no less. I am four fingers taller than him. You will see Jodhabai later. First, allow this pleasure-seeking bumblebee to sit on your lotus-like body to drink the pollen of love".

Liladevi closed her ears. Assuming the form of *Rann-chandika* (goddess of war), she said, "Akbar! You rule over Delhi, yet you are so dependent on ruling the heart? The sun may



believe that I have the freedom to gaze upon thousands of lotuses, but a lotus does not look beyond one sun. I am a lotus. For me, there is only one sun, and he is seated on the throne of Jaisalmer."

Seeing the power of chastity behind these words, Akbar was stunned. Each word was as fierce as the twang of a bowstring. Akbar said, "Lila! You are in Delhi and that too in an impenetrable solitude. You seem to be speaking without understanding this truth. There is only one way to be freed from this captivity: the acceptance of my love. Do not worry about Prithviraj. Tell me your final decision? If you agree with love, it's fine, otherwise....."

Akbar's outstretched arms seemed to tremble Liladevi like a terrible cobra. Seeing that no solution would work to remove the cloud that had gathered over her chastity other than her sacrifice, she drew her dagger. Like a lioness, she roared with pride, "Akbar! If my beauty and youth are dear to you, then my chastity is even dearer to me. You are an emperor. Protection is your duty, but when you yourself are ready to devour, then it becomes my duty to sacrifice myself on the altar of sacrifice. Even as an emperor, you have become impotent in preserving my wealth of chastity, then this dagger will protect me. A woman can be adorned as a *Narayani* (divine feminine power) who can even become a serpent for the sake of protecting *dharma*."

And at that very moment, Liladevi, with her own hand, plunged the sharp dagger into her stomach and became a martyr for her *dharma*. The verbal arrows of Liladevi, who became a martyr for her *dharma*, could not pierce Akbar's heart as much as her lifeless body and her silent stillness continued to tear through his inner being.

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## 18. Giving Life

Some life's *sitar* (a stringed musical instrument, here used metaphorically for a person's life and legacy) are so amazing that even after the strings break, the melody of their songs continues to resonate. The music of Mahakavi (great poet) Magh's life-sitar was just like that. In the history of the world, even today, his fame is immortal not only as a poet but also as a great benefactor. The first half of his life was as glorious as the latter half was full of calamities and obstacles.

If a person is born without eyes, they do not feel as much sorrow, but if they lose their existing eyes, there is no end to their sorrow. However, this was not the case for Mahakavi Magh. As the evening of his life approached, his wealth began to diminish. Yet, he did not feel sad about this. His only worry was that no beggar should return disappointed from his door.

The poet's wife, Malhanadevi, was as charitable as Magh. Once, the time came for poet Magh to depart from his homeland, but his fame as a giver did not allow him to sit peacefully even in the forest. Crowds of beggars started gathering there too. Whatever he had, he distributed freely. Now the time came to worry about tomorrow as well.

The poet asked his wife, "What will I give to the beggars tomorrow? Will our unbroken vow be broken tomorrow?"

"The poet's wife said, "Arya! You are a poet. Write a few poems. As long as the flags of Dhara Nagari, which appreciate poetry, keep fluttering, the flow of charity will continue." Poet Magh composed a poem. Taking that poem, Malhanadevi set out towards Dhara Nagari."

The lonely poet began to ponder over the past days of his life. As he flowed in the stream of thoughts, he felt satisfied with one thing that not a single beggar had returned disappointed from his door. A doubt arose in his mind whether his wife would like all this or not?

Meanwhile, poet Magh's wife reached Dhara Nagari. A meeting of scholars was gathered there. As soon as Magh's poem was mentioned, a wave of enthusiasm swept through King Bhoj's limbs and organs. When he saw a verse, it seemed as if poet Magh himself was narrating his own story under the guise of describing the world order. That poem described a lotus pond.

As soon as wealth departs from the lotus forest, the passionate bumblebees go away. As evening falls, the sun bids farewell. Oh! How strange are the turns and twists of fate?

King Bhoj's heart ached. He gave three lakh rupees to the poet's wife and sent her off. On hearing the announcement of the reward, the poet's wife as well as the beggars became extremely overjoyed. The poet's wife generosity was a ray of hope for them. The poet's wife

came out of the royal assembly. The beggars, who had gathered from all sides, surrounded her. Compared to Magh, his wife was even more generous. In no time, she distributed the reward of three lakh among the beggars.

In the forest, poet Magh was waiting for Malhanadevi. Seeing his wife come empty-handed, he was surprised—has the respect for Saraswati ceased on the land of Dhara? He asked, "Devi! Didn't Maharaja Bhoj meet you?"

Malhanadevi said with tearful eyes, "Arya! The Maharaja did meet me. I also received a reward of three lakh, but seeing the scattered poverty everywhere along the way, the hearts standing with hope at every step, and the affectionate pleas at every turn, my heart couldn't hold back, and I donated all three lakh."

Mahakavi Magh stood up. His body, from head to toe, thrilled with joy. He said, "Devi! Today I had doubted whether you agreed with my madness for giving donations or not? But today my delusion is gone. You have truly acted worthy of a great philanthropist today. Wealth was accumulated in every birth, but when does this opportunity to earn virtue come again?"

The poet couple considered the moments of giving donations to be the blessed moments of life. Meanwhile, a person full of hope was seen approaching from a distance. That beggar who had come following Malhanadevi, stood before the poet with outstretched hands. The clouds had already shed their last drop and were devoid of water, yet the poet asked, "Devi! This hungry and sorrowful beggar has come, is there anything left to give?"

Malhanadevi said: Yes, there is."

Poet Magh extended his palms, and Malhanadevi filled them with tears. The seeker understood the situation. He returned, feeling overwhelmed by their generosity. Even though he received nothing, the satisfaction of having received something made his face radiant. Seeing that seeker going away empty-handed from his door, Magh began to cry. With a choked voice, he pleaded to his life: "Oh life! Are you still here? After a seeker's plea has gone in vain, you should not remain. Ultimately, it is inevitable for you to abandon this body and depart, so why not go now? Look, that seeker is leaving. When will you get such company again?"

All the tears accumulated in Poet Magh's heart welled up and spilled out. His eyes were weeping, and his heart was burning."

History states that this sorrow proved so unbearable that at that very moment, the life of poet Magh flew away like a bird. On that day, was it the loss of a poet or a great benefactor? This became a profound question for the world.

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## 19. Magic and Yogi

One who performs miracles is not a true ascetic. Someone who uses miracles merely for spectacle, amusement, or to display power is certainly not an ascetic. If one has to perform a miracle to fulfill a duty and then be revered for it, is it possible for their asceticism to remain untainted? However, how can the yogic powers of someone who performs miracles solely to subjugate the world remain potent?

A *Yogi* (ascetic) certainly knows magic, but before wielding a magical stick, he takes extremely cautious steps.

Shri Mantungsuriiji was a great *Yogi*. Miracles bowed at his feet. One day, such a problem arose before him that he had to demonstrate the power of his yogic energy to protect the prestige of the (Jain) order. On that day, a challenge arose in King Bhoj's court. Mayur and Baan Pandits presented new miracles to attract King Bhoj towards their power

It is said that Pandit Baan had directly manifested the Sun god and transformed his leprosy-ridden body into one of golden complexion, and Pandit Mayur had pleased Bhavani (the Goddess) and regained his severed hands and feet. This made Mayur and Baan, and their deities, the sole objects of praise throughout the city. The chests of Brahmins swelled and remained stretched with pride. They filled King Bhoj's ears, saying, "Maharaj! The Jains, who claim all kinds of perfection, should be challenged to either show miracles or bow at the feet of Mayur and Baan.

King Bhoja, in a playful mood, challenged Jainism, saying, "Either show miracles or bow at the feet of the Brahmins."

"The echo of the challenge reached Shri Mantungsuriiji. He accepted it. Alerting the Jain community, he said, "Yogis do not perform magic, but when the brilliance and glory of Jainism are challenged, Jain acharyas would not simply stand by and watch."

Shri Manatungasuriiji stood before King Bhoja's court. He said, "O King! Miracles are not children's toys to be used to please people. Just as grass grows while cultivating grain, miracles are something attained while striving for liberation. A yogi is not evaluated solely by magic. One who performs magic merely to gain more recognition and fame is not a true yogi. Nevertheless, since you have challenged Jainism, tell me, which miracle should I perform?"

Bhoj thought of creating such a strong strategy from which this Jain Acharya could not escape. Bhoj was lost in thought when Mantungsuriiji himself spoke up, "O King! If you say so, should I break iron chains? If you wish, I can open the closed door and come out and

show you. If you say, I can fly in the sky and enter the netherworld and show you. Whatever you ask, I am ready to do, but the flag of my Jain religion must fly high."

Bhojraj smiled and said, "Suriiji! Your hands and feet will be bound with iron chains, and you will be put in a secret chamber. Thereafter, you have to come out of that secret chamber by the power of a miracle. Let me also see how readily your deity helps you?"

Immediately, Mantungsuriiji's body was bound with iron chains, but only the body was made captive. The one who controlled that body was free. Shri Mantungsuriiji became a captive to uphold the honor of the Jain religion. Forty-four iron chains were tightened on his body. The body was constrained, but the mind and speech were free. Who would remember any gods or goddesses? He began offering salutations to the 'Vitarag':  
'*Bhaktamarpranatmaulimaniprabhanam...*'

Soldiers were enjoying themselves all around. King Bhoj was present to seek the truth. Meanwhile, the sound of "*khanan-khan, khanan-khan*" began to come repeatedly. As each verse of that prayer, saluting the Vitaraga, was being sung, one by one, the iron chains continued to break.

Shri Mantungsuriiji, free in his inner self, was so absorbed and engrossed in devotion to Lord Yugadi Jineshwar that he forgot the distinction of place and time. It was as if there was no difference between the devotee and God. Just then, the last chain on Suriiji's body broke and scattered far and wide. Only then did he realize that his body has become free from bondage.

Giving *dharmlabh* (religious discourse) to King Bhoj, that Yogi said, "O King! Never make the mistake of measuring the greatness of yoga with magic. I do not desire the salutations of the world. There is no greatness in buying salutations by paying the price of a miracle. Well, now I am leaving. If the feeling and eagerness to understand the great value of liberation arise, then you must remember me."

And the Yogi did not even stop to receive salutations in exchange for performing miracles. The same sound was still echoing in everyone's ears that "one who performs magic to show their own fame and glory is not a Yogi."

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## 20. The Fragrance of Sanctitude

Struggle for power and conspiracies for women; betrayal, bloodshed, and murder for the stability of the throne, and inviting violent war to destabilize the thrones of other rulers and bring them under one's control – this has generally become the disposition of rulers of the world.

This nature of the world is centuries old. In ancient times, there were some moral restraints. But today, nature has become unrestrained. The essence of the rest of the world has remained the same. History is a witness to this.

Amidst such a conflict-ridden world, is it not surprising that the monarchy, which came in the tradition of kings, could remain stable? How many countries would raise arms against one king? Yet, what would be that inaccessible power that keeps that king's kingdom stable?

The answer by the man of tradition is – Kings remained stable with the support of their righteousness. Monarchy continued due to the strength of its purity. Powerful nations that relied on the sword instead of righteousness collapsed, and no one could harm even a hair of weaker nations that had faith in truth rather than weapons. Purity is considered the foundation of monarchy. Whenever this foundation was weakened, magnificent and splendid buildings turned into ruins with a single breath of the enemy.

Bhuyraj was a pure and virtuous man. Despite being a *bhogi* (enjoyer), he had a desire to live like a *yogi* (ascetic). This inner self of a human is like the sky. The sky is sometimes illuminated by the white moonlight of a full moon, and on some days, the darkness of the new moon also spreads its blackness. Once, in the sky of Bhuyraj's inner self, which was illuminated by the light of the full moon, a dark cloud of lustful thoughts gathered, and the inner light was obstructed.

There were many queens in the harem, but a beautiful woman entered the mind of the king who had gone out for a stroll. From her first sight, Bhuyraj lost his mental purity.

A detached Bhuyraj returned. He sent a trusted servant to bring the woman who had captivated his mind, by telling him(servant) her location.

A servant is a master's attendant. What more could he say? He did not have the ability to talk big due to his low status, but as soon as he heard about that woman, his heart became distressed and his head began to spin. He beat his head and said to himself, "For the sake of filling the stomach, even commands that deserve to be trampled underfoot have to be obeyed. O stomach! Is this the reward for the peace and comfort I have given you until today?"

The servant departed. He found the told location easily. Upon hearing the king's command, the woman agreed to come to the palace at night

The servant's distress grew. He thought, "If the shield itself acts as a sword, who will protect?" Night fell. King Bhuyraj's bedchamber was decorated differently today. A pavilion was created with such intoxicating beauty that even the stone of purity would melt into water.

At the appointed and fixed time, a figure of beauty entered the bedchamber. As soon as King Bhuyraj heard the jingle of her anklets, his heart, like a peacock, began to dance. He stretched out both his arms to embrace her, but the beautiful woman asked a double-meaning question, "Maharaj! If the lotus itself gets covered in mud, how will other flowers remain pure?"

King Bhuyraj repeatedly pondered that question with seriousness. "Oh! I am that lotus. If I become dirty and stained with the mud of lust, my 'lotus-vow' will be tarnished. It is the lotus's compulsion to be born in mud, but to rise above it, to remain pure in the midst of mud, is the true meaning of its life. For this reason, the 'lotus' is famous as an ideal for yogis. Getting stuck in the mud of lust would be an accidental mishap for a human, but their ideal is to rise safely and purely from this mishap and enjoy the blessedness of a holy life."

Bhuyraj replied, "Sister! The lotus will not be defiled by mud. Not as a king, but as an ordinary human, I will never forget your favor in reminding me of my duty. Will you introduce yourself?"

"I am just one of your maidservants. The one whom you ordered to bring me here is my husband. If I am considered his maidservant, why not yours too? Your servant's maidservant is also your maidservant."

As he bid farewell to the maidservant, King Bhuyraj's eyes held feelings of fraternal affection rather than desire. The seriousness of his servant seemed to tell him that sometimes a servant can possess more competence than the master.

The clouds of lust dissipated from within Bhuyraj, and the light of pure character spread there once again. Nevertheless, his mind could not fully immerse itself in worship. The arms he had extended to embrace another woman kept reminding him of the sin in his mind. Finally, he decided to severely punish these arms. However, who would punish the king who punishes everyone? In the end, he decided to become both the offender and the judge himself.

After midnight, Bhuyraj left his bedchamber and stood outside. According to the plan he had made in his mind, he disguised himself as a thief. The sentries were shouting warnings for everyone to be vigilant. There was silence in the atmosphere. Bhuyraj, disguised as a thief, put both his arms through the window of the royal palace. The sentry inside became alert. Gritting his teeth inwardly, he said, "Do you want to steal from the royal palace? Take it, take



it, the consequence of this sinful act!" And he swiftly struck those intruding arms with his sword. Immediately, both arms were severed. A fountain of blood erupted.

Bhuyraj stepped back with satisfaction and a smile. What use were those arms that had been extended to embrace another woman? What if they remained, and what if they didn't? Those arms, which recalled the terrible memory of lust, fell severed, and his mind became absorbed in worship.

In the morning, there was a commotion in the royal palace as people searched for Bhuyraj. Severed arms lay in one part of the palace. When the cabinet (group of ministers) saw those arms, they perceived some mystery.

Silence fell all around. Finally, King Bhuyraj was seen absorbed in meditation in a corner of the outer section of the royal palace. The ministers reached there. Blood was flowing from the king's body. Both arms appeared severed. The ministers asked, "Maharaj! What is this? How are you here? Who is that murderer who cut off your arms?"

Bhuyraj said, "Silence! The one who cut off my arms is not a murderer; it is I myself, no one else. Whether lust-contaminated arms are present or not, both are the same."

He narrated the entire account in detail. Finally, he said, "If a king, upon whose head rests the duty of making the fragrance of purity worldwide, does not perform such a severe penance, how can the purity of the subjects remain?"

History goes on to say that the dignity of Bhuyraj, who had a spirit of sacrifice to fulfill the duty of making the fragrance of purity worldwide, proves that sacrifice never goes in vain. Through divine practice, arms reappeared on Bhuyraj's body, but those arms and hands now felt good doing nothing other than worship. Bhuyraj became a renunciate and departed for the forest path.

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## 21. Anonymous Donor

The sweet sound of chisels echoing and creating in the mountain caves of Arbudachal had just ceased. The grand *Jinalaya* (Jain temple) of Lord Adishwar was complete. Shravak Bhim had advanced this wonderful construction by spending money like water.

The towering spires of the Jinalaya were resplendent. Its walls appeared as strong as iron. As soon as Bhim Shravak saw the completion of this construction, he began to praise wealth: “Wealth! You are connected to virtue, that such a creation has come into being through your association.”

Rich merchants and businessmen from villages began to come to see the magnificent beauty of the Jinalaya. The creation of the idol was yet to be done. There was still a delay before the consecration could begin. Before that, the religious land of Arbudachal was bustling with the arrival of pilgrims.

Bhim Shresthi was observing the temple with insatiable eyes. He desired to make the idol grander than the temple itself. His inner wish was to construct an idol not just of stone, but of brass. At an auspicious moment, the program for casting the idol began. Heaps of brass were being put into large furnaces. Pilgrims would stand to watch all this, and the imagination of the idol’s grandeur would fill them with emotion. Dhanak Shresthi from Prahlananpur was also standing there. The thought came to his mind that if his wealth could be used for this idol, he would be blessed. “If not a flower, then at least a petal,” he thought. He requested Bhim Shresthi, “Seth! You are fortunate. You have constructed this entire magnificent temple, and now you are also casting this solid, massive idol?”

Bhim Shresthi asked, “Who Dhanak Shresthi? Are you not from Prahlananpur?”

“Yes, yes.”

“Seth! It is the grace of the Lord and the affection of the Sangh that such a benefit can be taken. Alright, this is also a good deed, but a heap of misdeeds has also accumulated in life. In this, how much does this good deed account for?”

“No, Seth! This is wrong. The heap of misdeeds is like a mountain, and good deeds are trivial. There is no need to be disheartened by the vastness of one and to abandon enthusiasm due to the dwarfness of the other. What needs to be seen is that between the vast and the dwarf, which side has more power and who can shower sparks of fire? Even if the vast remains vast, but if the dwarf is powerful, then that vastness is merely a show. A single spark of fire is more powerful than a mountainous heap of cotton.”

“Seth! You approve by looking at external things, but...” Interrupting Bhim Shresthi’s statement, he came straight to the point and said, “Seth, my point is different. You have accumulated so much virtue, so now keep some share for me too. This brass idol is being cast, if some of my gold is included in it, you’ll be pleased, won’t you?”

“No, no, I don’t want such a wrong desire.”

“Wrong desire? How? Can you explain to me?”

Bhim Shresthi began to explain to Dhanak Seth:

“If I take your gold for this idol and people think it’s all Bhim Shresthi’s, what else is this if not an unauthorized desire for fame?”

“Wow, wow! You are truly intelligent. Why don’t you just clearly say that you don’t want to include my share?”

“Unauthorized fame?”

There was a lot of debate between Bhim and Dhanak Shresthi. Bhim Shresthi remained firm. He was not even willing to imagine mixing Dhanak’s gold into his idol. Dhanak Shresthi inwardly bowed to Bhim Shresthi’s sentiment, but the feeling of charity was strong within him.

Just as unnamed martyrs have arisen from the soil of this earth and become more immortal by embracing death, similarly, unnamed donors are a major gift to this earth. Dhanak Shresthi was also such an unnamed donor. All night he remained anxious, searching for a way to donate. Where there is a will, there is a way; where there is a feeling, a path is found. Dhanak found the path to donation: anonymous donation.

In the morning, Dhanak Seth was ready to follow the path he had found after thinking all night. He adorned himself with valuable ornaments.

The work of vigorously putting brass pieces into glowing furnaces was underway. The brass pieces were melting and molding into the form of an idol. Dhanak Seth saw that there was silence there. Bhim Shresthi was a little far away. He peeked into the furnace, and pretending to just look, he threw his own many valuable gold ornaments he had brought with him into the furnace. The flames of the furnace seemed to be praising that donation and the donor.

The anonymous donor! Secret donation! Bhim Shresthi remained in the dark. Due to the donation of an anonymous donor, that brass idol shone like gold. Even after many years, the anonymous donation did not allow even a speck of tarnish to settle on that idol.

Anonymous donor! You are fortunate that your donation gave the brass idol the shine of gold.

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## 22. The Amazing Effect of Non-Violence

The memory of a glorious virtuous woman is associated with Jamnagar city. Jamnagar and that glorious personality are worthy of being monuments to each other. The name of that glorious virtuous woman was 'Kesar Maa.' Many people could be envious of the success and fame 'Kesar Maa' achieved as the goddess of compassion. 'Kesar Maa,' who kept the blazing flame of Jainism ignited in her heart, often used to say, "If there is only the sound of *dharma* (righteousness), then where can the echo of *adharma* (unrighteousness) come from? If there is compassion in the heart, how can a person be cruel?" The occasion arose for Kesar Maa's faith in dharma to undergo an *agni-pariksha* (ordeal) and reveal its own brilliance.

Kesar Maa had gone towards the well for some work. There was no thought in her mind that she would get an opportunity to practice non-violence further on. When she went a little further, her compassionate heart was tormented by the scene she saw there. A black cobra was fleeing for its life. Its color was completely black. A group of Muslim boys was chasing it with sticks in their hands. The snake was going forward, and the group of boys was following right behind it.

Seeing this scene, Kesar Maa's heart cried out: "Oh! Will this poor snake have to die an untimely death? If I watch its death before my eyes, my Jainism will be tarnished, my non-violence will be considered cowardly."

Kesar Maa immediately went and stood in the middle of the group. She said: "Beware! If you take even one step further!" Hearing Kesar Maa's voice, everyone stopped. A voice came from the group: "First, finish off the black snake. If its shadow even falls on someone, their life will be lost."

Kesar Maa said, "This land of India says that even a criminal should be honored. This snake is innocent. It can never be killed. The way to remove its cruelty is not these sticks, but affection. If our compassion has power, then the snake's cruelty will surely vanish. This amazing process of non-violence did not go down well with the Muslims. A voice came from the group: "We will only rest after getting rid of this snake. Such a venomous snake can never be kept alive."

In a compassionate voice, Kesar Maa protested, "Will my words not be understood by anyone? Please believe me. The echo of a compassionate heart is compassion itself, not cruelty. Can this cobra's life not be freed from fear by any means?"

“Yes, there is a way,” one from the group replied. That person, under the guise of an impossible solution, wanted to take Kesar Maa's silent consent for violence. He said, "If you catch this venomous cobra in your hand and release it in a deserted place, then we have no objection. We will not kill it. Why should you be afraid? If there is compassion in your heart, then try to catch that snake."

Kesar Maa's compassionate heart smiled. His proposal did not go in vain. Delighted by the proposal, Kesar Maa became ready to demonstrate the amazing non-violent effect of releasing the black-faced cobra alive. She said with the poise of a brave woman, "Oh! What is there in this? I am non-violent, so the effect of non-violence will arise. Non-violence is in my heart; its effect will suppress even the snake's venom."

The group became eager to see the effect of non-violence. With fearless steps, Kesar Maa reached right near the snake. She mentally recalled the great *Navkar mantra* and, as if picking up a garland of flowers, she picked up that black snake in her hand with such natural ease and walked towards the forest. The snake quietly coiled up in Kesar Maa's hands like a rope.

After giving the snake refuge in the deserted forest, Kesar Maa returned, feeling satisfied that she had fulfilled her duty. In this way, her religious faith, which had become more radiant from this severe ordeal, surely made the proponents of violence ponder, even if for a moment.

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## 23. In One Night

Where was Pratishthanpur and where was Bhrigupur? There was only one night in between. In the morning, the horse was to be sacrificed in Bhrigupur, and the *Ashwamedha Yajna* was to be marked with a full stop.

Lord Shri Munisuvratswami was sanctifying Pratishthanpur. If a vast distance of 60 *yojanas* could be covered in the night, then the horse to be sacrificed in that *yajna* in Bhrigupur could be saved alive.

An immense ocean of compassion was surging within Lord Munisuvratswami. Without considering the short time and long distance, he departed for Bhrigupur. Following the Lord, the *Shraman Sangh* also set off.

Every moment was precious. Every single moment worth millions of rupees was passing. For the sake of granting fearlessness and self-welfare of one horse, they had to reach Bhrigupur in a short time. The Lord was traveling without caring for his body. Self-welfare of the horse was dearer to him

As the night passed, Pratishthanpur became further and further away, and Bhrigupur became closer and closer. Covering such a long distance in a single night, Lord Shri Munisuvratswami and the *Shraman Sangh* reached a garden situated on the outskirts of Bhrigupur.

That day, the final offering was to be made on the altar of the *Yajna*. That sacrificial fire, which had been burning for many days, was about to be extinguished after the final oblation. For the sake of saving the life of a horse, the Lord travelled from Pratishthanpur to Bhrigupur in a single night. The entire Bhrigupur was astonished by this unexpected news. People started saying: "Oh, such a great journey! And that too in one night, and for a single horse!".

The horse was also fortunate. Seeing the river flowing outside Bhrigupur, it also remembered its previous birth, because in its previous birth, the horse also had a connection with that flowing river.

King Jitshatru also could not understand anything. When he learned that the Lord himself had made such a great journey for the sake of the horse to be sacrificed in the *Yajna* organized by him, he also came before the Lord with the horse.

As soon as the horse saw the Lord, tears began to flow from its eyes. Jitshatru was astonished. He expressed his curiosity.

The moment had come to achieve the spiritual accomplishment for which the great journey was undertaken in one night. The Lord said, "O King! This great journey was not undertaken in vain for the sake of a horse. This horse is my friend from a previous birth. It was about to be sacrificed on the altar today, but its future is bright. This horse, upon hearing about its past life, will fast for seven days and, dying here, will become a deity in the '*Sahastrar*' *devlok* (abode of gods). After being born in the *devlok*, this horse will see its previous life, and in memory of this enlightenment, it will establish a pilgrimage site named 'Ashwavbodh' on this bank of the Narmada river."

Tears were in the horse's eyes, and curiosity was in the eyes of the public. Lord Munisuvrat Swami narrated to the horse its past life, hearing which the horse fasted for seven days, and eventually, its soul became a deity in the '*Sahastrar*' *devlok*.

In the '*Sahastrar*' *devlok*, that deity remembered its past life. It recalled the favors of the Lord, who had come from Pratishtanpur to Bhargupur in a single night for its salvation, and it established the 'Ashwavbodh' pilgrimage there.

That desolate bank of the Narmada became sacred like a pilgrimage. Lord Shri Munisuvrata Swami was consecrated as the presiding deity of that pilgrimage site. Even today, that pilgrimage stands with its proud elevated peaks, cherishing the memories of an amazing, supernatural and thrilling history.

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# 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

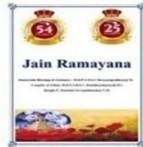


## Golden Path Towards Nirvaan

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



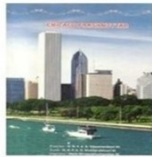
## Maynasundari

(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

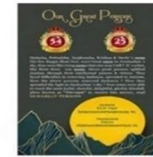


## Chicago Prashnottar

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

No. of Pages: 214

Published: 2018

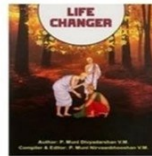


## Our Great Persons

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

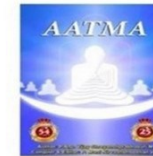


## Life Changer

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

No. of Pages: 40

Published: 2023



## 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

Published: 2023

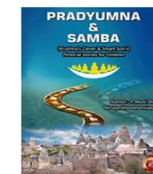


## Jain Mahabharat

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 & Samba

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

No. of Pages: 20

Published : 2024

## About the Compiler

The compiler pujya Anuyogacharya S. Nirvaanbhooshanvijayji Gani 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 and luxuries, to achieve high level of spirituality. When he was a teenager boy, influenced by the western culture started hating, not only Indian cultures and traditions but Jain religion also. He often went to Jain upashray, just to listen and 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 Hembhushansuriswaraji Maharaja**, to make his English powerful.

He was too obedient to follow each and every order of his Guru. Hence, he was given responsibility of giving 'pravachans' to children and teenagers, 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, etc., in English also. He became able of compiling books and translating pravachans in English. He also helped his Guru M. in translating case papers of Sammet-shikharji, Antarikshji, etc. He has a mastery of converting hearts of children, teenagers and 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 and lucid language, would help children, teenagers, 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





## Brief Introduction of the Pilgrim of Literary Pilgrimage

- **Birth Name:** Prakashkumar
- **Father's Name:** Babulal Shah
- **Mother's Name:** Shrimati Shataben
- **Birth:** V. S. 2001, Ashwin Krishna - 13, Nashik (Maharashtra)
- **Diksha (Initiation):** V. S. 2011, Vaishakh Shukla - 7, Dhasai (Murbad) (Maharashtra)
- **Diksha Age:** 9 years
- **Yogkshem Vahak:** Param P.A. Shri Ramchandra Surishwarji Maharaja
- **Jeevan Ghadvaiya:** Dadaguru P.A. Shri Muktichandra Surishwarji Maharaj
- **Gurudev:** P.A. Shri Jaykunjar Surishwarji Maharaja (Father Guru)
- **Laghu Bandhu:** Pujya Shri Muktiprabh Surishwarji Maharaj
- **Vadidiksha:** V. S. 2011, Jyeshtha Shukla - 5, Junnar (Maharashtra)
- **Ganipad:** V. S. 2041, Phalguna Shukla - 3, Hastagiri Teerth
- **Panyasapad:** V. S. 2044, Phalguna Krishna - 3, Shripalnagar (Mumbai)
- **Acharyapad:** V. S. 2047, Vaishakh Shukla - 6, Gopipura, Surat
- **Surimantra Sadhana:** V. S. 2056, Bhabhar Teerth (84 days)
- **Shishyadi Sampada:** 24
- **Literary Creation:**
  - More than 201 books on Historical life events, serial stories, inspiring philosophical compositions, essays, collection of good thoughts, etc.,
  - Scholarly guidance to the monthly 'Kalyan' magazine in Jain Sangh for 45 years,.
  - Regular writing in renowned daily newspapers like Gujarat Samachar, Lokhsatta, Phulchhab, Sambhav, Rakhewal, etc., for many years.
  - Writing introductions for hundreds of books.

### Special Achievements:

- Source of inspiration for unparalleled Shrutmandir Shankheshwar of Shrutraksha
- The first historical Chaturmas at Jagjaywant Jeerawala Parshwaprabhu's shrine
- Pratisthacharya of Shree Poshali Parshwanath Teerth under 108 Parshwanath
- Sattavisha Sangh Pratibodhak



## About The Author (World's Best Author)

The author H.H.P.A.D.S.V Purnachandra S.M. accepted monkhood at the tender age of just nine with his dad-monk & brother-monk. He started to write big motivational essays, historical unknown stories, heart capturing novels, articles, etc., at the age of just eighteen. He thinks, writes and meditates for 10 hours a day from decades.

He is just like a living 'Dictionary' of Gujarati language. He has written more than 201 books, in a very simple, lucid and attractive style, which captures the mind of readers for whole life. He is compiling top-most magazine of Jainism from several years. He has written articles in many top-most newspapers of India on various topics.

When I was in English medium school, I hated to read books in Gujarati language due to the influence of western cultures. But his books didn't only bring me near the mother language but to Indian real history and tradition also. His books also helped me to give up my dream of going to abroad and in accepting monkhood also; So but obvious for me, he is 'The World's Best Author'.

I am too glad and happy because he showered grace on me to compile his ever first series of English edition books in ever since first navvanoo (99) yatra of Shankheshwar in his pious Nishra. With the help of his and my disciples and Punyam Academy Pvt. Ltd. , I am able to complete the task, which is almost impossible for me.

His pen is more effective than atom bomb because it destroys the bad feelings and increases 'sanskar', 'sadachar' and 'sadvichar'.

We hope that his spirituals journey continues for a very long period because best publishers have also published his books, which gives a strong aim to attain 'Nirvaan'.

**Head of the biggest sect of Jainism,  
Gachadhipati, H.H.P.A.D.S.V. Hembhoosan S.M's disciple Anuyogacharya  
S. Nirvaanbhoosan V. Gani**

