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P. P. Nyayvisharad Acharyadev Shrimadvijay

BHUVANBHANU SURISHWARJI MAHARAJA

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Dedicated to Great Ascetic of This Age



P. P. Siddhant Mahodadhi Acharyadev Shrimadvijay
PREM SURISHWARJI MAHARAJA



P. P. Nyayvisharad Acharyadev Shrimadvijay
BHUVANBHANU SURISHWARJI MAHARAJA



P. P. Suvishal Gachchadhipati
Acharyadev Shrimadvijay
JAYGHOSH SURISHWARJI MAHARAJA



P. P. Prashantmurti Vartaman Gachchadhipati
Acharyadev Shrimadvijay
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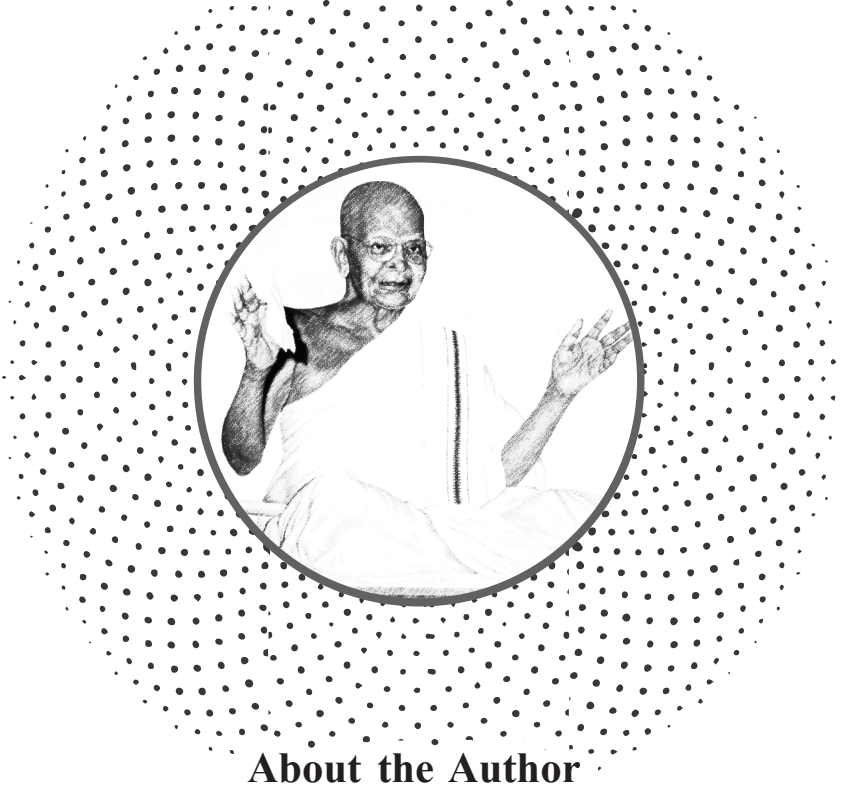


Suvishal Gachchhadhipati Param Pujaya Acharyadev

SHRIMADVIJAY JAYGHOSH SURISHWARJI MAHARAJA

A temple of devotion, a milestone of erudition,
A tireless traveller on the path of salvation,
Having virtues of an entire generation in his private possession,
No doubt, his glory has spread in every direction.

On the glorious occassion of Pujyashri's
86th Birthday.
May He live a long life!



About the Author

"Jain Acharya Param Pujya Bhuvanbhanu Surishwarji Maharaj"

A clairvoyant, academic genius, profound thinker, skilful orator, versatile writer, incredible mentor of approximately 250 disciples, great sage, and above all, humble devotee of Lord Mahavira and his religious order.

Surishwarji was instrumental in bringing about a revolution in Jainism during the early 20th century. His effective skills and sight, impactful words and acts shook the youth and brought their fast-paced worldly life to a momentary halt. A halt to think, reflect and contemplate upon where their current lifestyle was leading them...

Surishwarji had acquired the prestigious GDA degree (Government Diploma in Accounting, equivalent to the current Chartered Accountants degree in India) of London. Thereafter, he renounced the material world and accepted Jain monkhood.

Along with following the strict code of conduct of Jainism, he sunk into the endless ocean of Jain literature.

He was a renowned scholar of Prakrit, Sanskrit and Gujarati, and had mastered every aspect of Indian philosophy.

After years of in-depth study of Jain scriptures, he could explain advanced concepts of philosophy in lucid language to the masses.

His motivationg and heart-rending sermons created a magical effect on people from all walks of life. In a short span on 5 years, as many as 35 youngsters from affluent families of Mumbai renounced the material world and accepted monkhood.

He started a weekly magazine, *Divya-Darshan*, in 1952, which was published for 42 years.

Using his knowledge, logic, intelligence and convincing power, he was even successful in changing the thought process of a former Prime Minister of India on the subject of *"Child Diksha"*.

He invented the innovative concept of *"Shibir"* (youth camps). These camps played a pivotal role in increasing

the faith of the younger generation in religion, thereby providing them with a progressively satisfied and happy life.

There are no appropriate words to describe the transformation brought about by this legend in the first decade of the 20th century. Looking at his life, we understand that he lived many lives in one. He was not a jack of all trades but a master of all.

His unmatched ascetic legacy is now under the able leadership of **Gachchādhipati Āchārya Shri Jayghośh Sūriswarji**, who heads the world's largest and most reputed group of Jain monks.

INTRODUCTION

The western culture that has so immensely influenced our culture has resulted in many irreversible problems. One of them being the ignorance of the importance of our mother tongue and other regional languages.

The shortcomings of the unawareness of one's mother tongue are multiple, the major setback being deprived of one's prosperous culture, glorious traditions and it's intrinsic features which cannot be known otherwise (i.e., without the knowledge of the mother tongue). It is in this context that great visionaries are motivated to translate our literature from religional languages to English to ensure it's universal acceptance. But however hard you strive to bring out a lucid and apt translation, full justice can't be done. This does not merely denote the limitations of the English vocabulary but brings to light the limitations and poverty of the culture itself.

For eg. For 'Paap', the English dictionary has a word 'Sin'. But for 'Punya', you will find no word which substitutes the word 'Punya'. Does this symbolize the absence of the important element 'Punya' in their culture itself ? Food for thought! The closest available substitute I found for Punya was 'Fortune', which justifies this title.

Coming to the point, under the present of Narsinh's captivating story. Param Pujya Acharya Bhuvanbhanu Soorishwarjee Maharaja throws light on the power of Punya, the prime source of Punya - Almighty Arihant Lords and the altimate fruits of Punya. Narsinh's life sketch familiarized

the reader with the age-old maxim - 'As you sow, so you reap' thereby emphosizing the need to be alert about one's actions.

In today's technological and logic-demanding era, the baseless iden that idol worship is the worship of a piece of stone has inereasingly gained weight. Story Narsinh's instance effectively reforts this idea by highlighting the miraculous effects that he experienced by heartly worshipping Arihant Lord's idols. In reality, such great are it's fusits that devotedly worshipping Arihant Lords is no less than worshipping Arihant Lords, Himself.

It is the writer's innate finesse to think deep and bring out an apt moral from cash and every lil part of the story making this book a perfect combo of knowledge, story and inspirational discourse.

The chase and nin story of Narsihn and his moraculous rescues from the jaws of death compds the readers to believe in the incomparable powers of Almighty Arihant Lords and the Pujya accumulated by worshipping them. It justifies the thought,

Do the natural, He will do the supernatural
Do the ordinary, He will do the extra-ordinary
Do the possible and
He will surely do the Impossibe!

Go ahead,
read this thrilling fale,
strongthen your faith in the supreme Arihantas
and magnify your fortune manifold...



Suvishal Gachchadhipati,

Sidhant Divakar Acharya Shri

JAYGHOSHSURI MAHARAJA

Many are born, but while the birth of a majority of people is merely an addition to their cycle of birth and death, the birth of some exceptional people is instrumental in reducing their cycle of birth and death. One such person was :-

Suvishal Gachchadhipati Acharya Shri Jayghosh Suri Maharaja

Renouncing the World -

A mischievous little child frequently visiting the upashraya of Lalbaug, Mumbai caught the attention of Acharya Shri BhuvanbhanuSurishwarjee Maharaja. He saw immense maturity, deep understanding and the necessary strength of character in that mischievous lad to become a Gachchadhipati. The boy was called Jawahar.

When Jawahar was thirteen, on the auspicious day of Vaishakh Vada 6, Vikram Samvat (V.S), 2006, he and his father Mafatbhai renounced the material world and accepted the life of a Jain ascetic at Byculla, Mumbai. Along with his attire and lifestyle, Jawahar's name also changed. The pious name that was going to echo in the skies of Jinshasan with respect, glory and dignity was Muni Jayghosh Vijay.

The Grace of His Great Gurus -

In the holy presence of Dada Gurudev Acharya Shri Prem Surishwarjee Maharaja, Bal Muni Jayghosh Vijay increased his penance and ascetic practices. Meanwhile, an incident occurred which was instrumental in increasing his knowledge, virtues and punya manifold.

In the year V.S. 2011, Acharya Shri Prem Surishwarjee Maharaja was travelling from Ahmednagar to Mumbai. One day, they halted at a village named Khadki, near Pune. The evening vihar (journey carried on foot) was scheduled towards Dahanu. Muni Jayghosh Vijay was down with 104° fever and was sleeping.

Dada Gurudev commenced the vihar at 4 pm and instructed other saints, "Bring Muni Jayghosh Vijay when he wakes up."

When Muni Jayghosh Vijay woke up, he learnt that his Dada Gurudev had left.

Ignoring his fever and body pain, he immediately started the vihar and soon met Dada Gurudev on the way.

Seeing Muni Jayghosh Vijay's dedication and devotion towards Guru, Dada Gurudev blessed him wholeheartedly. This unconditional shower of grace now became Muni Jayghosh Vijay's driving force.

In each vihar thereafter, Muni Jayghosh Vijay had his mud pot in one hand and the hand of his modular (Dada gurudev) in the other.

A New Creation in Sanskrit -

In V.S. 2017, Dada Gurudev expressed his desire for the creation of new Sanskrit literature on the topic "Karmagrantha". To fulfil this task, he made a team of 11 young saints which was led by Muni Jayghosh Vijay.

Along with the huge responsibility of compiling and minutely proof reading the vast matter, Muni Jayghosh Vijay created Sanskrit commentaries amounting to 40,000 verses.

In the year V.S. 2020, Dada Gurudev made a 'will' for his group of ascetics wherein he mentioned Muni Jayghosh Vijay's name in 2 clauses and gave him certain rights combined with great responsibility.

(1) Take the advice of Muni Jayghosh Vijay in matters of scriptural discussions or questions.

(2) Hand over the leadership of Panyas Shri Bhanu Vijay's (later known as AcharyaBhuvanbhanu Suri) samudaya (sect) to Muni Jayghosh Vijay.

When the "will" was penned down, Muni Jayghosh Vijay's span of ascetic life was only fourteen years and he was merely twenty-eight years old!!

Siddhant Divakar -

In Jalgaon, Maharashtra, PujyaGurudev Acharya Shri BhuvanbhanuSurishwarjee decided to bestow Muni Jayghosh Vijay with the title of "Acharya", certifying his caliber as an ascetic, a scholar and a thinker.

On the auspicious day of Maha Shukla 13, V.S. 2040, along with the rank of Acharya, Gurudevshri bestowed him with the title 'Siddhant Divakar' to honour and felicitate his incomparable mastery of the scriptures.

Siddhant = Scriptures; Divakar = Sun

Ask him any question related to the scriptures and the answer quoting that verse of the text would be on the tip of his tongue. Hence, Acharya Jayghosh Suri acquired fame as the 'Mobile Aagam Library' of Jinshasan.

Such was the power and depth of his knowledge that Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja had answers not only to questions related to scriptures, but also to contemporary issues. Hence, the entire Sangh accepted Acharya Jayghosh Suri's decision as being the best possible solution.

Suvishal Gachchadhipati -

After Param Pujya Acharya Shri Bhuvanbhanu Suri Maharaja's Kaaldharma (passed away) on Chaitra Vad 13, V.S. 2048 (5 December 1991), Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja became the Gachchadhipati of a group of 250 saints. On the basis of his profound virtues of deep knowledge, detachment, affection, punya and effectiveness, he glorified the 'Prem-Bhuvanbhanu Suri Samuday' with more than 600 ascetics. Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja adorned the position of Gachchadhipati for 27 years and bestowed his blessings on each segment the Sangh.

In the entire Jain Sangh, the world 'Gachchadhipati' became a synonym for Gachchadhipati Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja.

Siddhi Tapa -

To maintain unity in Jain Sanghs, Gachchadhipatigurudev Shri Jayghosh Suri Maharaja carried out a unique experiment. Whenever he spent his chaturmas, he would mingle with the nearby sanghs and ensure a collective chaturmas of all the sanghs.

Siddhi Tapa proved to be a thread uniting all the pearls (Sanghs).

Gachchadhipati Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja's pachakhan (permission-cum-blessing to practise a specific penance) was so powerful that those who had not even managed to practise a single Navakarshi (smallest of Tapa) in their life could easily accomplish the most

arduous Siddhi Tapa!

In each chaturmas, not hundreds but thousands of people have successfully completed this great tapa with the help of Gachchadhipati Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja's Pachakhan and Vasakshepa. In the world of tapa, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to call Gachchadhipati Acharya Jayghosh Suri as the brand ambassador of "Siddhi Tapa!"

Kaaldharma -

On the gloomy day of Kartik Vad 1, 2076 (13 November 2019) in Ahmedabad, at the age of 84 and after observing a pure ascetic life for as long as 70 years, Acharya Jayghosh Suri Maharaja passed away. His life inspired lakhs of people to practise Jain dharma.

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1. Benevolence of Arihant Lords

Scriptures say that Narsinh was born in a brahmin family. When Narsinh was still a little kid, his father took him to respects the king and seek his blessings by touching the kings feet. The royal astrologer was astonished on seeing the brilliant child. The king inquired about the reason for his astonishment and he revealed that, “this little child is so fortunate that one day he will become the king and atom the royal thrown after you.”

The king got offended by this prediction and thought, “What!, how can a brahmin's son become the king and inherit my legacy instead of my own son ! I cannot tolerate this, I will get him murdered.” thinking along these lines, he hired an assassin and tried to murder him. He made as many as four attempts to kill him, but in vain. Narsinh survived every time. Who saved him?

In all 4 situations the child was in such a position that his death was inevitable as there were no loopholes in the murder plan which could save him. Inspire of all this, he miraculously survived. How was this possible? Also all the murder plans were carried out in utmost secrecy and not even a single person was aware of about it. Further, to avoid any suspicion the king showered abundant love and care on Narsinh. Even after such impeccable planning the king could not harm Narsinh. Who was responsible for this?

None of his smartness or wit was capable to save him from the clutches of death. It was the impact of his unflinching devotion and reverence towards Lord Arihant during his previous birth as a beggar which saved him time and again from such untimely death.

Who saved Narsinh?

Q. It was Lords darshan (sight) which saved him. What was the Lord's impact here?

A. You can consider this to be Vitarag Almighty Lord's impact because there were many Vitarag Lords temples in the city and by worshipping those again and again he had accumulated an enormous amount of Punya. Like in Anarya (foreign) countries, imagine if Vitarag Lord and his temples and his idols within those temples were not present in the city then where would he have gone so enthusiastically to worship? Hence, it can be said that the main and principle impact is of Vitarag Lords because of which he was able to worship frequently which resulted in accumulation of an enormous punya and that ultimately saved him form the clutches of death four times in this human birth and eventually lead him to be crowned as king.

In his previous birth as a beggar he was so unfortunate that even after begging for the entire day he could not amass even stale left overs to fill his stomach. Hence he decided to go to his neighbouring village to try his luck. He was about to depart form his village when he met a saint (Jain sadhu). He begged pleaded to have mercy on him and told him that he was starving since the past three days.

The saint replied, “listen brother, since you haven’t practiced religion in your previous birth, your present plight is such that you cannot even obtain food to fill your stomach. Hence, practices religion to brighten your present as well as your future life.”

He said, “Lord, what religion can I practice? I do not even have a single penny that I can donate and exercise religion.”

Even a beggar of this Arya culture has this basic understanding that if we spend our entire earning on ourselves or for our family, then it cannot be called religion. Only if we donate it to others who are more needy, it can be called a religious act.

Do you posses such basic understanding?

Eating ourselves is not religion, feeding others is religion. Entertaining ourselves is not religion but relieving others off their sorrows or serving saints through wealth is religion.

In short, **earning wealth and accumulating to in our bank accounts and treasuries is not religion but utilising it in auspicious felids is religion.**

Do you understand this basic principle? On the basis of this, drinking a glass full of milk every morning and feeding it to your family is not religion but true religion will be to utilise the milk for Lord's pakshal. Consumption for our own self and for our family is not religion but should be considered as sinful nourishment of moha (attachment).

Spreading 10 gms of ghee on khakhra for yourself and your family is moha while lighting a ghee lamp in front of Lord in the morning is religious. How much ghee is consumed

lighting a lamp? 10-12 gms? No, only 1-2 gms, but offering even such a small quantity to Arihant Lords and lighting a lamp is religion. Do you realise this? Does it not pinch you or any of your family members to not offer even so much ghee to Arihant Lords and directly start consuming it yourself?

Do you regret your act and contemplate about what I am doing? It is only because Lord's grace that I have acquired this precious and noble Jain human birth and have this opportunity to relish this ghee. How can I be so selfish and forget Lord's grace on me?

I do not possess even an iota of gratitude towards the generous Almighty Lord who have blessed me in innumerable ways. Instead, I am always worried about the well being of my body and my family who have not done any favours on me.

If such a thought shakens you then do you begin your day by first going to the temple and doing puja / offering your prayers, lighting a ghee lamp and then start consumption for self and family? If such a thought does not shake you then the mind is contaminated with the impurities of attachment, greed and hatred due to the reckless consumption of food, clothes and wealth.

That poor beggar said, "Lord! I do not possess even a single penny. How will I exercise religion without doing charity or helping others?"

Q. How does religion start with charity?

A. The poor had the understanding that, "how can I practice religion without making donations?" Who gave him this understanding? In this Avasarpini era, Lord Rishbhdev

established religion for the first time and he placed charity as the foremost form of religion.

He classified religion in four types : charity, character, penance and purity of mind. Here, he gave the foremost position to charity. When he himself proceeded towards the path of an ascetic life, he first did varshidan (daily donations for one year). After that, worked on this character i.e practiced asceticism which eventually led him to attainment of keval gyan through which became omniscient i.e possessor of infinite knowledge and then he demonstrated the four types of religion to the world wherein charity occupied the number one position. Since then, "charity is the first religion" – this mindset is prevalent in all Arya countries. Hence the bagger felt that, "how will he be able to practice religion without donating anything?"

Here the saint who explained him that, "look! Charity is for those who possess something themselves. But does that mean those who not possess anything cannot practice religion? No, there is a great religion for people like you also, i.e worshipping Arihant Lords everyday. There are so many Jain temples this city. By worshipping them everyday you can also exercise religion. **Happiness awaits those who exercise religion.**"

The beggar was delighted on getting such consolation and said, "is it so? Then I will worship Arihant Lords frequently. You have done me a great favour by guiding me. Till date I was enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. Was roaming from one house to another asking for food but did not go to the Lord temple, which is much greater than a treasure. Now I have nothing to worry. Since you have paved the right way for me, I will not look back. I am highly obliged."

Now why will the beggar look back? He roamed around the entire city to visit various temples and worshipped the Lord with great devotion. He did not get tired and relentlessly worshipped Arihant Lord because he very well understood that, **"I have roamed a lot around the city to earn a mere morsel of food to fill my stomach. Now why shouldn't I visit various temples to ensure that this soul also earns some religion?"**

Thus, the beggar exercised religion by worshipping and doing darshan of Arihant Lords. He accumulated punya which resulted in him becoming the king and enjoying royal comforts and luxuries along with exercising religion in the next birth. Not only that, he earned such punya which saved him from the jaws of death during tough times. Such was punya's impact that in-spite of the king's plot to kill him, he was saved all four times.

It is worth giving a thought that when a powerful king repeatedly plans foolproof plots to murder you, is it easy to save your life? Also, when you are aware that your life is in danger then you may flee away or take all possible measures to save yourself. But, when you don't have the slightest idea then you will not take any efforts in that direction. Under such circumstances how is it possible that you get rescued/ saved? It was only Lord's favour and blessing which saved Narsinh.

There is no other explanation other than it was Narsinh's past punya which was responsible for his survival. Otherwise the king had left no stone unturned to ensure that he was killed. Arihant Lord's worship (and not of other deva-devi) which led to the emergence of such punya. The subject of worship

was Almighty and supreme Vitraga Paramatmas which led to the accumulation of such strong punya. Hence, it is Lord's incomparable favour which lies at the root of his punya.

Q. If a respected father's son is able to collect funds for charity easily, it is because of whose favor ?

A. Do not forget that however smart or talented you are, you cannot acquire the desired results solely on your own. If a famous and wealthy man's son goes around to collect funds for religious activities and though he is talented, who is considered to have played the prime role here? His father. Since his father is such a respected person, people trusted him and donated the money. On the other hand, if another smarter and much more intelligent guy but without any family background goes around to collect funds, would he be able to gather lakhs? No. Because people would find it difficult to trust him without any respectable family background solely on the basis of his talent.

Good business trades are also due to the impact of your respected father or employer.

Similarly, though one has great marketing skills, but one can crack big deals if he associated or working with a prominent and respectable employer. He would not be able to crack the same deal if he was doing business independently. In first scenario he is successful but not in second despite putting the same efforts. Which factor plays a role here? The guy's intelligence or the employer's goodwill?

One can understand this if one wishes to. Similarly, Vitraga Lord's worship can lead to accumulation of abundant punya

and other great results. Here too, Vitraga Lord is the prime factor. Hence, it is Vitraga Lord who do an incomparable favour on us. It is not your efforts or other religious activities in your previous births which resulted in accumulation of this punya but its only and only the Arihant Lords themselves who have done this incomparable favour on us.

I am repeatedly proving this point so you can remember and consider the favour done by Vitraga Paramatmas on you and feel grateful to them forever.

After waking up peacefully in the morning, do you remember that, "O Lord! You have done a great favour on me by giving me this beautiful day. Thanks to you or else I could have died in my sleep." Similarly, while performing each and every activity during the day, do you remember Lord's favour?

Q. Some may ask, what can you achieve by repeatedly remembering God's favour?

A. Just as a dedicated son fondly remembers his parents, recognises his weaknesses and strives to attain the qualities of his parents, similarly if one can repeatedly remember the innumerable favours done on him by the Vitraga Lords, then he will be able to appreciate Lords unmatchable qualities and cry over his own shortcomings. He may feel, "I am obliged greatly by the supreme Vitraga Lord's innumerable favours. How can I possess such vices?" He will thus progress on the path of eliminating his vices and cultivating the good virtues and qualities of Vitraga Lords.

A son who understands his parents' favours will possess royalty and a sense of family-pride and hence will not let

his vices overpower him. He will feel “being the son of such respectable parents, how can I perform such a lowly act? Who is my father? Who is my mother? And I end up performing such bad deeds?”

Similarly, repeatedly remembering Lord's favours, will create this sense of royalty and responsibility which will save him from getting carried away by bad deeds and vices. He will think, “who is my God? The great Almighty Arihant Lords and can I, being their servant, perform such low act? How can I become such a scoundrel?”

This is for those who wish to remember God's favours. But those who do not wish to remember those favours and heartily thank God will not realise the importance and experience the great benefits of remembering Lord's favours again and again. Actually, this question about the need of remembering God's favours arises because one has never experienced the benefits of thanking Lord from the bottom of your heart.

Things which cannot be done solely by us can be easily achieved by the support of Lord. Hence, Lord is considered to be great.

Don’t we know that it is beyond our capacity to eliminate or even decrease our vices or stay away from bad deeds? Then how can we save ourselves? Only by the support of the Almighty Lord. “God, who has done infinite favours on me, is himself perfectly righteous and is constantly preaching to everyone to stay away from bad deeds; then how can I remain so aloof inspite of attaining such a great God?”

Lord has done great favours on people like us who cannot even redeem ourselves by providing support and becoming

a role model before us on the basis of which we can improve ourselves to the extent of becoming like God himself.

A famous poet says,

'प्रभुजी ने अवलंबतां निजप्रभुता हो प्रगटे गुणराशि के,
ऋषभ जिणंदशुं प्रीतडी'

"Prabhujine Avalambata nijaprabhuta ho
Pragate Gunarshi ke, Rishab jinandshu Pritidi"

Someone may ask,

Q. One can consider Lord to be their role model and support system buy why is it necessary to repeatedly remember his favours on us?

A. Do not forget the example of parents illustrated before. There are many virtuous people around us but such people do not inspire us to accelerate our efforts for the acquisition of those virtues but such efforts became easy by taking inspiration of our virtues parents. "My mother is so virtues and adorable, being her son, why can't I attain such qualities?" This is possible because parents have showered abundant favours on their son. Hence, the son repeatedly remembers their favours whole heartedly and is bound to get deeply inspired by them.

As a result, it is the parents duty to remain alert that they do not cross their limits and set wrong examples, as it would hinder the son's welfare. If the parents are moody, greedy, too proudy or habituated to fights, then their children are bound to be influenced by them and adopt the same nature. On the other hand, if the parents possess a virtues nature, then the child will not be influenced by the vices of the outsiders and

will become as virtuous as his parents. This illustrates that a child is obligated under the favour of his parents, and is bound to get inspired by them. Hence, it is essential that you remain alert and lead a moral life.

Look at the act of Jaipur's queen who was well-versed with this fact. Once, the king of Jaipur tried to sexually arouse the queen in front of their 2 years old kid. The queen stopped him immediately, saying that the child is watching and that such things will have a bad impact on his upbringing. However, the king refused the queens pleas saying that the kid was too young to understand these things.

Inspite of such deep and insightful explanations by the queen, the king continued and tried to arouse her again by saying that the child is too young to process these instances and be negatively affected by it. The kid may be lying the pram now, but how can we be so overcome by lust, that we do not even spare a thought for our own little child and spoil his life.

The queen thought, "my husband is madly in love with me and his lust is not letting him think clearly. His unthoughtful acts are bound to spoil my child's life. How can I be called a true mother then?"

This thought troubled and disturbed the queen greatly and hence she decided to end her life by taking poison.

The likes of today's women

This was the greatness of Arya women. Can the women of today's generation, engrossed in watching T.V and movies exhibit such greatness? They are influenced by movies and the culture they portray to such an extent that they cannot understand that they are imparting bad virtues to their children.

Instead, they cannot resist themselves from watching movies and carry their young children with them to the cinema. How won't the violent and sexually explicit content of cinemas leave a negative impression on the innocent child's mind? But today's women cannot resist themselves from such temptations and feel that there is nothing wrong in watching such explicit content or reading about it in the newspaper and magazines and hence are least bothered about child's spiritual welfare. God knows if they consider such exposure to be essential for the Childs upbringing!

Where is there any room for the protection of our beloved culture and values in this craze for cinema? If women born in the royal and noble Jain clan are not responsible for the protection of our valuable culture, then who else will do this? Being an heir to great women like Sulsa and Chandanbala, can I go to watch such degraded cinema?

Do you think that such cinema-crazy women possess the pride of being Lord Mahavir's follower?

Let's talk about a noteworthy act done by Hitler when he became the ruler of Germany. He terminated the employment of all the women working in Government offices and told them to stay at home. But he convinced them and instilled a sense of pride in them by saying that, 'You are responsible for the birth of a strong and valorous German citizens. You have to raise incomparably brave citizens for Germany; do you have to work here? If you will work in such offices, you will give birth to a coward citizens instead of valorous ones because men coming here will ogle at you and will not be able to control their sensual desires and may ejaculate too much sensual activity which will eventually affect the quality of their sperm. Then what kind of children will be born with

the weak sperm of such weak men? Obviously weak and cowardly ones. Hence, in order to give rise to a strong and brave German citizens, I order you to resign your jobs and focus wholeheartedly on your role as responsible mothers.'

He glorified the role of women in this manner and terminated them from their jobs. Can the women today be glorified as Lord Mahavir's followers? Being Lord Mahavir's Shravika (female follower), should I myself indulge in such sensual pleasures and attract my husband into it? Should my children also become the same? No, instead I should possess a reputed character and make my husband and children also like them. I shouldn't forget that I'm Lord Mahavir's follower.

Hitler's opinion had a precise and deep message.

'Man become weak in constantly ogling young women.'

The physical losses of ogling at young women

Ogling at women is harmful for a man because it weakens the semen which eventually finds its way out through the excretory system. At a conference of Ayurvedic Doctors held in Mumbai, more light was shed on this subject. They stated that, according to Ayurveda, the sight of another women sends a slight vibration in the opposite man's body which leads to generation of heat. This, then warms up the blood which melts the solid semen present in the veins. This melted and thin semen finds a way to flow out of the body in the form of urine, cough etc. As a result, the body loses its immunity and cannot resist diseases; also the body will not be fit for exercising noble acts and brave deeds. The new generation will also be weaker.

Even a dictator like Hitler understood this logic well and considered ogling at other women to be harmful and hence,

restricted women from working in offices and ensured that they stayed at home.

In a similar manner, if a man ogles at other handsome men can also prove to be harmful as it ignites the senses and hence it is forbidden. Seeing a child with rosy soft cheeks and not being able to resist the temptation to pull his cheeks is also a type of sensual indulgence. One has to stay away from sensual indulgence as it will lead to a deterioration in the quality of semen. Additionally, you will also set a wrong example for children.

Do not forget Jaipur's queen committed suicide to ensure that she does not become the root cause for her husband setting a wrong example for their 2 years old kid.

We were talking about the fact that the act of our grateful parents swiftly create an impression on our minds. Hence, it is imperative for parents to remain cautious at all times and lead a virtuous life which does not create any sort of negative impact on the minds of their children. Also, children should take inspiration from their virtuous parents that, "being the child of such noble parents, I cannot imbibe such vices and perform such bad deeds." Moreover, Almighty Lord's inspiration should be taken that, "How supreme is my Lord! I am the servant of such a Lord."

Inspiration plays a great role in all rites and rituals worshipping and revering God. He does a great favour on us by becoming our source of inspiration. Not only that but while exercising severe penance and austerities also, the glory and inspiration of Lord plays an eminent role because only when we follow the Lords teachings, it will lead to extra ordinary results.

“How fortunate I am to be able to follow Lord's preachings! Almighty Lords done immense favours on me by guiding me on this excellent path for my spiritual welfare.”It is wise to glorify Lord and his teachings and not our own smartness or efforts.

This is the reason why King Shripal considered it to be Almighty Lord's and Sidhcharkra favour for his repeated miraculous rescues. He himself strived relentlessly and worshipped the Almighty Lords with great devotion but all these efforts were possible only because he acquired the path of Almighty Lord and the great Navpad.

Similarly, it was Almighty Lord's incomparable favours that a mere roadside beggar who just worshipped Lord repeatedly was in his next birth, rescued from the kings foolproof plans to assassinate him multiple times.

In today's age, the trend is such that hugely corrupts our mind. The learned disciple of Pujya Roopvijayji M.S., Pujya Mohanvijayji M.S. pleads Lord Dharmanath in his stavan-

‘वायो रे नवि जाण्यो कलियुग वायरो रे लो।’

'Vayo Re navi janyo kaliyuga vayaro re lo..'

which means that, 'Lord! It is beyond our imagination that the winds of Kaliyug spread widely wherein minds are hugely corrupted. Hence it is said further that,

‘अंतरजामी जीवन प्राणाधार जो।’

"Antarjami Jeevan Pranadhar Jo."

O, Omniscient Lord! You are my life, the support of my soul.



2. Does The Soul Really Exist?

Q. How are our minds corrupted?

A. Our minds are corrupted because we refuse to believe in the invisible forces like soul, karma, Lord, his unimaginable strength, etc. As a result, we are constantly occupied, day and night in enjoying the pleasures of the senses. This is again a sign of corruption of our minds.

Do not rush and say that you believe in these invisible forces. When you assert that you believe in these forces, then is your life aligned and in sync with these beliefs? Are your thoughts, speech and action focused on the soul? Does the karma theory play a pivotal role in your lifestyle? Is your sight inclined mainly towards Arihant Lords?

If you truly believe in the existence and importance of the soul then your focus is bound to be on the soul.

Focusing on the soul means analyzing each thought that emerges in the mind and understanding if that particular thought leads to the increase or decrease of negative thoughts which would in return harm the soul.

In our past births as animals or even as humans born in Anarya lands, we have accumulated a vast amount of wrong thoughts which have negatively affected our soul. But now,

after attaining this precious birth of an Arya human, why should we have the negative effect on the soul?

This birth provides an opportunity to reduce the past negative effects by way of a pure and positive thought process. Then why act in the opposite manner?

In this precious human birth, is it worthwhile to stay engrossed in sensual pleasures just like animals? Is it right to get carried away by passionate feelings like anger, pride, deceit and greed? Why to burden the soul by such negative influences?

The one who does not focus on the soul is not bothered about its negative effects too.

If one is not focused on the welfare of the soul, then he cannot discriminate between negative and positive influences. All the thoughts, actions and words are directed towards worldly attachments and illusions. There is absolutely no room for concern for the soul.

Do the abundant thoughts, actions and words revolve around sensual pleasures and passionate feelings prove to be a boon or bane for the soul? Do we regret our wrong actions in this precious birth?

We need to understand that just as we focused on our physical body and its well being we should also constantly focus on our souls. In today's world which is totally deprived of faith, our minds have got so corrupted we are not able to perceive the invisible forces like the souls and karma.

Q. But like the body, the soul is not visible.

A. This is exactly the corruption of the mind. Only a corrupt

mind can claim that there is nothing like the soul as it is invisible.

Can your intelligence be seen? Then as per the above rule, its existence can also not be proved. So now do you believe that you don't have any intelligence?

Q. But appropriate actions, thoughts, etc. prove the existence of intelligence.

A. Then doesn't the love, hatred and attachment for various objects or people, also passionate feelings of anger, greed, etc prove the existence of the soul? Just as beauty, colour, softness, roughness, thickness and thinness are characteristics of the physical body, the sentilents are characteristics of soul or else they should be seen in a dead body too. But as these sentiments are characteristics of the soul, they are not visible in a dead body which is devoid of the soul.

Proving the existence of the soul is similar to intelligence.

How is intelligence derived? Whose specific characteristics is it? Of the brain? But this brain is made of meat, flesh, nerves and cells. How is it possible that intelligence increases on learning someones good speeches?

There has been absolutely no change in our brain. You have to agree that intelligence is not the characteristic of meat, flesh and cells. It is the characteristic of totally different object- the soul. It is not visible to the naked eyes nor can it be tasted by the tongue. Thus, despite of the fact that intelligence can't be seen, it can be proved by smart timely actions or words.

Similarly, when one thinks that what is the underlying support of intelligence, then the existence of a distinct soul can be proved.

In a similar manner, who is the root cause because of which we experience feelings like hatred, attachment, lust, anger, greed, pride, delict, desires, sorrow, disturbance, etc.? Neither the body nor the brain made up of flesh and meat. **Inspite of the consistent and unchanging presence of the body and brain at all times, there are ups and downs in the feelings of hatred, attachment, etc.** Why so?

For example when we did not possess the right understanding, petty matters would excite or dishearten us. Once we start hearing religious discussions such matters would fail to dishearten us or even if experience such emotions we would try to keep it under control and stop them from affecting us. But the brain itself was in such emotions in the past so why will it control these emotions now? The brain has developed in understanding of the soul and the uncontaminated intelligence which curbs them. Hence, it is proved that the soul and not the brain, is the support of all the above stated feelings. But the soul cannot be seen or felt with our senses of sight, touch, etc. and is thus called Atindriya (beyond the knowledge of external senses).

In our routine life, we have to believe many such objects or events which are not sensed by our external senses.

Even atheists have to agree and believe many things not visible to the naked eyes.

1. When one suffers from diarrhea, it seems that there is

some problem within our body. Though the problem is not visible, it is believed to be there for sure.

2. When our neighbor screams at us, the internal anger is not visible but we believe it to be there.

3. A child's hunger is not visible to the mother, but on seeing him cry even an atheist mother perceives his hunger.

4. In spite of the fact that America is not visible from here, it can be understood from the map that it is located in the west.

5. The electric power running in the wires can not be seen but when the light is switched on, it's existence had to be believed.

6. If the dealer sends less stock or fat bill, his cunningness is apparent. But can it be seen? If it could be seen then we would have set conditions before finalizing the deal but since his cunningness was invisible to the naked eye, we ended up going ahead with the transaction. This, though the cunningness was invisible, the fat bill proves it.

Will an atheist believe in the existence of his forefathers? An atheist readily believes in the existence of the above stated abundant invisible objects in this day to day life but is reluctant to have faith in objects like the soul, karma, rebirth, etc. He will immediately say "What is a soul? Who has seen it? Have you?" But ask him, "Have you seen your previous 17th generations forefather?" If not, then how can you be called his son? You should say that I have only seen my father and hence his existence can be proved but I haven't seen my forefathers and hence I cannot say if he existed.

Belief in grandfathers teachings but not in Lord Mahavir

At times, your father would say, "Son! My father was a very noble man but he passed away before you were born. You could not see him." Hearing these words, you would believe in the greatness of your forefather, but do we believe in Lord Mahavir's words? After performing severe penance, he acquired omniscience, attained keval gyan and then preached, "Look, you do not possess the omniscient sight and hence can't perceive the eternal soul but with the help of my omniscient, I can clearly perceive that it is trapped in this physical body but is totally different and distinct from it." We do not want to believe in these enlightened words and have false doubts..

How can one believe in rebirth?

Q. We cannot see our past or future births. Then how can we believe in rebirth?

A. There are several incidents of jatismaran (recollection of the past birth) seen today where in a person can visualize his previous birth perfectly as it was and the details narrated by him are exactly in accordance with the reality. How can this be justified? In spite of these clearly seen examples people who still refuse to believe in the rebirth theory should be considered as intelligent or foolish? Should we get carried away by their baseless talks?

Like the above invisible objects we should also believe in the existence of the soul, karma rebirth, the Lord Almighty, moksh (salvation), etc.

Many objects like atom it's 113 elements etc. which are approved by science today or not visible to the naked eyes but still become the subject of our belief. While the soul, karma, salvation, etc. are seen by Lord Mahavir through his omniscience. Then why don't they become our subject of faith and believe? All the above elements are clearly portrayed in Lord Mahavir's teachings that is various scriptures like The Aagamas.



3. Idol Worship Futile or Productive?

Q. But how can Lord Mahavir's existence be guaranteed? We do not have complete faith if Mahavir became paramatma in the first place.

A. If so, then why are there so many idols Lord Mahavir seen all over India? It is said that the idol of Lord Mahavir in Kshatriyakund is more than 2000 years old. The idol in the Village of Nandiya is consecrated by his brother Nandivardhan. Were all these people fools to spend lakhs of rupees and establish idols of an imaginary Lord Mahavir? Are the people devotedly worshiping these idols also fools?

Today idols of Arihant Lords sculpted and established thousands of years back are excavated in many places. Were all the people making and worshiping those idols, fools?

What a terrible kalikaal is prevailing today! Mentors do not mind if their devotees worship their photograph but prohibit them to go to a temple and worship the great Lord.

What a dreadful era! There are no restrictions on reading magazines or viewing cinema demonstrating skimpily clad women but there are gurus who restrict their devotees from worshipping Lords serene idol. They may say,

Q. No. We prevent our devotees from watching such cinema or reading such magazines too.

A. If that is so, then you are trapped. Do magazines or cinema have real women? They have mere pictures. But if you believe that idol worship does not prove beneficial in any way, then how can these photos cause any harm?

The picture of a women can also become a cause for attraction. Such obscene pictures can ignite to lustful feelings also.

Then, can't Vitaraga Lord's serene idols develop feelings of calm, composure, tolerance and non-attachment? If a man's senses get ignited on seeing women pictures, can't a devotees devotional feelings get ignited on seeing Lord's tranquil idol?

Q. We believe in idols, but do not worship (doing pooja) them.

A. It isn't appropriate to say so because many idols, monuments and representatives are worshipped in the world. When a person is monument is worshipped, is the respected persons present? When the family Goddess is revered, is the Goddess actually present in front of you? All such practices are not considered insane but the worship of Jineshwar Lords serene idol is considered as insane activity.

Examples of worshipping representatives or symbols in routine life

Loyal citizens of the country and soldiers respect the national flag, salute and worship it with flower garland. All this is not mere show off because the national flag represents the

country and respect for it denotes respect for the entire nation. Loyalty and respect for the nation inspired people to fight with great courage and valour during times of war and thus contributing in the protection of the nation. Now will you call the salutation of the national flag which leads to the respect towards the country to be futile? Similarly, can the worship of the Lord's idol which generates a strong feeling of devotion and respect for Vitaraga Lords be called futile? Is it wise to do so ? or it depicts foolishness?

When a warrior goes in a for to fight, his wife bows down and worships his belongings like sword, shield, arms and ammunition and prays, " Dear husband, you are my lifeline, my support system and hence, I worship. Stay in my heart all day and night so that no other man can dare enter my heart and I also do not get attracted towards any other man." Can such a worship of the husband's belongings done with the sacred intention of protecting one's character be considered worthless?

The site of a hosted national flag instigates even wounded soldier to fight with all his strength and protect the nation while the worship of husbands belongings while he is away protects the character and emotions of his wife and saves from the part of infidelity. Now, say is this reverence towards the national flag or husband's belongings futile or productive?

It seems that religion has become a centre point for such attacks. It is easy to make a mockery out of religion and say, "look, he believes the stone to be God!" What if someone said in front of the soldier, "ok, he believes this piece of cloth to be the entire nation and goes down to it." Just wait for

the reaction of the soldier when he hears such a statement. Say something like, "this ignorant woman believes that these simple leather shoes are equivalent to her husband." in front of the warrior's wife and it wouldn't be a surprise if she attacks you with the same sword.

People can make such comments in case of religion because no one stands up for it. If someone is ready to defend religion, then no one can dare speak anything against it.

Instance of Lord's mockery in Dholka

Once women in the city of Dholka were rushing towards the temple in the morning. A young, arrogant man said, "Is God in a hurry to cook khichdi that you are rushing with rice in your hand?" The religious women were hurt to hear this but did not react at the moment. After completing their daily worship they went and complained to the Nagarsheth.

What did Nagarsheth do? Did he tell them that they were wrong in rushing madly towards the temple? No. or did he tell them that the man's sin will ruin his future, how does it concern you? No. The Nagarsheth did not reply in the above manner but firmly told them, "Oh, he said so? You go home He will face the consequences of speaking in such a manner." After the women returned, the Nagarsheth made a declaration in the entire Sangh, "this young man spoke arrogantly and thus made a mockery of Vitaraga Lords. Hence, no one should keep any contact or relations with him."

The Nagarsheth's order spread like wildfire in the entire town. Immediately, everyone accepted it and cut ties with him.Not only the citizens of the town but also his own family members

scolded him and abandoned him saying, "Leave from here or we'll be thrown out of the Sangha."

Now where would that guy go? When his own family members abandoned him, which other relatives or friends would give him shelter ? The entire town despised him. Did he have the capacity to bear all this torture? No, he became helpless and straight away ran to the Nagarsheth's doorstep. He fell at his feet and begged for forgiveness, "Oh Lord! I committed a grave mistake. Please forgive me. I will never speak anything like this in my life."

It was not so easy to pacify the sheth. He shouted," Go away you rascal. You first sever the throat and then ask for forgiveness? Listening to the mockery of our Almighty and Supreme Arihant Lords is worse than slashing our own throat. Now that our throat are severed, we are dead. Can a deadman grand forgiveness? It is better that you move away from my sight."

But where would he go? Who would give him shelter? He fell at the Sheth's feet again and begged for mercy," I committed a grave crime. Please have mercy on me and save me."

The Sheth said," Mercy? Your spiteful statements have spread in the entire town and hurt many people's sentiments. How can I alone part you? I guess you should go to each and every house in the entire city and seek forgiveness."

The poor youngster saw a ray of hope and replied, "O Sheth! I will go to every single home and beg for mercy but please have mercy on me."

Now do you think this youngster will ever dare to make a

mockery of Lord religion? Why did he surrender? Due to the Nagarsheth's stern orders. How could the Nagarsheth remain so stern? It was only because the entire city supported and abided by the Nagarsheth's order and no one favour the youngster's mistake by saying that how does one statement matter so much?

None of the youngster's family members, relatives, friends or others favoured him or sympathized with him and hence the Nagarsheth could implement such strict actions. The youngster was thus compelled to change his way of life.

Today someone says "Who says this is Lord? This is just a piece of stone." Does anyone have the guts to penalise those who make a mockery of Arihant Lords, his holy idols and his religion? But he do not realise that that even if there is no punishment at present, he will surely have to pay for his grave mistake in the next birth. Our scriptures clearly state,

'जिणपूआ विग्घकरो...'

"Jinpooa Vigghakaro"

It means that the one who poses as an obstacle in worshipping God is sure to bind severe Antaraya Karma like Labhantaraya, Bhogantarya and Viryantaraya karmas. What is the fruit of these karmas? Obstraction in attainment of the desired thing or favourable comforts or necessary energy, health required to carry out specific tasks. Hence, when learned men face any of the above problems they calmly accept it and consider it to be consequence of not doing Lord's worship in the previous birth or the result of obstructing someones else's religious activities

in the past. Hence, to eliminate this fault, they would increase their devotion and worship of Lord and motivate others to do so.

Antaraya karmas – karmas which pose as an obstacle in our life

Labhantaraya karmas – karmas which obstruct the attainment of desired things

Bhogantarya karmas – karmas which obstruct the consumption of desired things

Viryantaraya karmas – karmas which limit or decrease our energy required for performing a specific task.

Q. Why does obstructing other's worship of Lord lead to binding of Antraya karmas which in turn obstructs our happiness?

A. This is because of the fact that if the other person [whom you obstructed] had worshipped Lord he would have binded good Punya karmas resulting in his attainment of desired comforts and happiness. Therefore, if you obstructed his worship, you consequently obstructed his acquisition of desired comforts and objects. As a result, it isn't surprising if the antraya karmas you binded by obstructing others worship will in turn prevent you from attaining your desired comforts and happiness.

Seize other's happiness and your happiness will also be seized.

Even if you aren't directly stealing other's happiness you indirectly become instrumental in doing so and as a result, Anantraya karma will stand as a barrier against your happiness.

Q. Then is a saint who gives Diksha to another person binds Antraya karmas by depriving the diksharthi off all worldly and materialistic comforts and pleasures?

A. No. A saint preaches about asceticism to him and makes him understand that worldly pleasures are a cause of attachment and violence which lead to increase in the cycles of birth and death. As a result, the person develops a deep understanding about the terrible truth of temporary materialistic world and voluntarily leaves it. He initiates a pure ascetic life which is devoid of attachment and violence and is engrossed in the implementation of the Ratnatrayi i.e.Samyak Darshan – Right faith, Samyak Gyan – Right knowledge and Samyak Charitra – Right conduct. In this situation the Guru who gives Diksha to a person cannot be considered to have deprived him of pleasures and comforts and seized his happiness. On the contrary the pure ascetic life is capable of giving him the ultimate bliss of salvation and till he does not attain salvation, it surely gives him the pleasures similar to heaven by binding abundant Punya karmas. Ofcourse attaining heavenly pleasures is not the goal, but till you do not have the capacity to reach the highest stage of Charitra i.e.Vitarag Charitra, Karmasatta will not let you burn in the sorrows of hell, poverty, pain, etc. It ensures that you attain noble births as a result of your Sarag Charitra [Initial Stage of Charitra]. It helps you attain such uncontaminated pleasures which do not lead to feelings of attachment or hatred during its experience but imbibes feelings of non-attachment and renounciation.

Charitra does this great job. Similarly, Lord's worship gives a

householder a golden opportunity to acquire fresh Punya by dedicating all his physical, mental and financial energies to Almighty Lord's feet. Thus, the one who becomes a barrier for other's worship naturally binds Labhantraya and Bhogantraya karmas obstructing his own attainments of comforts and happiness.

Lord's worship is an effective tool to curb the innumerable acts of violence and sensual indulgences occurring in a human's routine life. Once you are fully engrossed in Lord's devotional worship, you automatically avoid these dreadful sins at least for that specific period of time. Infact, this time proves to be an investment as it sows the seeds of non-attachment in the soul and then nourishes it.

If the photo of a renowned actress can cause feelings of attraction and attachment, can't the Lord's idol become instrumental in nourishing non-attachment in the devotee's soul?

Q. Some people argue that bowing down in front of Lord's idol may be appropriate but why should one worship the non-living idol (do pooja) ?

A. If statues can be worshipped, can't Almighty Lord's idols be worshipped?

How can those who raise the above questions, dare to call Lord's idol non-living? Whose idol is it? It is the sacred idol of the Almighty Lord's whom we are extremely grateful and obliged to. Worshipping the idol of a former brave freedom fighters ignites patriotism in the hearts of young soldiers. Can't the worship of Lord's idol develop non-attachment and composure in the hearts of the worshipper?

Those who are well versed with human psychology can very well understand the above fact. But how can this be understood by those who have absolutely no knowledge of psychology. Infact, because of their ignorance, those who contradict idol-worship, religious activities and rituals end up binding abundant karmas which drown them as well as others in the endless cycle of birth and death.

Advantages of worshipping Lord

1. Worshipping the Lord and carrying out the pure rites and rituals, provide a medium through which negative sentiments come to a halt and the heart is filled with noble, positive sentiments.
2. One can acquire the great benefit of obeying Lord's orders by performing Lord's worship
3. It is an opportunity to express our gratitude towards Arihant Lords who have done innumerable favors on us. Expressing our feeling of gratitude towards Arihant Lords is a great and noble act.

We have attained this noble human birth and other innumerable comforts and luxuries due to Arihant Lord's incomparable impact. Now on the occasion of worshipping Lord's idol, is it appropriate to say, "Why waste money in worshipping God? I am better off doing samayika, fasts, and other penance which does not involve utilization of money". After saving money this way, where will the money be used? Obviously for your own self and family purposes. You consider it fruitful to spend money on making ornaments and clothes for your wife and

consider it a sheer waste to make ornaments and for Almighty Lords! Isn't it ignorance?

When you look at your wife bejeweled with ornaments and appreciate her beauty, you constantly bind new karmas. Additionally, all other people who look at your bejeweled wife and are attracted will also bind karmas. Whereas worshipping the Angi of Arihant Lords and decorating him with ornaments leads to accumulation of Punya and positive sentiments. Additionally, other who worship Lord looking wonderful in the Angi also cultivate positive sentiments and accumulate new punya.

Let's come back to the roadside beggar we were talking about. Having faith in the saint's words, he merely went around the town worshipping Arihant Lords with great devotion and accumulated such enormous amount of Punya that in the next birth he was saved again and again from the jaws of the death and eventually went ahead to acquire the royal throne. As we go ahead in his story, you will realize that in all the instances of his escape from the clutches of death it was only the miraculous impact of his previous birth's darshan of Arihant Lord which saved him. His own efforts or smartness played absolutely no role.



4. True Appreciation of Religion

What did the beggar attain by doing Arihant Lord's darshan?

First and foremost, he attained the precious human birth and was born in the noble clan of a Brahmin. Once, when he was just a 5-6 months old child, the Brahmin took him to seek the blessings of the king. The king was delighted on seeing the charming little child, and the king's astrologer, seated beside him, was startled on seeing the Brahmin child. When the king asked him the reason of his astonishment, the astrologer replied, "Your Highness! This child seems to be greatly fortunate. He will become the heir to your throne." The king was taken aback. A hurricane of thoughts crowded his mind. "The son of a Brahmin, who earns his livelihood by seeking alms, will become my heir? My honour and pride will be shattered. People will think of me as an irresponsible king who did not train his own son to take up the responsibilities of the throne and since his son didn't have the calibre, such a beggar was coronated as the king!" Internally, the king was extremely furious but exhibited pleasure on his face and said, "Oh, is it? That is really good."

Is it a sign of wisdom or that of shrewdness to display external pleasure in spite of internal fury?



Did the king demonstrate *Viveka* ? No. It was mere shrewdness on his part. What shrewdness, you may ask. The king's mind was now filled with cruel thoughts. He thought, "I will not let him become the royal heir. He is like a poisonous tree. I shall uproot it before it grows. I will have the child killed now itself and thus, there will be no question of him becoming the king in the future. But, if I demonstrate my displeasure now, the child's father and the others seated here will doubt me if the child goes missing in the near future. Hence, it is wiser to show happiness now and then silently eliminate him from my way."

Now, you can judge for yourself, was the king's external facade of pleasure a sign of *viveka* (basic courtesy) or shrewdness. Based on this, we need to learn a lesson – whenever in life we are faced with circumstances where we have some certain feelings in our heart but have to behave differently because of *viveka*, we must not become a victim of shrewdness and deceit.

Q. Having certain feelings in our heart and exhibiting and behaving differently is deceit in the first place. How can *viveka* (basic courtesy) be incorporated here?

A. If the heart is full of maturity, pure religious thoughts and the desire for welfare of self as well as others, then even if it is essential to behave in a certain different way for the outside world, it is on account of *viveka* (basic courtesy) and not shrewdness.

For example, you are in your office. Members of the Trade Association come to you for collecting funds for some celebration. Your religious outlook does not accord belief in

such celebrations and consider such celebrations as a futile waste of money. In spite of this, being a member of the Trade Association yourself, you are obliged to contribute a certain amount for the celebration owing to basic courtesy. In such a scenario, your action is not attributable deceit but a sign of *viveka*.

Q. How can it be called viveka ? Is it wise to be courteous at the cost of accumulating sins?

A. Protection of religion is more valuable than the thought of accumulating sins. The mere thought of protecting religion requires greater courtesy. While shelling out money for the unnecessary celebration, a truly religious man thinks, "If I do not donate the money for their cause, these people are bound to think that I am a miser and will end up criticising my religion with the belief that my religion has only taught us to be such stringent misers". Thus, in order to avoid the criticism of his religion, if he generously donates even though his conscience doesn't permit him to, it is an act accountable to true wisdom and maturity. It cannot be termed as deceit.

Appreciation of religion by timely, courteous donations

In the bygone era, after performing a religious act, large amounts of money were spent on such donations. The builder of the magnificent temple of Ranakpur, Sheth Dharanshah's brother built a temple on the mountains of Achalgadh. To perform the consecration rituals (Pratishth**a)**, he came to Achalgadh with a grand walking procession. With great pomp and splendour, he performed the Pratishtha. After the

ceremony, he distributed approximately Rs. 1 lakh amongst the poor and needy. Why? To ensure the appreciation of the religion among people of other castes and beliefs.

The generous minister, Pethadshah offered 56 ghadis (unit of currency) of gold in auction against the Digambars* and saved the Shwetambar's right of worship on the holy mountain, Girnar. After that, he filled an equivalent amount of money in the Lord's bhandaar (donation box) and lastly, he distributed 4 ghadis of gold as donation amongst the needy ones.

Now, in the above 2 instances, was the donation made for Arihant Lords or Gurus? No, but it was because of such donations that there was great appreciation and recognition of our religion. As a result, needy people and even people belonging to other castes would feel, "Oh! Their religion is truly great which believes in such a generous celebration to mask the successful completion of their religious acts." Thus, the attraction and soft corner for Jain religion, which rises in the hearts of these people, leads to seeds of the religion being sown in their hearts. This is the biggest victory of the religion.

Q. What does the appreciation of Jain religion mean?

A. 'Glory to Jainism', 'May Jain religion emerge victorious' – is the chanting of these slogans considered as the appreciation of religion? No. The real appreciation of Jainism is when the attraction and liking for Jainism is established in the hearts of the people who are Jains merely for namesake and do not have faith in the religion preached

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* **Digambars, Shwetambars –** The Jain community is divided into these 2 sects.

by the Almighty as well as those who belong to other castes/ beliefs and are not Jains by birth. The victory of the religion is when a soft corner for it is developed in the hearts of the people who did not initially possess it. This initial attraction sows the seeds of religion in their hearts.

When is the appreciation possible? As is mentioned earlier, after making huge expenditures for the construction of new temples and its consecration, if money is distributed as charity amongst the needy of the neighbouring area of the temple, it can glorify Jainism. The makers of the temple of Achalgadh, as well as those who spent colossal amounts of gold for saving our rights for the temple of Girnar understood this very well.

The deep understanding behind such donations

The mere sight of grand religious processions cannot glorify religion, but filling an empty stomach can. Hence, in the foregone times, wise men donated huge amounts of money after spending colossal amounts for protection or erection of holy places so that such needy people and people from other castes are attracted to our religion and the seeds of Jainism are planted in their hearts. They believed in slogans like, "Lal! Lakh toh thava de sava lakh", and "Ghaan bhego ghasarko". The message behind these Gujarati slogans is that what if the religious acts involved an expenditure of Rs. 1.25 lakhs instead of Rs. 1 lakh? Then, if the religious act can be concluded within Rs. 1 lakh, then why can't Rs. 10,000 – 20,000 be spared in such donations to the needy? Can't we afford it or does it seem futile to us? After spending lakhs and crores of rupees in Updhan, Pratishtha, etc, do we undertake such little donations, which will lead to appreciation of Jainism?

The one who considers such kind of donations to be futile has not understood Jainism in its true sense.

Charitable donations even in small religious acts

Charitable donations should be made not only when colossal religious expenditures are involved, but also when small religious activities are performed in one's daily routine. In Ahmedabad, when Shethani Harkor used to go for her daily visit to the temple for worshipping, she would distribute money to all the beggars she came across on the way.

You can spend Rs. 101 towards Arihant Lord's aangi. However, you find it burdensome to donate Rs. 10 to the needy. If not anyone else, can you not give Rs. 10 to the poojari (temple priest) at least? His heart will overflow with thoughts like, "Wow! This religion seems to be very nice to have preached such generosity!" Try distributing sweet boxes in the houses of non-Jains located in the temple's vicinity. Try distributing gifts to non-Jain children gathered near the temple and then see, how much they praise Jainism from the bottom of their hearts.

Can you not make a rule – "whatever religious acts I perform, I will spend 10% of its total expenditure in such charitable donations". Is it that difficult? For example, if one has a budget of spending Rs. 100 on religious acts, will spending a total of Rs. 110 become burdensome?

Q. This may not seem burdensome. But suppose one spends Rs. 70,000 in ceremonies like Updhan, Pratishtha, etc. Now, isn't it burdensome to spend additional Rs. 7,000 on such donations?

A. Was the expenditure of Rs. 70,000 done with great financial difficulty? Did you have to empty your entire capital to incur the expenditure? Leave this debate. Generally, anyone who spends Rs. 70,000 has double, triple, or even 10 times the amount of capital safe and secure with him. Also, while carrying out a particular task, he is mentally prepared to bear an extra Rs. 10,000 – 15,000 in case of contingencies. But one still feels that extra Rs. 7,000 will pose an added burden.

Q. But what is the benefit of spending so much on non-Jains? Isn't it a sheer waste of money?

A. Do not call it a waste. This is a fruitful investment for increasing the praise and glory of Jainism. By way of such donations, non-Jains will develop a sense of respect and attraction for Jainism which will in turn, sow the seeds of Jainism in their hearts. If not here, in the next birth they will derive the fruits of Jainism. Compare this great achievement to a meagre amount of Rs. 7,000. Understand the importance of such charitable donations.

Charitable donations are the donations which sow the seed of religion. Charitable donations have the power to stop the criticism of religion.

Try giving such charitable donation in all, small and big, occasions and see the rise of religious sentiments that you experience.



5. Setbacks of Wrong Mental Calculations

We were discussing the instance wherein one has to contribute some money in unnecessary celebrations, being a member of a Trade Association, etc. even if he does not wish to do so due to his religious sentiments. Can you say that he cheated and acted shrewdly by having different thoughts in his heart and then acting differently? No. He was just courteous and made the donation to avoid criticism of Jainism as people would say that in spite of being a follower of such a great religion, he is still such a big miser. Shrewdness and deceit exist where religion is not involved.

On learning that the Brahmin's child would succeed him as the king, the king was extremely furious and wished to murder him, but exhibited pleasure on the outer front and exclaimed, "Oh! He is really fortunate." This is deceit and shrewdness.

When internal and external emotions are different but are directed towards religious thoughts, protection and glorification of religion, then it cannot be called as the sin of deceit.

In this case, the king's diverse emotions did not symbolise religion but harboured the wicked intention to murder the innocent child. After a few days, he hired an assassin and instructed him to discreetly abduct the child, take him deep into the forests and silently murder him.

3 people are involved in this ploy – the king, the assassin, and the child. Now, see how these people's individualities played a role in this plan.

1. The king had the power in his hands which enabled him to cruelly destroy his own naïve subjects. This power made him so blind and fearless that he didn't even have second thoughts before committing such a grave sin.

Power is dreadful because it can instigate you to commit terrible acts.

Power can be utilised to implement good acts too. But the wrong acts that it commits are so dreadful and executed with such fearlessness and cruelty that it washes away all the previous, numerous noble acts performed by the king.

What was the reason behind King Raavan's destruction? Why did he have to go to the dungeons of 4th hell? He was a just and kind king and had performed many noble acts also but his blind attraction towards Sita was the mere cause of his downfall. Eventually, seeing Sita's determination in protecting her threatened chastity, his attraction also faded away but his pride on being such a powerful king did not let him release Sita so easily. He thought, "I will not release Sita so easily. I will defeat Ram and Lakshman in war, capture them and get them to the royal court. I will humiliate them amidst everyone and then hand over Sita to them with mercy." This ego, arrogance, and pride instigated him to fight a bloody war and at the end, he was defeated and killed in the war and reached the dungeons of hell. Didn't his other noble acts save him? No. One dreadful act done due to the pride of power

was sufficient alteast for once to wash away the numerous good acts done by him. This is the dreadfulness of power.

The royal power enabled the king to hire an assassin to murder the innocent child. Here, the king's pride and cruelty played a role.

2. The assassin was ready to commit such a heinous crime out of the greed for money. Thus, the assassin's greed played an instrumental role here.

Wealth and lust are both dreadful vices which lead to terrible acts like cheating, killing, and betraying even those people who have done great favours to us.

Blinded by the greed of wealth, power, and kingdom, Konik imprisoned his father, the noble King Shrenik and fought a massive war against his grandfather King Cheda to attain the divined ear-ornaments and the elephant Sachenak.

Even today, people do not think twice before committing horrible crimes like lying, betraying someone's trust, deceit, dishonest, bribing, injustice, and getting involved in violent business acts just for the greed of money. For the purpose of career benefits and reaping fat pay-cheques, young students belonging to Jain families are also willing to take up medical studies where they do not even hesitate once before performing dissection of living frogs and cockroaches. Are you willing to perform such experiments on your own self? Can you even bear a needle poked deep in your skin? Are you willing to peel off your skin with forceps to study the organs lying underneath? Then how can one perform such horrible acts? The greed of wealth is dreadful, indeed.

Lust is also an equally dreadful sin. A man blinded by lust for his wife is ready to trouble or cheat his parents. He forgets the innumerable favours done on him by his parents.

Power misguided the king while greed misguided the assassin.

Pwoer and greed both were dreadful, but the religious element turns out to be the saviour.

The assassin's change of mind

By worshipping Lord in the previous birth, the child had got along with him the protection of religion in his current birth. It acted as the ultimate saviour. In the evening time, when the child was sitting alone on the porch of the house, the assassin lured him and then abducted him.

He swiftly ran and immediately reached the outskirts of the city. Night had fallen and the silver moonlight fell on the earth. In the moonlight, the assassin happened to glance at the little child's face. At the time, his mind was enveloped with varied thoughts, "Oh, such an innocent and charming face! How can this child cause trouble to the king in any way? How can I murder such an innocent child? Whatever may be in the king's mind, but I cannot commit the grave sin of killing this innocent young child. I will leave the child here only and inform the king that my job is done."

How did such positive thoughts cross the assassin's mind?

How cruel would be the man on whom the king had blind faith and trusted him to successfully carry out the murder of a young, innocent child! How is it possible that such an evil man's heart melted and he thought, "What an innocent child!

How can I kill him?" Can such a merciful thought touch a merciless assassin's heart?

Who enabled the assassin to cultivate such a merciful and compassionate thought? The child did not cry or beg for mercy. Also, the assassin did not come across some Guru (mentor) on the way who could have preached a religious discourse to change his mind. Then, who was responsible for this thought of mercy in the savage assassin's mind?

The enormous punya accumulated by the child by worshipping the great Arihant Lord in his previous birth was responsible for melting the assassin's heart. It was the child's punya which silently guided the evil man to leave the child in a garden, beside the gardener's house.

Look, how his punya saved him! It transformed a man's brutal and violent thoughts into merciful and compassionate ones. It gave him the strength to overrule a king's orders. This was the first instance of his survival.

Now, let's look at the second instance

The gardener stepped outside his house and happened to see the little child. The mere sight of the charming child was enough to attract him. He was lost in thoughts, "Oh, how did this child end up here? Whose child is this?" He goes around and tried to find the guardian of the child. On not finding anyone nearby, he thinks, "It seems that someone has abandoned him. Whatever it is, I am blessed. I wanted a child since so many years and now the Almighty has blessed me with such a charming child. I will keep him and treat him as my own son."

The gardener's wife's delight = The Brahmin's wife's sorrow

The gardener picked up the child and took him inside his home. He went over to his wife and told her, "Weren't you always crying that we don't have a child? Take this child, he is your son from now on. Look, he is as charming as a prince. God has sent him for you. Thank God that he blessed us with a child without you having to go through the pain of keeping him in your womb for nine months."

The gardener's wife's joy knew no bounds. She immediately took the little child in her hands and hugged him tightly and kiss him all over his face. She thanked God and exclaimed, "God, you are really compassionate! You blessed me with a prince-like charming son. I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

On the other hand, the Brahmin's house was filled with sorrowful cries, "Alas, where is the child?" They tried tracing his whereabouts in the neighbourhood but to no avail.

They thought that probably a dog or cat must have dragged him in the jungle. But they were no sure and hence, they could do nothing but lament. They consoled themselves thinking that they weren't fortunate enough to deserve the child.

This was also the little child's good karma that neither his parents nor the gardener felt like informing the court and creating a havoc in the town. Everything finished silently and the child was brought up with great love and affection at the gardener's house.

The prediction of the gardener's son becoming the king

Once when the child had grown up a little, the gardener had to go to the king's court to deliver some flowers. He took the child along with him so that the child could seek blessings of the king. When the child bowed down to touch the king's feet, the astrologer sitting beside the king glanced at the child and spontaneously exclaimed, "Such a blessed and fortunate child!"

The king enquired, "What happened? Why are you so startled?" "O king! It seems that this child will become your successor", said the astrologer. Again, the king was taken aback, "This gardener's son will become my heir!" He expressed delight in front of everyone and said, "Oh, is it? He is highly fortunate, then." But in his mind, agony knew no bounds. Numerous thoughts flooded his mind, "What! Had the assassin been unsuccessful in murdering the child 3-4 years back? Or even if he is dead, now will this child, born in such a downtrodden family, acquire my throne? My reputation will be ruined. Will my beloved son not get the fortune to become the next king? This is not possible even in the wildest of my dreams. I will have to get this child eliminated from my way."

One wrong mental calculation can lead to many setbacks in life.

The king was lost in a vicious cycle of evil mental thoughts. His mental thought process was wrong irrespective of whether the astrologer's prediction turned out to be true or not. If the astrologer's prediction was wrong, the king's thought that

'It is not right that this child will become the next king', and all his mental calculations will be totally useless as the child would anyways never become the king. If the astrologer's prediction proved to be right, that the child would eventually become the king, the king would not accept it and thought of committing the heinous crime of getting the innocent child murdered. Thus, whether the child would become the next king or not, the king became a victim of wrong mental calculations which eventually troubled him.

In daily routine life also, man become a victim of wrong mental calculations and suffers setbacks in life.

For example, one may feel that my brother, uncle, nephew, etc. do not support me and wish for my downfall. Hence, one may cut all ties with them. What happened here? A wrong mental calculation led to emergence of hatred and hard feeling. This calculation is wrong because may be the opposite person's behaviour was not wrong but you yourself made the assumption by listening to other people's views and thoughts. Isn't this a wrong calculation?

Initially, a person's financial condition was good and he came to our help but later when his condition did not permit him to do so, our self-motive was not fulfilled and we ended up thinking that the man had now changed colours. This is again our wrong notion.

Money can also enhance this poisonous vision

Q. How can money play a role in doing so?

A. When you have enough money but still think, "What if some needy person comes and asks for charity?" – this is

a poisonous vision. On the other hand, if you think that, "How can I utilise maximum amount of money for the welfare of others?" – this is a nectar-filled vision.

Do you feel jealous when your friend earns more money than you? Do you doubt his capabilities by thinking that he must be involved in some inappropriate act or must be using unjust means? This is a very poisonous vision and will become a barrier in developing a positive, nectar-filled vision of appreciating others. A nectar-filled vision is when you think on the following lines, 'So what if he earns more than me? He is my friend and I should be happy for his success. He is earning due to his own past punya. My past acts and karmas would be such that I have not accumulated enough punya and hence, it is obvious that my growth is hindered. If I end up being a victim of jealousy here, I will reduce my own punya and will accumulate additional sinful karmas'. Karma theory has a well-established rule that –

Negative feelings lead to the following repercussions :

(1) Accumulation of negative (sinful) karmas

(2) Transformation of previously binded good karmas into bad ones

(3) Decrease in the intensity and time-span of enjoying the good karmas which you have accumulated.

Intense feeling like anger, pride, greed, deceit, attractions, love, sensual desires, attachment for materialistic objects, attachment of wife, son, daughter, etc., hatred, agony, jealousy, cruelty, disrespect, etc. are all negative feelings. The emergence of these feelings in your heart is bound to

lead to the above-stated consequences. Also, it will strengthen the inclination towards such negative elements, which we already possess since times eternal. If we still surrender to such negative feelings now, we will just keep on adding fuel to our already strong inclination.

Great learned men from the bygone era had understood the catastrophic effects of such negative feelings and hence, live a life filled with positive sentiments with no place for such negativities. Even when faced with circumstances which compelled one to become a victim of such negative feelings, they would understand that, "If I spoil my feelings towards the opposite person even under the guise of unfavourable circumstances, I will not get redeemed. On the contrary, my soul will get trapped by sinful karmas. Why do I commit such foolishness by bearing the brunt of other's mistakes?"

Circumstances are dependent on Punya and Paap which you have accumulated whereas positive or negative feelings are dependent solely on the soul's efforts.

The soul is helpless when it comes to choossing the specific circumstances we are faced with but is independent in stopping negative feelings and having positive feelings at all times, irrespective of the circumstances. Then why should one let go of positive feelings and sentiments when their benefits are infinite.

Look, the loss incurred due to adverse circumstances is meagre but if it is borne calmly and positively, the profit acquired is immeasurable.

Someone seized Rs. one lakh from you or your partners cheated on you and took a greater share of profit – the loss

of this adverse event may be poverty in your life. But in such an adverse situation, if you keep your cool and develop a feeling of total non-attachment towards money and prosperity and also feel compassionate towards the opposite person who accumulated a lot of paapkarmas because of your wealth, then the profit acquired by your soul is immeasurable. You should think about how helpless the opposite person will be when he is faced with the dire consequences of the paap karmas. You should cultivate positive feelings like compassion, non-attachment towards wealth, forgiveness, complete faith in Arihant Lord's teachings, etc. as their benefits are immeasurable.

King Rama's positivity

Kaikeyi cunningly seized Rama's right to the royal throne for Bharat. What did Ramchandraji do in such a situation? Did he get angry? Was he arrogant and claimed his right to the throne? Did he harbour hatred and animosity towards Bharat and Kaikeyi? No, instead, he asked for forest exile. Why so? Because he was sure that Bharat would not accept the royal throne in his presence and hence, he willingly accepted forest exile. Even after leaving the royal palace and living a tedious forest life, there was not even one instance where he experienced sorrow or regret at the turn of events his life had taken nor did he feel hatred towards Kaikeyi or Bharat. Now, compare the loss and profit incurred by Rama. He lost his kingdom and a luxurious royal life. But the profit of his positivity was great :

(i) He could forsake all worldly pleasures.

(ii) His name went down in history as a father's true devotee.

(iii) He avoided feuds in his family.

He was a man with a noble outlook, who took all happy or sad events in his stride. But his mother could not bear to witness her son struggling in the forest instead of enjoying the comforts of the palace and was extremely depressed. But Rama had the art to revive her happiness by filling her mind with positive thoughts.

Rama said, "Mother, what are you doing? Instead of being proud of my actions, you are sitting and weeping? Not a single king in our entire clan of Ikshvaku has retreated from his words. Each great king has invariably kept his words. Father had given a promise to Kaikeyi according to which the kingdom was handed over to Bharat. But Bharat is not ready to accept the throne in my presence. Does that mean that father's word will not be kept? I have asked for forest exile so that Bharat does not have any option and has to inevitably accept the throne and this will ensure that father's word is perfectly kept. You should be proud and happy that since my son is willing to accept forest exile, my husband's words will not fail and the grandeur, legacy and dignity of the great Ikshvaki clan will remain intact!"

Listening to this, Kaushalya was exalted and patted Rama's back. But this was possible only because Rama did not harbour any hatred for Kaikeyi, was determined to follow his father's words and was ready to sacrifice his luxurious life and prosperity.

Today when conflicts emerge in a family, among brothers or uncles, if Rama's example is kept in mind, one can cultivate

the strength to sacrifice at least a little, if not everything like Rama, and thus, retain positive feelings and save our soul from getting contaminated with unnecessary karmas.

For this, the incomparable value of positive feelings should be understood.

Also, one should sit back and contemplate, "This noble human birth gives me the golden opportunity to strengthen my positive feelings and eliminate the inclination towards negative feelings cultivated in the past. Is it right if I do the opposite task here? Isn't it foolishness if I still succumb to negative thoughts and thus, strengthen my inclination towards it instead of strengthening my inclination for a positive disposition?

Money is highly responsible for a poisonous outlook

Money leads to the desire of carrying out numerous events and occasions where usually living creatures are harmed in some form or the other. In fact, even a person whose financial conditions do not permit him to carry out so much expenditure, he will sit back and imagine what he would do if he acquires enough money. In general, a major part of our thought process revolves around money. For example, "What a beautiful bungalow he has built!", "He does not know how to conduct his business properly. Then how can he get proper returns?", "He is a fool to keep his capital idle in spite of there being so may lucrative investment opportunities." Thus, money is such an object which leads to endless sinful thoughts.

Due to wrong mental calculations, man is compelled to fill his mind with sinful thoughts. Mental calculations that

"I will make profit on doing this particular task" are wrong because a man does not realise that Karmasatta is the ultimate controller. If my karmas are unfavourable, then my desires are not going to be fulfilled. On the contrary, I will end up binding more paap karma.

In this particular story, the king thought, "I will get this child executed and prevent him from becoming the king." He made several attempts to do so but in vain because the child had accumulated massive punya karmas in his previous birth by worshipping Arihant Lords. Hence, the king's sinful thoughts and acts did not work and became an added burden on his soul.

After the gardener and his child left, the king was engrossed in his thoughts, "Is this child the Brahmin's son whom I got killed a few years ago? Had the assassin spared his life? Or was he actually dead and a new heir had emerged? Whatever it is, but I cannot take the risk of letting him stay alive."

Thinking on these lines, he hired another trusted but tough-hearted and evil man to abduct the gardener's son, take him deep into the jungle and finish him off.

Carried away by his wrong calculations, the king implemented the act of getting the child executed but isn't it said that 'The entire world is incapable to do anything to the one who is favoured by the Supreme Lord Himself." The child had accumulated massive punya by doing Lord's worship in the previous birth. This was his shield against all odds. When such a shield is present, who has the capacity to even touch his hair?

Now, for the second time, a cruel assassin was hired to kill the child. He discreetly abducted the child from the gardener's house and swiftly rode on his horse while carrying the child in front of him and went deep into the jungle. After travelling for a long time, the child was hungry and without crying, looked right in the evil man's eyes, pulled his beard and spoke in his sweet, childish tone, "Uncle, I am hungry. Can I get a laddu?"

The horse rider's heart melted on seeing the child's innocent, adorable, loving face and on hearing his sweet voice. He thought, "Arre! Should I commit the grave sin of killing this innocent child? He seems to be God's miniature form. How can I kill him? Good, the king assigned this job to me. Had he assigned this job to some immature person, he would have killed this innocent child without sparing a thought. But this kid's fortune was in his favour that he was handed over to me. If a hard-core criminal like me can have thoughts of compassion and mercy, then it surely denoted the kid's good fortune. Now, let me leave him at a suitable place where he can find some guardian to bring him up."

The horse rider's thoughts were channelised in the right way. He himself showed mercy for the child but did not give himself credit for it. Instead, he gave credit to the child's good fortune.



6. Rendering service – easy or difficult?

It is easy to show mercy, compassion or serve others but giving others credit for it is really difficult.

Our history is full of examples of great learned men who, while giving donations, gave credit to the needy donees, i.e. "Brother, you did a great favour on me by giving me the chance to give donations. If there wouldn't be takers like you, how would I become capable to give donations in spite of my abundant wealth?"

When King Rana Pratap was immersed in poverty, Vir Bhamashah gave him abundant wealth to maintain his army for many years. Such a great act of philanthropy! In spite of doing this great act, he told Rana Pratap, "By way of this army, you are going to protect this country's great Aryan culture and age-old traditions. You gave me a chance to become instrumental in doing so. I am really grateful to you for that."

Philanthropy encompasses being grateful to the donee. On the contrary, if the donation was made with pride and an air of arrogance so that the donee stays under the donor's favours, then whether Rana Pratap would have accepted such a donation or not is a big question. And if Rana Pratap would not have accepted it, then how could Vir Bhamashah made

the donation in spite of his abundant wealth? If there was no one present to accept his donations, then how would he get the opportunity to make donations?

Impossibility of charity without seekers

USA's famous billionaire, Rockefeller, was renowned for his misery, in spite of amassing a huge fortune of billions of dollars. When he was faced with old age and deteriorating health conditions, realised finally dawned upon him and he thought, "Arre! I will die and these billions will stay as it is! It is better I do some charity out of it." Thinking on these lines, he asked for a list of all NGOs in the USA and signed cheques of 5,000 dollars each in favour of each NGO. But each of the organisations returned the cheques saying 'Refused with honour'. In this case, can Rockefeller's burning desire to do philanthropy be fulfilled?

Thus, while benefacting others, we have to give credit to them. Same is the case in serving others.

Do not think that you are doing a favour by serving others but consider it their favour unto you and give them credit for giving you a chance to serve them.

When you give alms to saints i.e. do Supatradan, what do you say? "I gave you good alms and did a favour on you" or "You gave me a good chance to serve you." Right? In reality, you served the saints and offered them alms but you still say, "You gave me a chance to serve you. I am really obliged." Why so? This is because you very well understand that in the absence of the saint, Supatradan was not possible. On the other hand, after serving your parents, do you thank

them by saying, "You did a great favour on me by giving me a change to serve you" or do you say, "Thank me because I am looking after you. Which other son of yours is prepared to serve you in this manner?" Why this difference?

Difference in praising your own-self and giving credit to others

When one's own greatness is the prime reason of serving others, utilisation of time, money, energy and other resources will be minimal and eventually, it will come to a complete stop. On the other hand, if due credit is given to the opposite person and you feel truly obliged that they gave you an opportunity to serve them, then you will generously serve others and such service will not get exhausted irrespective of whether you have adequate resources or not.

This is because, when the motto of serving others is to boast about your own greatness, then you will be satisfied with the heaps of praises you get even on spending a minimal of your resources and hence, there is no need to act in a generous big-hearted manner. Now, in such a scenario, if there is an instance where the opposite person speaks in a bitter tone, you will think, "In spite of the fact that I am serving him so much, I still have to listen to all this." And you will feel like giving up serving him altogether. You will think that if you serve some other needy person, you will get more praises. Thus, our aim is limited to boasting our own greatness and short-term welfare in this birth. Hence, we become more stringent and calculative in serving that person.

On the contrary, if you feel obliged to the opposite person and the focus is on the welfare of the next birth, then you

will think that, "He is giving me this opportunity to serve him and hence, I should cultivate feeling of gratitude, develop inclination for good virtues and accumulate punya." These feelings lead to generosity while serving others.

Till date, we have served others with our self-interest in mind, which is a wrong calculation. The above thoughts are possible only if we are willing to rectify our thought process.

Consider the opposite person's great favour that he is enabling us to improve our next birth by way of his service.

Leave aside cultivating a feeling of gratitude for the opposite person, one does not have this goal in mind even while worshipping God. Hence, instead of being obliged and thankful to the Lord, you take credit for yourself. Why is your name written on the board after you contribute for doing Lord's aangi or performing his pooja? Why is your name displayed grandly on permanent stone billboards after donating money for the temple? Why all this?

Q. Isn't it done so that others get the opportunity to do *anumodana* of good act?

A. Arre! The others may ensure their spiritual progress by way of appreciating your good act but you will hamper your spiritual progress by boasting about your own good deeds and by thinking that you have done a favour on Lord. If you really want others to get a chance for *anumodana*, then you can get the board written in this manner: 'A debtor of Arihant Lords has contributed for today's aangi, pooja, etc.' or you can engrave the following message on the stone billboard, 'A small payment from the huge

debt of Arihant Lords that I am bearing.' Can't this enable *anumodana*? Does *anumodana* require your name? It is all a ploy. Deep down your heart, your burning desire is for others to sing praises about you and then you disguise it under the pretext of giving others a chance of *anumodana*. All this is your cunning mind's cheating. Sit back and think, "When will this soul progress?"

It is Lord's great favour on us that we are getting a chance to revere and worship Him. If we do not consider Lord's immense favours involved when we worship Him, then our spiritual progress is miles away.

What are Lord's immense favours on us?

1. We can attain the chance of being supremely devoted to Arihant Lords only because Arihant Lords are present as our role models.
2. Arihant Lords preached the path of devotion which enabled us to engage in it and follow it. Hence, being our torch-bearers, they have done immense favours on us.
3. It is the impact of Arihant Lords that we acquired this noble human birth and have an opportunity to perform His reverence. Hence, He has done a great favour on us by gifting us this noble birth.
4. Arihant Lords Themselves do not wish to attain anything from us and hence, people are inclined towards His devotion. It is quite possible that if Arihant Lords were filled with desires, and asked something in return for their favours, our inclination for His devotion would not increase beyond a point or we may stop revering him completely.

It is natural that people's soft-corner is generally towards those who are completely free from desires and selfless.

Thus, keep in mind that those who engage in Lord's reverence and then blow their own trumpet by declaring their name on the board are foolish, ignorant, and arrogant.

Serving others and being grateful to them will do wonders.

Tell your son, "Dear son, I am not doing any favour on you but you are giving me a chance to nurture and raise a good, religious soul." This will work wonders and he will strive to develop a religious outlook because he understands that his parents are spending so much money, time, and energy on him so that he becomes a truly religious man. Initially, he may do religion just to please his parents or under the greed of getting gifts from them but eventually, religion will touch his heart and he will grow up to become a truly religious and noble man.

When you happen to help your neighbour, tell them, "You have given me a good chance to help you. I thank you for giving me this opportunity. You have been really kind to me." These words will carve out a special position for you in your neighbour's heart.

Hence, it is said that truly serving others is extremely difficult. It is said, "Sevadharma Paramgahano Yoginamapyagamyam". It literally means, "Providing true service to others is extremely difficult and is not known even by Yogis (highly learned men).

Why is it extremely difficult?

It is difficult because even after utilising all your physical, mental, and financial capacity in the service of others, you

still have to firmly believe that, "He did a great favour on me by giving me an opportunity to serve him." Is it possible to think on these lines? Most people find it difficult to digest that in spite of spending all your energy and efforts in serving others, you still have to feel thankful to the opposite person, instead of the other way around. This is the reason why this act is termed as difficult. Even those highly learned men who preach religion to others and purify their mind and soul finds it difficult to think that "I have enhanced my spiritual progress". He may also think that "I ensured his welfare".

Q. Why is it said that this is unknown even to the highly learned sages also? It is true that a learned sage improved the spoilt life of his follower but how can you say that the follower, in turn, enhanced the sage's spiritual progress?

A. From the point of view of the follower, it is right to say that, "This learned sage improved my life". From our point of view, too, it is appropriate to say that, "The learned sage improved his follower's life". But, from the point of view of the sage, he also has to believe that, "This man did a great favour on me". The intention behind this thought is that great learned sages from the past as well as my teachers had placed utmost trust in me and passed Lord's path of spiritual progress to me. Now, my task will be accomplished when I preach this path to others. This man did a great favour by accepting this path preached by me and thus, helped me accomplish my task. First, I should be thankful to the Supreme Lords that showed us the path for our spiritual progress. Then, the great learned sages and my teachers also did a great favour on me by guiding

me on this holy path. Now, it is my chance to return their favour. I can do so only if I ensure that this path is passed on. But to do so, there has to be some seeker, right? This lucky man accepted my discourse and helped me keep this holy path flowing ahead. Such a thought is difficult to occur in the minds of great scholars also. But it is a reality.

Q. But this thought process is against the normal flow that the men accepting service should be thankful rather than those who are rendering service. It is a deep philosophy.

A. If the one rendering service believes that he obliged the other person, it means that he became a victim of pride and arrogance which revolves around 'I'. Similarly, if the learned sage believes that he preached the right path to the seeker, his belief is wrong because in reality it is the Almighty God who had preached this holy path and the sage is merely spreading the knowledge about this holy path. Thus, if the service rendered ultimately leads to the rise of ego, then will this service accelerate or hamper his spiritual progress? It is said, "All's well that ends well". But here, this service ended in pride and wrong beliefs. Then how can it be fruitful?

Instead, if he believes, "What did I do? This path is not founded by me. It is preached by the Almighty Arihant Lords and I just have to deliver it. Then how can it be said that I did any favour on him?" Such a thought process can save him from pride and wrong beliefs.

In daily routine life, suppose you step out of your house and your neighbour entrusts you with Rs. 10,000 to give to a

specific dealer in the market. You took the money and deliver it to that dealer. Now, will you think that, "I gave you Rs. 10,000 so you should be obliged to me"? No. On the contrary, if the opposite person thanked you that, "You gave me Rs. 10,000 and helped me in my time of crisis", a gentleman will reply, "No need to thank me. My neighbour told me to hand over this money to you and by taking it, you freed me of my burden. Hence, I should thank you."

What should a learned sage believe?

In the above manner, a learned sage should believe that Lord's path was just a bundle given to me, delivering it to a suitable seeker helped me to return Lord's favour as much as I could. Lord obliged me and the seeker gave me an opportunity to be free from Lord's debt to some extent. If the sage is thankful to both, the Lord and the seeker, then he will be prevented from becoming a victim of pride and ego.

Q. What should you believe when you provide financial assistance to others?

A. Like above, even while donating money and other daily necessities like medicines, food, clothes, etc., one should believe that the seeker did a great favour on me.

Q. We parted with our money to help other. Then how can we say that the seeker obliged me?

A. The root of our thinking is at fault here. Is this money and wealth actually ours? We have derived this wealth due to the devotional worship of Arihant Lords done in the previous births as well as obeying Lord's preaching faithfully. Thus, this wealth attained is by the grace of God.

We must have sowed little in the form of Lord's worship and are harvesting this huge wealth today. Thus, the wealth that we have attained is actually Lord's belonging. Believing it to be ours is the first wrong notion. Then, believing that by giving our wealth to others, we have obliged them is our second wrong notion.

Instead, if we think that, I would have utilised, rather wasted my wealth in worldly affairs involving violence of innumerable creatures, enrichment of my sensual pleasures, strengthening of my attachment towards this materialistic world, which eventually leads to Aartadhyaana* and Raudradhyaana*. In this case, I am grateful to this person who accepted my donation and saved me from falling in the trap of these acts.

The above thought process can rescue us from wrong notions and ego. Similarly, when we assist others by giving them food, medical facilities, shelter, or even our precious advice, we aren't doing any favour on them because all of this belongs to the Lord. Even the advice which we impart to assist others is a result of our good brain, sharp intelligence, and right wisdom which we have acquired only due to the impact of Lord. The opposite person is accepting it gracefully and giving us a chance to repay the abundant favours done on us by Arihant Lords.

Another favour which the person accepting our service does on us is that by listening and following our advice or by graciously accepting our donation of wealth, food, medicines,

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* **Aartadhyaana** – A negative thought process including feelings like stress, anxiety, anger, deceit, depression, etc.

* **Raudradhyaana** – An extremely cruel thought process including intense feelings of violence, greed, hatred, etc.

etc, he is helping us to develop the good habit and virtues of donation and also, accumulate abundant punya. Isn't this a great favour?

Q. Scriptures say, "Suppose you preached the right path or gave good advice to someone and even if the opposite person did not accept it and turned a deaf ear towards it, you did your job with the desire of that person's welfare, hence, you are surely going to benefit from it. In this case, how can we consider that person's favour on us? Even if he would have accepted our preaching partially, then we could have said that he did a favour on us by giving us an opportunity to our words as a tool to improve his life.

A. Here also, one can consider his favour that we could deliver our teachings only because he sat to listen. If there was no listener, the to whom would we preach? Definitely not to the walls or pillars. It is quite possible that like the non-living walls, an unenthusiastic listener may accept nothing from our teaching. But a preacher cannot develop feeling of welfare for non-living walls and hence, will the question of preaching arise? Accordingly, the acquisition of a patient listener is in itself a favour for the preacher. Then why can't he be grateful to the listener?

A preacher selflessly delivered his teachings with the sole intention of the welfare of the opposite person in his mind, and without expecting any sort of consideration in return. In such a scenario, how many will think that the listener did a great favour on him and not vice-versa? Hence, there is a very popular saying, 'Serving others is really difficult and unknown to Yogis also'. Being thankful to the listener prevents from

fuelling your ego and arrogance. Thoughts such as, "I am taking so much effort in teaching but these dumb people still don't understand" or "The listener should follow what I say blindly" won't arise. Hence, by being thankful to the listener, the preacher becomes humble, modest and kind.

Another great benefit of believing that the listener is doing a great favour on us is that, you will appreciate the fact that the listener is giving me a chance to exercise the 5th type of Swadhyaya*called Dharmakatha which is also a type of Abhyantar Tapa and a great tool for elimination past karmas of the soul.

In spite of knowing all the above advantages, it is still really difficult to render service and consider that the opposite person did a great favour on us. Hence, highly knowledgeable Pujya Anandghanji Maharaj has rightly said, "Mugdha Sugam Seva Aadre, Sevan Agam Anupa…". It means, "An innocent man believes service to be very easy but in reality, it is difficult to decipher it, it is incomprehensible."

Q. Why are efforts undertaken for serving others considered superior than the efforts undertaken for attaining knowledge, performing penance, or carrying out other rituals?

A. Rendering selfless service ('Vaiyavach' as per the scriptures) is an imperishable quality. At times, the fruits achieved

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* **Swadhyaya –** It means the study of scriptures and comprises of 5 types : (1) Vaachana – learning scriptures from Guru Bhagwants, (2) Pruchchana – asking queries related to the lesson, (3) Paraavartana – revision, (4) Anupreksha – contemplating the studied matter, (5) Dharmakatha – imparting knowledge to others

by selflessly serving others exceeds the fruits attained by observing strict penance or studying scriptures. This is because after serving the opposite person, we still have to be grateful to him as he did a great favour on us by giving us a precious chance to serve him and as a result, we break our ego. Practicing penance, studying scriptures, following rituals is only a self-oriented task while selfless service involves other people and thus, we can consider the opposite person's favour on us for giving us this valuable chance of service. But how is this thought possible in the self-oriented acts of penance, studying scriptures, etc.?

Bharat – Bahubali's instance

In their previous birth, Bharat and Bahubali were Saint Bahu and Subahu. They whole-heartedly served 500 saints and acquired such an eminent position in their next birth. Out of the 500 saints whom they served daily, some may be highly knowledgeable, some may be practising severe penance while some may be engrossed in deep meditation. None of the great saints became famous or served as role models, but Bharat and Bahubali, who served them selflessly, have become eternal in the pages of history. It seems that both of them must have rendered service with this thought in mind, "You are giving me a great chance to serve you. I am really obliged."

Those who accept service give credit to those who render service and thank them while those who render service feel grateful to those who give them the chance to serve.

This is the glory of Jainism. It teaches every individual to think according to his position.

Thinking about Arihant Lord's innumerable favours on us

While worshipping Lord, bowing down to God, or creating Lord's beautiful aangi, one should think, "Lord! I am deeply obliged by you. I got this precious chance to worship you only because you overcame your internal enemies and became Arihant. What a great favour you have done on me!" "In daily life too, all external circumstances seem to be favourable. It is all because of the incomparable impact of my Arihant Lords. My heart is filled with noble thoughts, I can take vows, do charity, and perform other religious acts just because of your immense grace. I am totally incapable and hence, thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your favours on me."

In the above manner, repeatedly remembering Lord's favours and feeling grateful leads to numerous advantages. Some of them are :

(i) It slashed down our ego and pride. "Who am I and what can I do?" – this thought becomes prominent.

(ii) One can cultivate the habit of giving credit to others in spite of doing great noble acts.

(iii) One attains fresh punya which leads to prosperity due to the help of Arihant Lords. As a result, the mind is filled with overwhelming respect and faith for Arihant Lords. Arihant Lords are my real Lords and ultimate well-wishers – this thought gets fixed in the heart and mind.

(iv) If Lord's favours constantly envelope our mind, then we will work towards repaying Lord's favours.

(v) The attachment for Arihant Lords reduces our attachment and attraction towards materialistic and worldly pleasures.

(vi) If Arihant Lords are solely responsible for our progress and welfare, one is tempted to take Lord's refuge again and again, which will ultimately reduce our birth cycle.

(vii) One becomes increasingly enthusiastic in following Arihant Lord's words.

Thus, the ultimate message here is that even after rendering our service to others, we should consider it their favour on us.

The assassin hired by King gave the child credit for the emergence of noble thoughts in his mind.

As we saw earlier, the assassin employed by King experienced a revolutionary change of thoughts. His heart melted on seeing the charming face and on hearing the innocent, sweet voice of the child. He thought that the king was foolish to desire the death of such an angel-like, harmless child. He himself did not take the credit for the change of his heart but understood that it was the child's good fortune which was instrumental in bringing our such merciful thoughts in him. He mentally thanked the child, "Oh, little child! You did a great favour on me by stopping me from committing a grave crime. Your good fortune lead to the rise of mercy in my heart. You eliminated the demon of violence from my heart and established the angel of non-violence and compassion in my heart."



7. As you sow, So shall you reap

The assassin spotted a temple of Narsinh Yaksha in the forest. He went to the temple, made the child sit next to the Yaksha's idol, and pacified the child by saying, "Sit here. I will go and get a laddoo for you." He then bowed down to the Yaksha and prayed to him, "Please take care of this child" and left the temple.

Why did the kind assassin leave the child alone in the forest?

He left the child hungry and alone in the isolated temple in the middle of the forest because he very well understood that, "It was not wise to take the child back from where he picked him. Also, taking him to another town might lead to some calamity. This Yaksha has divine powers. He will definitely take care of him. Additionally, the child is also pretty fortunate." Thus, he left the child in the temple.

Why was the child fearless?

The assassin left and did not return for a long time. The hungry child innocently sat on the lap of the Yaksha's idol, patted his beard and said, "Uncle! I am hungry. I want a laddoo. Please give me one." The live Yaksha heard the innocent plea and his heart melted.

The child was a beggar in his previous birth and he religiously

started worshipping Arihant Lords without worrying about whether he will be able to acquire food or not. This led to him amassing a great amount of punya due to which the child remained fearless even in the isolated forest and did not cry. What does this symbolise?

The impurities which you keep aside while performing Arihant Lord's worship will definitely not act as an obstacle in your next birth.

Kumarpal's incomparable devotion towards Arihant Lords

In his previous birth, King Kumarpal had just 5 kodi (unit of currency probably equivalent to paisa) in his pocket and he bought flowers worth the entire amount and worshipped God and prayed, "Lord! I am a sinful beggar and I got the opportunity to worship you! Everything else seems worthless compared to your worship. You and your religion are really amazing to accept a person like me!" Engrossed on these positive feelings, he destroyed the impurities of Mithyatva and the impurity of giving more importance to worldly objects as compared to Arihant Lords and the religion. As a result, in the next birth of King Kumarpal, in spite of acquiring the vast empire comprising of 18 states, the impurity did not contaminate him and he became an unparalleled devotee of Arihant Lords and Jain religion.

Instances of Kind Kumarpal's courage and devotion towards Arihant Lords

(1) Kalikaal Sarvagna Acharya Bhagwant Shree Hemchandrasoori ji Maharaj was creating new scriptures and getting them scripted on Taadpatras (a type of leaf-

paper available at that time). Once, the entire stock of Taadpatras got exhausted and the work came to a halt. On becoming aware of this fact, King Kumarpal took a vow, "I will totally abstain from food and water until the stock of Taadpatras is not refilled". Such was his devotion towards the knowledge of Arihant Lords!

(2) While doing Lord's aarti, a thought stuck Kumarpal, "Lord has made me the ruler of 18 states and has blessed me with enormous wealth and prosperity. In spite of that, should I worship and decorate Lord with the flowers of just the present one season? Till I do not offer Lord the flowers of all six seasons, I vow not to touch food and water." Such was his string love, devotion, and gratefulness towards Arihant Lords!

(3) Once, while doing Samayik, an ant bit Kumarpal and was stuck on his skin. He tried to move the ant several times with the soft ends of his charavlo*, but in vain. Immediately, he called for a knife, peeled off that particular part of his skin and placed is in a safe corner without harming the ant. Such was his affection towards Arihant Lord's path of non-violence!

(4) During the festival of Navratri, the divine Kantakeshwari Devi herself appeared before King Kumarpal and threatened him, "If you do not sacrifice a goat, I will kill you." But Kumarpal was unmoved. The Devi struck his head with a Trishul (a trident – pointed weapon) which caused him unbearable pain and also covered his body with white spots. But Kumarpal was still determined.

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* **Charavlo** – A religious object used in Samayik to protect living creatures and insects

In fact, to avoid the criticism of Jainism as his body was covered with white spots, he was ready to burn himself in a pyre of fire. Such unflinching faith in Jainism and it's principle of non-violence!

How was this possible? He had kept aside the impurities of fear, cowardness, Mithyatva, and had not cared about his own life while worshipping God in his past birth. As a result, these impurities did not bother him here while worshipping the Arihant Lord.

Do you wish something like this for your next birth? Then remove these impurities from your soul by worshipping God devotedly here and observing the principles of Jainism wholeheartedly and as a result, these impurities will surely not bother you in your next birth.

Why did Shalibhadra not have attachment for the previous day's 99 boxes of jewellery, clothes etc. ?

When Shalibhadra gave kheer in alms to the saint in his previous birth, he had broken his attachment towards it. As a result, the impurity of this attachment towards material objects did not bother him in his current birth and he remained detached from the abundant clothes and jewellery granted to him by the divine blessings of the Deva. He thus disposed the previous day's divine objects in the gutter as if they were waste and worthless. Why did he not accumulate the wealth in a large Godown or treasure box and instead disposed it off? This was due to the fact that he had served saints devotedly by overcoming worldly attachment in his previous birth.

Impurity of attachment towards his mother that he overcame

In his previous birth, while he was on his death bed, Shalibhadra remembered his Guru (teacher) fondly, but overcame the attachment of his loving and doting mother sitting besides him. As a result, he could overcome his attachment towards his mother in the next birth and decided to renounce the world by thinking, "In spite of all this prosperity and wealth, I do not possess the ultimate authority. What is the use of such punya? It is better to seek refuge in the holy feet of Lord Mahavir and work towards the upliftment of my soul." Thus, the impurity of attachment towards his mother did not bother him here.

Nagketu's indifference towards his life while doing Attham

Nagketu's soul had a strong desire to do Athham tapa in his past birth. But his step mother took his life by burning him. At that moment, he was neither bothered about the excruciating pain nor about the danger to his life but he regretted that he lost an opportunity to observe the desired fast (Attham tapa) . As a result, in his next birth as Nagketu, he attained Jaatismarangyana* soon after his birth and in accordance with his previous birth's desire, started doing the Attham tapa. He did not care about the intense hunger or the death-like pain that he would have to undergo. This is because he has neglected the impurities of physical pain and agony of death in the previous birth.

Similarly, this young child that we are talking about had overcome the impurity of hunger, the fear of whether he

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* **Jaatismarangyana** – knowledge of all his previous births

would be able to attain food, etc. while worshipping Lord in the previous birth and hence, was fearless in the isolated jungle. He laughingly told the Yaksha that he was hungry and wanted a laddoo.

The wealthy merchant's dream about Narsinh Yaksha

The Yaksha's heart melted and using his divined powers, he gave a laddoo to the child. Along with it, he gave a dream to a wealthy merchant with a caravan in the other part of the same forest which was as follows, "Do you want a child? Go to the temple of Narsinh Yaksha located in this forest. There, you will get a charming, prince-like son."

The merchant was tempted by the Yaksha's dream and went about finding the whereabouts of the temple. He finally found it, stepped inside and was elated to actually find a child laughing and playing there. He was overjoyed and thought, "Oh, the dream did come true. What a charming little child! God blessed me and eliminated my problem of being childless." He gleefully went near the child and said, "Oh, kid! Why are you sitting here alone? Come with me!" He took the child in his arms, hugged him tightly and showered him with abundant kisses. The child said, "Uncle! I am hungry. Will you give me a laddoo?" The pleased merchant said, "Is it so? Come, come. I will give you laddoos and many other sweets too. Will you stay with me?" The child happily said, "Yes, yes. I will surely stay." The merchant took him along and proceeded towards the caravan. In his mind, he was astonished, "God knows how this child is alone in this dense forest. In spite of this, he is not crying and agreed happily to stay with a stranger like me."

This fact astonished the merchant but he was unaware about the child's previous birth wherein he had worshipped Lord devotedly without bothering about the acquisition of food, etc. and had thus, attained such fearlessness in this birth. The purity of his worship gifted him with such punya that emotions like worry, fear, hunger, stress, etc. did not bother him.

The holy scripture 'Yogadrashti Samuchchaya' states that any religious ritual is considered extremely pure only when

(1) The ritual is done whole-heartedly and with utmost faith and belief.
(2) It obstructs your desires for food, suppresses your anger, etc.
(3) There is no intention or desire of reaping fruits by performing the ritual.

Such a pure ritual reaps pure punya.
Scriptures call such pure punya as a giver of uncontaminated results.

'Uncontaminated results' means that while experiencing the fruits of this punya, the soul does not experience the contamination of extreme attachment, hatred, fear, anxiety, or distress. The rise of pure punya is without above impurities. So, how does this punya emerge? From the purest form of rituals.

The merchant took the child to his home and told his wife, "Look, you always wanted a son, right? Here, God heard your prayers and blessed you with a charming, prince-like son."

The lady was startled on seeing the little kid but delightfully

took him in her arms. She also hugged him and kissed him all over his face. Her joy knew no bounds. Everything else – her palace-like house, her precious ornaments, her chariots and even her loving husband seemed insignificant in front of the million-dollar son that she had acquired.

Now, instead of the child, if a person considers the great Almighty Lords to be worth a million dollars, his everything and his whole and sole, then wouldn't worldly objects like huge bungalows and cars, wealth and jewellery, spouse and children seem insignificant to him? The one who genuinely calls Lord his 'everything', certainly likes to call all worldly objects – 'nothing'.

It's a common complaint these days that we cannot develop such intense interest in religion and we are not able to focus our vision on the Almighty Lords. But how can that happen?

As long as one has attachment towards materialistic worldly objects, one considers them to be his 'everything' instead of considering them to be worthless, till then Arihant Lords and religion will seem insignificant.

Contemplation of considering worldly objects insignificant

If one wishes to consider Almighty Lords and His religion to be 'everything', then it is inevitable that the value and importance of worldly objects in his life should be 'nothing'. How can it be done? If one reflects that "My state is like that of a tamed monkey who is trained to dance in front of these worldly objects. They made me dance according to their own

free will. But how can I, belonging to Arihant Lord's noble clan, dance like a tamed monkey in front of these things?"

In reality, we are so blinded by the addiction and attachment towards worldly objects and the illusion they create, that we do not realise how we are dancing on the beats of these worldly objects like a tamed monkey. The dance generally is as follows :

(1) Worldly good objects make us dance on the beats of happiness.
(2) They make us dance on the beats of appreciation.
(3) They then make us dance to achieve it.
(4) They fill us with pride after achieving it.
(5) And then make us take proper care to protect it and take efforts to enhance it.

Now, if these objects get spoilt even a little, they then motivate us to dance on the beats of

(6) Tension and distress,
(7) Rush of thoughts considering various possibilities and
(8) Aartadhyaana, etc.

Thus, we get trapped in an emotional roller-coaster starting with happiness, appreciation, efforts, pride, protection, enhancement, tension, distress, rush of thoughts, Aartadhyaana. All this not the original nature of our pure soul. It is hired and cannot beautify the soul. Hence, they are termed as 'dance' here. Our loved ones or our desired objects are not truly ours and cannot stay with us on a permanent basis. Despite of these, we get elated on acquiring them. This is a dance. Also, the depression, sorrow, and frustration experienced on its loss is a dance.

We undergo fear and restlessness at the thought of facing an unwanted person or an unfavourable situation. After we come face-to-face with that unwanted person or land in the middle of a sticky situation, we experience distress, irritation, and tension. We then strive for the removal of such unfavourable people and circumstances. All this is the dance on the beats of these worldly objects and our illusion.

Becoming a victim of anger, greed, etc. for the sake of these non-living objects or living people like wife, children, etc. is also a dance.

Now sit back and think that how many worldly objects are constantly keeping us on our toes and making us dance on their beats?

What is the reason behind this dance? Not considering them insignificant and 'nothing' compared to Almighty Lords.

If we truly consider them insignificant and 'nothing', then our dance will surely reduce. What makes us dance on the beats of our employer, Government officer or even the peon at times? 'Money' – which we consider to be extremely precious. Why does someone else's bungalow or latest model of car attract and please us? This is because we consider them to be precious and significant. But if we consider them insignificant in front of Arihant Lords, then we will not have to dance on the beats of such attraction and pleasure.

Q. What is the harm in considering a bungalow to be good or beautiful? It is natural that a good bungalow will attract us.

A. Considering the bungalow to be good is our root mistake. Is a bungalow good or a temple? Is the latest model of a

car good or is it good to walk carefully and save the lives of little creatures and insects on the road? Whenever you remember or glance at the bungalow which you believe to be good, it is bound to poison your soul with attachment, pride, and extreme violence involved in its construction. Now, is this bungalow truly good?

Q. How many sins to be carried out for the sake of a desired car?

A. Liking for a car means approval of the violence done in its manufacturing, the violence of infinite Agnikaya* and Vaayukaya* creatures harmed when you drive it and the violence against many little insects that are crushed under its wheels. Additionally, liking for the car poisons the soul with its attachment, possessiveness, pride, etc. Can this car be good?

To summarise, if one considers the bungalow, car and other such material possessions to be dreadful and not good, then one will not have to dance on the beats of its attachment, joy, pride and ego. Otherwise, these bungalow and cars are no less than monkey trainers which compel this soul to dance endlessly like monkeys. To save ourselves from dancing like a monkey, the only solution is to consider these worldly objects to be 'nothing'.

If you are successful in considering worldly material objects to be 'nothing', only then can you understand the real worth of Arihant Lords and feel like establishing a connection with Him.

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* **Agnikaya –** the creatures of fire;
* **Vaayukaya –** the creatures of air

Do not forget that to establish a relation with God, the most favourable birth is this great human birth.

Do not rely on the future that, "We will strive to establish a relation with God some time in the future when we attain a similar good Arya human birth." This is because the negative feelings of attachment towards worldly objects strengthened here are bound to give rise to similar thoughts in the future as well. Hence, it is advisable to do good today instead of waiting for the future.

One should cultivate this thought, "If I get delighted on unexpectedly attaining a desired worldly object and build clouds of imagination related to it, then why am I not exhilarated on unexpectedly attaining the Lord of the three worlds – Arihant Lords as my Lord? A sinful person like me acquired the powerful Arihant Lords who are worshipped even by the Indras!" Why doesn't this thought amaze you?

Child named Narsinh

The childless couple was extremely elated on acquiring a prince-like son they desired from the Yaksha. Since they found the kid from the Narsinh Yaksha's temple, they named the child 'Narsinh'.

Due to the impact of the worship of Lord done in the previous birth, the child was saved miraculously and was now loved and nurtured as the son of a wealthy merchant. The merchant was travelling far and wide along with his servants to establish his business and earn money. After a period of nearly 3 years, he felt, "I have earned enough. Now, why should I become greedier? I have been blessed with an adorable son, also.

Why don't I go home and raise the child with great love and affection, spend quality time with him and play with him? He is my greatest asset. Why should I now roam about here and there?"

Is it possible for a merchant who roams far and wide to amass wealth to actually satiate his greed? No, but the desire to bask in the happiness of attainment of son exceeded his desire to earn more. Similarly, if you give entry to the element named 'religion' in your life and inculcate the desire to enjoy devotion, worship, and remembrance of God, then the greed of wealth can be overcome. This can be understood to the one who has tasted the flavour of the worship of Lord.

Narsinh's goodwill

The merchant reached his town and spread a rumour that his wife had secretly given birth to a son while they were on the expedition. People who were completely unaware of the real happenings accepted him to be the merchant's son. The merchant got rid of his blot of being childless. His goodwill among people increased. Narsinh was also fondly loved by one and all. Everyone felt like playing with the charming kid. Due to his previous punya, he was already fearless and smiling with happiness at all times, additionally, he was now the wealthy merchant's son. Hence, the merchant's relatives and friends came to his house and played with him, loved him, got him various gifts and were delighted on seeing him. As a result, the merchant and his wife's affection for the child increased by leaps and bounds. He was thus pampered a lot.

Miraculous effects of Punyanubandhi Punya*

Look at the special characteristics of Narsinh's punya. In spite of being pampered so much, receiving abundant love and adulation, he did not become arrogant. He never threw tantrums, lost his temper or had mood-swings. This was because his punya was pure.

How was such punya acquired by him? As a result of the worship done without the intention of attaining any worldly desires, not even a piece of roti to fill his hungry stomach. His calculation was very clear, "I will attain roti if my past punya permits. Why waste such precious worship of Lord for a mere piece of roti? It isn't easy to attain the valuable worship of Lord. Who will leave aside the worship of Lord and become a slave of worldly objects?"

Even a small act of religion exercised with such desirelessness is bound to give enormous Punyanubandhi punya. The functioning of punya is truly amazing.

What role did Narsinh's talent or his efforts play in him being so fortunate? At such a tender age, how can he use his smartness to attain so much love and affection? In spite of extensively utilising their talent, smartness of efforts, not all people attain such fortune. It is all a game of punya, an outcome of punya. From where did this incomparable punya arise? In the previous birth, he had repeatedly and devotedly worshipped the ultimately fortunate Arihant Lords. As a result, the great punya of Saubhagya Naamakarma arose.

As Narsinh grew up, the merchant appointed various teachers

*** Punyanubandhi Punya** – Such punya which results in new punya

to tutor him in a wide range of subjects. Eventually, he excelled in all fields like literature, grammar, knowledges, mathematics, accounts, book-keeping, science, identifying diamonds and gems, identifying grocery, horse-riding, sword-fighting, and other types of martial arts too. Narsinh did not have to put in too much efforts to learn all of this and become highly knowledgeable because he has worshipped the omniscient Arihant Lords. At the young age of 16 years, he had acquired expertise in all diverse fields.

Don't you wish to attain worldly comforts and pleasures? Do you remember Arihant Lords at that time? You wish to attain wealth but do you feel like dedicating something or the other in Lord's feet because it is He who is responsible for this precious human birth and prosperity that you possess? Shouldn't we use this wealth for His beauty? If you wish to attain good milk, shouldn't you offer milk to God? If you wish to acquire ghee, you should burn diyas of ghee in front of the Lord.

Feeling of gratitude towards Lord

Do not be misguided here. Lord does not have to be worshipped so that you acquire ghee, milk or money in return. This is just for the common understanding that if you have taken something from someone or feasted on someone's food, you have the burden on the back of your mind to repay him in cash or kind. Then why don't we possess such feelings for our ultimate benefactor? Is it because He has not given us anything directly, hand-to-hand? The Government has also not directly given us anything. But we thank it, if its laws and policies allow cheap imports such that we can avail of foreign goods at cheap prices.

Along with this thought, we need to think about the favours Lord has done on us and will continue doing in the future as well.

- Lord is a possessor of infinite knowledge,

- Lord is a possessor of incomparable noble clan (*ucch gotra*), goodwill (*yash*) fortune(*saubhagya*) and credit that people believe in His words(*aadey*) .

- He is a possessor of infinite magical and supreme powers due to the elimination of Labhantaraya karma.

- He possesses infinite energy and is capable to eliminate our infinite greed, hatred, and attachments."

If by worshipping supreme Arihant Lords, the acquisition of infinite knowledge, power, etc. can become possible, then the acquisition of lesser and immaterial things is obviously easily possible.

Thus, why roam around here and there? Rather, worship and seek refuge under the possessor of infinite knowledge and prosperity; serve and revere him. All your needs are sure to be fulfilled.

Our rich history is full of examples of great men who acquired material wealth as well as spiritual prosperity solely by devotedly worshipping Arihant Lords.

Great Shravak Nagketu was devotedly worshipping Lord with flower when a snake hidden in the flower basket bit him. The poison spread in his body and the pain was insufferable. But he was in front of the Lord, who is the treasure trove of infinite powers, incomparable purity, health, well-being and prosperity. Then why would he bother about his temporary,

rented, physical body? He became so engrossed in the true, Godly form of the Lord that he forgot about his body and the suffering that he was undergoing. As he went deeper in the meditation of Arihant Lords, his other worldly attachments also dissolved and he became a possessor of *Anaasanga Yoga* which is the stepping stone to the attainment of Kevalgyaan i.e. omniscience. His soul was enlightened with infinite knowledge. What cannot we acquire from the supreme Lords who are brimming with infinite knowledge and spiritual prosperity?

To acquire from the supreme Arihant Lords, even if we carry out just one simple form of His worship by getting completely immersed and lost in it, it is sure to reap immeasurable fruits.

Narsinh had just worshipped Lord in an exceptional way, by getting completely engrossed in it. As a result, he acquired exceptional smartness, intelligence, and skills.

Now, when Narsinh was 16 years old, his guardian father, the merchant took Narsinh along with him on his business expeditions to foreign countries to enable him to get experience and exposure in their trade and business. Eventually, while doing business in various cities and towns that came their way, they reached King Nand's capital town. Taking presents to please the King, the merchant went to the King's court accompanied by Narsinh. Both of them bowed down to the King and offered the presents that they had brought along.

On being enquired by the King about the purpose of their visit, the merchant said, "I have come here for trade. Bless me so that I can succeed in doing business here." In the

meanwhile, the astrologer sitting next to the King's throne had a noticeable smirk on his face. The smirk did not go unnoticed from the King's sharp eyes. He seated the merchant on an appropriate seat, called the astrologer and asked him the reason behind his smirk. The astrologer whispered in the King's ears, "Your Highness! It is likely that this merchant's son will become the next king."

On hearing this, a chill ran down the King's spine. He was flabbergasted and thought, "Oh no, is he the same child? A mere trader's son becoming my heir? I will not let it happen."

Like always, he exhibited happiness on his face but decided strongly to first establish intimate relations with the merchant and then get rid of his son at an appropriate time.

The king told his minister, "Arrange for a good house for this merchant to stay and ensure that he gets appropriate facilities for his business. Take proper care of him. We have to make him a citizen of our state."

The minister accepted the King's orders.

The merchant was extremely delighted and again bowed down to the King to express his gratitude. The King said, "Happily set up your business here. Let me know if you require anything. Flourishment of your business is my city's glory."

The merchant left the palace and the minister arranged for a comfortable place for him to stay.



8. The King's Ploy

King's evil intentions for Narsinh

The merchant was overjoyed. He considered himself extremely lucky to have attained so many facilities from the King. Little did he know about the King's evil intentions hidden behind his friendly behaviour.

On one side, the merchant established his business in the city and on the other, he maintained cordial relations with the king. The king also reciprocated warmly and tried to improve his relations with the merchant. On the invitation of the king, the merchant frequently visited the royal court and the king exhibited son-like fondness for Narsinh. The merchant believed, "Wow! This son gifted to me by God seems to be really fortunate that even the king showers him with love and affection!"

Paapanubandhi Punya is like an unjust king

Did the merchant know the king's evil intentions of killing Narsinh hidden under the façade of love and affection? No, he did not understand this. Same is the case when this soul acquires happiness and comforts as a result of Paapanubandhi Punya. He does not understand its evil nature that, "This punya looks good only on the outer front but it will eventually destroy me." Thus, one rejoices on the comforts and pleasures

given by this punya and ends up committing abundant sins for its sake.

You acquired something you desired and assume it be because of your punya but can you identify whether that punya is Punyanubandhi or Paapanubandhi? You may ask that, "What is the purpose of identification of this punya? Let us enjoy what we have received.

Do not commit this mistake, because if it is Paapanubandhi Punya, then it will be evil like the king and will ruin your life. You enquire about a man's background, nature, etc. before you trust him with your friendship. Then shouldn't you test the nature of punya before enjoying its fruits; whether or not it will cheat you and take you to the dungeons of hell and other lower births? Hence, it is essential to test whether the punya you are using is Punyanubandhi or Paapanubandhi.

Q. How to identify that the punya is Paapanubandhi?

A. One can identify if the punya is Paapanubandhi if :

(1) Our good intentions do not rise and bad intentions stay constant.
(2) Religious feelings do not emerge and instead we are engrossed in worldly enjoyments.
(3) It is not possible to maintain feelings of forgiveness, humility, and kindness whereas you are constantly enveloped by rage, pride, ego, arrogance and these negativities do not even pinch you.
(4) Also, you possess deep attachment towards the wealth and prosperity like Mamman Sheth.

From this, one can recognise the nature of punya as Paapanubandhi. You basked in the glory of such punya, but what will be its consequence in the next births? The consequence will be that by utilising the various comforts and pleasures provided by these punya karmas, one will stay immersed in vices and commit further sinful acts which will eventually drag you into the dungeons of hell or other such low births.

How much can a cruel king, unjust Government or our enemy possibly harm or ruin us? Now, compare that with how much this Karmasatta can ruin us. But foolish people do not understand and contemplate about this and are instead crazy after the material luxuries and comforts which they acquired from such punya. They just want to engage in activities leading to accumulation of karmas. If, by chance, they happen to exercise religion, it is also due to greed of attaining worldly comforts, fame, respect, wealth and family, which in turn strengthens their attachment towards it. As a result of this attachment, people do not think twice before engaging in such sins and have absolutely no regrets about it.

Isn't it foolishness to do religion and strengthen the attachment towards worldly objects?

Who compels us to do sinful acts? The attachment towards wealth, goods, fame and family.

What leads to its attachment? The nature of wealth, goods, fame and family is such that it leads to its attachment.

Thus, the nature of these things is terrible and so is its attachment.

Some may ask,

Q. What is the harm if we attain all the above things but refrain completely from its attachment? Did all the above things hamper Bharat Chakravarti's spiritual welfare? Didn't he attain Kevalgyaan i.e. omniscience in his Aarisa Bhavan (mirror-palace)? Thus, there isn't any harm in acquiring and hoarding wealth, etc. without harbouring attachment towards it.

A. If you really do not have any attachment towards it, then why to take efforts to acquire it and hoard it? Is attachment an external thing that will be visible? Yes, external display of happiness is its characteristic but a cunning mind may not display it. Otherwise, in the absence of any attachment towards it, what is the point of working towards its acquisition and protection?

Understand,

It isn't wise to internally harbour secret fondness for these materialistic objects and lead a material-oriented life which is capable of converting our punya to paapanubandhi. If so, it will ruin you like this evil king.

In his previous birth, the beggar accumulated vast and pure punya by eagerly worshipping Jain temples on the saint's advice. Owing to this, in the current birth, he became the wealthy merchant's son Narsinh who was favoured by the king too. But the king's display of affection was fake. He was doing it to cunningly keep a track of Narsinh's activities and eventually get rid of him. Little did the king know, that due

to the precious support of Arihant Lord's worship, this plan was also going to work in Narsinh's favour.

Even the unfavourable becomes favourable for the one who has the backup of Vitraag Lord's devotion.

The King's ploy

The king frequently invited Narsinh's father, the wealthy merchant to the palace and built a friendly rapport with him. He occasionally took the merchant's advice and praised his intelligence. Along with that, he repeatedly praised Narsinh's calibre and qualities. Many times, once the merchant's work was done, the King would request Narsinh to stay back and play with his son. Narsinh also got along well with the King's son and days passed swiftly in this fashion.

Narsinh was also innocent and straightforward. He considered the king to be so virtuous and loving. He could not smell the foul and wicked intentions of the selfish king. He did not wonder as to why the King gave so much respect to a foreigner like him. His simple and straightforward vision could not think on those lines.

The merchant seeks permission to return to his country

The merchant was monitoring Narsinh's progress and when he thought that Narsinh had attained sufficient expertise and trade skills, he decided to return to his country. When he asked for permission from the king, the king insisted, "What hurry do you have? Stay back here. Isn't your business doing well here?"

The merchant humbly replied, "It is going well by your grace."

"Then, why are you in a hurry to leave?"

"Your Honour! All my relatives and friends stay there. Also, I own fixed assets and property there. It's time I go and take care of them as well. Is it possible to get all those things here? The joy of staying among our own family, relatives and people cannot be experienced here among 2-3 people. Homeland is homeland. Nothing can replace it. Hence, please grant us permission to leave."

The king realised that the game would soon be out of his control and getting rid of Narsinh would become impossible. Hence, he thought that he should at least stop Narsinh from going.

The King's desire

Thoughtfully, the king told the merchant, "You are absolutely right. But my son and I both have grown really fond of your son and would miss him a lot. Hence, we request you to let Narsinh stay here for some time."

The merchant laughed and said, "Your Highness! I and his mother also cannot bear his absence even for a short span of time."

The king replied, "Yes, but you have him for your entire life, right? We would be very delighted to have virtuous and loving Narsinh with us for some time."

The king persistently insisted and demonstrated so much warmth that the merchant thought, "Narsinh is really fortunate

that even a king is so fond of him. The king gave us many facilities and gave us a lot of respect during our stay here. How can I flatly refuse his request? It is just a matter of few days. I guess I should let him stay back."

The merchant felt obliged under the weight of the king's favours. Otherwise, Narsinh was his heartbeat and the gleam of his eyes, and he could not even bear a thought of returning without his beloved Narsinh. His wife was also present there and the merchant asked for her opinion, "What should we do?"

She was extremely fond of their son gifted to them by God. She loved him more than her own life and hence, she replied, "What? How can we leave him and go? I cannot part from him even for one second."

This is all a drama of attachment. One cannot pass a second without their beloved son but Lord's absence does not matter.

Some may say, "We do not like Lord's absence also. Hence, we go to the temple daily to worship God."

Are you honestly saying this? Before you go to worship Lord, do you feel empty and restless without God and thus, become eager to worship Him at the earliest? Whereas, does your mind stay unaffected and indifferent while seeing other people? Only then can you say that the mind feels restless without the worship of Lord.

Do you really want to love God? Then ensure that Lord's sigh, and not others' sight, overwhelms your heart.

Also, ensure that your mind remains unaffected on seeing others and overflows with joy on seeing the great Arihant Lords.

This implies that sight of your spouse, children, etc. also should not excite you.

Q. Ideally, this should happen but our practical experience is different.

A. It is because we feel restless without the one whose sight we find overwhelming. We are indifferent about Lord's worship and it does not affect our heart because life does not seem incomplete without Lord.

How can you say that the one who cannot live without his near and dear ones but can live without God, really loves God?

The merchant and his wife's half-hearted approval

First, the merchant's wife also could not imagine going home without Narsinh but then she had second thoughts, "The king provided us with so many facilities which helped our business flourish. Also, the kind has also given us exceptional love and respect. How can we overrule his desire? Let him stay for some days. We will call him in a short time."

The merchant also thought on the same lines. Hence, he softly asked his wife, "What should we do?"

His wife replied, "We cannot break the king's heart. He has done so many favours on us. Let Narsinh stay back for a few days. We will call him back soon."

The couple's reluctant approval to let Narsinh stay back

The merchant told the king, "Let it be, Your Honour! We are really fortunate that you love him so much. We will honour your heartfelt desire and let him stay here for a few days. But, as you are very well aware that he is our one and only, beloved son, we request you to please send him back after a few days."

The king's intentions were malicious. Hence, he understood that, "Within this short time span, I will have to get him executed in such a manner that people will not realise that I have played any role in this act or that he was purposely murdered. His parents are keeping him back here for some days. This should be enough for me."

Who can judge a cunning man? He will sugar-coat his words in such a manner that the opposite person will get carried away by his words and not even get the slightest hint of deceit.

The King's consolation

The king very sweetly said, "You are absolutely right. It is natural that you cannot bear the absence of your one and only son. It is your generosity that you agreed to honour my wish. Do not worry, I will send Narsinh back home in a few days and that too, not alone. I will have to send my son along with him because they enjoy each other's company so much that my son will insist on accompanying Narsinh. They have become really fond of each other."

How sweet and convincing did the king's answer seem!

How would the merchant and his wife get the slightest idea of deceit? The world is trapped by such cunning people. The merchant and his wife were overjoyed on hearing the king's words.

Cunning people cheat the greedy world in this manner.

It is a greedy world and hence, blinded by such greed, people cannot recognise such cunning people. Hence, great men have advised us to refrain from greed or else we will become a prey to such cunning people. No one can cheat the one who is free from greed.

Today, so may people are cheated and duped because of their greed for wealth, family, respect, fame, etc. Many of us have heard complaints like, "This man promised me to set up a new and biggar factory and duped me of thousands of rupees! How cunning is he!" and we curse the opposite person. But what we fail to understand is that it was because of our greed "Instead of earning a meagre 12% interest on these funds, I can earn upto 40% of the charge of profits if I invest in the factory" that we fell in the opposite person's trap.

In the greed of happiness, people are cheated by their own relatives and friends. For their sake, one becomes ready to spend their punya and take on paap.

Q. Can relatives and friends cheat us?

A. Aren't the ones who empty our stock of punya and burden us with the debt of abundant paap karmas, called cheaters? What do our relatives and friends do? They expect favourable behaviour and situations from our end.

To fulfil them, we have to do away with our punya and have to exercise many bad deeds like illegal business activities, acts involving violence of living creatures, injustice and deceit and also have to subject ourselves to negative feelings of anger, attachment, hatred, etc. All this multiplies the inflow of sins and washes away our stock of punya. Who is at the root of all this? Not our neighbours or stranger walking on the streets but our own intimate relatives and friends.

Q. Then should we not bother to care about our family and friends?

A. Is such a question emerges then can't a counter-question arise that, "Then should I wash off all my previous birth's punya in the attachment of my family and friends? Should I intentionally and knowingly throw myself in the never-ending, sorrowful cycle of birth and death by accumulation of abundant sinful karmas?" As far as your question is concerned, you do not have to be totally unconcerned about them. You have to be increasingly concerned about their spiritual welfare and ensure that they acquire higher religious levels. What to do if they do not understand religion? If your family or you do not become capable to renounce the world, you should at least mentally understand that, "Staying in this crazy world is going to create higher chances of an endless cycle of lower births for me."

Can you say that Shalibhadra and others like him, who renounced this world didn't care about their family?

Shalibhadra forsake his loving mother and 32 pretty wives. Others like Meghkumar, Avantisukumal, Nandishen, Subahukumar, etc. also left their families and walked on the path of renunciation. Will you call them irresponsible and careless towards their families? Isn't it essential to understand the reality and stay detached from them?

Characteristics of a Samyaktvi soul :

समकित द्रष्टि जीवडो, करे कुटुंब प्रतिपाल,
अंतरथी न्यारो रहे, जिम धाव खेलावत बाल।

"Samkit Drishti Jeevdo, Kare Kutumb Pratipal,
Antarthi Nyaaro Rahe, Jim Dhaav Khelavat Bal…"

These words mean that,

"A Samyakdrishti soul protects his family but is internally detached towards it just as a foster mother is towards the child."

A foster mother nurtures a prince for the sake of earning her livelihood. She laughs and plays with him but remains completely detached from him from within. She takes care more of the little prince than her own child, but does not consider the prince to be her child. Her heart is always inclined towards her own child. Similarly, a Samkiti's soul is detached from his family and does not consider them to be his own. His heart is always inclined towards Arihant Lords, Gurus, the Chaturvidha Sangha and Sadharmikas. In spite of the fact that he takes care of his family more than the above 4 elements, he very well understands that these relatives and friends are responsible for:

(1) Unnecessary illusions and worldly attachments

(2) Emptying his stock of punya

(3) Engaging him in act of 18 paapasthanaks

(4) Overall loss of the good and attainment of the bad.

At the time of binding our life's span for next birth, if the attachment for any of them are present in our hearts, then the chances of acquisition of a good birth are negligible.

Only if Arihant Lords, Guru, Sangha, or Sadharmikas are present in the heart, can one acquire punya and good births.

If we truly stay detached from our family, then when the family showers love on us, gives us respect and serves us, we do not get carried away that, "Oh, he is my well-wisher". This is all a game of self-interest. One should pray to God, "Lord! Save me from the downfall due to worldly attachment. Only You are mine. You are my real saviour and companion."

If Arihant Lords, Gurus, and the Chaturvidha Sangha truly reside in your heart, then you should be addicted to their service. Be enthusiastic about serving them with physical, mental and financial resources that you possess.

We were talking about the fact that this world is cheated by such deceitful and cunning people. Similarly, Narsinh was also betrayed by the king's affection and appreciation. He assumed that such a great king loved him so much and hence, he accepted and fulfilled each word of the king. The king repeatedly appreciated Narsinh's talent, enterprise, and smartness because it was necessary as a base for the plan he had made to get rid of him.

The King's smart plan

The king had made an evil plan wherein he delivered a message to the king of the neighbouring state ordering him to surrender himself and accept his rule. But the other king was not going to give up his kingdom so easily and gave an arrogant answer. The king went to Narsinh with this answer:

"The opponent king has given an arrogant answer and refused to surrender. I will have to send the prince there along with the army to control him but the prince is not as smart as you. Hence, it is my wish that you accompany the prince and lead the army."

Innocent Narsinh answered, "I have no problem. Even if you wouldn't have requested me to go, I would have gone anyway because I would miss the prince a lot if I stayed here alone without him. Now since you have told me, I will surely go and lead the army."

"That's very good. Keep the control of the army in your hands. Ensure that he and the rest of your army follow your instructions."

The king's plan was like sending Narsinh in the jaws of death. But the brave Narsinh did not feel so. On the contrary, he felt that it was the king's generosity that he entrusted him with such a great responsibility. He accepted the king's words with folded hands.

King's order to his son and his Army Chief

The king strictly told his son, "You do not have to take lead

in the war, Narsinh is capable. He will do an excellent job. Hence, ensure that he leads the war and thus, gets full credit.

Unaware of his father's malign intentions and out of his love towards Narsinh, the prince readily accepted his father's order and looked forward to Narsinh's victory in war. The king's intention was that, "This merchant's son will lead the army from the front position and will naturally be killed. I will then do a peace treaty with the opponent king." With this intention in mind, he called the Army Chief and instructed him, "You have to give Narsinh the front position to lead the army in the battle. But if it seems that we are nearing defeat and victory is doubtful, then sign a peace treaty with the opponent king."

All arrangements seemed complete. Princess Usha told the king, "Father! Can I also accompany my brother to witness the battle?" The king saw no problem in her suggestion as the princess would anyways not participate in the battle and granted her permission. Along with the army, the prince, princess and Narsinh reached the border of the opponent king's state. The opponent king also came there with his army all prepared to fight. Next morning, the battle commenced with Narsinh at the forefront.

Can Narsinh be saved in such a position? Even though Narsinh had acquired expertise in sword fighting and other warfare tactics, since he was at the front, the first attack was bound to be on him. It was possible that he may survive a few attacks but even one perfect shot was enough to send him to the gates of heaven.



9. Religion – The Ultimate Saviour

The impact of the punya of Saubhagya-Aadeya Naamkarma

But here, Narsinh's punya of Saubhagya-Aadeya Naamkarma which he accumulated in the previous birth by doing the pure worship of Arihant Lords without expecting any returns whatsoever, came to his rescue. It created a great impact in the mind of the Army soldiers and they developed a strong feeling of respect and warmth towards Narsinh. As a result, they fought by surrounding Narsinh on all sides so that Narsinh did not have to face the enemy's direct attack. Also, Narsinh constantly motivated them to fight valiantly and aim for victory. Here, his Aadeya Naamkarma came into action due to which the soldiers readily accepted his inspirational words and fought ferociously with all their might.

Narsinh's victory

Narsinh's punya was magnificent. Hence, when he continuously motivated and inspired the soldiers, they fought the battle with great courage and bravery, resulting in the destruction of the opponent's army. The opponent army's soldiers lost confidence and Narsinh captured the enemy king. The enemy king sought Narsinh's refuge and Narsinh was declared victorious in the battle. The enemy king welcomed Narsinh

to his capital with great pomp and splendour and requested him to sit on the royal throne. But Narsinh flatly refused and managed to convince the prince to sit on the royal throne. The king was his captive.

You saw the result? King Nand thought that Narsinh would be killed in the battle and thus, would be out of his way. But here, he was declared victorious.

It is truly said that "Ram raakhe, tene kaun chakhe?" It means that 'no one can spoil anything of the one who is favoured by God (Ram) himself'. To the one guarded by Him, even nature cannot do anything. He can be miraculously saved in calamities like earthquakes too. Long time back, during the earthquake of Anjar (Kutchch), a dog was found alive after 3 days of rescue operations. When the earthquake occurred, a cane basket fell upside down on the dog, thus, covering him. A lot of other things fell on the basket but the dog was miraculously saved beneath the basket. Who saved the dog? You have to admit it to be Lord's shelter and his own punya which saved him.

Similarly, Narsinh had acquired the shelter of Arihant Lords by their devotional worship. As a result, thousands of soldiers fell in his feet without causing any harm to Narsinh whatsoever.

Did you understand the point that I am trying to convey? Are these acts in man's hands? Can he do anything or control the outcome according to his wishes? Then who is responsible for executing such miraculous tasks? Do you wish to acquire such power?

You protect religion, it will protect you

One should worship Lord with a pure heart. Then, you will feel that Lord is telling you, "I will protect you if you just devotedly worship me." It means that Lord's selfless devotion leads to such punya which protects us in all ways possible and gives us all facilities. The photographer tells us, "You just keep a smile on your face, I will take care of the rest." It is said that if you protect religion, it will surely protect you. Leave everything in its hands.

What did religion give King Shripal?

Shripal went alone to earn money in foreign lands without even carrying food. In spite of him not making a lot of efforts, difficulties were automatically overcome and he easily acquired abundant wealth and prosperity. Why? Because religion was acting as a saviour to protect him. It not only protected him but felicitated him with luxuries and comforts. Read the entire story about his life and you will be acquainted with the fact that he was rescued miraculously and he acquired great wealth without putting in great efforts only because of the impact of religion.

In today's world, lakhs of babies are born daily. But out of lakhs, how many of these babies are born in the houses of wealthy people? Is the child's own talent responsible for the birth in such affluent families? Is the baby smart enough to make its own choice? Or did he use and carry forward his smartness of the previous birth to acquire the birth in such an affluent family? If this was the case, then why would smart children be born in poor and middle-class families? Wouldn't they also choose wealthy families? Thus, the child's

own smartness is incapable of enabling it to choose the family in which it is born. It is only due to the impact of religion that it acquired birth in a rich, noble family. Hence,

If you desire a good birth, good facilities, favourable circumstances and good protection, then hoard the wealth of religion in this birth.

Impact of religion means the impact of Arihant Lords

A beggar by birth observed the only religious act of worshipping Arihant Lords whole-heartedly. As a result, in spite of the king's several attempts to kill him, he survived miraculously and got a comparatively better and higher position each time. Isn't it the magical impact of Arihant Lords whose worship led to this turn of events?

From a Brahmin's son, he became a gardener's son where he was pampered as God's gift and from there on, he became a wealthy merchant's son! From there, he became a loved and respected confidant of the king and the prince. As per the king's wishes, he went to war and though the king had expected his death, he emerged victorious.

Now, let's go ahead and look at the twist in the story where Narsinh gets the opportunity to marry a princess.

The King's frustration

The prince immediately sent news of Narsinh's victory to the king. The king was agitated on hearing the news. He thought, "Arre! How did this happen? A merchant's son emerged victorious?" The fool did not realise that being a merchant's son was absolutely immaterial. What was important was that

Narsinh's punya was flourishing while his own punya was extinguishing. The king had varied thoughts, he was confused as well as extremely furious. He thought, "I am making fool-proof arrangements for his murder, but he is emerging more and more victorious each time. Will he really become my heir and adorn the royal throne instead of my own son? No, I will not let this happen. However, I need to come up with a better plan to murder him. The assassins I had hired previously to murder him seem to have failed. Now, how can I rely on such assassins to complete the job? Is it better that I entrust this job to my son? He will surely obey my orders."

Look at the king's frustration and agony. He had become obsessed with the idea that he would not let Narsinh become his successor. Hence, he succumbs to dreadful thoughts and more daring attempts to get rid of him. Who will become his successor is a worldly affair. Once it captured his mind, it led to cruel thoughts.

Worldly affairs are so terrible that they lead to a wicked thought process.

The king's mind is obsessed with the thought, "How can Narsinh become my successor?" This leads to such a wicked thought process that he made numerous attempts to kill him.

A son thought that, "Why is my mother constantly bothering my wife?" Just this thought and he ended up torturing and pestering his mother who had given birth to him and raised him. "Why is my elder brother bossing over me?", this one thought makes a man look for excuses to pick up a fight with his own brother.

Worldly affairs are so terrible that they drag a man into inappropriate and wicked thoughts which eventually leads to inappropriate behaviour. Therefore,

"If you want to stay away from inappropriate thoughts and actions, the only solution is to not give significance to worldly affairs."

This is not difficult because it is related to the mind. One should train the mind. If the mind says, "Why to bear such injustice?", then we should think that,

"Don't we bear karma's unjust behaviour on us?"

This worldly life is controlled by karmas. We are dependent on karmas but karmas are not dependent on us. They do not work according to our wishes. We have to accept karma's doings. When unfavourable circumstances arise due to our karmas, criticising those situations increases our sorrow and pain. The first pain is the one given to us by karmas and the second is the one which we inflict upon ourselves by being mentally disturbed and criticising the situation. Why act so foolish?

If we learnt to happily accept the situations arising out of karmas, then this mind would feel no sorrow.

If the mind is not sad, then the sorrows inflicted by karmas will not feel like a sorrow.

Facing a sad situation is different and feeling sad is different. Karmasatta inflicted Lord Mahavir with extremely painful situations but He did not take this pain to mind and become sad. Hence, to Him, the sorrows did not seem to be sorrows in the true sense. Hence, even amidst great pains, Lord wasn't sad, instead he had a calm and composed mindset.

Once we overcome our mental sorrows, then only happiness remains. Hence, in the sutra "JayaViyaraya", we pray to God to eliminate the mental sorrows.

Q. What are these mental sorrows?

A. Anxiety, stress, distress, mental disturbances, irritation, hatred, attachment, unnecessary thoughts, etc. are all mental sorrows. They can be terms as 'Bhava Dukha' also. External shortage of money, hunger and thirst, torture and insults done by others, etc are all 'Dravya Dukha'. We pray to God for the destruction of our 'Bhava Dukha' because once we overcome them, we will not be sad, irrespective of any external painful circumstances which may arise.

Meghkumar overcame his mental sorrow

On the very first night of Prince Meghkumar's diksha, he had to sleep near the door and hence, his Santharo (woollen sleeping mat used by Jain saints) became rough due to the dirt falling from the saints' feet. His mind was distressed and irritated. His attachment towards his body and a comfortable soft touch gave birth to hatred in his heart and he also despised his co-saints who were responsible for his dusty Santharo. All these were mental sorrows, 'Bhava Dukha', which made him unhappy. However, in the morning, Lord Mahavir unfolded his past birth to get him back to the right track. He said that, "In the past birth, you were a merciful elephant who kept his foot raised for a continuous period of 2.5 days to save the life of a small rabbit who had come under your leg. You endured tremendous pain, hunger and thirst for the sake of a small rabbit. The pain was so enormous that at the end of 2.5 days, you collapsed out of exhaustion and died but not once did you

complain, spoil your mind and make it unhappy. Then in this noble, human birth, why do you corrupt your mind merely for the sake of the dust particles falling from the saints' feet and become sad? In fact, you should consider it your great fortune that, "Oh! I am getting the touch of the sacred dust from the feet of highly learned and celibate saints." Lord showed him the great fruits of showing mercy for the rabbit. In Prakrit, it reads,

'भो मेहा ! ताए पाणाणुकंपाए परित्तीकओ ते संसारो।'

"Bho Meha! Tae Pananukampae Parittikao Te Sansaro."

It means,

"O Meghkumar! You limited your birth-cycle by just having mercy on that creature (rabbit)." Then imagine the great fruits you will receive on retaining your devotion towards saints even in adverse situations! Even in death-like pain, you did not take the sorrow to your mind or regret your act of mercy. Then why are you forgetting the devotion towards saints in this situation by taking the sorrow to your mind? You will lose the fruits of your noble acts if you take such sorrows to your mind or regret the noble acts you have done.

Listening to Lord Mahavir's words of wisdom, Meghkumar's mental sorrow was eliminated. The attachment towards his body and delicate touch withered away and the 'Bhava Dukha' of frustration, irritation, unnecessary wrong thoughts, stress, etc. were washed away. As a result, he was no longer sad. He took a great vow of accepting each difficulty happily without defending himself with the exception of defending his eyes.

How can mental sorrow be overcome?

If you do not take the pain/ sorrow to your mind, do not give place to 'Bhava Dukha', then you can be happy in adverse situations too. Otherwise, you will be sad in favourable situations and extremely depressed in unfavourable circumstances.

Q. Then how can we get rid of these mental sorrows i.e. 'Bhava Dukha'?

A. If we can learn to accept the adversities arising out of karma, then such mental sorrows will not arise. Also, the sorrows should be accepted but not with stress that, "Oh no! This sorrow was destined to come. What can we do but accept it?" No. Real acceptance means accepting it happily, without any regret.

Sorrow has come but there should be no worry or stress. We ourselves have accumulated karmas in the past due to ignorance. Now, those karmas will get eliminated only if the fruits of those karmas, whether good or bad, are accepted happily and generously.

Out of 4 sons, the smart one earns well and is the backbone of the family but his nature is bitter. The father will accept it without complaints thinking that, "Though his nature is bitter, but he is hard working and smart. Hence, I should not get fed up with his nature."

Similarly, if this life is filled with adversities and problems, one should tell the mind that,

"Even though this life is filled with adversities and problems, this birth is extremely useful for chanting the Navkaar Mantra,

worshipping God and cultivating good virtues, acceptance of various vows, oaths, listening to the sacred Lord's teachings, meditation of Arihant Lords, doing penance, etc. All this is possible in this birth only. Hence, do not concentrate on the difficulties and adversities. Do not get tired of them. Happily accept them."

If we are successful in doing so, then we will not cry over adversities which we have to face due to our past karmas.

Negative thoughts emerge when we cannot happily accept worldly affairs:

Why does the mind get dragged into negative thoughts due to worldly affairs? This is because it has not learnt to accept unfavourable situations without any complaints. Hence, when worldly situation occur due to our own karma and destiny and we have not learnt to accept them with an open mind, then we are bound to develop a negative thought process and end up accumulating further unwanted sins. We succumb to vices and sins like envy, pride, violence, frustration, negative thoughts, etc. all these are "Bhava Dukha" as stated earlier. "Bhava Dukha" do not arise due to our karma but due to one's own efforts in the wrong direction. Hence, if one concentrates on the advantages that he has acquired in this noble birth and learns to accept adversities happily, then these negative thoughts i.e. "Bhava Dukha" will not trouble him and cause mental stress.

To summarise, following is the key to overcome these Bhava Dukha

(i) Learn to accept adverse situations which are regulated by karma

(ii) Give importance to various religious acts, virtues, and positive thoughts

(iii) Sorrow isn't what karma has given you, but real sorrow is the tension, irritation, anger, frustration, depression, distress and tantrums that we throw due to these external sorrows.

Keep the above 3 things in mind and decide to refrain from any wrong efforts in this direction. It will surely put an end to our "Bhava Dukha" i.e. wrong acts, thoughts and speech.

King Nand was fuming with rage due to the worldly thought, "Will Narsinh now become my successor after gaining victory over the enemy state?" He does not accept the situation that, "If karma wishes, then he will succeed me as the King and I should willingly accept it."

I have much more to achieve and do in this noble birth. Why should I waste my precious resources of time and energy in thinking about things not in my control?

Since the king would not think on these lines, he was still stuck on the thought, "Now I do not want to entrust this job to any assassin because they are not trustworthy. Instead, I will poison him through my son only. My son is very obedient. He will execute my orders without delay and will surely give him poison."

Thus, the king immediately wrote a letter addressing his son, "Without thinking anything else, immediately give Visha (poison) to Narsinh."

Letter to his son

He gave the letter in the hands of a trustworthy messenger and told him to deliver it directly to his son. He repeatedly advised him to ensure that the letter did not reach anyone else, no one should come to know about the letter and also told him to tell the prince to read the letter in privacy. Man is so foolish to think against karma and believe that things will work his way. The messenger left with the letter in the evening. Night fell soon, and he started searching for an appropriate stop to rest for the night.

Power of Punya : The Yaksha comes to rescue

Narsinh possessed powerful punya because he had sought the refuge of the all time powerful Arihant Lords. As a result, coincidentally, the messenger found the divine Narsinh Yaksha's temple to rest for the night. Tired due to the journey, he was fast asleep in a short while. At the time, the Yaksha used his divine knowledge to know who the man was, why he was sleeping there and where he was going. With the help of his knowledge, he learnt that, "Arre! He is carrying a message to give poison to by beloved Narsinh. How can I let this happen? But not to worry, I will write the word 'Usha' in his letter in place of 'Visha' i.e. poison.

The Yaksha removed the letter from the messenger's pocket, made the alteration and replaced it back in the pocket. In his deep sleep, the messenger had no clue of the happenings. He woke up in the morning, found the letter safe in his pocket and started his journey on the horse back. He swiftly reached the enemy king's capital city, met the prince, gave him the letter and told him to read it in privacy.

What will Narsinh get – poison or Usha?

The prince read the letter in isolation. It read, "Without thinking anything else, immediately give Usha to Narsinh." It was signed by his father.

The prince was ecstatic on reading his father's letter. His sister, Usha had come along with him. He thought that his father was really wise and knew how to appreciate other's virtues. He was in consent with his father's thoughts that after having such a brave and virtuous Narsinh by their side, why think of finding anyone else for Usha? Will another prince also possess calibre like Narsinh? What if some other king asks for Usha's hand in marriage? Hence, it seems appropriate to marry Usha immediately to Narsinh.

Thus, considering this decision to be the king's deep understanding, the prince approached Narsinh with the proposal of marrying Usha.

Impact of pure punya : it does not make one greedy

Narsinh possessed pure punya and hence, was not going to become greedy about the comforts provided by this punya. It is the characteristic of one who has attained impure punya to become greedy and get tempted towards the things offered by punya. It also blows him up with pride. This greed and pride do not leave his side till he dies. But Narsinh possessed pure punya because he had worshipped Arihant Lords with a pure heart in the previous birth. After meeting the saint, he became satisfied in whatever little alms he got and did not expect anything more in return of his worship.

The greed and attachment towards things acquired due to punya denotes that the punya is impure. Dissatisfaction in what we have acquired leads to impure religious activities demanding desired things in return of the religion exercised. **To exercise pure religious acts, satisfaction in what we have attained is absolutely essential. Pure religion leads to pure punya.**

Narsinh possessed such pure punya and hence, was not tempted by the prince's proposal. In fact, he told him, "Listen friend! Do not speak of this. I am a merchant's son and not suitable for a princess. She should be wedded to some great king or prince."

The prince said, "Thought you are a merchant's son, your calibre is evident from this victory. Hence, you will have to accept Usha."

Narsinh was still not convinced and hence, the prince said, "Well, will you accept my father's orders?" Since Narsinh was completely unaware about the king's letter, he said, "Of course, there is no question about it."

The prince answered, "Then, take this letter and read it." Saying so, he placed the letter in Narsinh's hands and said that a trustworthy messenger had delivered the letter to him some time back. Now, Narsinh had nothing left to say. Princess Usha was married to him with great pomp and splendour.

What was the king's plan and what actually happened? The king had intended to give poison to Narsinh but his own beloved daughter Usha was given to him.

The wrong steps undertaken by sinners to harm others become right and end up benefitting the virtuous ones.

Dhannaji's elder brother wanted a share out of his earning and thus, tormented his father. Understanding the situation, Dhannaji quietly left his house empty-handed without any money. However, he ended up acquiring a kingdom and a princess. Things automatically fall into place for religious and virtuous people.

Fuming with rage over his daughter Mayanasundari's preaching, King Prajapal married her to a homeless leper, who turned out to be Prince Shripal.

Blowing with pride and arrogance, Saint Kurgadu's fellow saints spat in Kurgadu's patra of rice. But this spit became Saint Kurgadu's stepping stone to attain Kevalgyaan (omniscience)!

Here too, the king had written a letter to give poison to Narsinh but instead, his daughter Usha was given to him.

After the wedding, the prince suggested, "Let's go back to our home." They handed over the state control in the hands of the defeated king who was now under their command and left. They were welcomed in their state with great honour and reached the palace. As soon as Narsinh fell in the king's feet to bow down to him, the king was alarmed, "How is he alive? Hadn't the messenger delivered the letter? Or hadn't the prince implemented it?"

King's amazement at reading his own letter

Before the king had time to process anything further, the prince bowed down n his feet and gave the letter in the king's hands.

"Father! You generously appreciated Narsinh's victory in war. According to your instructions, I have married Usha to him. Bless the newly wedded couple."

The king saw the letter and read the clear statement indicating that Usha should be given to Narsinh. He was startled and could not believe his eyes. He was sure that he had written 'Visha (poison)' and was wondering how it was replaced by 'Usha'. But he couldn't speak aloud about his confusion. To retain his image, it was not inevitable to accept the situation at hand and hence, he had no option but to bless the couple and exhibit joy on his face.

Importance to the state's successor rather than his own daughter becoming a widow

The king blessed Narsinh with a long life but in his heart, he still wished to get rid of him at the earliest. He felt that it still wasn't too late. He considered his daughter's widowhood to be a small issue compared to someone else succeeding him as the king because clan's image would be spoilt in front of other kings and he would not be remembered in history.

Isn't this thought process faulty? A thick thread, strongly twisted, will not leave it's turns even after unwinding it. However hard you try to straighten a dog's tail, it will still remain curled. Similarly, the king was not ready to keep aside his attachment, illusions and ignorance. He wasn't ready to give up in his attempts to kill Narsinh.

Isn't this mere illusion and absolute ignorance? If not, then he would have finally got some sense and thought, "I have already made 4 attempts to kill him but have been unsuccessful. In fact, he is emerging more and more victorious each time.

I sent him to war so that he would die but he emerged victorious. I wrote a letter to give him poison but he ended up becoming my son-in-law and that too, on the basis of my own letter! Destiny is weird. My own son married my daughter to him and made him my son-in-law. I guess it is better that I understand that he is highly fortunate and this fortune will now make him my successor. Anyway, now my fame will not be affected even if he becomes my successor as he has emerged victorious in the war and also, he has already become my son-in-law. Now, I don't have to worry even if he becomes the king."

However, the king was blinded by illusion and attachment and hence, could not think on these lines. He had just one thought stuck in his mind, "This Narsinh should not become my heir."

The role of illusion, ignorance, and attachment (Moha) in this world

Illusion and ignorance lead to faulty calculations and choice of wrong options. The one who is trapped by this is bound to jump into deadly acts and till he cannot do so, his mind is enveloped by negative thoughts. Faulty calculations and wrong choices once adopted are definitely going to lead one to the wrong track.

The youth of today are enveloped with the thought that, "My mother should not bother or put restrictions on my wife." Once this thought corrupts him, he will accept any rude or unwarranted behaviour by his wife to be correct and consider his mother to be of bad temperament. He will end up tormenting his own mother and may eventually start living separately from her.

Even so-called religious people engage in feuds with their brother, uncle or other relatives because of this deadly trap laid by illusion and ignorance. Wrong notions that,

(i) "He has laid claim on that which is mine and not his, or he will do so in future."
(ii) Previously I needed him but now I have no need.
(iii) He is responsible for my loss.
(iv) He is extremely selfish.

If the web of these above thoughts is woven, then aren't feuds and disputes obvious?

Why are these notions false?

(i) These imaginations and thoughts are false in the first place. Our notion that instead of strangers our own intimate relatives will illegally lay claim on our property etc. is totally wrong. I guess it is the gift of this Kalikaal that instead of being generous towards near and dear ones, one is increasingly calculative and intolerant towards them.

(ii) Believing that you will not need that person in the future is also wrong because you already used him when you needed help; accordingly, now it is essential that you take efforts to maintain relation to return the favour done by him. Also, today he may seem to be of no use to you but are you sure that you will not need him in the future?

Q. Can't we establish a relation with him again when required?

A. How can we do so? You broke relations in between and ended up breaking his heart. Now, you will have

to convince him a lot to once again establish relations with you. Wasn't it better to remember his favours and gratefully maintain relations with him?

(iii) Believing that my intimate relatives are responsible for my loss is also a wrong belief and a sign of ignorance. Because,

Mainly, our past karmas are responsible for our profit or loss. Others are merely instruments in the working of our karmas.

If a religious soul will not believe in the above equation then who will do so? An Anarya or sinful soul will not have faith in the working of karma. Only an Arya or religious soul will believe in the theory of karma. If one truly believes in karma, then who will he hold responsible for his loss – karma or his relatives? If you really claim to be religious, then do you harbour any hatred towards your relatives and acquaintances? No, you should not. You do not hold them be responsible for your problems and thus, label them as your enemies and cut ties with them, right? If you do the opposite, then how do you claim to have faith in karmas?

The scriptures say,

'केवली निरूपित सूक्ष्म अरूपी, ते जेहने चित्त वसियो रे,
जिनउत्तम पदपद्मनी सेवा, करवामां ते घणुं रसियो रे,
सम्यग्दर्शन पद तुमे प्रणमो।'

"Kevali Nirupit Sukshma Aroopi, Te Jehne Chitta Vasiyo Re,
Jinuttama Padapadmani Seva, Karvama Te Ghanu Rasiyo Re,
Samyag darshana Pada Tume Pranamo."

It literally means :

The 'sukshma'* and 'aroopi'* elements preached by the omniscient ones – reside in the hearts of the one who is inclined in the devotion of the Almighty Lords. Bow down to the holy entity 'Samyak darshana'.

Here 'sukshma' means 'karma' and 'aroopi' denotes the 'soul'. There are many other things that are 'sukshma' and not visible to the naked eyes and similarly, there are many things which are 'aroopi' like Dharmastikaya*, etc. But here 'karma' and the 'soul' are to be considered. If both these entities reside in one's heart, only then can he be a true worshipper of Arihant Lords. He can be said to possess true interest in Lord's worship.

Check yourself. Do you possess real interest in the reverence of Arihant Lords? You may be devotionally worshipping God on a daily basis but are karma and the soul always in front of your eyes? Or are you worshipping God with the inclination towards wealth and property? The real interest for Lord's worship and reverence can be proved if your mind is enveloped with thoughts like, "It is Lord who demonstrated the true form of karma and soul to me. I should worship Him." or "Only Lord is capable to free me from the clutches of karma and enable my soul to attain salvation. Hence, I should serve and revere Him." What will I attain in running after my family or others? Nothing but an increase in my birth cycle."

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* **Sukshma –** That which cannot be perceived by the naked eye
* **Aroopi –** That which does not possess a specific external form
* **Dharmastikaya –** The eternal element which enables thing to move in this universe

Worshipping Lord with such thoughts can cultivate real interest in the worship and make it worthwhile.

Worshipping God is a different thing and having genuine interest for pure worship is altogether different. Even when the one possessing genuine interest cannot engage in Lord's worship due to unfavourable circumstances evolved due to karma, his mind is inclined towards Lord's worship at all times. When circumstances permit and he gets a chance to worship God, he will utilise all his time and mental energy in worship; so much so that everything except Lord i.e. family, friends, precious belongings, etc. will seem futile to him.

The worship performed with such interest can be called "Bhaava Bhakti"; the rest is mere "Dravya Bhakti".

As we saw earlier, the one whose focus is on soul and karma, his devotion is worthwhile. Thus, if the focus is clear, in case of some loss or trouble, one will think, "My own bad karmas are responsible for this, not my brother or relative." Such a thought will prevent feuds and conflicts with your relatives.

Additionally, one should think, "I have accumulated these bad karmas by harbouring hatred, enmity and envy towards others and hence, I am faced with such a situation now. To overcome these shortcomings, in spite of the opposite person's faults, I should strive to build healthy and friendly relations with them which will eliminate the enmity in their heart and also wash away my past bad karmas."

Can you think on these lines? If yes, then why bind new karmas when you are already facing past bad karmas?

Adversity is an opportunity for religious souls

A religious soul considers an adversity to be an opportunity to eliminate previous bad karmas and cultivate positive feelings. He wishes to repair things spoilt by animosity with the help of friendship, repair that situation which is spoilt by hatred with the aid of compassion and nullify the effect of bad karmas accumulated by envy and jealousy with the pure feeling of appreciation of other's virtues. He is a true religious soul who considers his karmas responsible for his loss and does not wish to put his near and dear ones on the prisoner's box and harbour hatred towards them.

Also, he does not consider them to be selfish and break ties with them because he knows that the entire world, including him, is selfish. Considering others to be selfish and not one's own self is ignorance and illusion. Under its shelter, a great number of people sacrifice their feelings of friendship and compassion and live their life in the clutches of hatred, pride, animosity, etc.

The hold of ignorance and illusion leads to wrong calculations.

King Nand does see the great fortune and punya of Narsinh that, "In spite of my repeated attempts to get rid of him, he is miraculously saved and progressed to the extent of becoming my own son-in-law. How great is his punya!" Due to the hold of ignorance, he does not see this and makes wrong choices to the extent that, "Even if my daughter has to become a widow, I will still get rid of Narsinh as soon as possible. How can he become my successor? If that happens, it will demolish my fame completely."

Look at his thought process. His fame did not get demolished when Narsinh became his son-in-law but it would get demolished if the same person was to become his successor. The working of this world is weird. Some things do not affect you while some do.

Being a miser in your choice of words (i.e. not freely appreciating someone's good acts and virtues) does not affect your fame but not dressing up according to the latest trends and fashion demolishes your status. Hence, one is ready to spend enormous amounts for the sake of his attire but will become a spendthrift when it comes to giving charity or donations for religious causes. This is because he feels that not spending for this cause will not affect his goodwill.

Caught in the web of false notions, the king considered it a blot on his goodwill if Narsinh becomes his heir and hence, was ready to kill his own son-in-law. He thought that, "He has just emerged victorious in war, married Usha and returned to the palace. It would be better to get rid of him before he creates a stronghold around here. Hence, I should make a fool-proof plan and get him out of my way, today itself." His mind was constantly inclined towards plotting the murder of Narsinh.



10. Tit for Tat

In this noble and supreme birth, are we inclined towards exercising the good or is our inclination towards the materialistic world?

Inclination towards the materialistic world

It is essential to check what our mind is inclined towards. On contemplating, you will realise that the mind is rarely inclined towards things revolving around our spiritual welfare. On the contrary, our mind is constantly inclined towards meagre worldly matters. For example, if a mosquito bit you 3-4 times in spite of you trying to get rid of it, the mind is now inclined in ensuring that it doesn't bite you again. If you are late at lunch and the food is cold by the time you sit down to eat your food, the mind is now inclined towards having some hot food. Seeing less customers in the store, the mind is inclined towards increasing customers. Don't you know how many limits you are willing to cross once your mind is strongly inclined towards something?

Today's unmarried youngsters are inclined towards meeting each other. Now, the meeting places they choose are also weird.

Meeting at temples?!

Once, we were in a city. The Hindu temple located in the

centre of the city was always crowded with people in the evening. I happened to engage in a conversation with a local and said, “This temple is always crowded with people in the evenings. People seem to be fairly religious here.”

The man replied, “Maharaj Saheb! Do you know why the youth is seen in such a large crowd here?”

“Why will people come to the temple? Obviously with the intention of worshipping God!”, I said.

He spoke, “No, Saheb! For young, unmarried boys and girls, this temple is a meeting spot. Hence, they come to the temple. Where else can girls go? Who will stop them from coming to the temple? Hence, this is an ideal meeting place for them.”

I was surprised and said, “What a highly condemnable act! Using the holy premises of a temple for this…?!”

What kind of era is this? Are we heading towards progress or destruction? Amidst such corrupted thoughts and acts, how can the mind be truly inclined towards Lord’s worship? Even if Lord’s worship has created a slight effect on one’s heart, the negative inclinations of such condemnable acts happening in and around the temple will not let the positive effect last. The entire life passes in the same rhythm. Not only that, but he carried these bundles of vices along with him to the next birth too. As a result, he will commit low-grade sins there also and become a sinner. Are there any chances of attaining a noble, human birth available to him? Or will the births of animals or hell (naraki) await him?

Who leads to this condition of men? Women who wear revealing clothes and expose their body. They become instrumental in instigating lust in men which eventually leads them to the dungeons of hell. Women who cause this condition of men are called 'Jogmaya' (those who lead to deceit and destruction). Scriptures rightly say, 'Nari Narakni Divadi' i.e. 'Women are torchbearers of hell.'

How can good, virtuous women be called torchbearers of hell?

Q. Aren't there good, virtuous women also?

A. Here, do you call her body virtuous or her soul virtuous? Of course, the soul is virtuous. But how is her body for men? A man forgets everything on seeing it.

Q. What if one considers the body to be a dump of garbage?

A. If one considers the body to be a garbage dump, then will he stare at inappropriate places of a woman's body? Even if you happen to see a woman, would you continue ogling at her? Is it truly a garbage dump or an attractive package? If he really believes it to be a garbage dump, then will his eyes rest on it? Will his heart skip a beat? Hence, it is inappropriate to engage in ogling or staring at women's body irrespective of your belief or else, it is sure to lead you into a series of inappropriate thoughts.

Have you heard the story of the Sinhgufavasi Muni (the saint who spent 4 months meditating near the mouth of a lion's cave)? Didn't the learned saint know that the woman's body is garbage and filth even if she possesses extra-ordinary beauty?

Then why did he succumb to the prostitute's temptations? By seeing her body, right?

Q. Then isn't the sight of a man's body dreadful for a woman? If so, then why isn't it said that 'Nar Narak no Divado' (i.e. Men are torchbearers of hell)?

A. There is a difference in both. Each and every part of a woman's body can ignite sexual desires in a man, be it her hair or even the heel of her foot. This is not the case for men. A woman will not be attracted to a man's beautiful hair or his feet. The difference is very evident. A woman's body leads to enticement. Hence, the sight of the woman's entire body, each and every body part is dreadful. It is capable to increase your birth cycle and throw you in the dungeons of hell.

Understanding of a virtuous woman

Then, aren't the women who purposely wear revealing clothes and expose their body terrible? Don't they accumulate dreadful sins? If she is virtuous, she should understand that majority of men are blinded by lust and inclined towards the sight of women. They become crazy on getting such an opportunity. Hence, shouldn't women not become the reason for men losing control and going crazy and refrain from giving them a chance to bind karmas that will take them to the dungeons of hell? Further, women themselves will have to face more horrible consequences in the future births.

Why more horrible consequences?

Just as a wine shop owner is a greater sinner than one who drinks wine, a dealer of prostitutes is a greater sinner than the prostitute herself, similarly, rather than the men ogling at

other women, the woman wearing revealing clothes to entice men and giving this chance to men is a greater sinner.

You can imagine the sins accumulated by today's movie producers, theatre owners, magazine printers, etc.

What is our mind inclined towards? This was our topic of discussion. What if the mind's inclination shifts from woman's sight to Lord's sight? Our work will be done.

Just as the one inclined towards ogling at women still thinks about the woman, even after she has left and cannot forget the woman even if he wants to; similarly, the one whose mind is inclined in the worship of Arihant Lords does not forget Lord even after leaving the temple. His mind and heart are still occupied in the remembrance of Arihant Lords. If his remembrance and fondness for Lords is so strong that he cannot visualise anything except Arihant Lords, then he will not like anything else, everything else will seem insignificant and illusionary and dreadful :

This is called Vairagya (non-attachment) that except for the attachment towards Vitragaa Lords, all other worldly attachments seem dreadful.

Solution for salvation

Attaining Vairagya is a great achievement for the soul. It loosens the grip of karmas on the soul and the occasion of complete renunciation of this world will come soon. It will lead us to Moksha (salvation) in a short span of time. The primary solution for attaining salvation is that the mind should be more inclined towards the worship of Arihant Lords than towards the sight of women.

We were talking about Kind Nand, who was obsessed with the idea of killing Narsinh at the earliest, without even bothering about the fact that his own daughter will become a widow if he goes ahead with his wicked plans. He doesn't consider the fact that Narsinh's death will leave his daughter bereft, she will be sad and lonely throughout her life! Such was his obsession that his animosity towards Narsinh made his heart indifferent and cruel towards his own daughter as well. This is *Sansaar*.

This Sansaar is such that it gives birth to selfish interests and instigates one to cause dreadful pain to innocent, distressed people and even one's own relatives at times. It leads to *Raudra dhyaana*, terrible intentions and passionate feelings of anger, greed, etc.

But you are fond of this very sansaar and have no regret of having to stay in it. Do you cry over it, that :

"Alas! I have attained the precious Jinshasan which has the power to free me from the clutches of this terrible sansaar and give me a noble life of renunciation. Then why am I still nourishing and strengthening ties in the sansaar?"

If you do not regret your worldly attachments, then you truly have not known the real significance of Jinshasan and its path of renunciation. It had the calibre to demonstrate the real form of sansaar to you and free you from its clutches. The one who understands its significance will weep over his worldly ties, he will ensure that his acts do not cause pain to or hurt others and his mind if not engaged in intense Raudra dhyana, anger, greed, etc.

The one who understands that this sansaar is truly insignificant and worthless will check his intensity of negative feelings, curb violent acts, and strive to refrain from cruelty, envy, giving pain to others, hatred, etc.

The sansaar which leads to such dreadful vices is truly dreadful.

What is the reason due to which your heart is filled with dreadful thoughts and vices? It is because of this sansaar. Do you realise that your deep and strong attachment to this materialistic world is like a crime and this attachment leads you to a chain of dreadful thoughts and vices? Now sit back and contemplate about your life and inspect the kind of dreadful thoughts and vices that arise. If you engage in such impurities in spite of attaining this precious Jinshasan, then do you think that you will be eligible to acquire this Jinshasan once again?

Those dreadful sins exercised without any sort of hesitation are bound to throw us in low births and this, deprive us of this Jinshasan.

But the King does not think about all this. He is just determined to murder Narsinh without thinking about any consequences. Has he any fear of the horrible births he will get?

The King's new plan

On that very day, the King called Narsinh and said, "It is a tradition in our family that post the wedding, one should worship the Goddess at the temple located on the outskirts of the town at the earliest and that too, alone. Hence I guess

you should go tonight only to make your offerings and seek the Goddess's blessings." Narsinh accepted the King's orders and replied, "As you wish."

This was a wicked plan devised by the King. After Narsinh left, he secretly summoned Chandalo, who was responsible for executing criminals and instructed him, "Look, today you have to kill a traitor." Chandalo said, "Let me know his whereabouts. It is a child's play for me."

The king said, "I have news that the traitor is going to visit the Goddess's temple located at the outskirts of the city tonight. As soon as you see him, without any second thought, attack him and finish him off then and there. Leave the spot immediately. This seems to be a good chance to get the traitor out of our way. No one will know that you were responsible for the act. Make sure that this plan doesn't leak or else the task will not be accomplished."

Chandalo thought, "The king is right. A traitor should not be spared. He should be definitely killed. Now, that it is the king's orders, we have nothing to think." He answered, "Do not worry. The work will be done.", and left from there.

At night, on the path leading towards the temple outside the city, 4 murderers hid behind the dense bushes with sharp weapons in their hands. They were waiting for the traitor to pass. They had decided that as soon as the traitor came near them, all 4 of them would attach with their weapons together. As a result, the traitor would be killed within a minute and then, they would leave immediately.

Can Narsinh be saved?

The plan is set and Narsinh has accepted the King's wish to

go to the temple alone at night. Can he be saved? It is not possible that the plan would be leaked because no one other than the king and the murderers knew about it. But Narsinh would escape this attempt also. How? By human efforts or by the help of some invisible force?

Today, there are several incidents wherein a few people miraculously escape from accidents, earthquakes, floods, etc. Whose impact is this? If his escape is a result of human efforts, then he would do all that is possible to save himself. But at times, in spite of tremendous efforts to escape, the trap gets all the more vicious. How? You have to believe in the existence of an invisible force in front of which man is helpless. Also, there is another mighty force which is working against and scaring the above force.

Did you understand anything?

Karmasatta is the invisible force and only Dharmasatta has the might to stand against and give a fight to Karmasatta.

But ignorant souls prefer to bear the pain and trouble given by Karmasatta rather than seeking refuge under the Almighty Dharmasatta!

Isn't it great ignorance?!

Since eternal times, the soul is a slave to such ignorance that he is ready to fight against karmas even in the middle of the night but is not ready to willingly exercise religion even in the course of the day. What ignorance! He will fight against karmas even if he is tired and exhausted. Contrary to this, he will not exercise religion even if favourable

circumstances when he is fresh and full of energy. How ignorant!

You are willing to bind karmas even if it requires you to spend money or entails stress to your body but you don't want to exercise religion even if it can be done without any physical stress or monetary expenditure. Isn't it foolishness?

You may feel that the house and shop will not function without binding karmas but don't you feel that a good birth, health, and prosperity will be impossible without religion?

Religion acts as a saviour in times of adversity and has the potential to give you desired happiness.

There are many people in this world who take enormous efforts to earn but only a few can acquire enormous wealth. Why so? This is because only those few have exercised pure religion in the previous births and hence, can experience sweet fruits in this birth. There is no other answer to his.

Modern science calls this chance or accident or co-incidence. But do you think that this answer is logical? Accident means something that which happens without any cause. Only cause leads to effect. This is the universal law. Otherwise there will be no proper cause-effect system. Curd can be made only from milk, it cannot be formed out of water. Pot is made out of clay and not dust. What does this denote? That a particular cause leads to a particular effect. Chance may be called fortune. Here, when Narsinh escaped unscathed and miraculously from 4 murder attempts of the king, it is his punya accumulated due to Lord's worship which is playing a role.

Punya is his saviour and behind this punya it is the religion of worshipping Lord that is his saviour.

What a terrific cause!

When such a terrific cause is standing on his side, what can the king do? In spite of that, the king had made arrangements to execute Narsinh. On one hand, Narsinh decided to go and worship the Goddess and on the other, the murderers were ready to attack him as soon as he reached the temple's path.

Will Narsinh get killed this time? The one who does not believe in the power of invisible forces will surely reply, "Of course, there is no doubt." But an invisible force is in action here. Hence, how will Narsinh die?

How will Narsinh be saved?

As night fell, Narsinh left from the palace to go to the temple with his plate of offerings and walked a little ahead when the prince, who was standing on the palace gallery saw Narsinh and called out to him. Narsinh stopped and the prince came down and inquired, "Brother Narsinh! Where are you going in this dark night? What is this plate of offerings for?"

Narsinh replied, "For worshipping the Goddess."

"At this time?"

"Yes, father has said that it is a family tradition to worship the Goddess on the first night post the wedding. Hence, I am on my way towards the temple."

The prince answered, "Oh! All you have to do is to offer this plate of offerings to the Goddess? Give me the plate. I will do this task. You go back and have a good night's sleep."

The prince was attracted by Narsinh's virtues and his personality. Also, his fondness towards him, his recent victory and marriage to his sister increased his affection towards Narsinh and hence, he couldn't see Narsinh taking so much trouble. He thus stopped him and said, "Offering a plate of offerings to the Goddess can be done by anyone from the royal family. Give me the plate and I will make the offering on your behalf. I will pray to the Goddess to give you a long and prosperous life and fulfil all your desires."

Narsinh hesitated and was reluctant to give his plate of offerings to the Prince and said, "Father has told me to go and hence, I should not overrule his words." But eventually, he succumbed to the prince's insistence. He handed over the plate to the prince and returned to the palace. The prince left with the plate and walked towards the outskirts…

Prince in the jaws of death

Where was the prince enthusiastically and fearlessly heading towards? To the jaws of death? Will he be saved? You will have to admit that if one has the backup of punya accumulated in the previous birth, he will be saved, not otherwise. His personal efforts or smartness of this birth could play no role in saving him unless he had exercised some religious act with extreme positivity in this birth. This is because scriptures say, **"Good or bad deed exercised with great intensity give immediate results."** Other than this, only previously accumulated punya can rescue you. If the prince has punya, he will be saved. As of now, he has left with a good motive without even the slightest smell of the King's malice.

Was it appropriate for him to go or not?

If he had the slightest idea about his father's plan then he shouldn't go and instead try to save Narsinh from the impending troubles. But, since he didn't have any idea, it is absolutely appropriate for him to be courteous and go instead of Narsinh.

It is man's responsibility to carry out his duties.

Due to the respect and affection towards Narsinh, the prince considered it his responsibility and courtesy to go instead of Narsinh and let him rest. Didn't he fear going alone at this time of the night? He did, but he thought that the fear factor was same for Narsinh also and hence, he should not miss his duty.

Fear should not be an excuse when executing your duties

When the occasion of executing your duty arises, then fear should not be given as an excuse. Otherwise, an efficient job cannot be done. Also, excuses of fear can be brought up at every step of life. The special feature is that execution of many challenging jobs in this worldly life does not come to a standstill due to fear. Is religion so unnecessary and insignificant that excuses arise for its execution?

When you have to get your daughter married at an appropriate age, do you have the fear of her becoming a widow? But you will not agree eagerly if she wishes to take diksha. Here fear will envelope your mind, "What if she cannot cope with the ascetic life?" What do you think, "Is this life meant for dutifully carrying out worldly responsibilities and fill it with sinful acts?"

It is wise to fill this human life with the execution of good duties and eliminate excuses of fear which obstruct it.

Is it possible to carry out these noble duties in the births of buffaloes, ants or even devas? No, such noble duties are possible only in this supreme human birth.

Abundant noble deeds and appropriate duties are possible in this human birth only and hence, this human birth is so glorified.

If you really wish to glorify this birth, then do not just waste it away in business, wealth, entertainment, food, family, pride, respect, and fame; fill it to the brim with noble deeds like those done by former great men and women like Ramchandraji, Lakshmanji, Sita, etc.

The murderers' attack on the prince

The prince took over Narsinh's plate of offerings, sent Narsinh back to rest and he headed alone towards the Goddess's temple. As soon as he crossed the city's limits and walked into the forest, immediately the 4 murderers came out of their hiding with their sharp weapons. In the darkness, they couldn't recognise the prince. In accordance with the King's orders, without any hesitation, they all attacked the prince at once and the prince was killed then and there. The murderers ran away from the spot.

The King must have had a sound sleep that night thinking, "Tonight, I will finally get rid of the merchant's son Narsinh, who was bound to become my heir."

What is the calibre of a weak man in front of strong, warrior-like karmas?

What was the King's evil plan and what did karma and nature do? Actually, Mother Nature was kind towards the king and did not punish him for the previous 4 attempts but in the king's 5th attempt, karma and Mother Nature deprived the king of his dear son whom he wanted to coronate as the future king! The working of karma and Mother Nature was so smooth and smart that the king would have no one else to blame but hold himself responsible for his own son's death. He wouldn't be able to blame the murderers for killing his beloved son because they were merely obeying his orders. Also, he wouldn't be able to scold Narsinh for letting the prince go in his place because then his evil plan of executing Narsinh would be revealed. Thus, Mother Nature worked so smartly that the king would have to hold himself responsible for his son's death.

In the king's 5th cruel attempt, Nature gave him such a strict punishment that he would stop thinking that, "How can Narsinh become my heir? My beloved one and only son is the sole person eligible for the royal throne." Now, with his son's death, what would become of all his desires?



11. Nature's Justice

Nature's law is to 'Live & Let Live'. But how will nature tolerate the one who manipulates Nature's law and turns it to 'Live & Kill'.

Q. But Nature picked up the innocent prince and killed him. How can you call it just? How can it punish the son for the offence of the father? Isn't Nature involved in wrong interpretation of justice?

A. To understand the answer to this question, first know what 'Nature' is.

1) Nature is the combination of 5 causes. Do not think that by Nature, we refer to an individual God who controls the entire world because in that case, we will face a major question as to why did the compassionate God take the life of the innocent prince. Some may say,

Q. Can't we say that the prince must have binded some karmas in the previous birth and God did justice in this way?

A. But here karma will become the prime reason and you will have to believe that it is karma's power which shows these results. Where does God's power come into play here?

Q. Karma is non-living. Doesn't it require a living God to make it work?

A. A question that will arise here is that if karma was carried

forward from the previous birth of the prince, then why didn't God take the prince's life earlier? Why so late? Also, why did the All-powerful God let him bind such karmas? Why didn't he stop him? It means that one's bad acts can show its fruits without God's interference.

If God also has to be dependent on karmas, then what is God's independence? Also, what is the requirement of a God? Karmas can show their fruits after a stipulated time span. Now if God also can not reap fruits without the passage of that specific time span, then what is the calibre and requirement of a God? If the child in the womb acquires its features, beauty, strength in accordance with his own past karmas, then how can it be called the creation of God?

To conclude, Nature ≠ God
(Nature does not mean Almighty God)

Q. Then do you refer to karmas as Nature?

A. Not only karmas, but karmas, destiny (*bhavitavyata*), time, nature (disposition) and efforts – the combination of these all of these 5 elements is called Nature.

2) How does destiny/ fate become one of the causes?

Q. What is the need of considering destiny, time, etc. as a cause when karma is already considered as a cause?

A. In this case, the prince was inflicted with terrible pain due to the heavy and sharp blows struck by the murderers. This pain was born due to his past Ashaata Vedniya karmas* binded by him but why were the murderers appointed by no one but his own father responsible for this? It isn't

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* **Ashaata Vedniya karma** – The specific karma which leads to health disorders and consequent mental disturbance

written on the Ashaata Vedniya karmas that his Ashaata or pain will arise through the hands of his own father. The nature of Ashaata karmas is just to inflict one with pain.

Then who made such arrangements that he had to bear pain due to his own father? His father had no hatred for him. He made a ploy to kill Narsinh. Why was his son trapped in it?

The answer here is,

Destiny (*bhavitavyata)* is only such that the King arranged for the murder of Narsinh and his own son had to face its consequences.

Karma gives the result whereas destiny (*bhavitavyata)* creates definite circumstances for its working.

For example, here the prince's Ashaata Vedniya karma gave him the fruits by inflicting tremendous pain; this was the only job of karma. But for this to work, his father himself arranged the murderers for Narsinh, Narsinh left the palace for worship, the prince saw him and stopped him, insisted Narsinh to let him make the offerings, etc. All these definite circumstances were created by Destiny (*bhavitavyata)*. Suppose the father's punya is such that he acquired a good son, but here a specific individual can only become his son – Destiny (*bhavitavyata)* is the reason here. Similarly, a son gets good parents due to his punya but how does he get a particular set of parents? Due to his Destiny (*bhavitavyata)*.

3) Nature (disposition)

Just as Nature comprises karma and destiny, it includes nature (disposition) too. For example, a son is born due to karma, but now why did he take birth after 9 months only? Why

does the body not grow in 2-4 days or a month, once it enters the womb? Here, 'nature' is the primary cause. The nature of the Audarik Pudgal* responsible for creating the body in the womb is such that the body is formed slowly and gradually. If it is a body of a Samurchhimjiva*, then the nature of the pudgal is to make the complete body immediately. Also, the nature of the Vaikriya Pudgal*, which create the body of heavenly and hellish beings is also such that it makes a fully grown body as soon as the soul is born there. It is fire's innate nature that its flames will go upwards to cause heat and water's innate nature is to cool down. Here, not karmas and destiny, but nature plays a pivotal role. Due to the fault in his nature, an Abhavi soul cannot attain Samyaktva inspite of getting abundant favourable religious circumstance and putting in massive efforts.

In this manner, Mother Nature comprises of karma, destiny (*bhavitavyata)* and nature. Additionally, 'time' is also a component of Nature.

4) Impact of 'Time'

A Bhavi soul came out of the Nigoda* due to destiny and favourable karmas gave him a noble, Arya human birth and favourable Dev, Guru and Dharma. Since the soul is Bhavya,

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* **Audarik Pudgal –** Pudgal means matter and Audarik Pudgal is that particular matter which leads to formation of human and animal body

* **Samurchhim jiva –** Those orgainisms which are born due to specific natural conditions and not due to intentional reproduction

* **Vaikriya Pudgal –** That particular matter which leads to the formation of the bodies of Devas (celestial beings) and Narakas (creatures in hell)

* **Nigoda –** A form of algae. All living creatures were initially a form of algae and gradually came out of it and commenced their births in the 4 gatis as humans, animals, devas and narakis

it is his nature to eventually attain Moksha. All these causes are in his favour and to add to it, he made sincere efforts, too. But till he is in his Acharmavarta kaal* (period before the last Pudgal Paravarta* of his birth cycle), leave alone Moksha, he cannot attain Samyaktva also. What is the cause here? Only that his time is not favourable. The appropriate time to progress on the path of salvation is the Charmavarta*i.e. the last Pudgal Paravarta. This religion will uplift his soul only when his time ripens.

In a particular type of fever, till the time of 7 or 14 days does not pass, medicine will not show its results, irrespective of the amount or type of medicines taken. The medicines will not work. Expert vaidyas will also stop efforts and patiently wait for the right time to treat the patients.

Q. But with the advancement of medical research, today the doctors can bring down the temperature in fevers like typhoid, malaria, etc. with the help of tablets. Swallow some tablets and you can get rid of the fever. Why wait?

A. Ask the patient whether he feels as fresh as he was during the pre-fever stage even after his temperature is under control. Does he feel like eating or has his saliva become bitter? Does he still feel lethargic and weak? Do his bones and joints have cramps? What causes all this? These are the

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* **Acharmavarta kaal –** The time period wherein a soul is distant from salvation

* **Pudgal Paravarta –** A huge measurement of time comprising of innumerable years

* **Charmavarta kaal –** The time period which depicts a soul's proximity to salvation

faults caused post-fever. A heathy body basically requires a balance of Vaata-Pitta-Kafa. When there is an imbalance in this ratio, the body is down with fever. This fever ripens the ripens the disturbed Vaata-Pitta-Kafa but it requires a stipulated time. What happened when you suppressed the fever with tablets? The imbalance created within the body stayed intact because they cannot ripen without a specific time span. Thus, 'time' is also an independent cause. Just as karma is an independent cause, destiny (*bhavitavyata)* is different, nature is independent, so is time.

5) Effort is also an independent cause

Along with the above 4 causes, Nature also comprises of efforts, which is also an individual cause. It also has its own specific contribution.

Let us see the working of these 5 causes

As we saw earlier, (1) a soul came out of Nigod due to its destiny (*bhavitavyata)*, (2) it possesses the innate, eternal nature of Bhavyata which can let him attain salvation, (3) time gave him the appropriate Charmavartakaal, (4) karmas gave him the noble human birth i.e. favourable circumstances of Deva-Guru-Dharma. Now, are the above 4 things sufficient to attain salvation? (5) Or does one need to make efforts for Moksha by worshipping and serving Deva-Guru-Dharma? If personal efforts weren't necessary, then Arihant Lords would not have established this Shaasan and preached to us the path of salvation. Why did He deliver sermons? To ensure that Bhavya souls will listen to it and make efforts in the right direction. Thus, the main objective of Tirthankar Lords in establishing

religion was inspiring worldly souls to strive on the path of salvation.

Q. Some say that destiny is responsible for efforts. Is it right?

A. Do the people saying this make efforts in their worldly life on the basis of their destiny? Do they sit and think that, "These efforts will be possible only if favoured by destiny; hence, let me check first if I possess the destiny to carry out these efforts"? No, there they think that, "Efforts are in my hands." Hence, if a son tells his father that, "O Father! I do not have that kind of destiny and thus, I will not make efforts to go to office or search for a job", will the father give consent to the son? The father will immediately say, "Stop this nonsense of destiny. Is destiny seen with naked eyes? Lazy bones! You do not wish to work hard and are giving the excuse of destiny." The son will be scolded in this way, right?

Then when we tell you to exercise religion and you say, "Saheb ji! It is not in our destiny and hence, we cannot make efforts for religion", should we also give you the same answer given to the son by his father? Will you accept this logic?

What have you been taught since childhood? Destiny or efforts?

What do you teach your children since childhood? To rely on efforts or destiny? Suppose you came home tired from work and asked for a glass of water. Your 8-9 year old son replied while lying on bed, "It is not in my destiny to take the efforts of giving you water. Without destiny, my efforts are waste."

What will you reply? "Lazy boy, get up and walk towards the pot of water and fill a glass. Then we will see whether it is written in your destiny or not. You don't want to take the slightest efforts or serving me and then blame destiny for it?" Won't you reply in this manner?

Then when we tell you to exercise religion and you reply, "It is not in our destiny and hence, we aren't taking efforts to exercise religion", then can't we tell you the same thing? "Stop giving these baseless excuses. Get up and go to the temple, Upashraya, worship the great Lords, exercise religion, give donations, take vows, start doing occasional fasts, engage in the devotion of Gods and service of Gurus and then we will see whether it is written in your destiny or not. You do not feel the necessity of religion, are not interested in exercising it and hence, cunningly give the excuse of destiny." Can we not tell you this?

You can thus understand that efforts are not dependent on destiny.

How is each cause different and independent from destiny?

(i) Is time dependent on destiny? Year 2020 AD is currently going on. Will the time of 2021 AD come only if destiny permits? Or is it independent?

(ii) Is nature or our disposition dependent on destiny? Will the soul's nature of Bhavyata or Abhavyata be formed due to destiny? Or is this innate nature independent and present since eternity?

(iii) Is karma dependent on destiny? You lie, cheat, kill and trouble others but karmas will rise only if it is in your

destiny. Is this possible? Or karmas will be binded as soon as you execute these wrong acts?

(iv) Now, when time, nature and karmas are independent of destiny, then why will efforts rely on destiny?

Just as factors such as time, etc. emerge without the support of destiny, why can't efforts be made independently without relying on destiny?

All the above causes are distinct and independent. All 5 of them can collectively carry out a particular task but none of these causes can lead to the working of another cause during the accomplishment of a task. Nature does not arise out of time and vice-versa.

Q. But karmas arise out of efforts, right?

A. Yes, that's true but to a certain extent.

When we talk about a specific task,

The karmas which are responsible for the accomplishment of that task are not born out of the efforts made for that particular task but due to some of our previous efforts. Hence, for this specific task, karma is independent and efforts are also independent. For example, money can be earned due to business. Thus, in this task of earning money, efforts of doing business as well as previous good karmas play a role. The karmas which are at play in this specific task of earning money are not born out of the present efforts but out of previous efforts. Hence, for the present task of earning money, present efforts, previously binded karmas, specific time, innate nature of the object, and destiny – all these 5 causes are working independently and help to accomplish the task. But none of these 5 causes have emerged due to the other.

To summarise, on a general basis, all these 5 causes work towards accomplishment of one task. These 5 causes are collectively called Nature. "Nature's justice is unquestionable". This means that the justice of these 5 causes collectively is undebatable i.e. they invariably give birth to an appropriate effect. Now, you will understand that till the king made 4 attempts to kill Narsinh, the appropriate confluence of these 5 causes had not occurred which would lead to the death of his son. In the 5th attempt, all the factors fell in place. As a result, the king's fury seized his own son from him.

The king's bad karmas now ripened. Hence, when all the 5 causes accumulated, the king lost his son. This was Nature's punishment to the king. Now the question here is,

How and why was the prince punished?

Q. What was the innocent prince's crime in it that Nature punished him?

A. Here too, all the 5 factors played their allotted role and the prince had to endure the pain of being slaughtered alive. He himself had binded bad karmas in his previous births which came in to action here. Now, the situation that, "Narsinh was going to the temple and the prince happened to spot him from the palace balcony, stopped him and out of courtesy he went to make offerings to the Goddess himself" – was created by destiny (*bhavitavyata)*.

It is not written in the bad karmas that he will have to undergo so much trauma at the hands of his own father. The bad karmas can only decide to give him pain but it is destiny's (*bhavitavyata)*role to create suitable circumstances for it.

Hence, understand that the job of one's previously binded karmas is only to give one just pain or relief and not create appropriate circumstances for it.

Ask those people who do not believe in soul or karma that, "A fool-proof plan was in place to murder Narsinh. Then why was the prince killed in place of Narsinh?" They will not have any other answer except for the prince's karmas. The prince was killed due to his own previous karmas.

At night, the king was at peace, thinking "Narsinh must be killed by now. I have nothing to worry. My son now has no competitor." Till when was this peace and relief going to last?

As dawn set, people from the city who went out for a morning stroll, saw the prince's dead body lying in a pool of blood on the path towards the Goddess's temple. Their cries and horrified expressions filled the air. Word spread like wild fire and very soon, it reached the king too that, "Someone has murdered the innocent prince and his dead body is lying on the road at the outskirts of the city!"

On hearing this, a chill ran down the king's spine and he thought, "What? My son got killed instead of Narsinh!" His mind was not ready to accept this news and he doubted that, "Maybe there is a possibility that Narsinh had worn the prince's clothes and hence, the citizens had mistaken Narsinh for the prince."



12. Realisation Dawns

The King's grief on his son's death

Without delay, the king rushed to the spot and amidst the crowd of people, identified the face of his beloved son, slaughtered brutally and lying in a pool of blood. Ow, how would he control his emotions? He started wailing uncontrollably,

"Alas, son, what happened to you? You got killed? Oh, my beloved, my life line! O delicate son! Why did you leave me and go? What happened to you?"

On one side, the king was sobbing profusely while on the other, all his ministers, treasurer, chief of army, soldiers, merchants of the city gathered there and were taken aback by the scene they were witnessing. They could understand the king's pain and agony, and they saw that he could not stop his tears but why wasn't the king saying, "Which rascal had the guts to kill him? Soldiers! Go an find out the sinner who committed this horrid act. Ministers, find out right now as to who is responsible for this evil act." Why wasn't the king saying all this?

Everyone realised that the king was not issuing any such orders. At that time, the minister who was also crying, came forward and said, "Your Highness! What a dreadful incident! You lost your son but we lost our future and highly virtuous king!

Let me go and find out the murderer. That criminal should be found out immediately, subjected to the highest degree of torture and then killed…"

On hearing this, the king was lost in thoughts, "Who will be caught? If the murderers are caught and the ministers torture and threaten them, they will reveal my name to save their life. Hence, in reality, only I am worthy of the punishment. Now what is the point of hiding my sin? Nature has given me my punishment but karma's punishment is still left to be faced in hell. Hence, it is better to reveal my true face so that people can learn a lesson and my sins can also be reduced to some extent."

The king was still consumed by his thoughts when the minister said, "Soldiers! Oh Aryan men! Go and find the prince's murderers right now." Where did the minister have any clue about the battle going on in the king's mind? But the king immediately said, "Stop this search for the murderers. I, myself, am the prince's murderer."

On hearing the king's words, an eerie silence fell. "What? The king himself killed his beloved son? Is he crazy?"

The minister said, "My Lord! What are you saying? Have you left some shortcoming in the security of the subjects because of which you are saying that you yourself are the prince's murderer?"

The king's strong remorse

The king said, "No no, not at all. This is not my calculation. But I had planned and arranged for someone else's murder and the prince got caught in the trap. Hence, I am saying that I am the murderer."

The king had a change of heart and the fire of remorse was burning in his heart. Hence, he wished to lighten his burden by revealing the truth to everyone. He thought, "The astrologer had already predicted that Narsinh would become the king. I went against Nature and made 5 attempts to get rid of Narsinh. Nature forgave me for 4 unsuccessful attempts but in my blind obsession to kill Narsinh, punished me in the 5th attempt and made me pay a very heavy price. What was the fault of the innocent prince? But due to my sins, these fateful circumstances arose and the prince went to the temple in place of Narsinh and got brutally killed. As the fruits of my awful karmas, the insult that I would have to face in revealing the truth is pretty small compared to the dreadful sorrows that I will have to face in hell. Hence, I will reveal my evil acts to everyone." The king's mind was occupied in a whirlwind of such thoughts.

The one whose heart is filled with true, deep and burning regret will not take into consideration his insults and reputation. This is true regret which does not give significance to self-criticism, insults or one's image because he feels that the sin performed by him and its dreadful consequences are so much worse that the above consequences are insignificant.

Leave alone people, why do we hesitate to admit our sins to our Guru also? Doesn't the sin pinch you? Or is your reputation more important that the dreadfulness of the sin?

No one knows why but the mind feels that, "Sins and its consequences are truly dreadful but loss of reputation is worse." Our ego comes in between – "Why should I admit my sins and be proved in a wrong light?" What is bigger, your

repentance about the sin you committed or your reputation? Don't you feel, "I am really wrong to have committed such a sin." It is possible that by accepting your sin, your reputation in front of the Guru may be tarnished but it is nothing compared to the dreadful sin that you have performed. On the contrary, confessing those sins to your Guru with a remorseful heart will decrease the dreadful effects. However, hiding or lying about your sins will only increase its effects. This is because if these sins stay back on the soul, it will lead to a sinful outlook in the next birth which is really unwanted and harmful.

Exercising a sin is bad but not admitting it to your Guru is worse. As a result, this sin will be carried forward in the next birth leading to a sinful outlook which is worse.

What is more terrible? Carrying out a sin or the fruits of the sin?

The consequences of carrying out the sins are no less horrible. Enjoying the act of executing the sins not only leads to great sorrows but also cultivates a sinful outlook which in turn makes your entire life more sinful. This leads to a series of sins. All this is terrible. But what was the root of this cycle? The sins done with great enjoyment and without any limit in this human birth lead to this entire channel and hence, sins are terrible.

This question is similar to – Are snakes dangerous or is the venom from a snake bite more dangerous? The result is death! It itself is dreadful but what was its root cause? The snake and its poison. Hence, the snake can be called the root cause of death.

Does anyone say that, "No, I will play with the snake and stay with it but take care to avoid its poison." No one says so because here everyone understands that if the snake is present, there is a great possibility of disaster and hence, one wisely stays away from it.

Same is the case with sins. Sinful act lead to disasters. Hence, it is wise to stay away from these sinful acts. Our mind should truly feel that sinful acts are dreadful. We say that the consequences of sins are dreadful but we cannot see them and the sins that we see at present do not seem dreadful. Then how will one stay away from them and stop exercising them?

For this, the mind should feel and believe that sins are truly dreadful. How is this possible?

Reflection to be done to ensure that the dreadfulness of sins touches our heart and mind :

For the mind to feel that sins are really dreadful, one should think that the repercussions of sins are terrible and hence, by fearing the repercussions, one should not exercise them. **Along with this fact, there are many other reasons which make sins dreadful. They are as follows:**

(1) Almighty Arihant Lords have forbidden us to exercise sins. Hence, by exercising sins, we are breaching Lord's orders.

(2) Being in the category of religious people, exercising sins is like causing a stigma to the religion and religious category of people.

(3) Sins tarnish our impression as the disciple of a renowned Guru and taint the reputation of our Guru as well.

(4) The fondness for sins wastes this human birth acquired as a result of forsaking these sins in the previous births.

(5) Sins cause pain and suffering to others also.

Due to all these ill effects, exercising sins is horrible. If such thoughts are constantly inculcated in our mind, then along with the repercussions of sins, the sins itself will also seem horrible.

If one feels that sins are less dreadful than ones own criticism, then can Samyaktva stay?

It is possible that compared to the dreadfulness of ones sins, one may feel that confessing ones own sins to Guru and bringing down ones self-respect is worse. Hence, do not admit their sins to the Guru. But they are unaware of the fact that,

If one considers the harm to one's self-respect by confession of sins as more dreadful than the sin itself, then he will end up losing his *Samyaktva*. If we manage to save our self-respect by not confessing our sins, does the dreadfulness of our sins disappear? No, instead the burden of the sin will be heavy on our heart and that is even more dreadful.

Our self-respect and dignity are truly disastrous. Suppose we lied in front of someone and he caught our lie red-handed and started yelling at us. What is our reaction at such a time? Do we consider this insult to be insignificant compared to our horrid lies? Or in spite of our lies, we cannot tolerate the opponent accusing and insulting us? Do we answer back at the opposite person saying, "Why are you screaming like this at the top of your voice? I haven't committed some heinous

crime that you are subjecting me to so many insults." If you consider dishonesty to be dreadful, you will not defend your dignity and self-respect by saying the above words.

Sit back and contemplate. While working under someone, the employer's abuse will hurt you but back answering him and yelling back at him may cause you to lose your job and a good income. This loss of income hurts you more and hence, you are willing to silently bear the employer's abuse and taunts.

One lets go of his employer's behaviour to retain his job. Similarly, if sins pinch you, then you must learn to ignore the fear of loss of his reputation, dignity and self-respect.

The king's sins now pinched him hard and hence, the possibility of criticism, loss of pride, fame and reputation as a noble king, etc. did not bother him. Thus, in spite of the fact that no one was aware of the king's foul plan, he himself was ready to confess it to others.



13. Intensity of Remorse

Q. How can one deliberately reveal one's own sins and that too such horrible ones?

A. Along with the repentance of his sins, the king disgusted his sinful soul to such an extent that he did not feel that he was great or better compared to other people. He considered a poor beggar to be better than him. He did not consider his kinghood also to be of any importance. In the king's eyes, he had already lost all his dignity and self-respect and hence, was not bothered about his reputation in front of others.

The king was overflowing with remorse for his grave sins and the sorrow of the loss of his innocent, virtuous son. He folded his hands in front of the ministers, merchants and other common men and with tears in his eyes, confessed the truth –

The king's public confession

"Look people! I, myself, am the murderer of my son. I had devised a plan to get rid of my son-in-law Narsinh, but he was fortunate and escaped and instead my innocent son got caught in the trap and was brutally killed. This is the law of Nature. He who digs the hole will fall. Nature let go of my previous 4 attempts to kill Narsinh. Due to his punya, Narsinh

escaped unscathed each time and Nature did not punish me also. But in this 5th attempt, Nature slapped me hard and seized my own beloved son from me."

"The story goes like this. Narsinh must have been around 4 months old when his Brahmin father got him to seek my blessings. At that time, the astrologer predicted that he will become my successor. My mind couldn't accept the fact that a child born in a Brahmin's family would become my heir and hence, I appointed an assassin to execute him. But his punya must have been really powerful and he survived and must have been brought up in a gardener's family. When he was approximately 3 years old, the gardener got him along to the royal court and the astrologer once again predicted the same thing on seeing him. I again assigned the job of killing to another assassin. There also he was somehow saved and ended up becoming the wealthy merchant's son. The merchant also got him along when he was around 16 years old. Again, the astrologer predicted the same thing. Hence, I cunningly displayed a lot of affection for him and insisted him to stay back for a while. I sent him to war with the enemy king with the intention that he would be killed in the battle. However, he did not die in the war and on the contrary, emerged victorious!"

"Thus, though he was saved 3 times in the past, I did not have to sense to understand that he was being protected by Nature and hence, I should give up on the attempts of killing him and let destiny take its course. Instead, I was stubborn and hell-bent on killing him and getting him out of my way. So, I wrote a letter to my son, the prince, to immediately give poison to Narsinh but as it is said, "Who will not favour the

one who is favoured by Lord Himself?" I do not have any clue about what happened but the word 'visha' (poison) in the letter was miraculously altered to 'Usha'. As a result, my son obeyed my wish and married Usha, my own daughter to Narsinh. After that too, the reality did not strike me and I told Narsinh to go to the Goddess's temple located outside the city in the middle of the night and make offerings to the Goddess. On the other side, I summoned the murderers and give them instructions to finish off the man coming to the Goddess's temple at night."

"But as I said earlier, "Who can trouble the one favoured by Lord?" Due to some fateful circumstances, my son went for the offerings to the Goddess and was killed on the way!"

King ready to commit suicide

While saying all this, the king's heart was full of remorse and tears were rolling down his cheeks. He continued,

"Oh Lord! I am so evil to have made so many cruel attempts to kill innocent Narsinh. Eventually, my beloved and innocent son had to bear the brunt of my sins and was brutally killed! Oh Lord! Where should I go? Who will be able to wash away my sins? This earth has become heavy due to the burden of a sinful person like me. I am not worthy of this life. Even if I kill myself with the same sword which killed my son, then also it is less compared to my sins and the pain subjected on the prince. Hence, I will take my own life."

The king's feeling of regret was so strong that he took the sword and was ready to take his own life. Immediately, the minister caught hold of the sword and said,

The minister's guidance

"Oh king! What are you doing? Do you want to make your loyal subjects orphans without any mistake of theirs?" He took the sword from his hand and continued, "What has happened, has happened. Now forget the past. It is of no use to cry over spilt milk. It won't improve the past but will end up spoiling the future."

Another noteworthy thing is that by merely killing yourself, you cannot wash away the sins. To get rid of past sin, you require penance and a strict ascetic life, free from vices and sins."

The king was convinced by the minister's words and coincidentally it so happened that an omniscient saint arrived in the city. The citizens headed towards worshipping the saint and the depressed and repentant king also assigned the job of his son's funeral rites and went to worship the saint.

He bowed down in the saint's feet and asked, "Lord! What had Narsinh done to accumulate so much punya in the previous birth that he escaped 5 fool-proof plans devised for his murder?"

The learned saint replied, "O king! In his previous birth, he had just repeatedly worshipped Arihant Lords whole-heartedly without any desire of attaining anything in return. Due to the impact of such pure worship, he was saved miraculously from the jaws of death and progressed rapidly each time." Saying so, the saint shed light on Narsinh's previous birth.

Real purification of sins lies in penance and retreating from all sins i.e. a pure ascetic life.

The king accepts monkhood

After that, the king asked for a solution to get rid of his dreadful sins. The saint showed him the path of monkhood combined with strict penance as a solution to wash away his sins. He said that accepting ascetic life was the path to wash away all the sins exercised in the previous worldly life. The king immediately coronated Narsinh as the king and followed the saint's advice by renouncing the world and accepting ascetism.

The moral of this entire story was the impact of Arihant Lord's worship done by Narsinh in his previous birth of a beggar. As a beggar, Narsinh didn't have enough money to spend on religious activities or to give donation. In his situation, all he could do was merely worship the Arihant Lords. But, he did so with a pure heart and without expecting anything in return.

If he had money and had attachment towards it, there would have been a dilution in his whole-hearted feeling towards the Lord. But the beggar had no money and hence, there was no question of attachment towards it. As a result, his worship became pure, impactful and powerful.

If you possess hard feeling towards others or have attachment towards your wealth and then worship God, do not expect such results. Otherwise, Lord's worship has miraculous powers. Remember,

The attachment for the body or wealth does not only lead to negligence in penance or charity but also obstructs other strong feelings of Lord's worship, etc.

The impact of Lord's worship done with a pure heart is incomparable.