

January 2010

Dada Bhagwan Parivar's

Price Rs : 12/-

AKRAM Express

The Importance of asking
for forgiveness



AKRAM Express

The Importance of Asking for Forgiveness

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Friends,

In our daily routine, we use the word 'sorry' many a times. It means, 'I am asking for forgiveness'. Have you ever thought why one needs to ask for forgiveness so often? What is its importance? By asking for forgiveness, is one truly forgiven? Are we truly able to prevent subsequent mistakes?

In this issue, we shall learn of this extraordinary science as revealed by Param Pujya Dadashri. In addition, simple stories illustrate the benefits obtained by asking for forgiveness, for having hurt others by our mind, speech or actions.

So let us understand the importance of asking for forgiveness and free ourselves from these mistakes.

- Dimple Mehta

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Vol. : 1, Issue : 7
Conti. Issue No. : 7
January 2010

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Publishers, Editor & Printed,
Published from
Dimple Mehta on behalf of
Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj,
Ta. & Dist.:- Gandhinagar - 382421

Print at:-

Amba Offset
Basement, Parshvanath
Chambers, Nr.RBI,
Usmanpura, Ahmedabad-14.

Subscription (English)

Yearly Subscription

India: 125 Ruppess
U.S.A. : 15 Dollars
U.K. : 10 Pounds

5 years Subscription

India: 550 Ruppess
U.S.A. : 60 Dollars
U.K. : 40 Pounds
Send D.D./M.o.in the
name of 'Mahavideh
Foundation'.

Every religion, be it Christian, Muslim, Hindu or any other, teaches about asking for forgiveness even though the ways may be different. In every religion, the first step to washing out one's faults begins with repentance, and here in our 'Akram' path there is 'Pratikraman.' The objective of asking for forgiveness is to burn the root of your sin, so it does not sprout again.

Questioner:
Besides repenting, is there any other method to wash out our sins?

Dadashri: There is no other solution besides repentance. What is your definition of the word 'sin'? When you eat, drink or sleep, you do not hurt anyone. However, when the food served is not to your liking, and you become angry at your mother, then

that is called 'Atikraman.' A deed which hurts others is considered 'Atikraman'.

God has asked one to do 'Pratikraman' only when one does 'Atikraman.' Repentance is required only for those deeds which others don't like, deeds that hurt others, not for those deeds which please them.

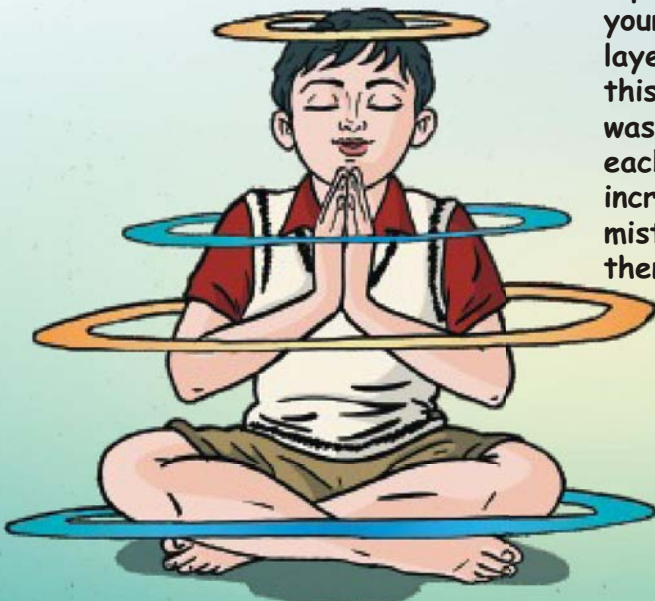
'Pratikraman' implies asking for forgiveness with the correct understanding. In witness of whichever God you believe in, ask for forgiveness from the Lord that resides within the person that you have hurt, by stating, "I have realized my mistake and decided never to commit it again. What I have

done is wrong and I take an oath never to repeat it again."

However, if it happens again, repent again. As soon as you realize your mistake and repent it, those many layers of the mistake will decrease. In this way, gradually everything gets washed out. But if we do not repent each time, then the mistake keeps increasing. No matter how grave your mistake is, if you repent very heartily, then that deed will not recur.

The more one keeps asking for forgiveness, the more his/her mind will become pure and s/he will feel lighter.

Dadaji Says...



Priceless Gift



Shikha was busy preparing for her upcoming birthday party. She was cleaning her cupboard when all of a sudden a picture frame fell out. She picked it up and discovered that it was a picture of two smiling girls in school uniforms with their hair tied in red ribbons. One of them was Shikha and the other was Hina, who used to be her best friend but Shikha rarely spoke with Hina in the last two years.

The photo was covered in dust. Shikha cleaned the dust laden picture. On seeing it,

she recalled the incident that had taken place between them. Many other memories were revived in her mind.

It all started during the summer vacation of class five. Hina's aunt had come to visit from America during the summer. She would spend majority of her time with this aunt and her son. This made Shikha feel very lonely. Hina would go hiking and mountain climbing to various places with her cousin while Shikha was at home all day. After her aunt's departure, Hina showed Shikha the clothes, shoes and games that she got from her aunt, saying happily, "Look Shikha, my aunt has brought this word game for me, let's play." "Very nice", said Shikha, giving a cold reply with disinterest.

Shikha liked the shoes but she didn't say a word. Instead, she wished that Hina would lose her gifts and her clothes would get spoiled. Gradually she started thinking negatively about Hina. Once she even invited all her friends except Hina to stay over at her home. Hina was not aware of this, but Shikha's negativity and ill feelings started affecting her.



Gradually, they drifted apart.

The summer vacation drew to an end and the children were promoted to class six. The year began with both the friends now sitting apart. Shikha became friends with two girls sitting next to her and she would ignore Hina.

Time passed and Hina made new friends too. The following year, Hina shifted to another school and they were no more in touch.

As Shikha looked at the picture now, it brought back memories of the good times that both friends had shared. Hina had always been by her side, come what may. She had also helped Shikha with her studies. Shikha understood that it was her own fault that they were no longer friends.

Shikha realized the folly in being jealous of Hina and wishing the worst upon her. When Hina got below average marks, Shikha was very pleased in her mind. As she recalled all the incidents, Shikha's eyes welled up with tears. That

night, she deeply repented all her misbehavior with Hina. It is said that just as one's negative vibrations reach the other person, one's repentance for mistakes committed against another also touch that person. Shikha had asked for forgiveness from within, but she now desired to do

so in person to bridge the gap that had developed between them. She also prayed to God for strength.

It was Shikha's birthday today and as she longed to rekindle her friendship



with Hina. She gathered a lot of courage to call Hina. As soon as someone picked up the phone she said gently, "Hello Hina, this is Shikha speaking."

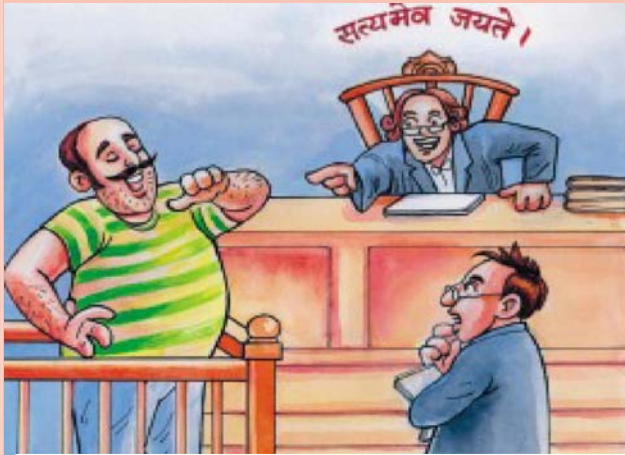
"Hi Shikha, I was thinking about you. Happy Birthday! Many many happy returns of the day", Hina's voice reverberated through the phone. Shikha was surprised that Hina remembered her birthday and was talking so nicely to her. "I'm having a birthday party at home today and I've invited all my friends. Will you come, too?" Shikha asked.

"Yes! Definitely, I wanted to meet you for a long time as well." Hina replied happily. Shikha's amazement knew no bounds. She experienced firsthand the results of repenting heartily.

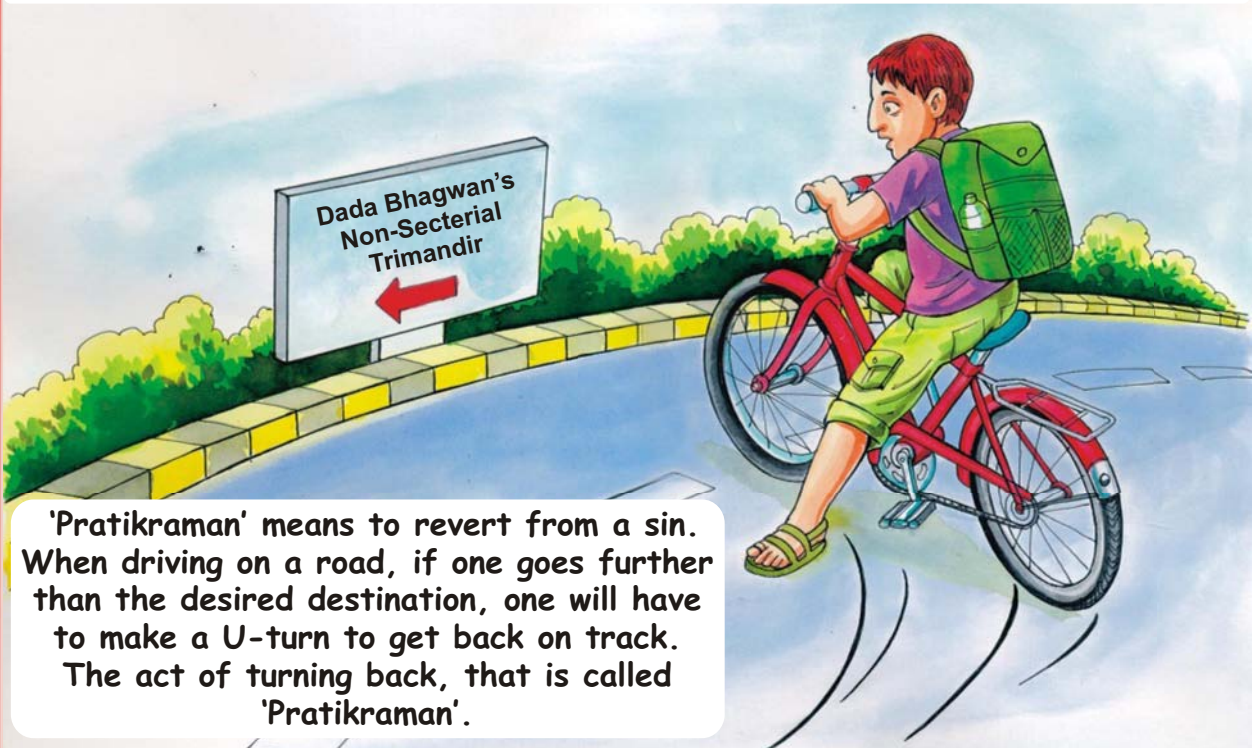
At the party the two friends met warmly without any prejudices as though nothing had transpired between them. This was a priceless gift on Shikha's birthday. The two girls became good friends once again.



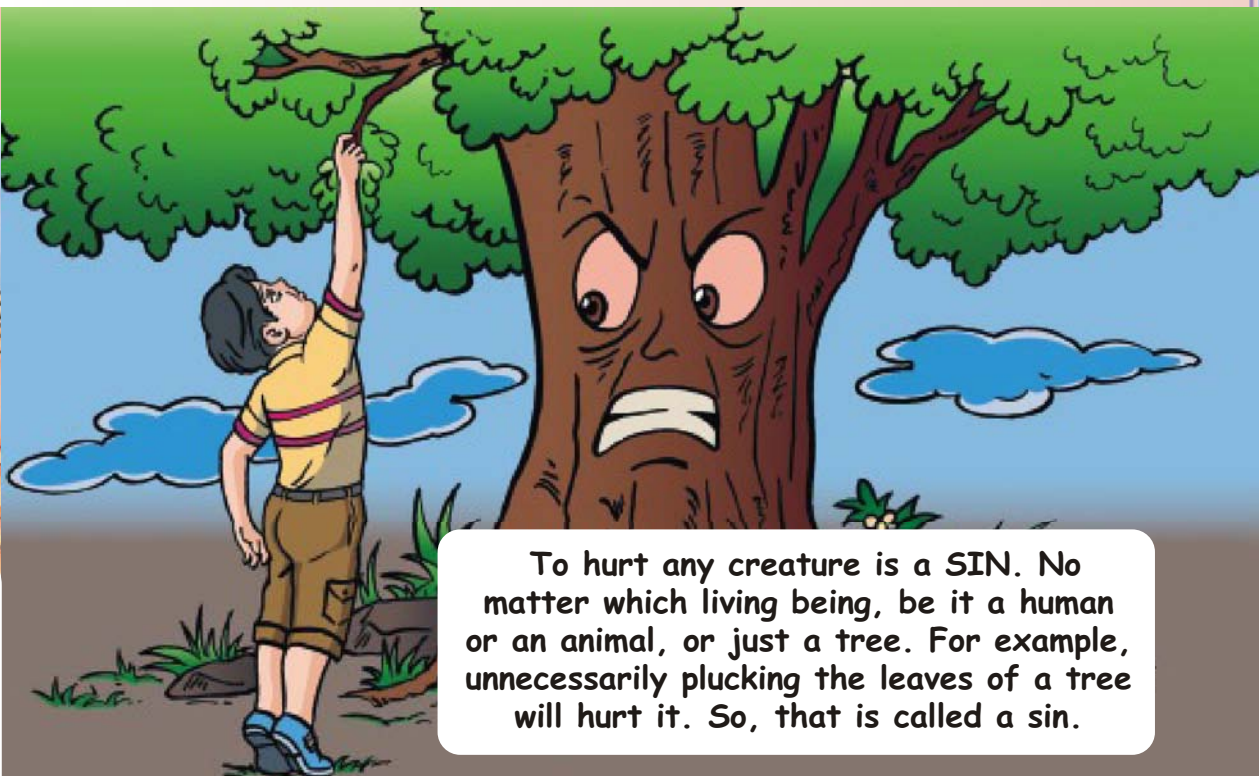
Absolutely New and Different!



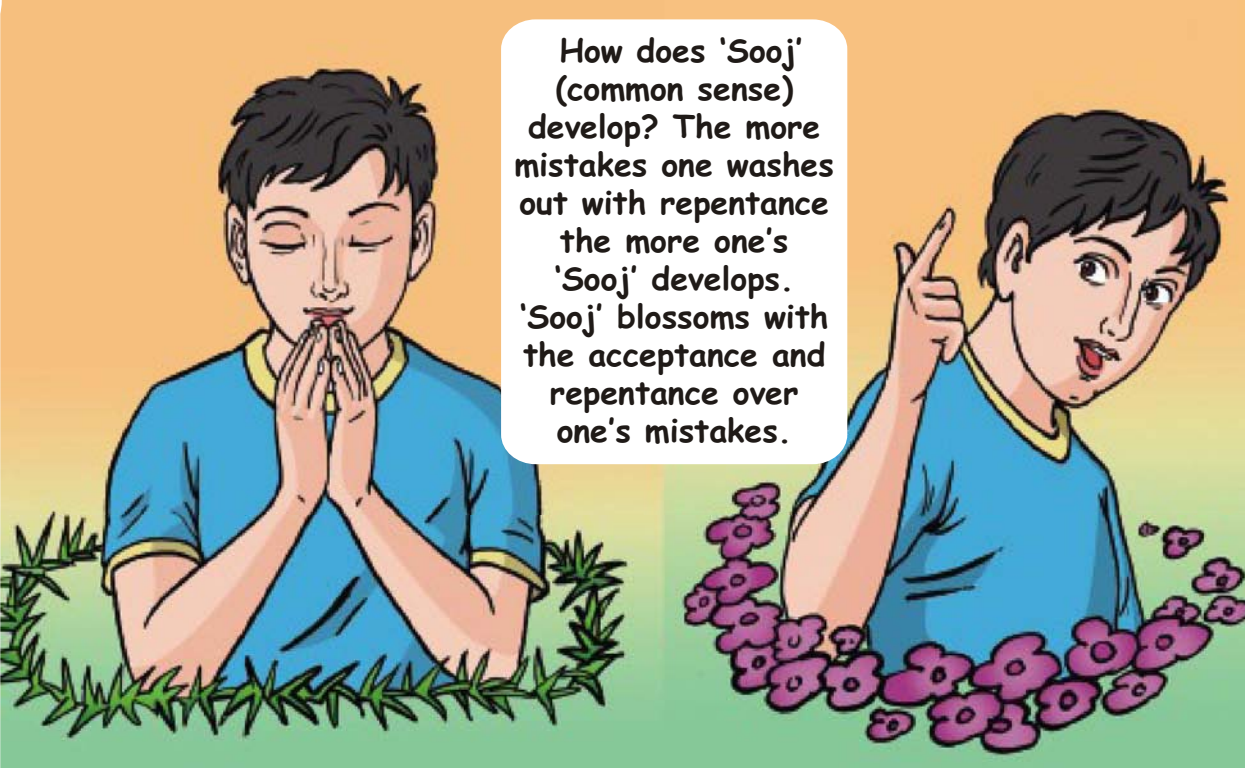
If one derives happiness from committing a misdeed, nature multiplies the punishment three fold, and if one repents the misdeed, the punishment is substantially reduced. For example, if a thief is happy over his deed, a twelve month punishment is extended to three years. While in the same case, if he were to repent, the punishment would be reduced to six months.



'Pratikraman' means to revert from a sin. When driving on a road, if one goes further than the desired destination, one will have to make a U-turn to get back on track. The act of turning back, that is called 'Pratikraman'.



To hurt any creature is a SIN. No matter which living being, be it a human or an animal, or just a tree. For example, unnecessarily plucking the leaves of a tree will hurt it. So, that is called a sin.



How does 'Sooj' (common sense) develop? The more mistakes one washes out with repentance the more one's 'Sooj' develops. 'Sooj' blossoms with the acceptance and repentance over one's mistakes.

Bunny and Sunny

Bunny (rabbit) and Sunny (bear) are very good friends. They are classmates and play with each other all day. One afternoon, Bunny goes to Sunny's cave.



You will find your pencil case in school tomorrow. I shall help you search for it. Let us play today, please. It will be great fun.

Bunny feels very hurt. He takes his bicycle and goes away immediately. Mrs. Owly, their English teacher who was passing by, overheard their conversation, but she simply walks away.



Keep quiet and go away. Don't harass me. You just want to play all day. Leave me alone for some time.



The next day at school, Bunny does not sit next to Sunny. Even during lunch break, he sits with Simi (squirrel) and Manu (rat). Sunny feels very isolated but he knows that it is his own mistake. His words have hurt Bunny and broken their friendship.



It is Mrs. Owly's class after the break.

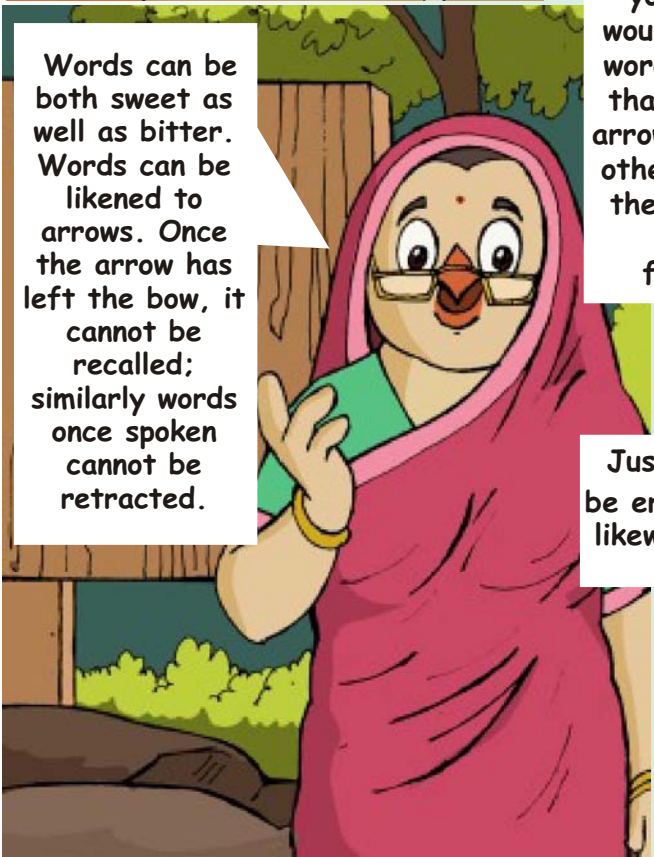
This pencil case was found near the hall yesterday. Whoever it belongs to may come and collect it after class. Today, we shall learn of the various different kinds of speech.



But children, did you know that wounds caused by words are deeper than those of an arrow? There is no other way to heal them, except by asking for forgiveness.



Words can be both sweet as well as bitter. Words can be likened to arrows. Once the arrow has left the bow, it cannot be recalled; similarly words once spoken cannot be retracted.



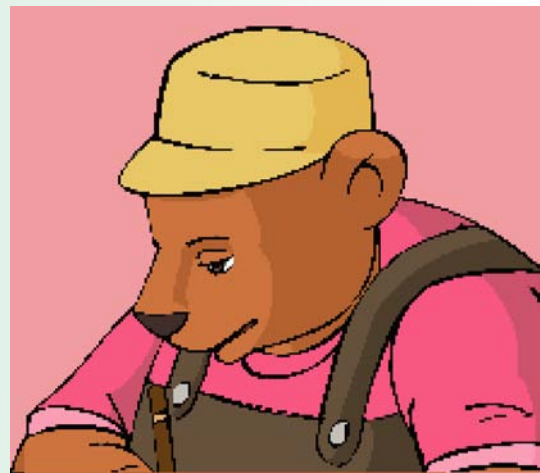
Mrs. Owly takes an eraser from the pencil case and while showing it says,

Just as mistakes while writing can be erased with the help of an eraser likewise, heartfelt repentance helps heal the wounds of words.





After class, Sunny takes his pencil case from Mrs. Owly.



Sunny takes a pencil from his pencil case and writes a message to Bunny which says, "Dear Bunny, I am sorry for having spoken harshly with you yesterday. I know that it has hurt you deeply. Please, will you forgive me?"

In a few minutes, Sunny receives a reply from Bunny stating, "Yes, of course! Let's be friends once again. Shall we go cycling by the pond?" Bunny turns around and smiles at Sunny.

Friends, did you notice how after having hurt Bunny, Sunny made up for it? Similarly, if we make a mistake, we too should make amends for it.



Introspect Yourself!

Nikki and Khushi were good friends since the past one year. They were always together.

On one Saturday a month ago, Khushi went to Nikki's home to do math homework.

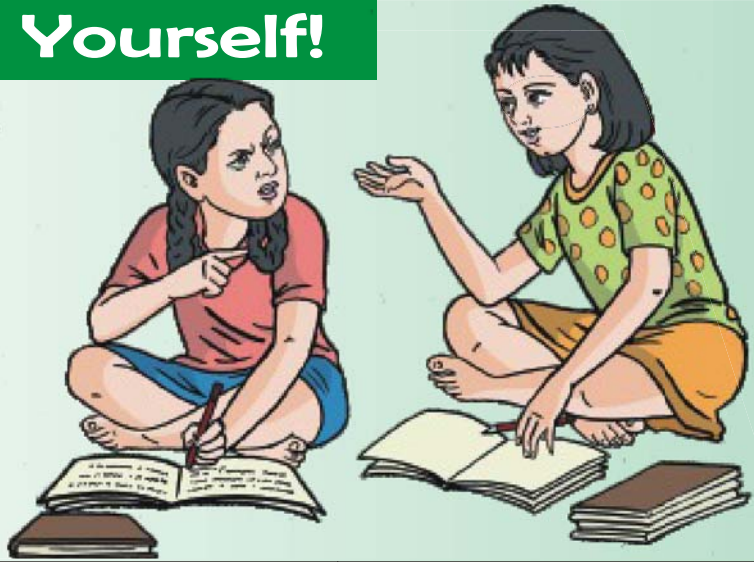
While doing her homework, Khushi had difficulty solving a particular problem so she asked Nikki to help her. But Nikki was so involved in her own homework that she did not pay attention to Khushi.

Khushi waited for Nikki's response for a few moments and once again said, "Nikki, please do me a favor and help me solve this problem. I am finding it tough to solve."

Nikki replied, "Oh Khushi, don't harass me. Let me finish my homework. Can't you even solve a simple problem by yourself?"

This offended Khushi so much that she went back home. Do you think Nikki should do something to preserve her friendship with Khushi?

Help Nikki save her friendship by solving the questions in the maze on page no.17.



(A) If you don't know something while doing your homework and your friend refuses to help you, would you feel hurt?

Yes - Turn Left

No - Go Straight

(B) Remember the day when your friend used to help you with your homework. Will you also help your friends in the same way?

Yes - Go straight

No - Turn to the right

(C) Do you feel happy after you've hurt others?

Yes - Turn left

No - Turn right

(D) Do you want to do nothing and lose your friend?

Yes - Move downwards

No - Turn left

(E) Would you ask for forgiveness and preserve your friendship?

Yes - Turn right

No - Turn left

Turn to page no.17 for the Maze

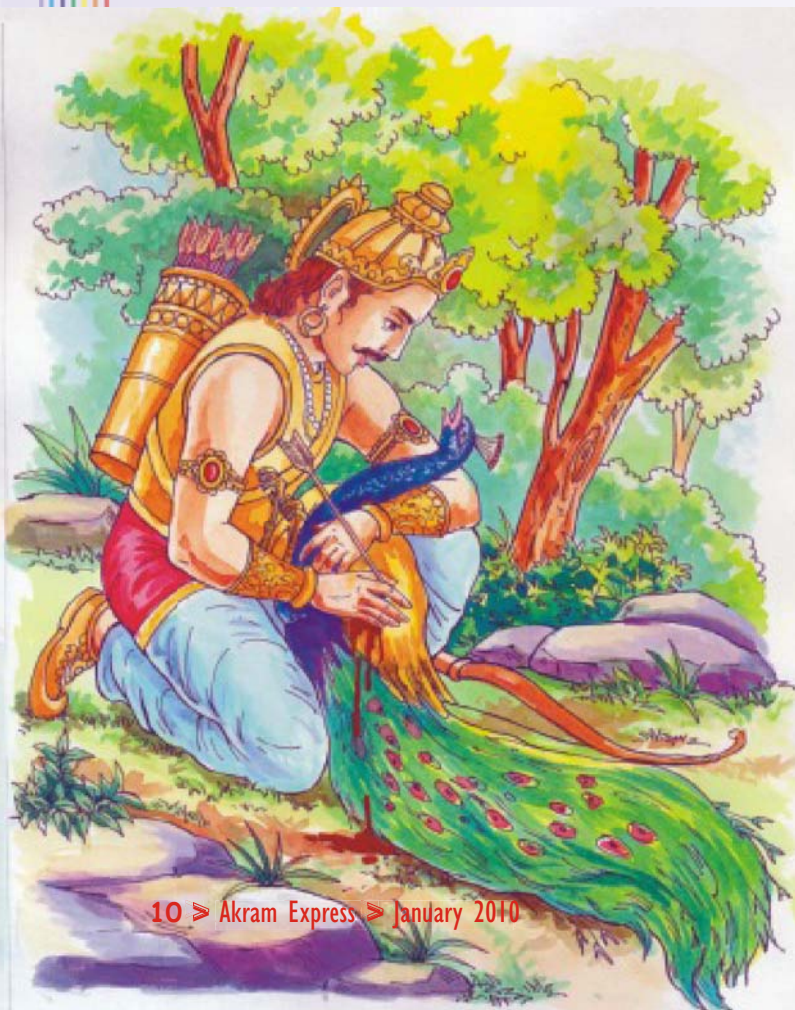
Once upon a time, in the kingdom of Kshitprathistha, there lived a king named Pruthvipal. One day when he was hunting with his bow and arrow, he shot the arrow at a peacock sitting on a tree. As soon as the arrow hit the peacock, it fell with a piercing cry. The arrow had pierced its body but it was still alive. The wounded peacock was struggling between life and death. Seeing the peacock's agony the king felt deeply grieved. "Oh! What a cruel deed I have committed! I have pierced an innocent being with my arrow. What if a mightier person or animal pierced me or tore me

apart, then I too would have to suffer just like this peacock."

The king went to the peacock's side. He pulled out the arrow slowly and tried to stop the bleeding. Then he stroked the peacock lovingly and asked for forgiveness. Due to the king's love and care, the peacock felt at peace and started having virtuous thoughts. After a few moments it passed away. As a result of the pious thoughts, the peacock was reborn as a human in the town of Vishadpur.

One day, king Pruthvipal saw a

Mythological Stories



saint seated on top of a big boulder. He approached the saint, who gave a sermon saying, "Compassion for living beings is the mother of religion." Hearing this, this king immediately accepted 'Shravak Dharma'. On returning to the palace, king Pruthvipal burnt all his weapons such as bows and arrows, traps etc. He spent the rest of his life abiding by the principles of Shravak Dharma. After his death, he was reborn in the same town of Vishadpur, where he grew up to be a rich and prosperous businessman named Sunand.

Meanwhile, the peacock was also reborn as a human in the same town, and was now the king's 'sevak'. One day, the king's sevak saw Sunand the businessman. As soon as the sevak saw Sunand, the thought of murdering him crossed his mind due to the karma's of their previous birth.



From that day on, the sevak was always in search of an opportunity to murder Sunand.

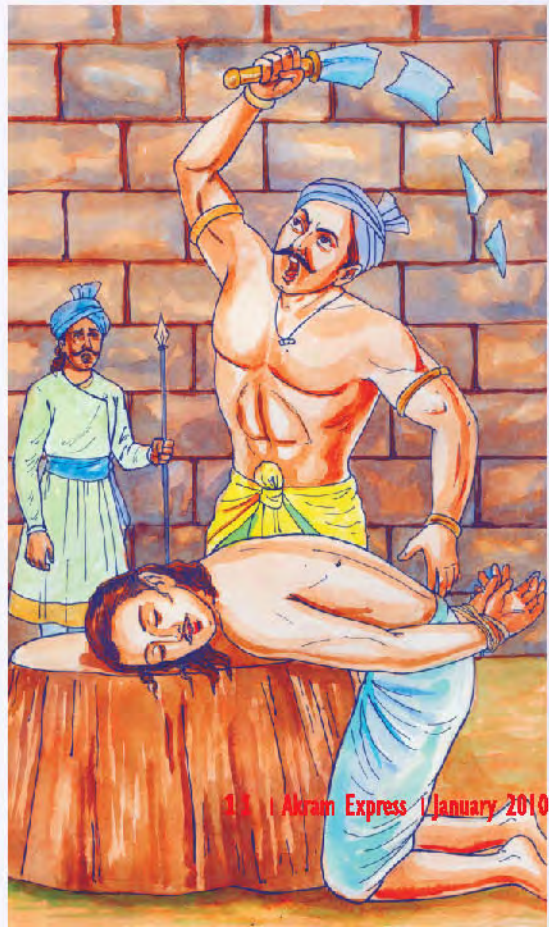
A few days later, the sevak stole the queen's precious stone necklace and went to Sunand who was deep in penance. The sevak carefully strung the necklace around Sunand's neck. The queen soon found out about the missing necklace. As a result, the King sent his soldiers to search each and every house for the necklace. The sevak took some soldiers and arrived at Sunand's house. Sunand was lost in deep penance. Seeing the necklace around his neck, the soldiers tied him up and took him to the king.

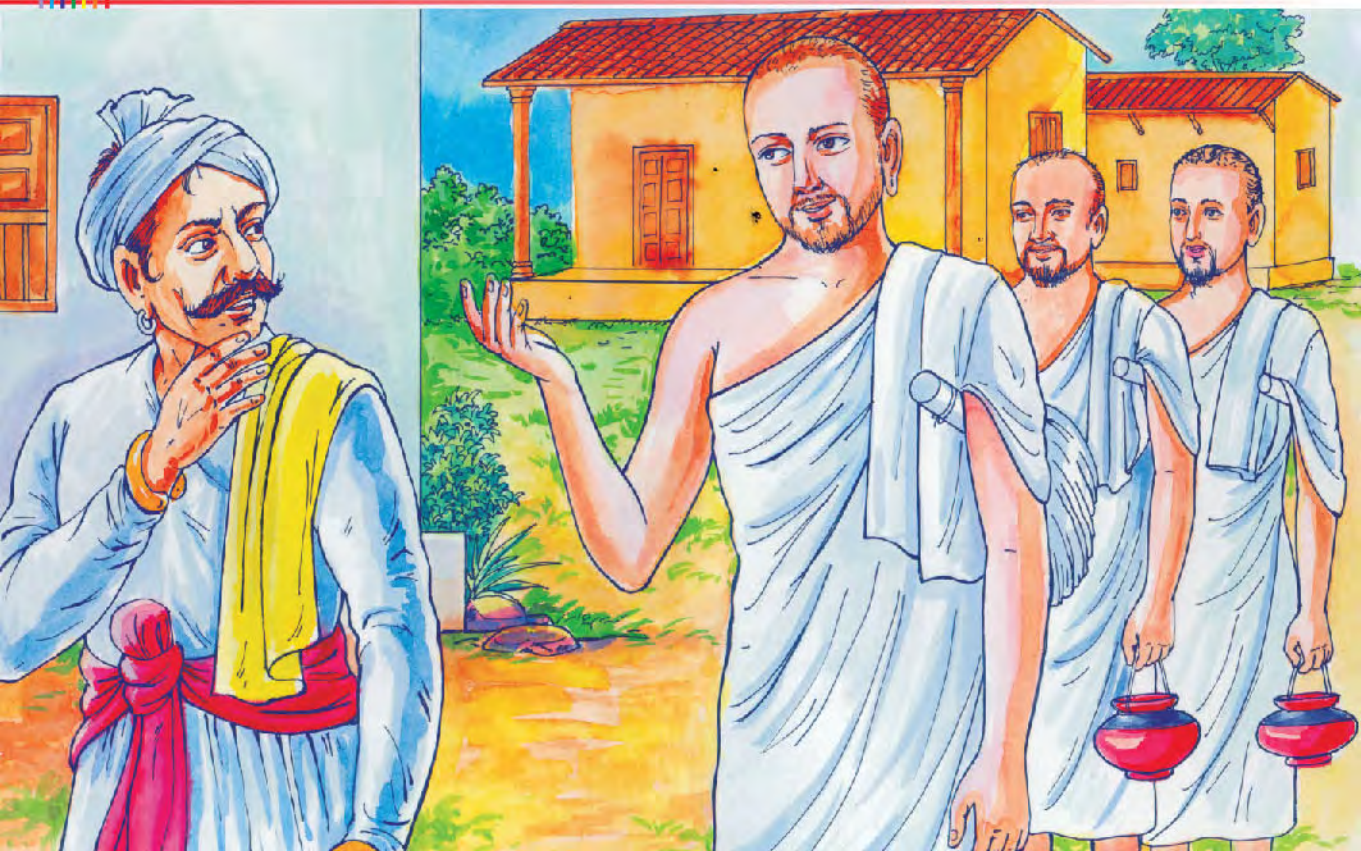
The king questioned Sunand about the necklace. Sunand did not reply which angered the king tremendously. The king ordered for Sunand to be executed. The next day as per the king's

“ The king ordered for Sunand to be executed. The next day as per the king's order, when the sevak lifted the sword to excute Sunand...” ”

order, when the sevak lifted the sword to excute Sunand, it shattered into pieces. Seeing this, everybody was amazed. As other soldiers lifted their weapons in an attempt to execute Sunand, their weapons shattered into pieces too. Ultimately, they related the incident to the king who immediately went to the place of execution, and gave orders to free

Sunand. After being free'd, Sunand went home and finished a few chores before he went to meet the king. Sunand spoke very modestly to the king saying, "O, King! I am a Shrivak. We Shrivaks never steal. I have many such valuable necklaces in my locker." The king accompanied Sunand to his home and was





astonished to see that his wealth included necklaces of greater value than those owned by the queen. Then Sunand said to the king, "O King, yesterday was an auspicious day. I cannot speak of wealth and ornaments on such a day. Thus, I could not respond when you questioned me about the necklace." The king was highly impressed by these words.

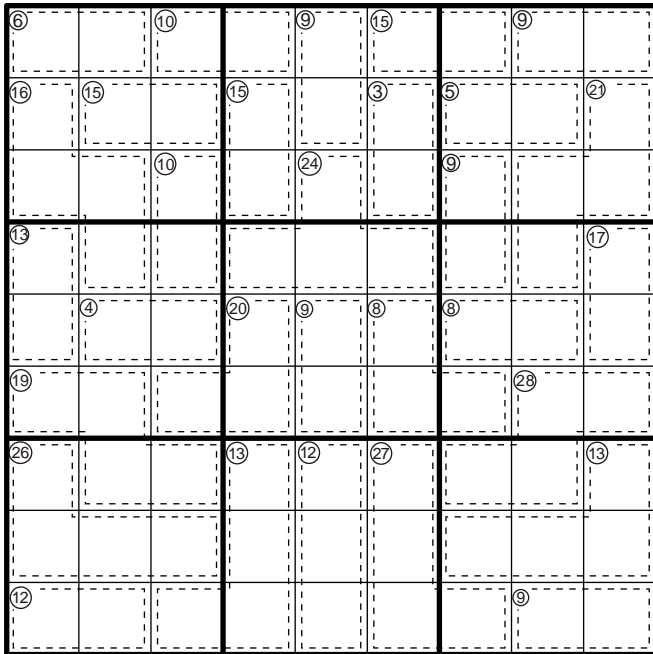
As time passed, Sunand handed his business over to his son and took renunciation. In due course, he attained Keval Gnan. Once, on his journey, he happened to reach the town of Vishadpur again. Upon seeing him, the sevak once again started getting thoughts of harming Sunand. Noticing this, Sunand who was now a 'Kevali' preached, "In your previous birth you were a peacock. I had killed you with my arrow while hunting.

Now that you have attained this precious human form, bring an end to your bad deeds. These deeds will only make you wander endlessly one life after the next."

Hearing this, the sevak gained Jatismaran Gnan (Knowledge that enables one to envision his/her previous births). Then, he fearlessly revealed his role in the necklace theft, and asked for forgiveness from all. After this, he took renunciation. In this way, the sevak who was the peacock in his previous birth, repented his mistakes and freed himself from the vengeance towards Sunand, and moved forward on the path to salvation.

So friends, do you understand how heartfelt repentance can free you from binding any kind of vengeance?

Let's Play...



(1)

Fill in the blank squares so that each row, each column and each 3-by-3 block contains all of the digits 1 through 9. The dotted lines indicate areas which also contain a non-repeating set of digits. These squares can be added together to produce the sums shown in the clues.

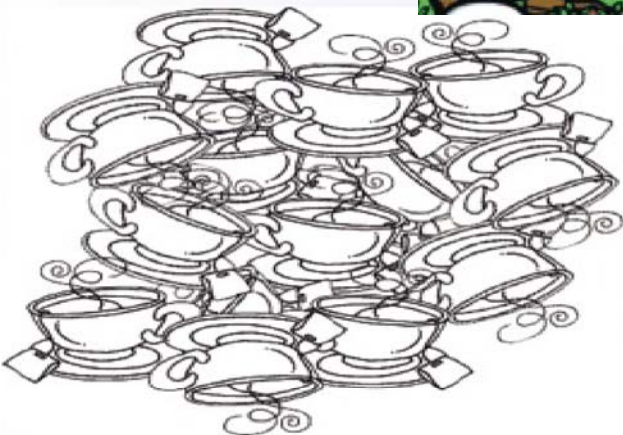
(2)

Find the abnormal in this picture.



(3)

In the picture to the left, figure out how many cups there are in total.





Once when Dada was in Los Angeles, He was ill and many people wanted to take 'Gnan'. However, due to Dada's poor health, He was unable to conduct 'Gnan Vidhi'. There was a particular lady who was very eager to take Gnan. She would visit Dada everyday for 'darshan' and ask Him, "When will I get Gnan?" In due course, when Dada regained His health, a 'Gnan Vidhi' was declared. The lady brought her husband and came to attend the 'Gnan Vidhi'.

Dada asked those who had taken Gnan to come back the next day at 6:00 in the morning. Mahatmas arrived one after another. The lady had come with her husband at 9 am. Since 'darshan' had started from 6:00a.m., Dada was tired and went in to rest. 'Darshan' was put on hold until Dada woke up. Soon after Dada retired to rest, He fell asleep due to his weak health. So, instead of the 5 minute break, He woke up one and a half hours later. Meanwhile, that lady's husband got tired of waiting and left.

Just as Dada awoke and the doors were opened for 'darshan', the lady came crying to Dada saying, "My husband waited for one and a half hours and just left feeling very upset. Now what will happen to his 'Gnan'?" Dada replied,

Sweet

"You don't worry. Just bring your husband here somehow." The lady answered, "He won't come." So Dada replied, "Is that so, I shall write a letter and you make him read it." Saying this, Dada dictated His letter to Niruma stating, "Bhai', please come back. I have erred. You came when I was resting and you left without 'darshan'. Please forgive me and come back for 'darshan', just once." Dada signed the letter and gave the sealed letter to the lady but her husband did not give any importance to the letter.

After a fortnight, once again the lady came at 9:30 p.m. to meet Dada. Seeing her, Dada immediately asked, "Why have you come all by yourself? Go and get your husband too." To this the lady replied, "He is sitting in the car downstairs and said to me, "You go, I don't want to come. Do 'darshan' and come back soon, I'll be waiting for you downstairs in the car." He is not agreeing to come upstairs." Niruma went downstairs to bring him to Dada and said, "Dada is waiting upstairs for you. Let's go!" The gentleman followed Niruma immediately. Everyone was pleased to see him come.

As soon as the mahatma arrived, Dada said with great compassion, "You've come! I have waited a long

time to see you; I made a big mistake that day. I made you wait so long and you had to go. Just as you came, I fell asleep. Time passed and I did not realize. In reality, it is my mistake." The man replied, "No,... No,... No... it is not like that at all. I am not at all displeased with you." Dada continued, "No, you will have to forgive me. Whatever the case, it is my mistake."

The mahatma was taken aback in astonishment. He said, "No, Dada, it is not your fault." But Dada persisted, "No, not like that. Place your hands on my head and say, "Dada I have forgiven you."" Hearing this, everybody was in tears. Dada spoke with so much compassion. People sitting there were amazed at Dada's humility. What a remarkable intent Dada had to ask for forgiveness and to become free of all claims. As Dada continued to ask for forgiveness, the man couldn't stop crying. Ultimately, Dada took the man's hands and placed them on his head himself saying, "Now say, "Dada I have forgiven you."" The man kept crying and at last said, "Dada, I have forgiven you." By now he was totally in awe of Dada's compassion. From that moment on he became a strong devotee of Dada.

What astounding compassion Dada had! What incredible humility Dada had! His desire and intent to be free must have been so strong that he was not bound by any claims. He had such a powerful realization of his mistakes. No matter how stubborn the other person was, no matter what they did, Dada would always ask for forgiveness as if it were his own mistake and free himself from all claims.

Memories

Questioner: Right from a young age, I used to be stubborn and would insist on getting what I want from my father, but I made this mistake unknowingly. I obtained things by hurting my father and I feel very remorseful about it, what should I do?

Pujyashree: Do pratikramans for it. One time even go and bow down to his feet and ask for forgiveness saying, "Pappa, in my stubbornness I have harassed you, please forgive me." Then ask, "You will forgive me, won't you?"

Questioner: I have done exactly as you say, but even after doing pratikramans, I keep feeling that what I have done is very wrong.

Pujyashree: The first step after making a mistake is to repent over it. The second step, after one continues to feel deep repentance, is to make a firm resolution never to repeat such a mistake again.

Questioner: When I see my friends' things, I feel the urge to get them too.

Pujyashree: See, with our comparisons

we hurt our fathers so much. As it is our parents go through a lot of hardship to fulfill our needs, and then if we insist and act stubborn, half their income is spent fulfilling our wants. How unhappy they must be! Nevertheless they go through a great deal of trouble to keep you happy and help you.

Questioner: My friend bought something and I want it too. My father was refusing saying, "We do not want to buy it for your own good." But I was not ready to understand that he was refusing for my own good.

Pujyashree: No, but now we have understood that. So we all need to learn that sometimes when we act stubborn, hurt our father, answer back rudely, or at times we even say that, "my father is stingy and does not give me any money!", it is wrong. Is it right to speak in this manner? Don't your parents pay your school fees? Don't they provide you with meals? Do they make you wash your own clothes? Don't they help you in every way? It is unbecoming for children with good values to behave in this manner. I have never hurt my father by making such demands or by harassing him.

Questioner: If I get annoyed in my mind only, do I need to do pratikramans?

Pujyashree: Yes, you do. If we don't do pratikramans, it builds up into a big knot, and then it comes into our speech and action as well. Instead, if we wash it off in our mind, then the matter ends there.



Pujyashree with Kids

Puzzle Answers

(1)

2	4	7	3	5	6	9	8	1
5	6	9	8	4	1	3	2	7
1	3	8	7	9	2	4	5	6
4	7	2	1	6	8	5	3	9
9	1	3	5	7	4	2	6	8
8	5	6	9	2	3	1	7	4
7	2	4	6	1	5	8	9	3
6	8	5	4	3	9	7	1	2
3	9	1	2	8	7	6	4	5

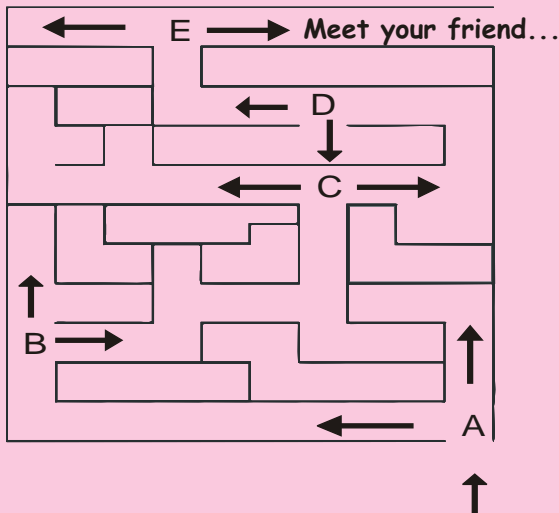
(2)



(3) 14 cups

Introspect Yourself!

In the maze provided, you are to start at point A. Move forward in the direction indicated by your chosen answer and find out if your friendship will last or not?



My Vision



You severely reprimand your younger brother since you feel that he has lost your pencil. Although he repeatedly insists that he has not misplaced it, you refuse to believe him and scold him very harshly. That night, while arranging your school bag for the next day, you find your pencil in the bag. At that moment, you remember that you had put it in the bag. You deeply regret having scolded him. Your brother fell asleep sulking. What will you do?

Response from the Previous Issue of "My Vision"

I will not think negatively of my father, nor will I angry him. Additionally, I will not remind my Pappa that it has been a week since he had promised to get me a cycle, as there must be a genuine reason for the delay. I will be patient and will not get angry. I will not be angry at Pappa, even from inside. If I hurt Pappa, than I will suffer the consequences of my action. Since Pappa has promised to buy me a cycle, he will buy it for me even if it is after another week. I have complete faith in my Pappa's promise.

Name: Arun Chawla,
Chaloda, Age: 9 year

Akram Express

January 2010

Year : 1, Issue : 7

Conti. Issue No.: 7

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on 08th of every month



Different Festivals and Kid's Drawing Art

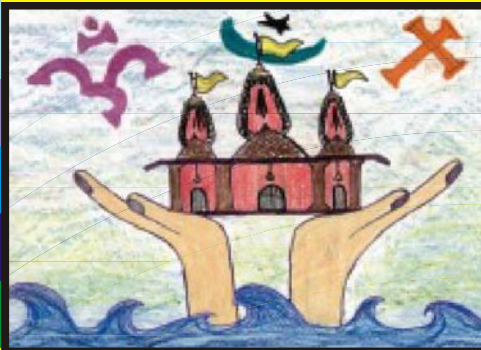
Khunt Ekta, Age - 12 years, Vadodara



Lakariya Bhumi, Age - 10 years, Vadodara



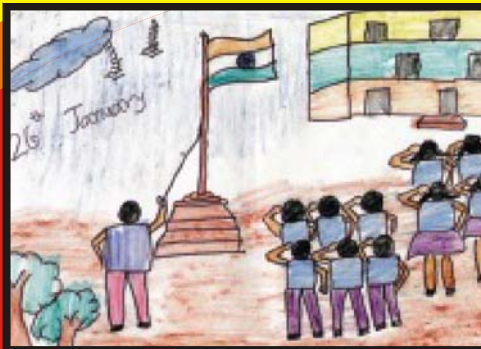
Darshan Gohil, Age - 12 years, Vadodara



Patel Bhumi, Age - 12 years, Vadodara



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Publication - Dimple Mehta on behalf of Mahavideh Foundation

Printed at **Amba offset**- Parshwanath Chambers, Usmanpura, Ahmedabad-14 and published.