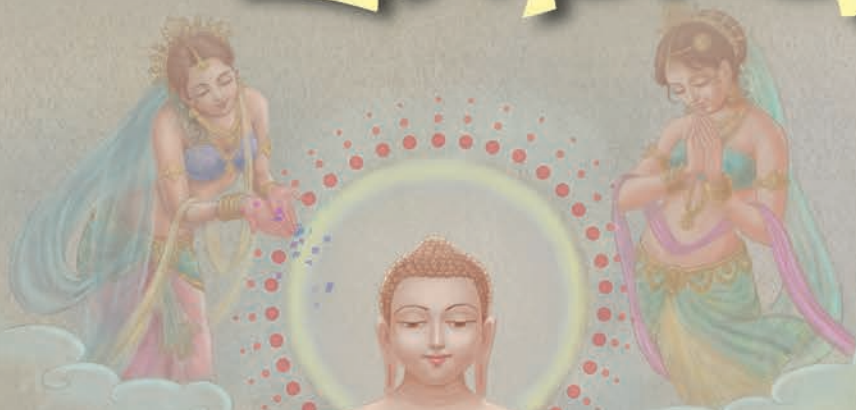


Dada Bhagwan Parivar's

April 2022

Price per copy : ₹ 20/-

# AKRAM Express



# MAHAVIR

## The Hero of Heroes

Editorial

Is there actually any real suffering in our lives? At times we complain about how this person did this to us and that person did that to us...and then we might even hit out at someone or get into a fight.

We feel that we are the only person that has ever suffered. But no, even people as great as God have had to endure terrible pain. Yes, I am talking about Lord Mahavir. Just hearing about the tremendous suffering he went through in his life, can make us tremble. So what would God have done back then? Would he have hit out at people or got into a fight like we do?

Come, let us read the tales of Lord Mahavir in this issue. What was it about him that made him become known as maha-vir (the greatest of heroes) and also got worshipped as God.

- Dimple Mehta

Editor : Dimple Mehta

Printer & Published by

Dimple Mehta on behalf of  
Mahavideh Foundation  
Simandhar City, Adalaj - 382421,  
Ta & Dist - Gandhinagar.

Owned by  
Mahavideh Foundation  
Simandhar City, Adalaj - 382421,  
Ta & Dist - Gandhinagar.

Printed at  
Amba Multiprint  
B-99, GIDC, Sector-25,  
Gandhinagar - 382025.

Published at  
Mahavideh Foundation  
Simandhar City, Adalaj - 382421,  
Ta & Dist - Gandhinagar.

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# Akram Express

Subscription (English)

Yearly Subscription

India:200 Rupees

U.S.A.:15 Dollars

U.K.:12 Pounds

5 years Subscription

India:800 Rupees

U.S.A.:60 Dollars

U.K.:50 Pounds

Send D.D./M.o.in the  
name of 'Mahavideh Foundation'.

2 April 2022

Vol.: 19, Issue : 9  
Conti. Issue No.: 151  
April 2022

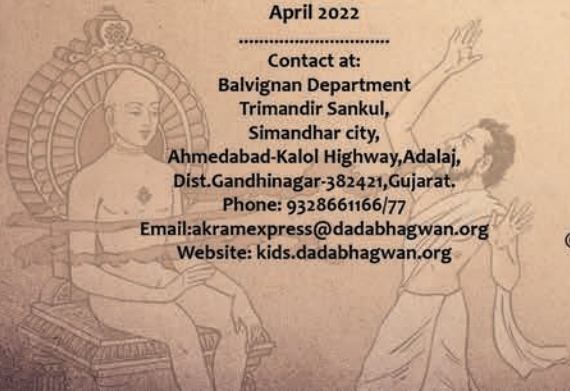
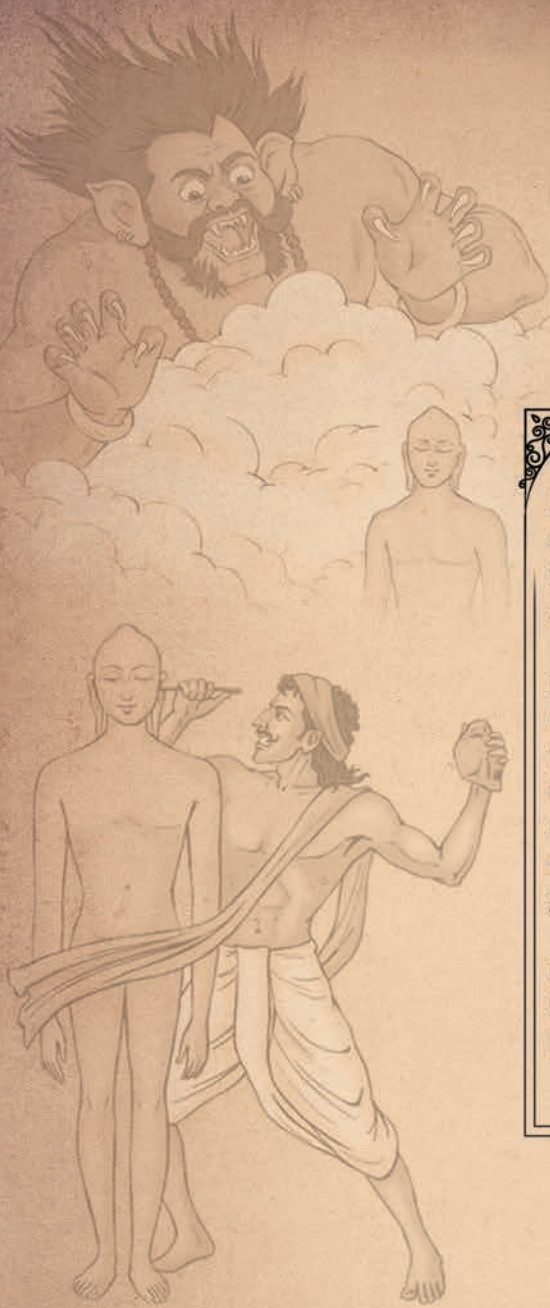
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# Gnani Says...



Who is a Tirthankar? The one at whose every footstep, a pilgrimage site is established, is known as a Tirthankar. They only move about for world salvation. Day and night their only intention is for people to be free from all suffering, for them to progress in the path of liberation and for their ultimate liberation.

2500 years ago, the last Tirthankar of this time cycle was Lord Mahavir. Why was he known as 'Mahavir'? Because he gave a tough fight against the worst karmas. (Causes of the past life which come into effect in the present life). Lord Mahavir's power and strength to settle his karmic account was extraordinary.

**Questioner:** When unbearable suffering came upon Lord Mahavir, the celestial gods (Devos) requested if they could help him. Then why did the Lord not accept help?

**Pujyashree:** The life of a celestial god is for the service of the Tirthankars. The celestial gods will help with everything. But the Lord said, "Let me finish my karmas. If I take your help, then my karmas will be remain pending."

For example, if someone collects 10,000 rupees from me which I had to repay, and I then borrow 15,000 rupees from someone else. Then wouldn't I still be left with an outstanding loan? Even if I repay the 10,000 rupees, I still have an outstanding loan of 15,000 rupees which I would have to repay at some point.

The Lord said, "Do not help me. Let my karmas finish." He settled all his karmas with his own strength and the power of knowledge of the Self, until he attained absolute Knowledge. Lord Mahavir finished all his karmas with equanimity.

**Questioner:** What does it mean to remain in equanimity?

**Niruma:** No hate arises within you, nor any anger even if someone verbally abuses you, no reaction occurs. If someone praises you, bestows you with honour and garlands you, you remain calm and even-headed. There is no change within you.



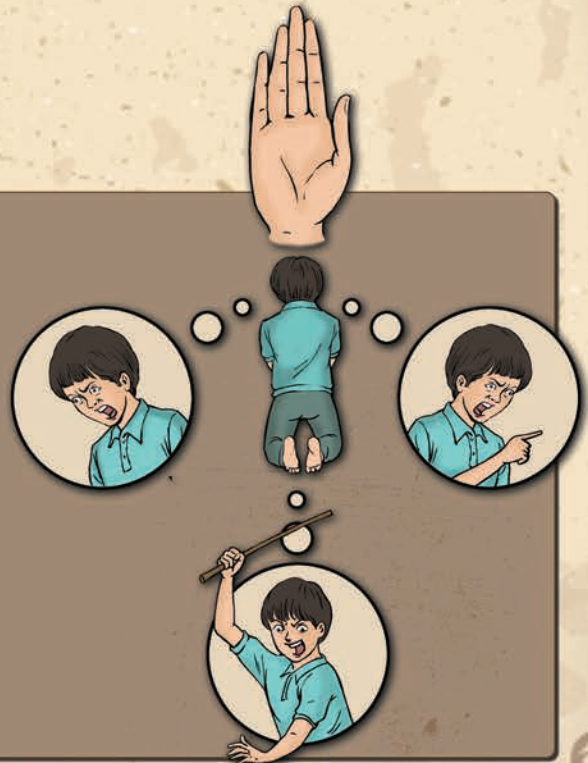
# Absolutely New and Different!



*Upsarg* are externally inflicted terrible sufferings.

When there is appalling insult, someone verbally abuses you, speaks harsh words to you, or even hits you all these are upsarg.

To forgive someone is when you see someone at fault and then forgive them for it. God never feels that anyone is at fault. He only sees his own karmas. So he has no need to actively forgive anyone! His forgiveness is natural and spontaneous.



# Shulpanj Yakshdev

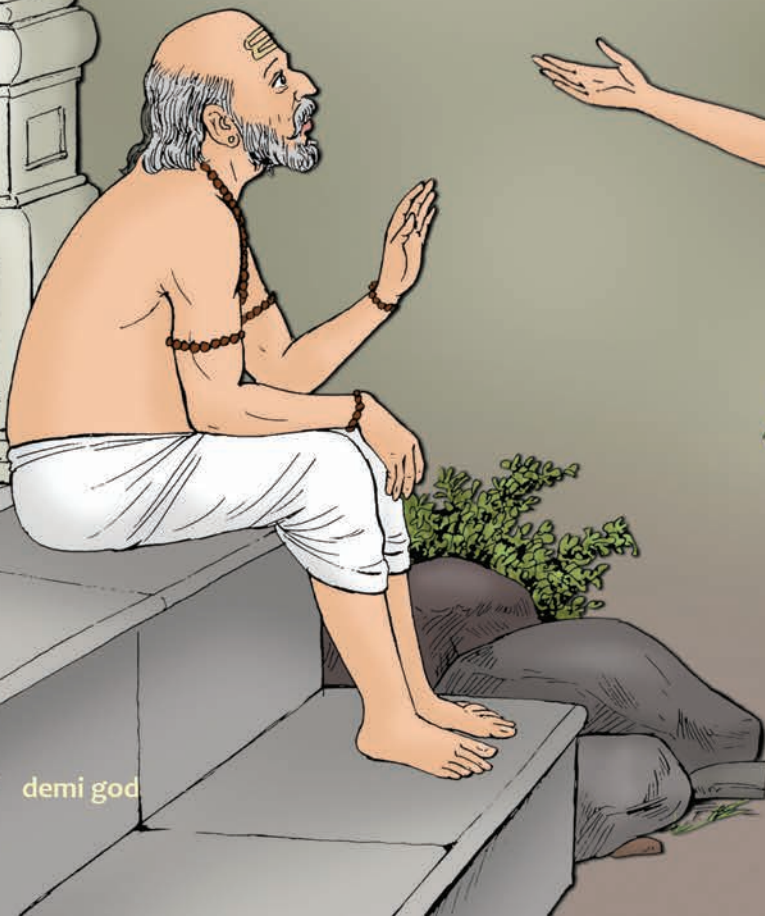
While moving about, Lord Mahavir came to the outskirts of a forlon village called Asthik. The muddy river flowing through it had turned black with dirt. On the river bank there was a temple of a Yakshdev\*.

It was evening time and the priest, Indrasharma, was sitting outside the temple. Seeing the radiant man he asked, "Why have you come here?"

"I would like to spend the night here. A small corner will be enough for me," said Lord Mahavir.

"It is impossible to stay in this temple, and to stay the night is extremely dangerous. The deity of this temple, Shulpani, does not leave anyone alive.

It is said that a merchant named Dhandev once passed by here with five hundred carts of groceries. Unfortunately his carts got stuck in the muddy swampy river and they could not move. Dhandev had one strong bull. With extreme effort the bull managed to pull out all of the five hundred carts from the mud. However it took a massive toll on the bull and it collapsed on the ground. It could not get up or move!



\* demi god

Dhandev cared for the bull deeply. He requested the villagers to look after the bull and in return he would give them as much money as they wanted. The villagers agreed to look after the bull and Dhandev gave them the requested amount of money. Dhandev showed his love for the bull with a long and affectionate goodbye and finally left with tears in his eyes.

However, the villagers did not take care of the bull. They fed it one day and not the next day. They gave it water one day and then not for two days. Without adequate food and water in the extreme hot summer, the bull suffered a lot and eventually died. It was reborn as a daemon (from celestial world) named Shulpani and started wreaking vengeance upon the village. He would kill people without any reason. Eventually, the villagers came together to build a temple to appease him. They started worshipping, doing aarti and offering food to the deity. They appointed me as the priest. Shulpani has a terrible temper. During the day it may be fine, but no one can stay here at night.” Priest Indrasharma finished his narration.

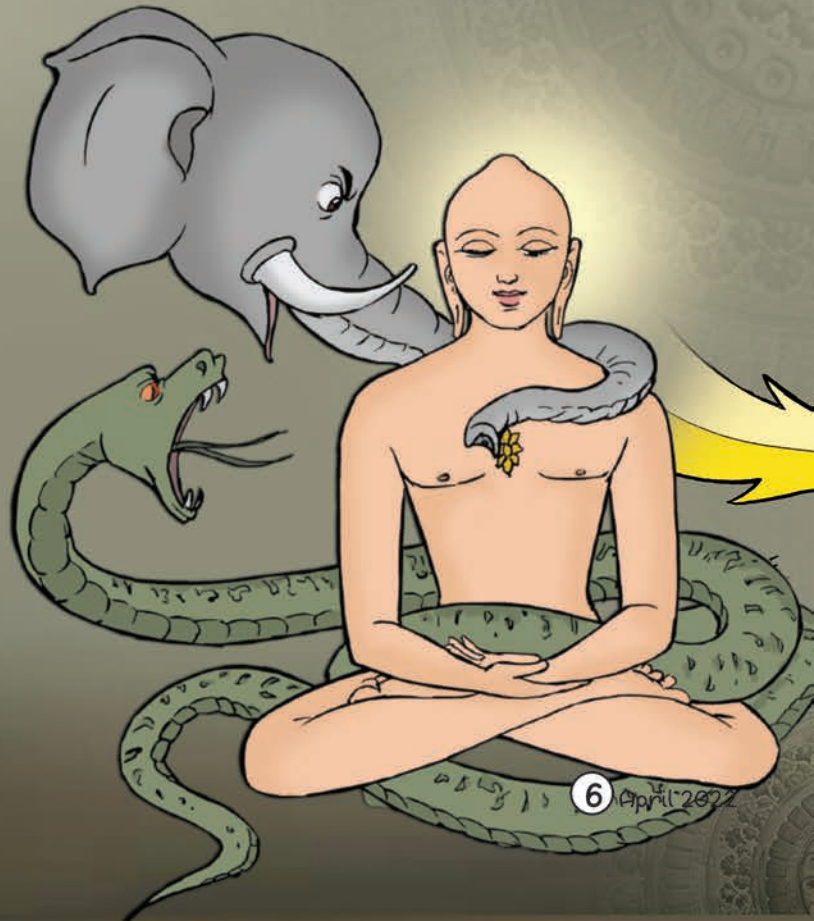
Lord Mahavir said, “Please give me permission to stay for one night.”

“Even though it is so dangerous?”

“I am fearless. I do not fear anything and I do not cause anyone to fear me. Please give me permission without getting worried.”

The villagers gave him permission and Lord Mahavir spent the night there.

As soon as it got dark, the priest closed the temple doors and left. There was nobody around for miles. Not only people but even the animals were scared of that place.



Lord Mahavir sat crossed-legged in a corner. All of a sudden there was a sound of sinister laughter. Then a wild elephant crashed through the door and charged straight towards Lord Mahavir. It picked him with its trunk, , threw him down, and trampled him under its feet! After a little while the elephant disappeared.

Then came a demon with long nails and teeth. He clawed at Mahavir's body, pulled out the flesh and started chewing on it. But there was peace on Lord Mahavir's face. It was like that peaceful face was saying, "Eat well brother, do not go hungry."

The demon also disappeared. Suddenly, a venomous snake came out of the abyss. It came closer and attacked the Lord bite upon bite. But Lord Mahavir showed no fear and felt no vengeance.

The whole night was spent in facing terrible torture, but Lord Mahavir turned out to be maha-vir (great-brave one or hero). Eventually the deity Shulpani appeared and fell at the Lord's feet and cried, "Please forgive me!"

Lord Mahavir replied with love, "I do not feel any animosity towards you. You are a friend that is here to test me."

"Me, a friend?' And that too, your friend?" Shulpani was surprised.

"Yes not only mine, you can be a friend to the entire world. You have just lost your way. You were trying to quell your feelings of vengeance by taking revenge, but you can never conquer vengeance with revenge. Only love and forgiveness can conquer vengeance. Free yourself from vengeance."

After hearing the Lord's compassionate words, the fierce Shulpani became gentle. His burning heart became calm. He felt blissful and started singing.

Thus, Lord Mahavir, without caring for his own body, brought Shulpani out of the fire of vengeance and showed him the path of love and forgiveness.



# Chandkaushik

Lord Mahavir was walking from one village to another. On the way a cowherd stopped him and said, “Do you know that there is a hermitage named Kanakhal on this route and there lives a ferocious snake. Its name is Chandkaushik and this snake even has venom in its eyes. Just one look from the snake, and the victim will immediately burn up and die.”

However, even after hearing this, there was not an iota of fear on Lord Mahavir’s face. He walked ahead.

The cowherds stopped Lord Mahavir again and pleaded, “Before you take another step, first listen to what we have to say:

‘In his previous birth, an ascetic named Kaushik was the keeper of the hermitage. He was a very angry man. Children used to come and play in the garden of the hermitage. Kaushik did not like it when the children were mischievous. He would chase them with a stick. The children would run away terrified.

To tease Kaushik the children gave him a nickname, ‘Chand-kaushik’. Chand means hot-tempered.

One day when Kaushik was not around, the children came and caused havoc in the garden. When Kaushik saw the garden in utter ruin, he became very angry. He picked up an axe that was lying on the ground and ran after the children to punish them. There was a deep pit on the side of the path. The ascetic did not see it and fell into the pit. His own axe fell onto his head and the ascetic died there and then. He was reborn as a ferocious snake and now he does not spare anyone who comes in his way.” The cowherd finished narrating his story.

Lord Mahavir looked at him with love and continued walking ahead. In a little while he arrived at the hermitage. Chandkaushik picked up the scent of a human. He looked at the Lord with its venomous gaze. To his surprise, the Lord stood before him strong and fearless. He had not flinched a bit.



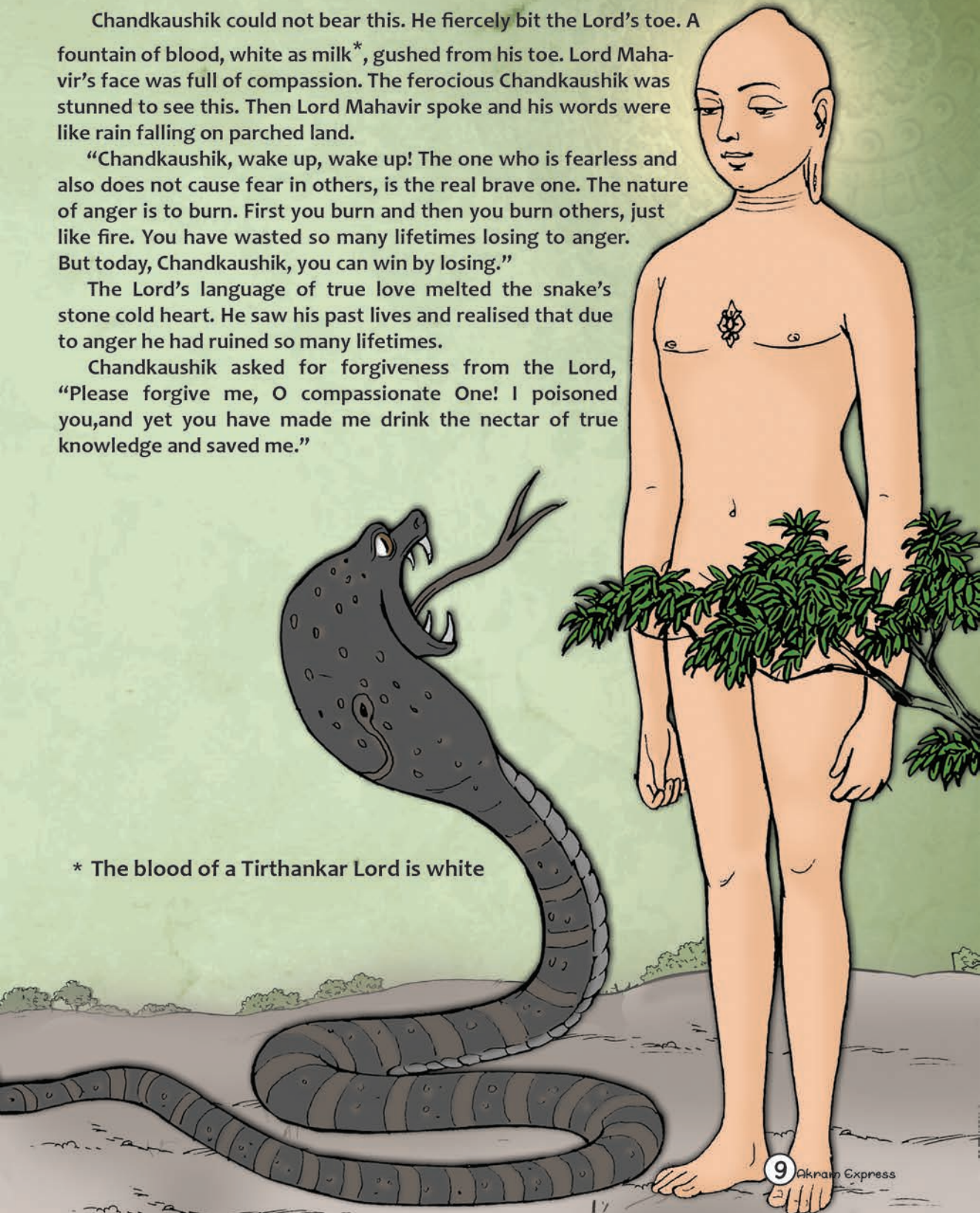


Chandkaushik could not bear this. He fiercely bit the Lord's toe. A fountain of blood, white as milk\*, gushed from his toe. Lord Mahavir's face was full of compassion. The ferocious Chandkaushik was stunned to see this. Then Lord Mahavir spoke and his words were like rain falling on parched land.

"Chandkaushik, wake up, wake up! The one who is fearless and also does not cause fear in others, is the real brave one. The nature of anger is to burn. First you burn and then you burn others, just like fire. You have wasted so many lifetimes losing to anger. But today, Chandkaushik, you can win by losing."

The Lord's language of true love melted the snake's stone cold heart. He saw his past lives and realised that due to anger he had ruined so many lifetimes.

Chandkaushik asked for forgiveness from the Lord, "Please forgive me, O compassionate One! I poisoned you, and yet you have made me drink the nectar of true knowledge and saved me."

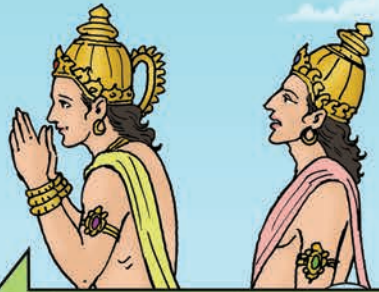


\* The blood of a Tirthankar Lord is white

# Sangamdev



Once Lord Mahavir was standing motionless, absorbed in meditation, outside a village called Pedhal. Indradev, witnessing this divine strength, gave homage and praise to Lord Mahavir, from the celestial world.

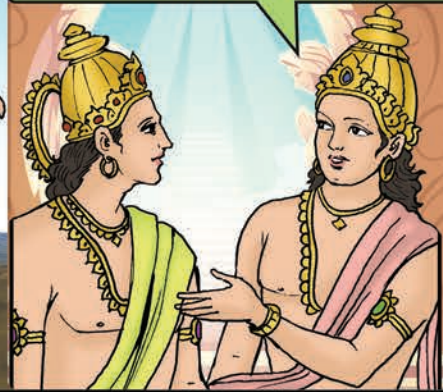


Mahavir you are great! You have no equal in meditation, courage and patience.

A deity named Sangam, present in Indra's assembly became jealous.

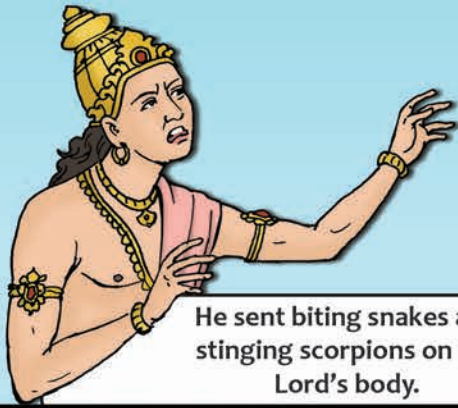


O king of the gods! A mere mortal cannot have such superhuman abilities that can withstand strength from celestial gods. I will shake Mahavir's meditation in one night.

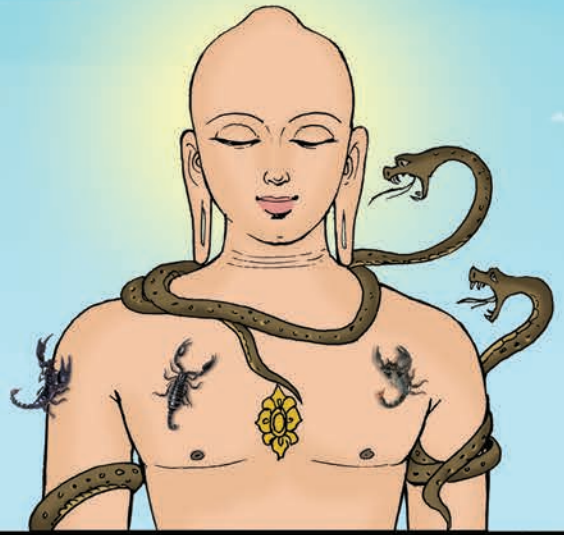


Thus Sangamdev came down on Earth to test the Lord's meditation. He started his torturous tactics to disturb the Lord's meditation. He caused a severe sand storm to occur, and the sand got trapped in the Lords nose and mouth.

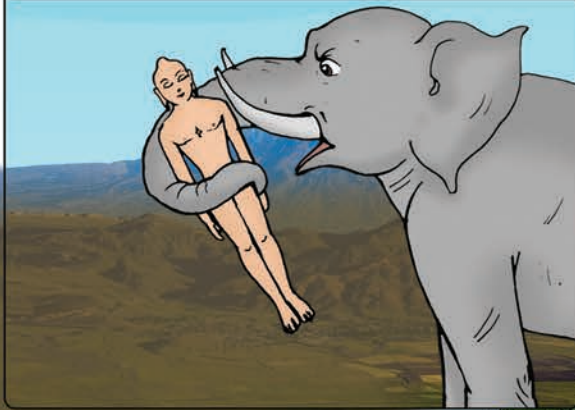




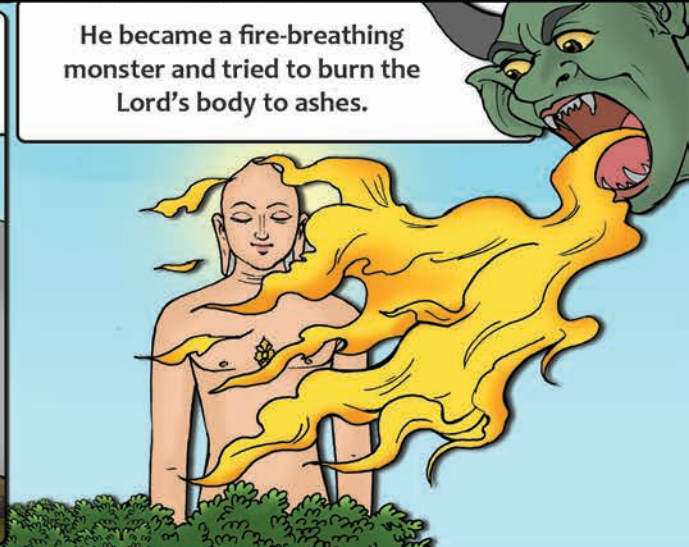
He sent biting snakes and stinging scorpions on the Lord's body.



He took the form of an elephant and threw the Lord up into the air with his trunk.



He became a fire-breathing monster and tried to burn the Lord's body to ashes.



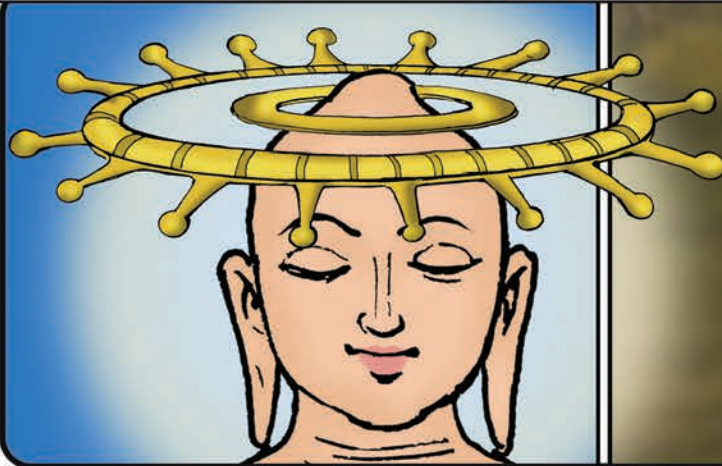
He lit a fire between the Lord's legs, on which he cooked sweet rice with milk.



By taking the forms of a lion and a cheetah, he tried to rip apart the Lord.



Sangamdev released a wheel weighing a thousand tons onto the Lord's head. This wheel, powerful enough to crush even Mt. Meru<sup>#</sup>\*, pushed the Lord into the ground up to his knees.

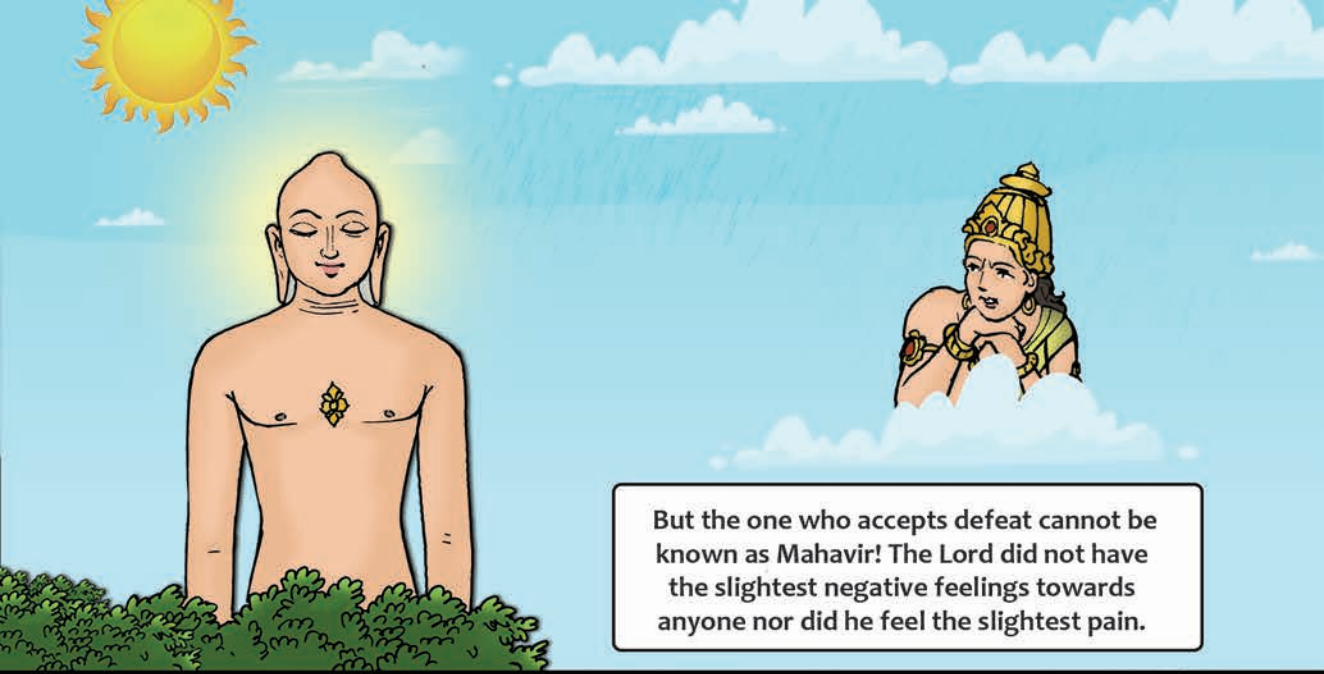


Even after torturing Lord Mahavir in so many different ways, Sangamdev did not succeed in disturbing the Lord's meditation.

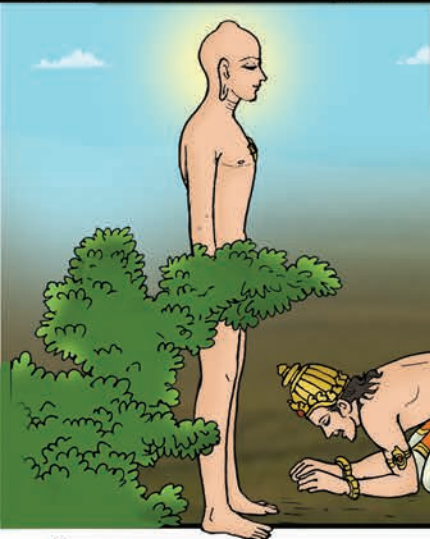


Lord Mahavir had been fasting for days. When the Lord would go to the village for alms, Sangamdev would make sure that only the stale food was given.



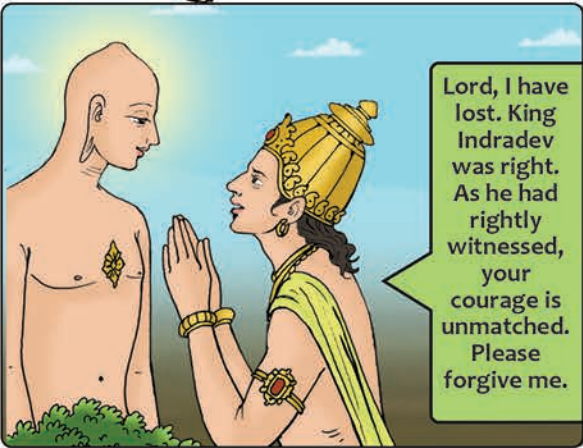


But the one who accepts defeat cannot be known as Mahavir! The Lord did not have the slightest negative feelings towards anyone nor did he feel the slightest pain.

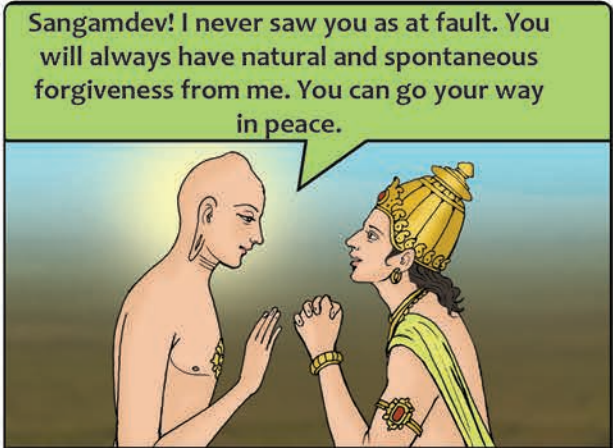


After afflicting torture on the Lord for six months, Sangamdev finally accepted defeat and fell at Lord Mahavir's feet.

O great mortal, I subjected you to a severe test of your courage and patience. I was not able to defeat you. I did not see even a slight hint of pain on your face.



Lord, I have lost. King Indradev was right. As he had rightly witnessed, your courage is unmatched. Please forgive me.



Sangamdev! I never saw you as at fault. You will always have natural and spontaneous forgiveness from me. You can go your way in peace.

\* The sacred five-peaked mountain as per Hindu & Jain mythology

Then Lord Mahavir traveled from there to the town of Kaushambhi.

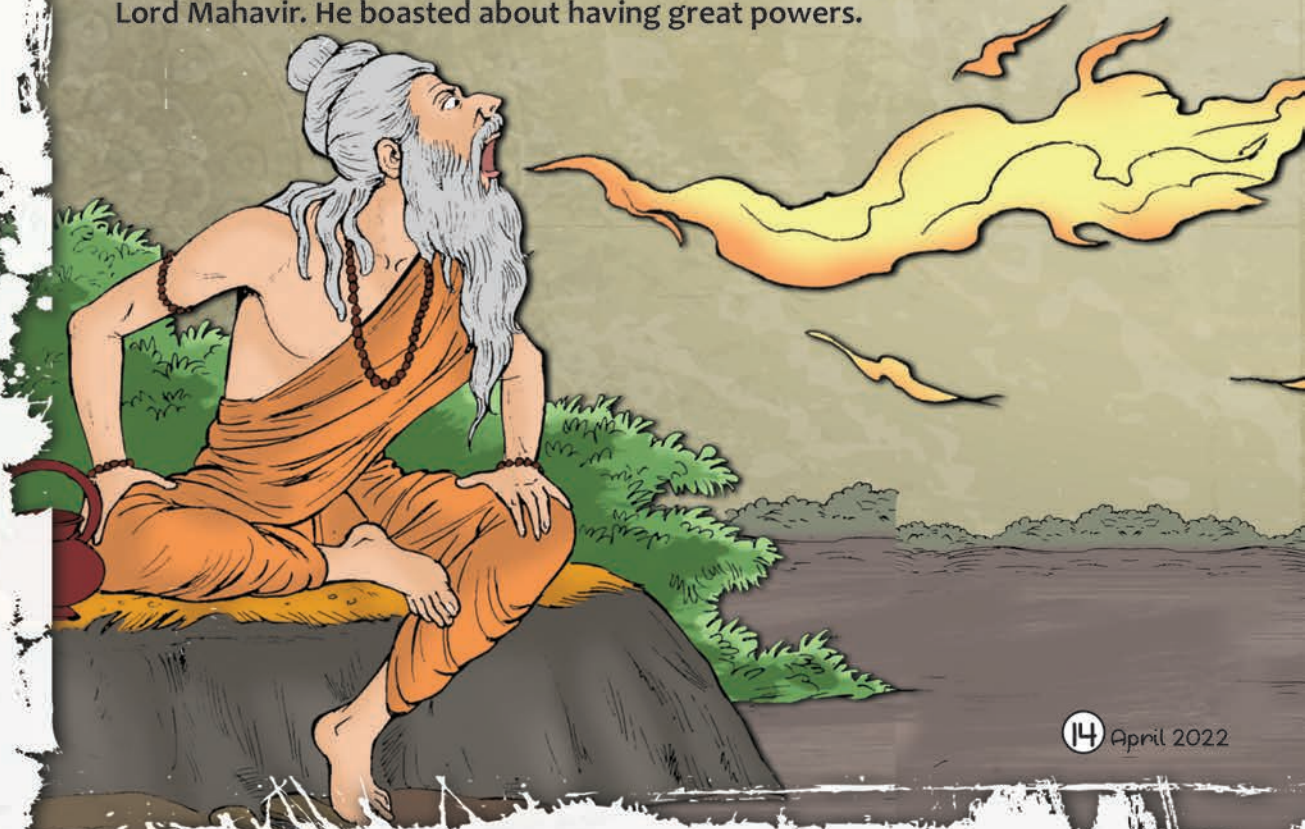
# Goshalak

One fine morning a young man came before Lord Mahavir and said, "I am Goshalak. I wish to become your disciple."

Goshalak did not receive a reply from Lord Mahavir but still he decided to stay with him. He had it in his heart that, "If not today then tomorrow, the Lord will surely accept me." Like a shadow, Goshalak followed Lord Mahavir everywhere.

One day Goshalak made fun of an ascetic. Angered by Goshalak's words, the ascetic threw a tejoleshya at Goshalak. Tejoleshya is fiery flame drawn from within the body and when thrown at someone that person burns to ashes. Goshalak ran to Mahavir in panic and fell at his feet. From the compassionate heart of Mahavir flowed a cool pacifying energy and when the glance of Mahavir fell on the fire, it subsided. He thus saved Goshalak from death. Seeing the power of tejoleshya, Goshalak resolved to learn the art of attaining it.

After gaining this power from the Lord, Goshalak started believing that he himself was Tirthankar. He separated from the Lord and started his own rival sect. He proclaimed to his disciples that he was the 24th Tirthankar and not Lord Mahavir. He boasted about having great powers.



One day, Lord Mahavir arrived in Shravasti Nagri, where Goshala was residing. Goshala came to Lord Mahavir's assembly and insulted him terribly. But Lord Mahavir remained calm. Goshalak spoke as bitterly as he possibly could and this provoked Lord Mahavir's disciples.

One disciple came up to him and said, "Oh Goshalak! Even when one has learnt from a Guru (spiritual teacher) or a Brahmin (the learned priest caste), he should respect them, but you are no other than the Lord Mahavir's disciple. You have learnt everything from him, so how can you be so disrespectful?"

Goshalak was furious upon hearing the disciple's words. He threw tejoleshya at the disciple and burnt him to death there and then. Another disciple was about to say something, but before he could, Goshalak burnt him as well!

Before anyone else went near Goshalak, Lord Mahavir went and stood in front of him. Goshalak saw in him his only rival. He took seven to eight steps back. Then he came forward and fixed his eyes on Lord Mahavir and ultimately cast tejoleshya at him. Immediately a burning ring of fire enveloped Lord Mahavir's body.

Goshalak laughed loudly. But the next moment he was surprised to see that instead of entering Lord Mahavir's body, the ring of fire was circling around him!

Before Goshalak could think further on why this strange thing was happening,



the ring of fire turned back on him and entered his body. In an instant the handsome Goshalak became ugly and his face turned black.

Lord Mahavir, embodiment of peace, stood there calmly.. He said, “Goshalak, once you had blind love for me. Today you have become blind with hatred. You want to kill me. Your enemy is not outside but the hatred and jealousy within you are your enemies. The fire of hatred and jealousy is worse than tejoleshya. Calm yourself. Go towards the salvation of the Self.”

Even towards the one who tried to inflict such terrible suffering, the Lord had only loving words. The only goal in the Lord’s mind was how to turn Goshalak towards salvation of the Self.

After seeing the Lord’s compassion, Goshalak felt great remorse for all the misdeeds he had done. He repented for his sins, confessed his faults and exposed his sins to all his devotees. He died after the seventh day while feeling heartfelt repentance.

Friends, Niruma used to say that if someone vomits on you, what would you do? Would you scold him, argue with him, or give him some water? The truth is that we would do what we could to help him feel better. In the same way, if someone insults us or says harsh words to us, those words are like vomit. At that time, instead of fighting with that person, we should pray that he calms down. That will keep us calm and the person's anger will also subside.





# SUMMER CAMP 2022



## SANSKAR SINCHAN SHIBIR - 2022 FOR KIDS AND YOUTH

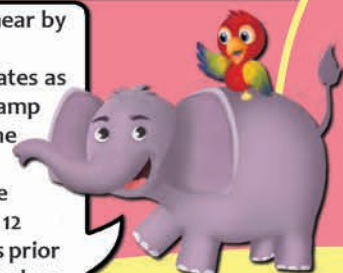


Center	Group - 8 to 12 Years		Group - 4 to 7 Years	
	Date	Contact Number	Date	Contact Number
Ahmedabad	21 March & 5 June & 6 June	9429442597	2 June & 3 June	8141377833
Ankleshwar	-	-	17 April	7984196369
Amreli	29 May	9714543551	-	-
Baroda	21,22 May	9428767383	15 May	9825018956
Bharuch	29 May	9662520998	-	-
Bhavnagar	21,22 May	9558860259	-	-
Bhuj	28,29 May	8200303866	31 May	9429297223
Dhoraji	15 May	9574046082	-	-
Gandhidham	29 April	9428310787	-	-
Jamnagar	15,16 May	9137710901	18 May	9924780877
Mahesana	15 May	9427375177	-	-
Morbi	29 April	9978633035	26 April	9725199144
Mumbai	Grant Road, Dadar, Parle, Borivali, Mira Road, Ghatkopar, Mulund, Vashi	9867989202	Borivali & Ghatkopar	9820508608
Nadiad	1 May	7984836769	-	-
Rajkot	1,2 May	8849265224	28 April	9979620315
Surat	30 April, 1 May	9574008498	5 May	9913141600
Surendranagar	14,15 May	9512672433	-	-
Simandhar City	6,7 May	079-35002154	3 May	079-35002154
Veraval	26 May	9712191887	-	-
Pune	July	7774079780	-	-

Note: 1. In order to attend the summer camp, it is mandatory to register at a near by centre. The registration charges are non-refundable.

2. The registration for the youth and kids will be done based on the pre-fixed dates as per their age and standard. The registration will be closed 7 days before the camp start date. Thereafter, additional tatkal charges will have to be paid for the registration.

3. Registration for attending the summer camp at Simandhar City will have to be done at 'Store Of Happiness' within the Trimandir Sankul between 10.00 AM to 12 noon and 4.00 PM to 7.00 PM in the evening. Registrations have to be done 5 days prior to the summer camp. The registration will starts from 1st April Contact Number - 079-35002154 096-34002948

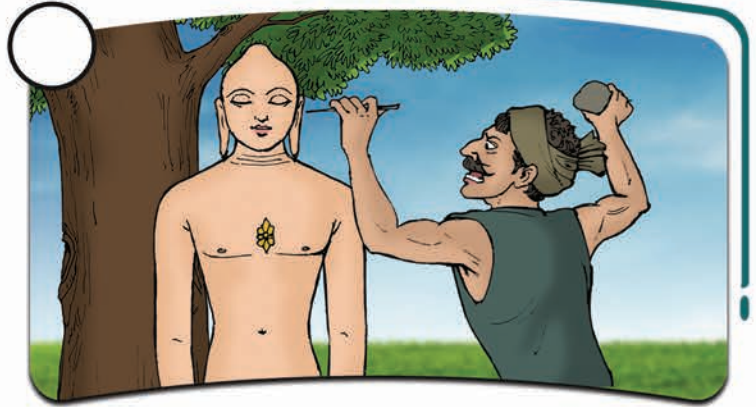


# Make A Story

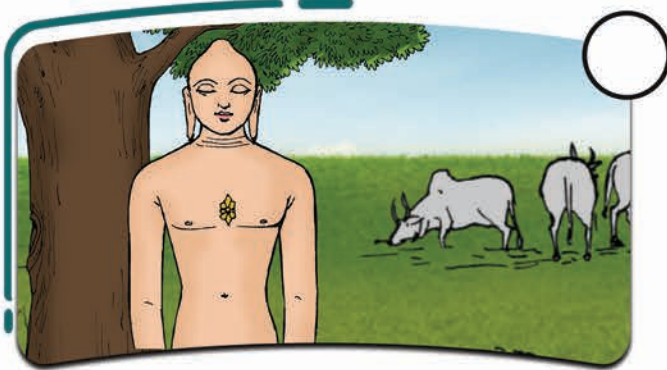
Arrange the story in the correct order. Cut the pages and make a booklet. Send the video of your booklet to whats app no - 9313665562 by 15th April 2022.

The first person to send will be the winner!

He took sharp wooden sticks and without hesitation, he drove them through Mahavir's ears.



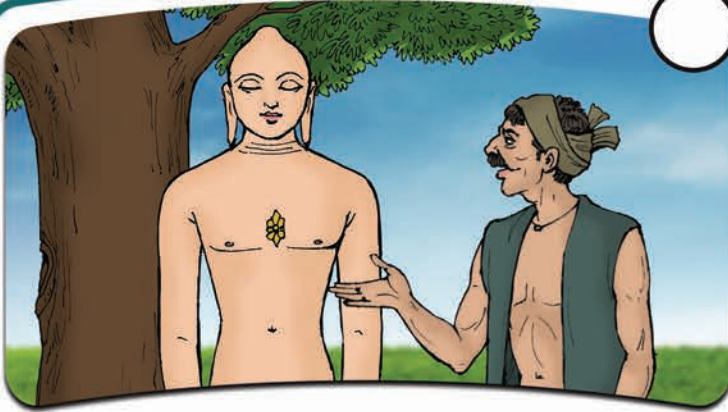
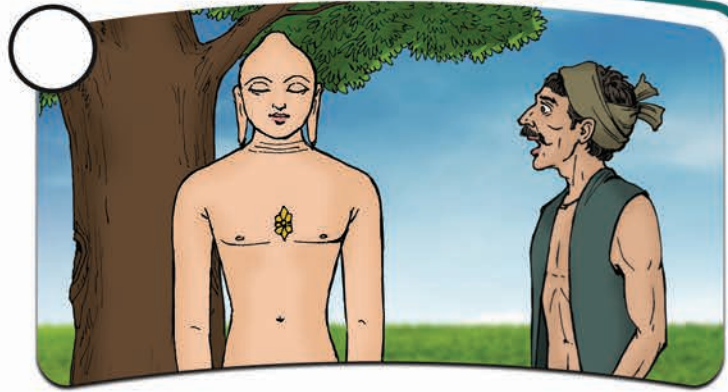
The cowherd left the cows there and went away. The cows wandered away while grazing.



O holy man, please look after my cows. I will be back soon.



Despite the unbearable pain, neither did Mahavir's meditation break nor did he have any hatred towards the cowherd.



On returning, the cowherd inquired about the cows.. Mahavir remained silent. The cowherd asked again. But Mahavir was engrossed in meditation. When the cowherd did not get a reply, he became enraged, "Imposter! Can't you hear? Wait, I have a remedy for that."

In a previous life, Mahavir was Tripushta Vasudev and the cowherd had been his attendant. Due to a minor mistake, Tripushta Vasudev had ordered boiling lead to be poured into the attendant's ears.



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Read Tripushta Vasudev's story here.

Akram Express

April 2022  
Year :19, Issue : 9  
Conti. Issue No.: 151



Date of Publication 8th of every month  
RNI No. GUJENG/2009/35410  
Reg. No. G-GNR-278  
valid upto 31.12.2022  
Licensed to Post without  
Pre-payment No. PMG/HQ/103/2020-2022  
valid upto 31.12.2022  
Posted at Adalaj Post Office on 8th of every month

## Genius kids who won last month's poem puzzle.



Answer : MAHAVIR - The Hero of Heroes!



Name - Aditri Shrivastava  
City - Bhopal, MP



Name - Nira Prajapati  
City - mehsana



Name - Mansi Jesani  
City - Amreli



Name - Vanshika  
City - Ludhiana, Punjab



Name - Ansh vishavadiya  
City: Rajkot



Name - jinal Dabhi  
City - Surendranagar



Name - Bhavya Sakhiya  
City - Rajkot



Name - Shlok Patel  
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Publisher, Printer & Editor - Dimple Mehta on behalf of Mahavideh Foundation  
Printed at Amba offset :- B-99 GIDC, Sector - 25, Gandhinagar - 382025