

BalVignan Presents

Dada Bhagwan

Part-1



Foreword

Dada Bhagwan was an outstanding atma-gnani of the modern age. Since childhood, he was interested in realising the soul and the ultimate truth. He used the scientific approach of analyzing the events of daily life, breaking free from rigid wrong beliefs and emphasizing on true understanding. In this way, he moulded his life in a very unique fashion. Many episodes from his childhood give voice to this 'inquisitive' urge in him.

His life's episodes can become a beautiful way of showing the direction and encouraging everyone to find the true goal of life and also in finding a way out of unhappiness and life's problems. This book will give a hearty introduction to several such inspiring episodes of his life.

An attempt has been made to present the episodes from Dada Bhagwan's life in a pictorial manner in a way that's as close to his own narration of his life as possible. If you find any mistake in the book's pictures or text, it's due to compiling inefficiencies. We apologise for any such inadvertent mistakes.

Jai Sachidanand

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Dada Bhagwan

Part-1



Ambalal Patel,
popularly known as
"Dada Bhagwan"
was born on
November 7, 1908
at his maternal home
in Tarsali village
near Vadodara.

His father Muljibhai Patel and mother Jhaverba were residents of Bhadran village located in the Charotar region of Gujarat. They had outstanding personalities in terms of their familial, social and religious values.



Bhadran village was quite tiny, with a population of about 7000 people. Amongst its residents, no one could be compared with Jhaverba as far as character and values were concerned. She was a kind and benevolent^{*} person with high thinking.

* benevolent : charitable

Jhaverba had vowed to Goddess Amba Ma not to have any ghee and after about eight years a son was born. So she named him Ambalal, meaning 'son of Amba Ma'!



As a child Ambalal was very sweet and attractive. While he was a very clever and brave, he also had a naughty streak in him. Due to his marigold-like fresh and cherubic* face, Puniba, a neighbour, nicknamed him 'Galgotia.' People in the village would call him 'Gala' lovingly.

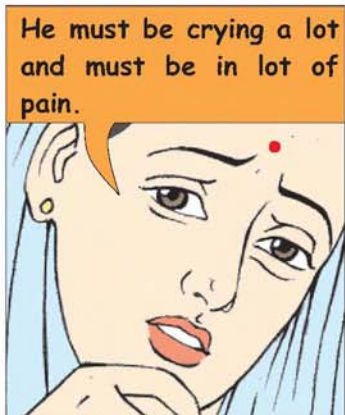
Ambalal was lucky to get warmth and closeness from his mother as a child. When he was quite young, if Jhaverba had to go away somewhere, she would leave her soft saree for him to hold. Ambalal would feel that his mother was right next to him!



When children grow up with close bonds with their mother, they learn some of the most valuable lessons of their lives. Jhaverba instilled great values in Ambalal and build a good moral character. If good care is taken the plant will blossom well too !

*cherubic: divine

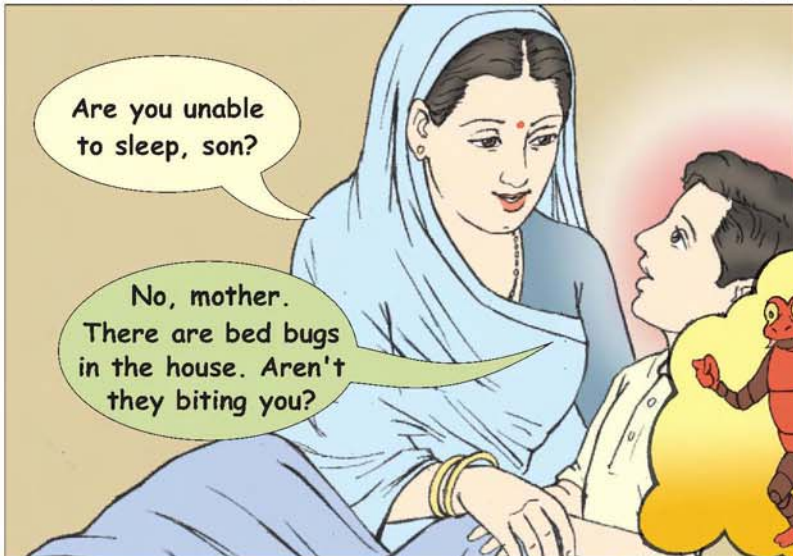
One evening, Ambalal returned home after playing with his friends.



Wouldn't imparting such high values from the mother make the child a Mahavir*

* Mahavir : Lord Mahavir, 24th Jain Tirthankar.

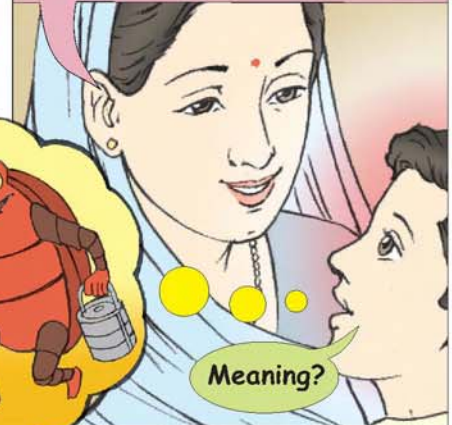
One night, Ambalal was unable to sleep due to bed bugs biting him. He sat up in his bed.



Are you unable to sleep, son?

No, mother. There are bed bugs in the house. Aren't they biting you?

Of course they are biting me. But, bugs don't come with a tiffin for food.



Meaning?



Bed bugs don't go around begging with a bowl asking for alms: "I am hungry, give me something to eat."

Yes, but they bite and suck blood.



They just have their share of food and go away. Should we kill them for that?

No, mother! Even if they suck my blood, I will not kill them from now on.

"No living being in this entire world should ever be hurt by me" such a value was instilled in Ambalal's heart. In this way, Ambalal learnt the lesson of non-violence at an early age from his mother.

Once, Jhaverba had to go out of town for some work. A neighbour cooked food for Ambalal.



He went to the kitchen; but obviously, he did not know anything about cooking at that young age. He took out utensils, opened boxes and enthusiastically started off on his little mission, but didn't get far. He only ended up making a mess.

The next day when Jhaverba returned, she found the kitchen looking topsy-turvy. But, instead of getting angry at her son, she lovingly placed her hand on his head.



What outstanding qualities as a mother Jhaverba possessed! She never scolded or took out her anger on Ambalal. Instead with positive attitude helped him reconcile his doubts and misgivings with love.

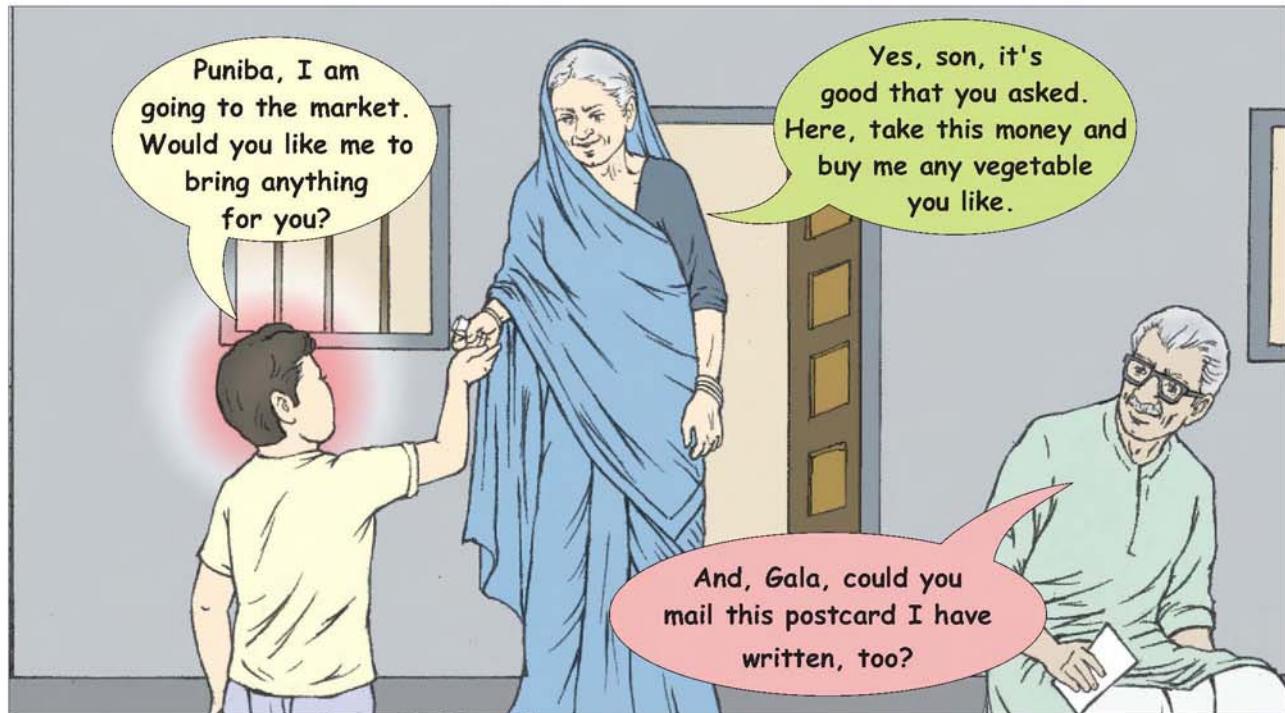
Since childhood, Ambalal had a friendly and obliging nature. His mother's obliging nature and noble character were visible in his personality from a young age. He enjoyed helping people out by running errands for them.



The market's about four furlong* away, rather than walking so much and bringing back only a couple of things, let me ask the neighbours if they also need anything from the market. That way, they don't have to go and their work will also be done.

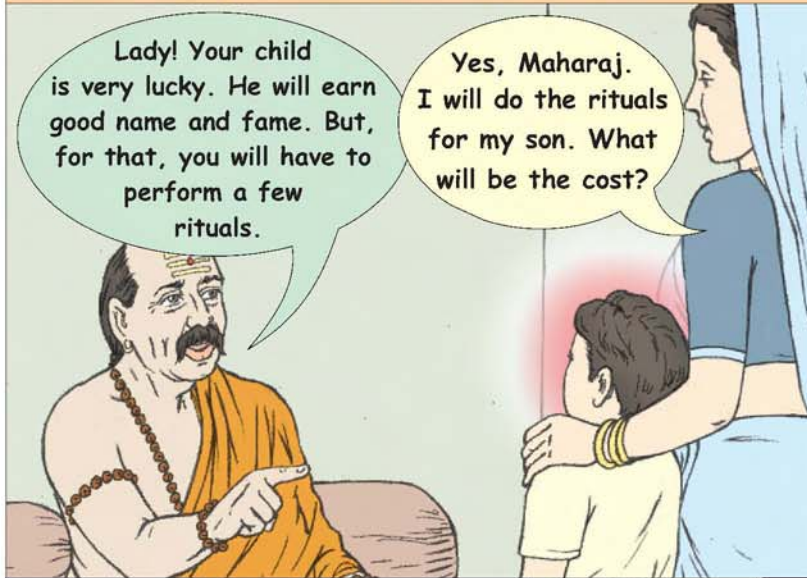


* Four furlong: Half a mile



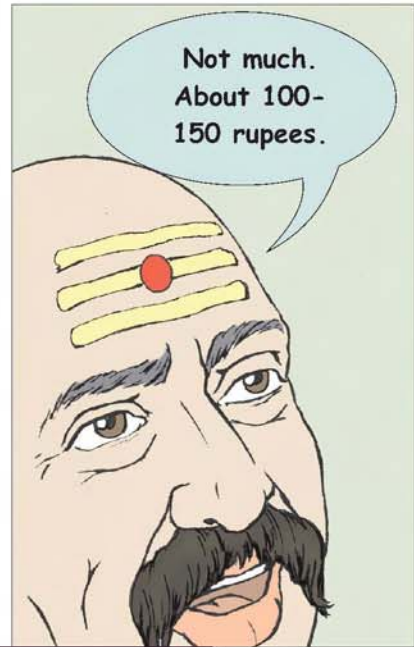
Helping people by doing their work gave Ambalal great pleasure. "Whoever meets me, should gain some happiness. Otherwise, such a meeting is useless." Since childhood he believed in giving happiness to everyone.

One day, an astrologer visited their home.



Lady! Your child is very lucky. He will earn good name and fame. But, for that, you will have to perform a few rituals.

Yes, Maharaj. I will do the rituals for my son. What will be the cost?



Not much. About 100-150 rupees.

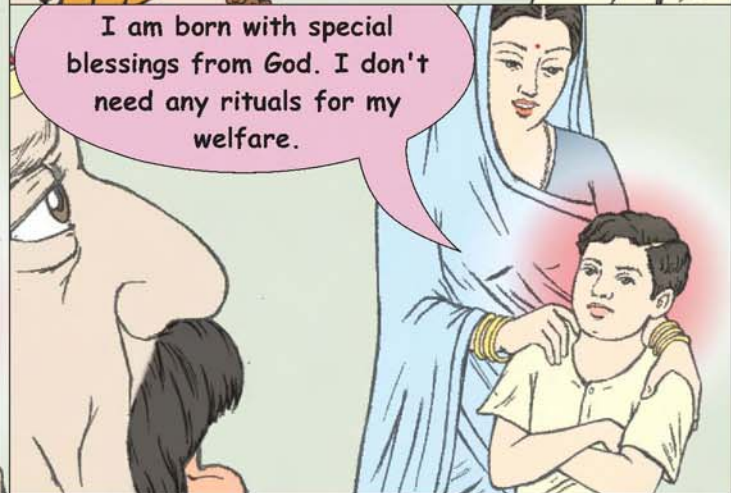
100 rupees in those years would mean 1000 rupees today! But due to the previous birth development, Ambalal was wise even as a child.



Rituals will do your welfare, child.



No, mother, we don't need to perform any rituals.



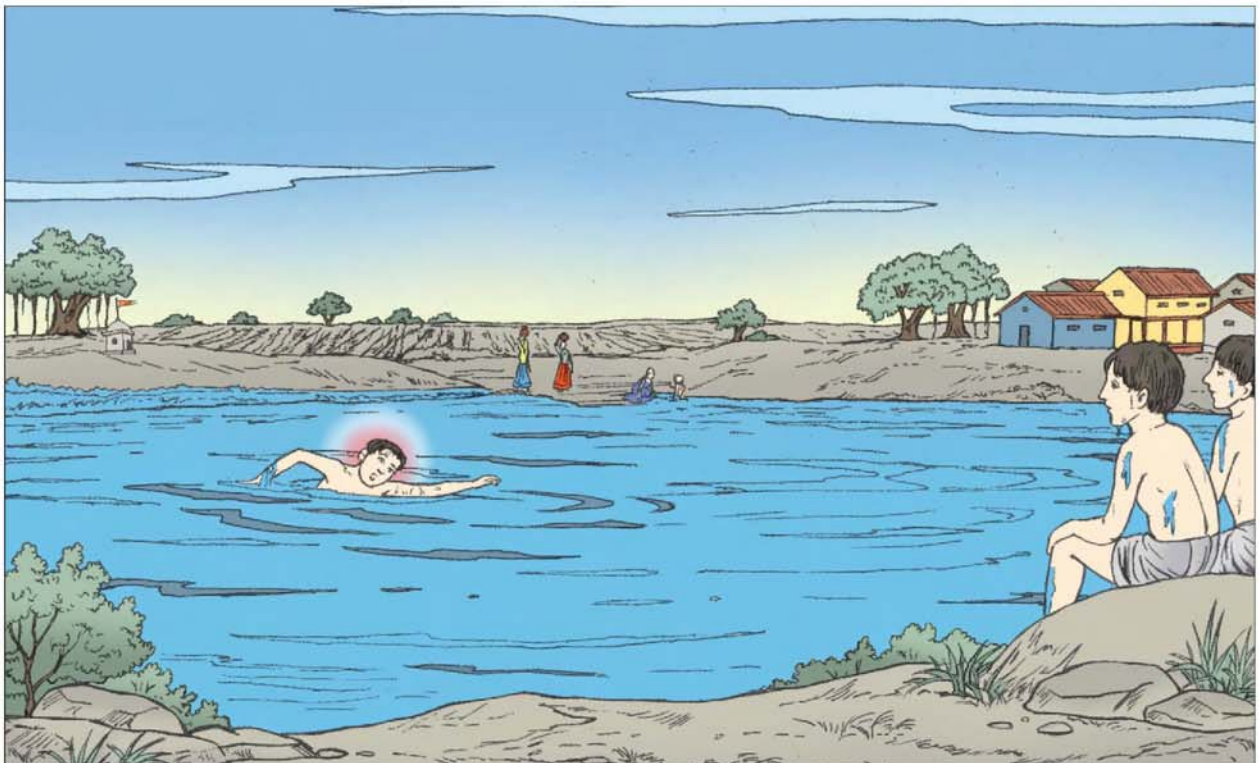
I am born with special blessings from God. I don't need any rituals for my welfare.

"I have come with my own destiny and nothing or no one can change it" - Ambalal had this deep understanding since childhood.

Ambalal was quite playful as a child. He would often jump over the wall of his backyard and run off to the village pond. He would get on the buffaloes bathing in the pond and have a fun ride imagining that he was riding an elephant!



He had a robust and strong body as a child. He often swam across the village pond while playing with his friends.



Ambalal would often play the 'chalkstick-game' with his friends. The game involved throwing chalksticks from a distance into a box. All his friends would aim meticulously, but the chalksticks would fall into the box only three-four times. During the rest of the attempts, they would just bounce out.



Ambalal, on the other hand, would throw the chalksticks without even taking aim. Yet, about five would easily land inside the box.



If we try to be the 'doer,' none of the chalksticks actually land inside the box. I don't know how to aim, but the chalksticks still land inside the box. That means that the real 'doer' is somebody else.

He realised that the 'doer' in this world is a force other than the self.

Once, Ambalal asked his father for 25 paise. But, his father refused to give it to him.

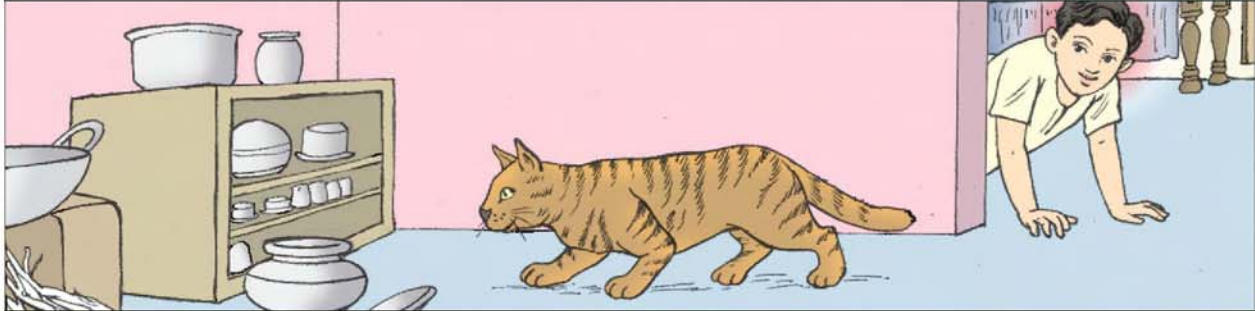


But, since childhood, he had always been very self-reliant. He liked solving his problems himself.



Such an independent spirit was visible in his personality since childhood.

Ambalal had a mischievous side to him, but at the same time had a knack for insightful observation. Once, a cat slipped into the kitchen. Ambalal wanted to have some fun, so he opened up a pot of curd and set it down on the floor. Then, he hid behind a wall to watch the fun.



Smelling the curd, the cat went straight to the pot and put its head into it. It tried to reach the curd at the bottom of the pot, but only ended up getting its head stuck in the pot. Now, it could not get the pot off its head!



See, what a problem you have created for yourself! Stand still, I will take your head out of the pot.



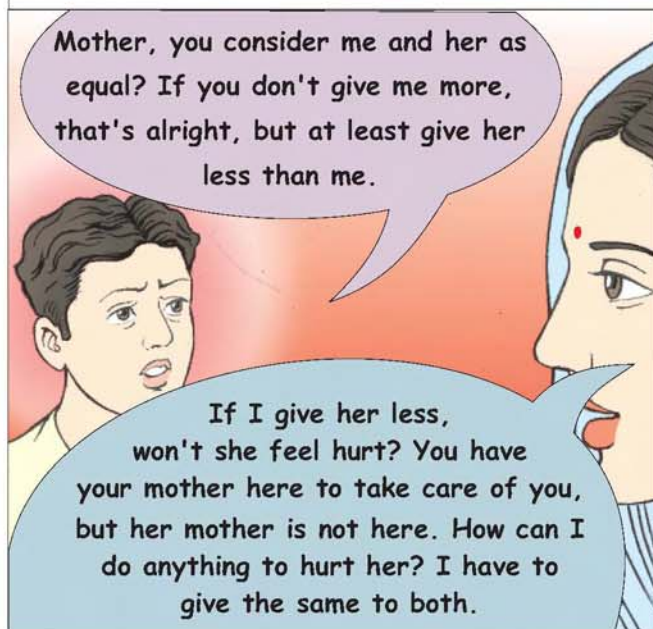
Ah...one has to pay so dearly for one's greed! Even after having gone through so much trouble, the cat will forget everything. The next time it sees a vessel full of milk or curd; it will repeat the same mistake, get trapped in the circle of greed and endure pain.



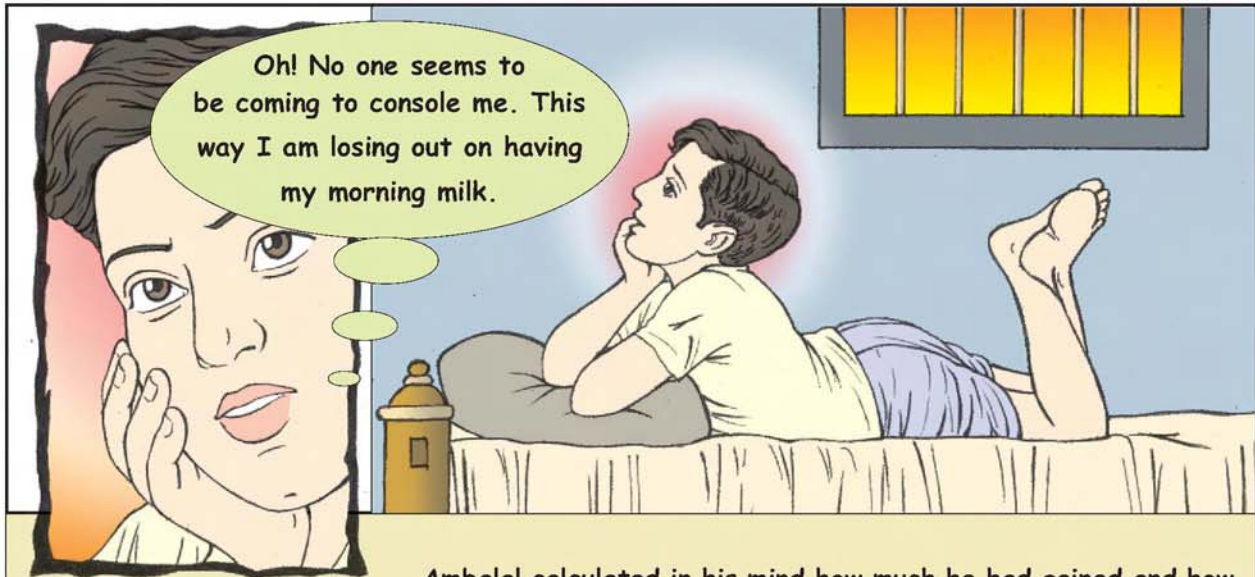
Aren't human beings also just as foolish? Even after having learnt a lesson, they forget the unhappiness they went through the previous time and again turn greedy and make the same mistake. But I can never forget the trouble I have gone through once and the bitter experiences I have had. I constantly remain alert not to be trapped again.



Ambalal's elder brother's name was Manibhai. He was older than Ambalal by quite a few years. So, when Manibhai got married, Ambalal was still quite young. His sister-in-law was also very young, like a little girl. But, Ambalal wanted to establish his importance in the house. One morning, he decided to be unusually stubborn while having milk.



Ambalal went off to his room without having any milk. But, Jhaverba did not go after him to console him. So, in a very short while, he began to feel anxious.



Ambalal calculated in his mind how much he had gained and how much he had lost by sulking*. Sitting in his room all alone the entire day meant that he lost not just the milk, but also laughing and talking with everyone, playing, going to school, everything! Ambalal realised his mistake - "Sulking is a loss to me." After that day, he never sulked again.

What wisdom Jhaverba must possess to be able to consider both her son and her daughter-in-law as equal! Finding a more noble and cultured woman than her would be impossible! When she would walk down the street in her neighbourhood, everyone would come out of their houses out of respect to wish her 'Jai Shree Krishna'. Her radiance could turn any unhappy person into a happy one. Everyone called her 'Devi' respectfully.



Ambalal observed that people were respectful towards his mother due to her high values and noble character. He decided that he too would grow up to be as noble as her.

* sulking - acting displeased

When he turned seven, Ambalal began going to school. He studied for the first four years in a Gujarati medium school and the next seven years in an English medium school.



He was a very intelligent child. He would understand everything in a jiffy even when the teacher explained the lesson only once and would remember it well also. But along with the cleverness was the mischievous streak in him. So, teachers used to be a little scared of him.

He liked showing off, so he would deliberately reach school late. He would reach his class leisurely after the bell had rung, all the children had taken their seats and even the teacher had entered the class!



After growing up, Ambalal said, "It was only after I became aware of the ego and stubbornness behind my tendency to show off that I was able to cleanse my inner self."

Ambalal would often go to nearby fields and orchards with his friends and eat the mangoes and guavas growing there.



All his friends would not only pick enough to eat for themselves, but would also carry some back home. Ambalal would never carry any fruits home. Since childhood, he was not greedy.

Once, when Ambalal was nine, his grandmother was about to leave for Africa.

Hey Gala, come, why don't you accompany me to Africa?



No, grandma, I don't want to come.

Oh, come on! You will enjoy studying there and also get to experience new things.



No, no. I wouldn't like to leave this country and go anywhere else. So, if you force me to go, I will run away and become a monk.

Ambalal created such a melodramatic scene that everyone gave up the idea of sending him to Africa. Importance of Indian soil was undoubtedly there in his heart, from very young age.

Once when Ambalal was 10 years old, his father was sleeping soundly in the courtyard outside their house. Jhaverba and Ambalal were also preparing to sleep, when suddenly...



Jhaverba happened to turn and look at Muljibhai's bed. A five-foot long snake was sitting in the bed right next to Muljibhai. Jhaverba remained calm and composed. After some time, the snake crossed over Muljibhai's body and slithered away.



Jhaverba woke Muljibhai up and told him what had just happened. Ambalal had been watching all this.



Ambalal was greatly impressed by his mother's composure and patience. This way, he learnt how to face life's difficulties with a balanced mind.

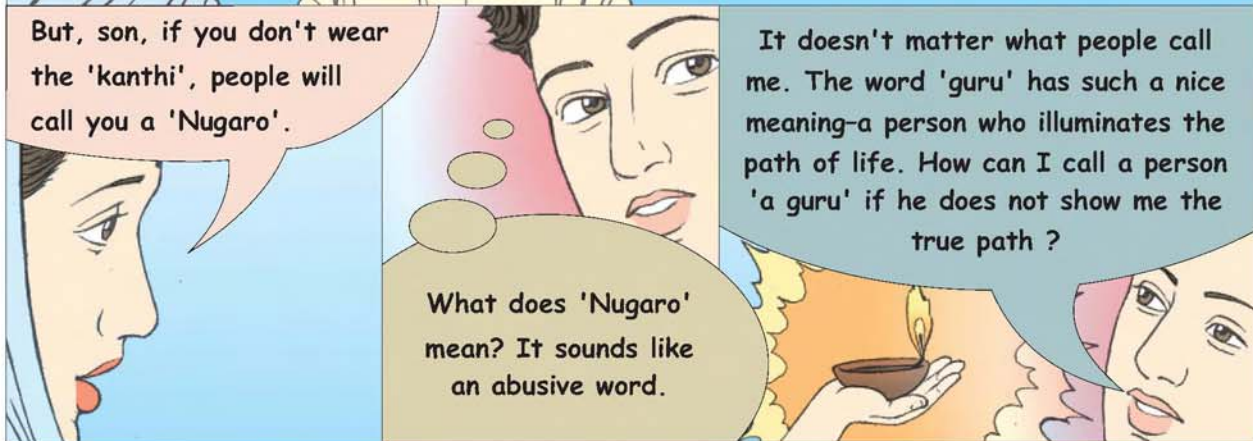
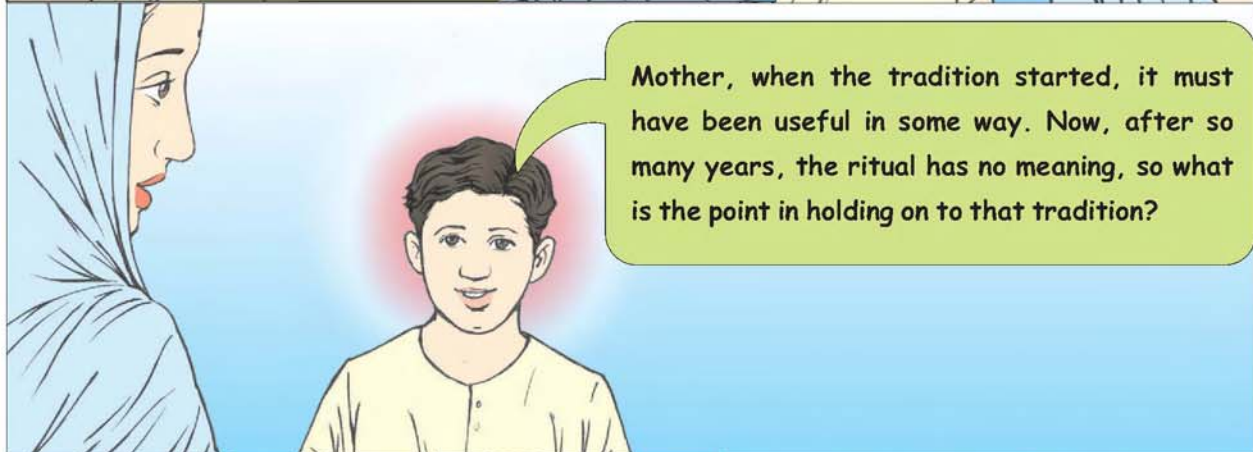
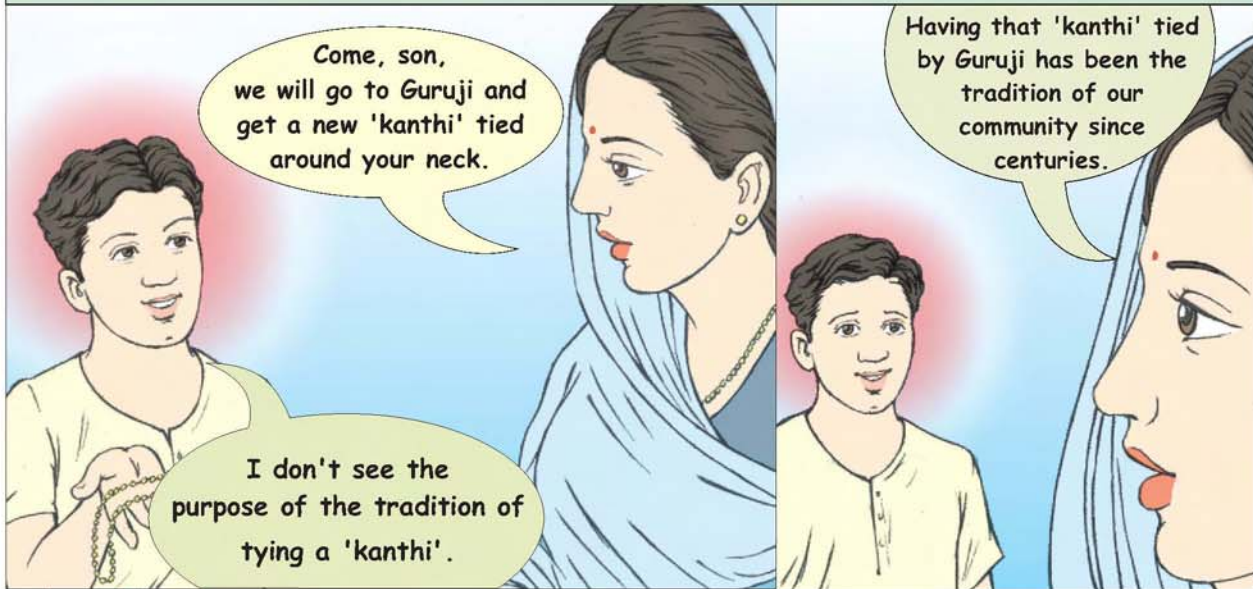
When Ambalal was eleven years old, a paternal brother of his family died. The departed's brothers began to wail away loudly, crying, 'Oh, my brother!' Seeing this, Ambalal's heart melted and tears rolled down his eyes. All the women with their faces veiled by sarees were beating their chests. He was touched so much by this scene.



Oh gosh! I thought what I was seeing before my eyes was the truth; but, this turned out to be just a drama. These people aren't really in grief. How hypocritical this world is! This is all worldly. If I follow this worldly path I will get trapped. It's not worth following people blindly. I would rather walk on the untrodden path.

Even as a child, Ambalal never gave importance to people's opinions. He never found happiness in the worldly things that most people found pleasure in.

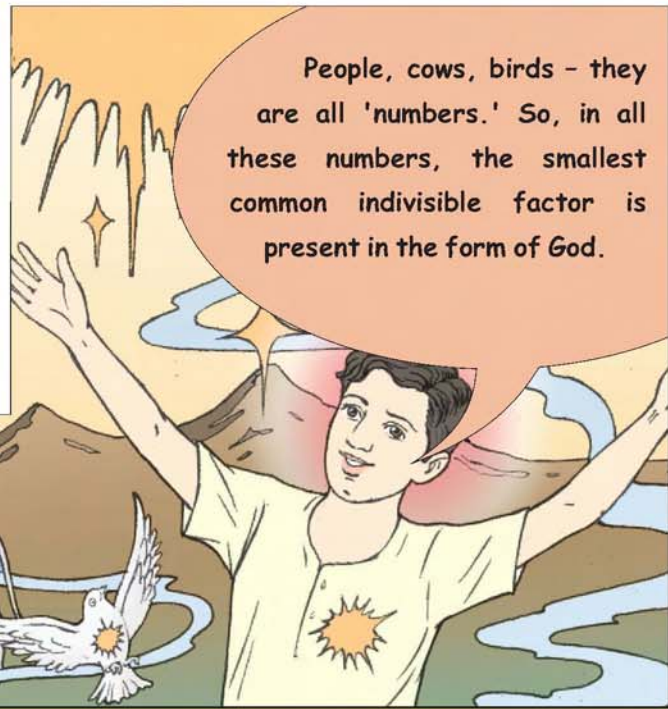
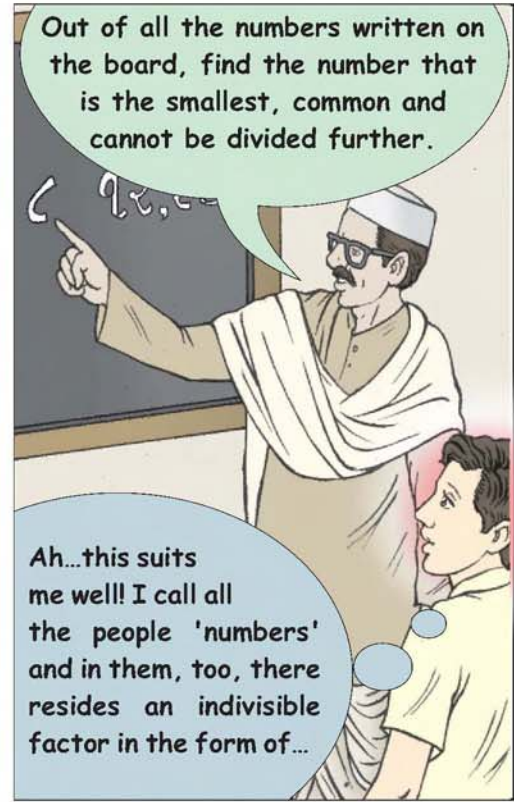
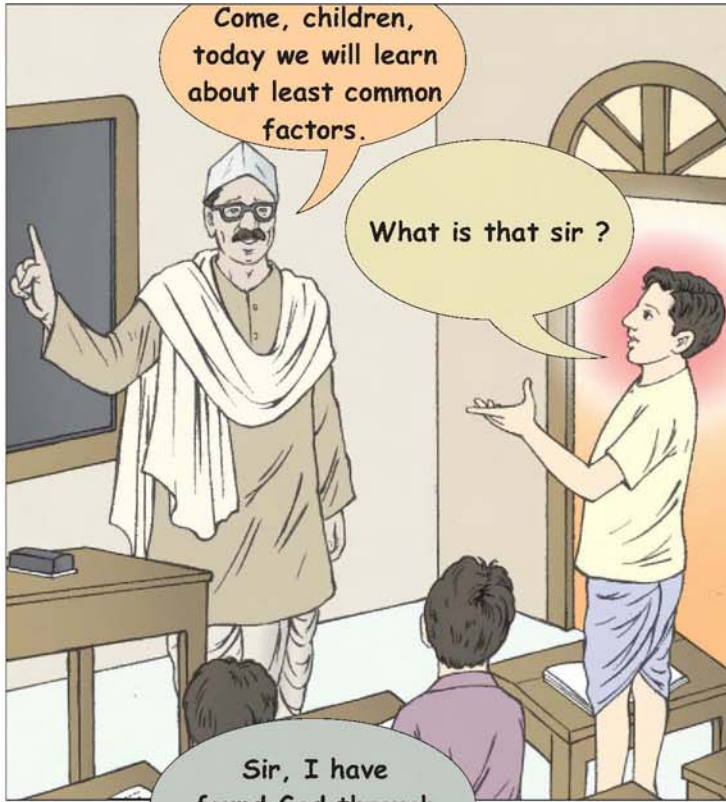
When Ambalal was twelve years old, the 'kanthi'* he had worn since childhood broke.



The word 'Na-guru' - a person without a guru - had been changed by people to 'Nugaro'. Ambalal understood this only when he grew older. But as a person in search of truth, he was not worried about people's opinions.

* Kanthi : A holy bead necklace.

Once, when Ambalal was in the seventh standard, the teacher was teaching maths in the class.



Ambalal's insights were so incredible that he could find God in all living beings!

There was an Ashram* near Ambalal's school. After school hours, Ambalal would often go to the Ashram to serve the saint and seek his blessings. He would sit beside the saint there and massage his legs. The saint was happy with him. One day, the saint told him...



Child,
God will grant you
salvation.

Maharaj,
I am not able to
accept that.

Right now you are
a child. Slowly, you will
understand this.

When God grants me salvation, he will give me a nice seat. Then, when God's friends come, He will tell me to get up from there. If there's someone to say 'get up' even after attaining salvation, then I don't want such salvation.

Get up from
here.

Even at the age of thirteen, Ambalal had a very independent spirit. He didn't want anyone over him nor did he want to boss over others. Only such a salvation would suit him where even God was not above him. At the time he envisioned such an idea, he didn't know that this really was what salvation was all about. Our own mistakes rule over us. If we are able to break free from those mistakes, we will not have anyone to boss over us. Later on, as a gnani, he placed forth this beautiful definition of salvation to the world.

* Ashram-abode of saint

Since childhood, Ambalal's thoughts and actions were different from those of others. Usually, people try to keep their superiors happy and bully their subordinates. But, Ambalal would revolt against the bullying of the superiors and try to protect the subordinates. Even if he saw someone fighting on the street, he would take the side of the person who had lost the fight or was beaten up, and try to protect him. The qualities of a 'Kshatriya'* were present in him in plenty!

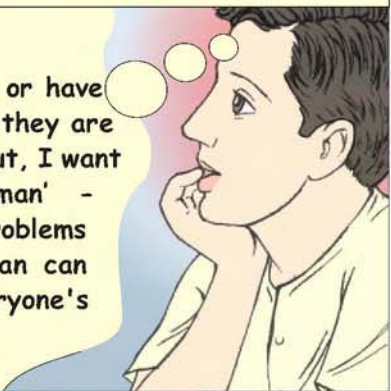


He would clearly state that till we like to keep subordinates then we will find superiors who will try to make us subordinate.

At the age of thirteen, Ambalal thought of being 'super human'.



Generally, people are so helpless or have so many problems that they are unable to help others. But, I want to become 'super human' - someone who has no problems whatsoever. Only such man can help others and solve everyone's problems.



As a firm believer in the spirit of independence, Ambalal did not like the idea of taking up a job. He was ready to live thriftily, if he made less money in business, but the dependence of working under somebody was not acceptable to him. That's why after completing school; he joined his elder brother in his business.



*Kshatriya- warrior sect who protect others

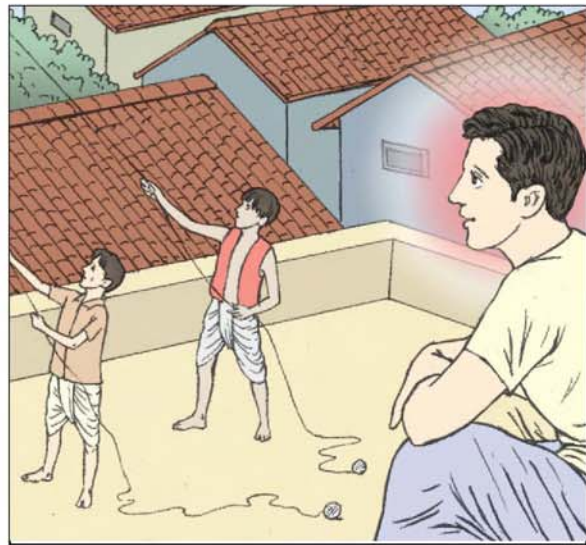
Once, Ambalal's household servant had gone away for 12-15 days and his elder brother told everybody to make their own beds and fold away mattresses themselves everyday. Ambalal also had to make his bed himself.



Why do I have to carry this mattress every day? It's so heavy! When I carry it, it's almost as if the mattress is sleeping on me! Do I have to sleep on the mattress or does the mattress have to sleep on me? What's the point of using such mattress?



After learning this new lesson, Ambalal stopped sleeping on a mattress. There after, he slept on a simple mat.



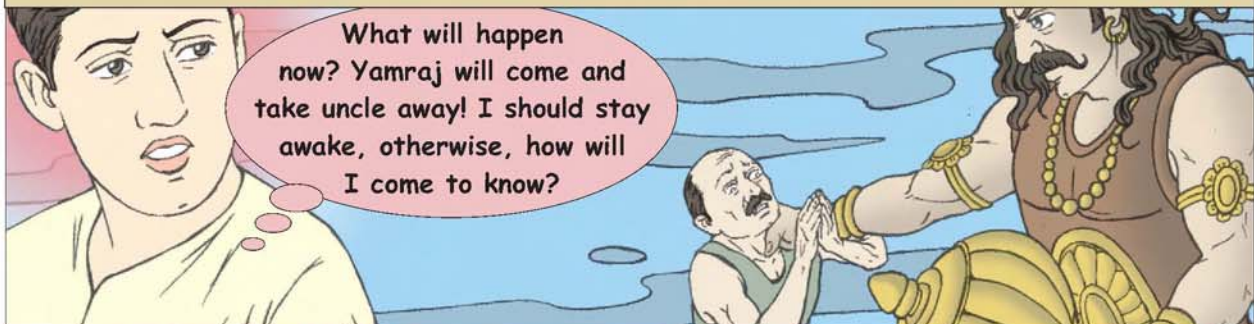
As a child, Ambalal never participated in bursting fireworks during Diwali. Even when his friends would fly kites, he would sit on the side watching them, but did not feel like joining them. So, since childhood, he never enjoyed buying and using too many things.

When Ambalal was 13 years old, an elderly person living in his neighbourhood fell very ill. People from the neighbourhood would take turns in spending nights with the sick man to serve him. One Sunday, Ambalal offered to serve him. At 10:30 pm, Ambalal gave him some medicine and tucked him into bed. But around 11:00 pm, a dog in the street began to howl. Ambalal immediately got up, worried.

Oh
gosh!
Why is this dog
howling today? This
means that 'Yamraj'*
will come and take uncle



Ambalal had heard about this belief from his relatives and had started believing in it quite strongly that if a dog howls when somebody is ill, then, Yamraj comes to take him away. He had also heard scary descriptions of 'Yamraj,' so he was quite frightened.



What will happen
now? Yamraj will come and
take uncle away! I should stay
awake, otherwise, how will
I come to know?

Worrying that Yamraj would come any moment, Ambalal was unable to sleep. But, Yamraj didn't turn up. The elderly uncle slept on soundly. At last, at almost dawn, Ambalal fell asleep. When he woke up with a start, he found that uncle was still sleeping soundly. In the morning, a neighbour came to take over the duties from him.

I just found out that the
belief about Yamraj is just
to frighten people.



In the night, a dog was howling
a lot, but Yamraj did not come
to take away uncle. If Yamraj
doesn't really exist, then
what could it be?

Why do you
say so?

Ambalal derived that there is no
Yamraj but only Niyamraj (Law of
nature). People have changed the word
'Niyamraj' into 'Yamraj'

This was just the beginning to erase superstitions, wrong beliefs and ignorance with correct understanding.

* Yamraj : Deity of death as per Hindu scriptures

When Ambalal was 17-18 years old, he went to the circus with his friend. They bought two lottery tickets worth 25 paise each. When the winners were declared, his name was the first. He had won a Japanese bicycle worth 21.50 rupees!



Hey, Gala, we need to buy a bicycle for my cousin. Why don't you give this bicycle you have won? We don't have to buy a new one for him that way!

Sure! You can take it with you!

Who would give away their possessions so easily without even a second's thought? Such nobility is almost impossible to find anywhere!

Once he had gone to a near by city with his friends. All his friends decided to hire horse carts and go to a theatre to watch a play. In those days, drama tickets would cost a rupee.



Once they reached the theatre, everyone stood waiting to see who would shell out the money for the tickets. Ambalal had 15 rupees in his pocket.



It looks ignoble to be standing around waiting for someone to shell out money. What's more important—money or the self-respect?



Ambalal bought tickets for everyone. But, then he reflected, "I will have to give account of 15 rupees to brother and in the process may even have to lie. Somehow I will solve this issue, but the deal certainly turned out to be costly. I did it to satisfy my ego, but henceforth, I would never go to the theatre."

Ambalal had one admirable characteristic that he would not repeat a mistake, once he realised it.



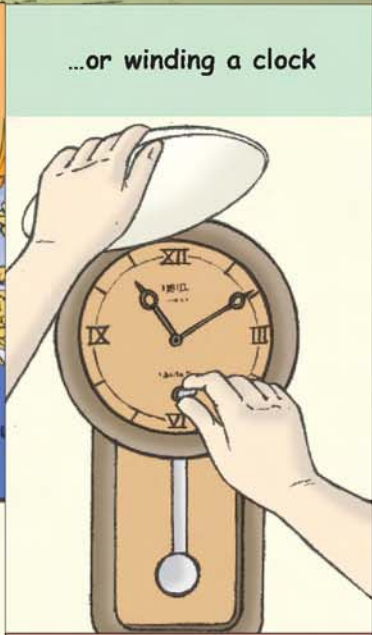
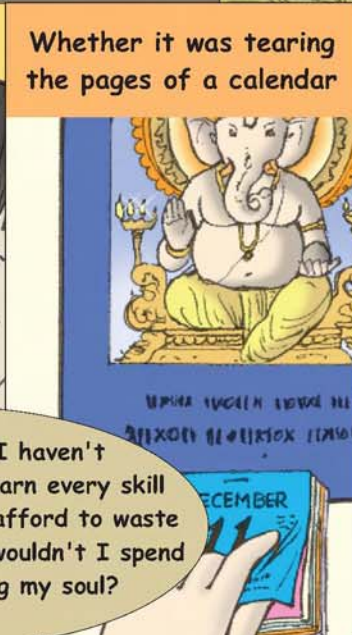
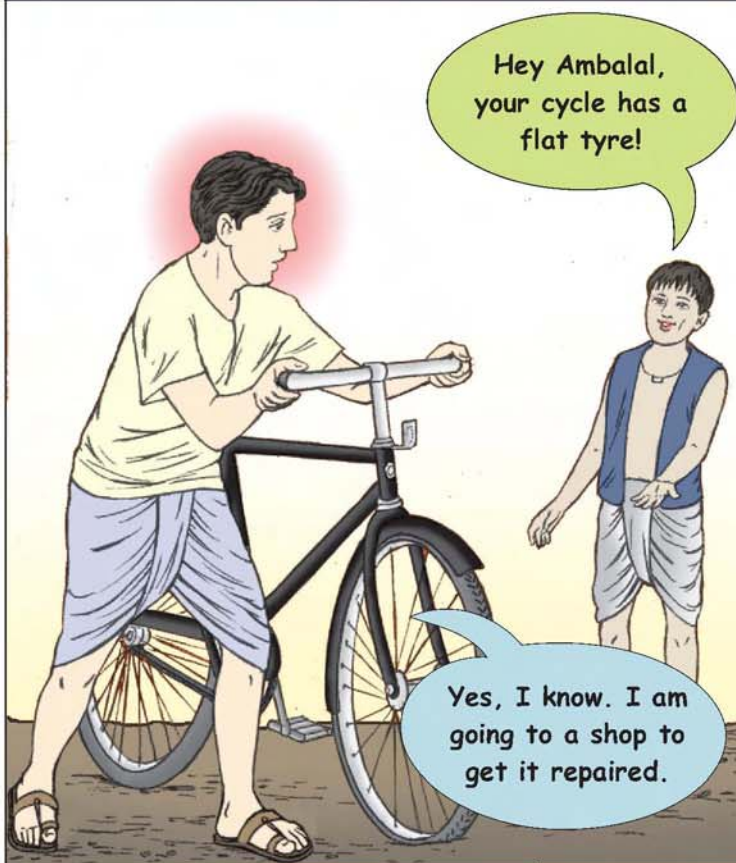
Once, Ambalal bought a second-hand watch from his friend. But, from then on, he would keep getting anxious every time he looked at the watch thinking, 'Oh gosh! I am late! Now what?'



Then, one night, he fell asleep with his head on his arm. The watch on his wrist kept ticking away right into his ear. So, the next day, he decided to get rid of it. Why create an attachment for something that gives you so much pain?



Ambalal would often go bicycle riding. He owned a Rally company bicycle worth 52 rupees.



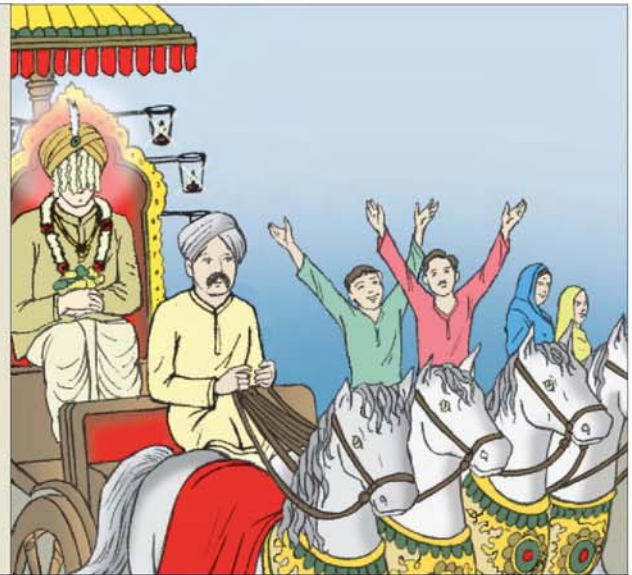
Since childhood, Ambalal was aware that life's biggest goal is realising the soul.

...he preferred not to waste his time in such trivial work.



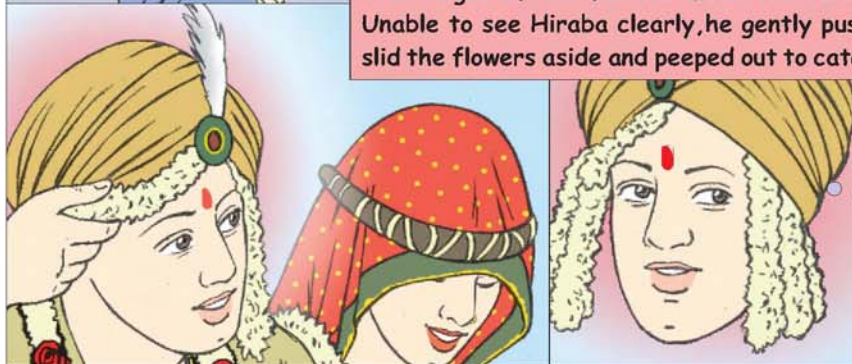
Ambalal had imagined marrying a woman who was noble, beautiful and less-educated. He hoped she wasn't the nagging kind and would listen to him. Hiraba turned out to match his image of a wife completely.

In those days, people were married off at a young age. Ambalal had seen Hiraba only once before marriage and had given his consent to his parents. His wedding took place with a lot of pomp and show. He rode on a chariot drawn by four horses and as a member of the Kshatriya community, even adorned a majestic turban on his head.



His mother-in-law liked Ambalal so much that during the welcoming ritual she picked him up in her arms with joy.

The bridegroom sat down on the wedding dais and the bride Hiraba was brought in by her mama*. Ambalal's face was covered with veil of flowers. The weight of the flowers made the turban slip down and cover his eyes. Unable to see Hiraba clearly, he gently pushed the turban back in place and slid the flowers aside and peeped out to catch a glimpse of her.



She looks pretty! Today, we get married and become one as husband and wife, but one of us will have to accept widowhood someday.

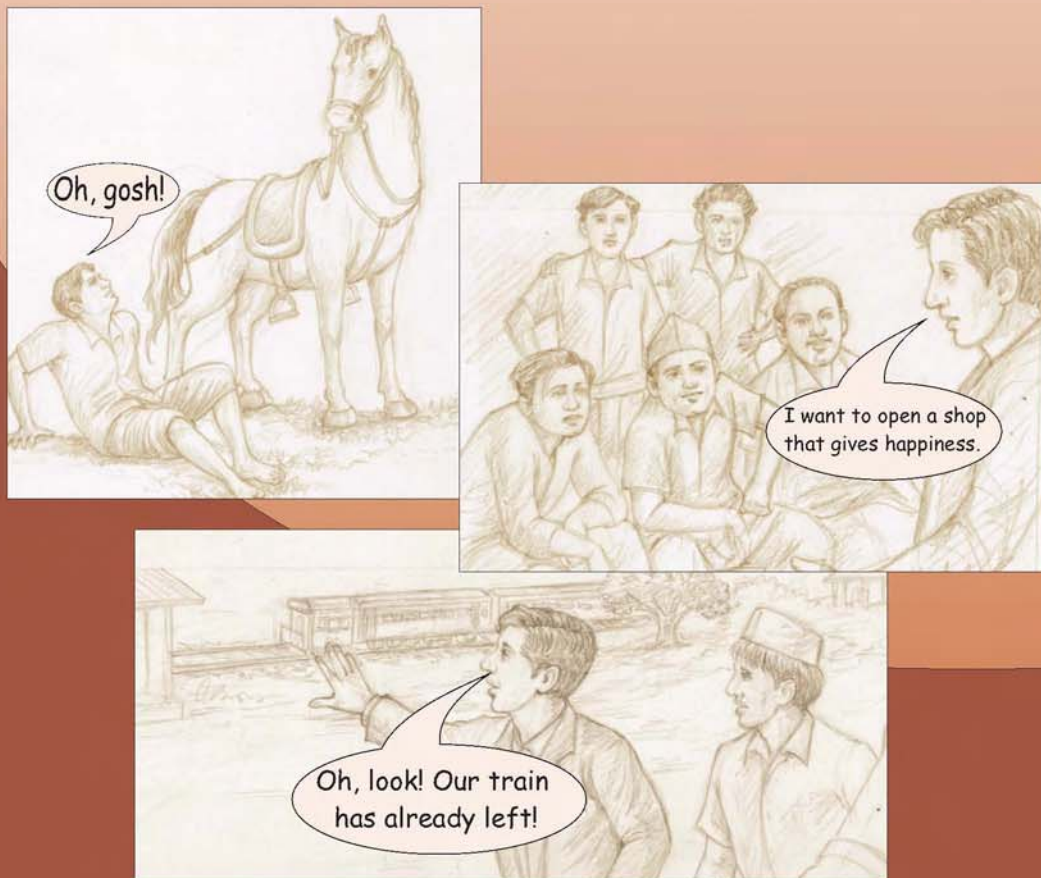
Only a rarest of rare can think of widowhood at such a young age, especially when he is in the middle of his own wedding and expected to be intoxicated in new-found desires and attachments. Even at that time, what an indifferent and detached attitude he possessed!

* mama : maternal uncle.

As Ambalal steps into a new phase of life after marriage, his childhood stands out as a unique one. The thirst to understand God and to realise the soul was visible in all his thoughts and behaviour.

Wouldn't you be interested in finding out how Ambalal Muljibhai Patel spent his married life while devoting all his energies in the search of God and finally presenting the world with his 'Akram Vignan' – a scientific methodology of realising the soul?

You can read about more episodes from his life in Dada Bhagwan Part-2...

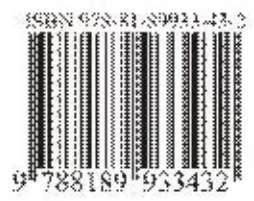


★ Jay Sachhidansnd ★



Dada Bhagwan was an outstanding Atma - Gnani (self realised) person of the modern age. Since childhood, instead of getting carried away by the common man's blind beliefs and superstitions, he possessed the quality of a researcher for true understanding. Several episodes from his daily life illustrate this scientific temperament of his.

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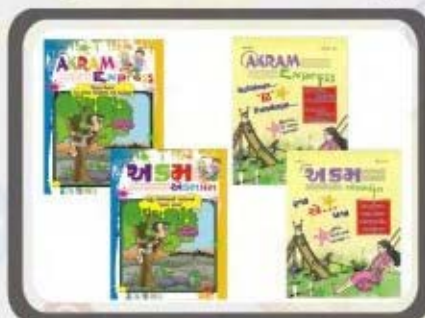


Bal Vignan's Other Presentations

Picture Book



Monthly Magazine



Story Book



Website



V.C.D./D.V.D.



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