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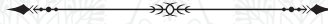
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Dedicated in the holy feet of

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 occasion of Pujyashri's

84th Birthday.

May He live a long life!

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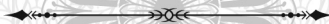
About the Author



"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 motivating and heart-rending sermons created a magical effect on people from all walks of life. In a short span of 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 Gachchhadhipati Acharya Shri Jayghosh Surishwarji, who heads the world's largest and most reputed group of Jain monks.

Introduction



"Hey ! Just take 1 puff of this new-flavour hukka."

"What's the harm in tasting a li'l liquor?"

"You know how it feels to smoke?"

"Come on, become a little bold and explore new possibilities."

Such persuasions and conversions are frequent in the life of today's youth. When this happens on a daily basis, it becomes difficult to stand by one's principles and resist such temptations. Many a times, if an individual is firm, peer pressure takes its toll. Unaware of the dreadful consequences, the youth gets carried away and succumbs to such temptations. Eventually indulgence in such vices is not considered to be a great deal. On the other hand, non-indulgence is considered to be a sign of cowardice and narrow-mindedness. Constantly living in such an environment, amidst people of a similar mindset, an individual's brain gets washed and he tends to follow the herd.

But don't you think that it is high time one realises that there is no limit to this downfall. Understand that when you succumb to some sensual desire, it ain't just a one-time act but it is the first time. If you do not take charge, this act will become an addiction and ruin your life. To stop this downfall, it is wiser and easier to curb the desire at the initial stage itself.

Param Pujya Acharya Bhuvanbhanu Soorishwarjee Maharaja has used Kamlata's pitiful story as an effective tool to put forth this message to the readers. He has immaculately described the mental process to be cultivated to refrain from such vices, the terrible after-effects of sensual indulgence and the spiritual downfall caused as a result.

In the current era, this book seems to be the need of the hour. Keeping Kamlata's disheartening instance in mind, the author tells us to redefine our idea of courage.

Courage is not boldly exploring unexplored territories of indulgence, suppressing others with our anger, ego and social status or wickedly causing other's downfall.

But believing in yourself,
standing for what you believe in
regardless of odds against you and
the pressure that tears at
your resistance means COURAGE.

By medium of this book
redefine your idea of courage...

Stay alert and stay firm,
It is never too late
to upgrade your COURAGE !




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1. Insatiable Sensual Desires

Since eternity, the soul is engrossed in eating, enjoying and lazing around. The soul is enveloped by anger, greed, pride and deceit at all times. Hence, it becomes difficult to identify them. But once the mind becomes strong and is determined to win over these inner enemies, then trust me, the war has begun. Even if the mind becomes strong, for one instance, then it will surely remain strong and face any situation with courage and determination.

The mind is such that if you let it succumb to temptations, it will always keep on doing so. On the other hand, if you make it strong and start resisting your temptations, then it will continue to do so in future as well.

When you let your mind succumb to temptations, it becomes weak.

When a beautiful young lady walks down the lane you are tempted to throw a glance at her. If your eyes and mind succumb to that temptation, then you end up losing your mental courage. Your mind becomes weak and serial damage will begin.

You feel like getting angry and scolding the opposite person. When you act according to such desires, you lose your mental courage and the mind becomes weak. This will lead to a series of anger outbursts in the future.

Someday, you feel like showing off your superiority in front of someone. You do it and thus, end up losing your mental

courage. Going forward, you will feel like resorting to self-appraisal again to strengthen your ego. This will eventually weaken your mental strength.

Accordingly, it is dangerous to fulfill the mind's demands and desires even for one instance. We can very well understand this from the pitiful life of Kamlata. Let's see -

Kamlata, a Brahmin's wife, had gone to fill water from the well located outside the village. An enemy King had come along with his army to conquer the state. His soldiers happened to see the beautiful Kamlata, captured her and took her to the King. The King was attracted by her beauty. Considering her acquisition to be a great victory, he took her and returned with his army to his state.

The King reached his palace, offered her the position of the main Queen and tempted her to become his wife and enjoy a luxurious life. He told her, "You will not be able to escape from here. Then why are you staying unhappy? Instead enjoy your life. What did you get in that poor family? You must have heard the brunt of your poor husband's anger frequently. Your precious youth will get wasted. Here, you have all the luxuries. Additionally, I am like your servant. There is no reason to think. Enjoy your youth and utilize this human life."

Kamlata got tempted :

The King lured Kamlata. She got attracted, and succumbed to the temptation of becoming a Queen. She lost her mental courage.

Now we will witness the series of damages that follow. She performed just one misdeed and it led her to the disgraceful act of becoming a prostitute and eventually having physical relations with her own son.

If Kamlata was determined to not succumb to the temptations

and save her character, she could have thought on the following lines while responding to the King's offer.

How to resist temptations ?

This King's talks are lame and immature. He thinks that this human body is meant just for pleasure and comforts without considering the means employed to acquire them. But this is his ignorance.

Sensual pleasures and attractions are not a source of enjoyment but are actually a source of trouble for the body and soul.

- 1) Trouble for the body because you have to keep on satisfying its lust and temptation again and again. Loss of strength in old age and loss of medium to satisfy this temptation in youth is bound to distress you. Isn't this troublesome ?
- 2) Trouble for the soul because it has to become a servant to satisfy the demands of the body and senses. Thus, it loses a golden chance to serve the Almighty God and Guru.
- 3) Trouble to be dragged in misdeeds :

In spite of understanding that sensual pleasures and leisure are not right, if you get tempted even once to enjoy these pleasures, then this loss of determination is bound to drag you in these misdeeds again and again. Being compelled to commit wrong acts inspite of understanding that it is wrong- is this joyous or troublesome ?

- 4) Trouble of losing the good :

While exercising the wrong, loss of the good and beneficial things and acts is unavoidable. Isn't this a great trouble ?

- 5) Trouble of complete destruction :

By the end of life, all is lost. Then all the previous acts are nothing less than trouble.

- 6) Trouble of becoming a servant of the body and senses :

Insatiable Sensual Desires

The needs of the body and senses are insatiable. How much ever food and pleasures you give it, it's hunger will never die. The more you give, the more it demands. Isn't this the soul's trouble ?

Before succumbing to temptations, Kamlata could have thought, "The King has become blind in lust and has forgotten the noble virtues of a human. He has become like a donkey who has his eyes only on skin and flesh. But why should I become blind ? Why force such misdeeds on this noble body ? The body and senses are like a tigress which goes wild on licking blood.

If a human had to get roasted in the dreadful hunger of the body and senses, then wasn't he better off in the births of donkeys and pigs ? Why waste such a precious birth for such heinous acts ?

Inspite of the King's tempting offers, my character should remain pure. I do not want to become a slave of my senses and be troubled. If I remain courageous and determined to suppress my temptations, then I will have no trouble or sorrow. On the contrary, I will experience immense happiness experienced by the Mahasatis of the past. Compared to that happiness, sensual pleasures do not give even 10% of happiness.

The insatiable desire for sensual pleasure is the soul's greatest sorrow. Day and night without any limitations, the body and mind will keep on demanding these material pleasures and the soul will eventually become its slave. All the virtuous and benevolent acts will be lost. This increasing desire for sensual pleasures is the greatest sorrow, greatest misdeed and a big trouble. I do not want this.

In this precious birth when I can distinguish between the right and wrong with the help of the inner eye, should I close this eye and become blind ? In the births of animals, I did not

possess this inner eye and hence was blind. Now in spite of having this inner eye, should I perform such a heinous act and fall in the deep well of sensual pleasures ?

No, in this birth I do not want to close this inner eye which can help me to distinguish between the right and wrong and do not want to welcome blindness in my life again.

In the context of sensual pleasures, happiness is equivalent to a mere drop while the thirst for it is as vast as an ocean.”

If Kamlata would have been determined, and thought on the above lines, then she could have recognized the wrong and could have resisted the King’s offer. But she lost her courage and character and ultimately succumbed to the King’s offer. But as years passed, she fondly remembered her loving husband and infant child. She regretted her decision. She thought, “How mean am I ! They would be enveloped in miseries while I am basking in luxuries here. Let me run away and meet them.”

Under the King’s tight security, it was impossible for Kamlata to run away and hence she made a dreadful plan wherein she could easily kill the King and flee. She started convincing the King, “Look, my condition is so miserable. I should perform some good religious acts. I wish to do charity.” The King was totally unaware about her foul plan and replied, “You can happily donate as much as you wish. This treasure is all yours.”

Does this act mean that the King also became religious by heart ? No, he was just a slave of sensual pleasures. He felt that if he fulfilled all her desires then she would be happy with him and love him all the more. Carried away by these thoughts and just to satisfy his desires, he gave her access to his treasure and let her donate it freely.

The temptation for sensual pleasures destroys the soul’s welfare.

Why did Marichi* get trapped in comforts in each birth ?

The religion and charity exercised as a result of sensual temptation actually strengthens these temptations and not religion. This addiction for comforts and sensual pleasures is bound to trouble you in each birth. Why so ? Because in this birth also you do not wish to strengthen religion by performing religious activities but want to strengthen your sensual pleasures from it. Then how will you be able to acquire and increase religion in the forthcoming births ?


Marichi enabled Prince Kapil to forsake the material world. This was religion but his real intention and desire was to attain a disciple who would serve him. This is greed for sensual pleasures. To strengthen this greed, he was compelled to do Utsootra Bhashana¹. What was its result in the next birth? Increase in the desire for sensual pleasures and becoming a Tridandik² repeatedly. It is said in Lord Mahavir's stavan which describe His 27 births,

"Panchme bhavē Kollaka Sannivesh,
Vishayasakt Brahmin Vesh"

(In the Kollaka town, in his fifth birth, he was a Brahmin who was attached to sensual pleasures.)

* **Marichi** – Marichi was Lord Adinath's grandson who had accepted Diksha. As time passed he could not bear the difficulties involved in the ascetic life and hence took some freedom and became a hermit. In spite of these, he told all the people coming to him for Diksha to go to Lord Adinath and accept the difficult but right path. But once he became greedy for a disciple and told prince Kapil that his path was also right.

1. **Utsootra Bhashana** – Speaking against the principles of Jainism
2. **Tridandikpanu** – Becoming A hermit who wear orange clothes, have a bath, wear footwear and do religion according to their convenience.



2. Kamlata's Wicked Plan

The King permitted Kamlata to give charity according to her own free will and hence she started her donation center. Hearing this, seekers started coming from far and near. Among them was her husband. She immediately identified him and took him aside and gave him a box full of jewellery and money. She told him, “Take this with you. Come at the temple of Goddess located outside this city on the night of Kali Chaudasa. I will also come there, accompanied by the King. I will then murder him and come home along with you.”

The Brahmin was astonished to hear this. But he had received abundant wealth and jewellery and was now on the verge of getting his beautiful wife back. In this greed, he convinced his mind thinking, “Women are weak and dependent. What could she do? How could she escape from the clutches of the King? How could she have protected her character in the King’s trap? But she regrets her actions which means she is still good at heart. Let the sinful King die. I am getting my wife back. I should give her refuge and protect her.”

The greed for sensual pleasures and wealth converts a human into a devil. For the poor Brahmin, giving refuge to his characterless wife out of sympathy was merely an excuse. In reality, he wished to fulfill his own desires. As a result, breaking the King's trust and thus murdering him was also not a big deal for the Brahmin and he did not regret it at all.

One cannot even imagine the extent to which such sinful people can fall for their self-interests.

If you want to be saved from such sins, then do not lose your determination and courage.

The rising attraction towards sins in today's times :

In today's world, there are abundant situations and instruments which can drag you in such sinful acts. If you do not remain strong, you will be tempted to practice such deeds.

Today's business and taxation system tempt you to cheat.

Today's movies tempt you to stare at the partly naked bodies of the actresses.

The revealing attire of women also tempt us to look in their direction.

Fast, tasty food served at restaurants tempt us to forget the difference between the Bhakshya (edible) and Abhakshya (inedible).

There are abundant places for entertainment which tempt us to roam about here and there.

Today's I-Phones give you the entire world in your palm and burden your mind with things going on all around the world.

Thus, the mind is bound to be enveloped in Artadhyana (negative thoughts). The atmosphere around us is contaminated with hatred, envy, narrow mindedness and animosity and compels us to think on the same lines at all times.

Elements which drag the mind in wrong thoughts (Mithyabhava*) :

In today's times, losing your courage and getting dragged in wrong thoughts is not a big deal. Not only has the temptation for the senses increased but elements which drag the mind in such Mithyabhava (wrong thoughts) have also increased -

- 1) Articles in magazines and newspapers
- 2) Messages and videos on WhatsApp and YouTube

* **Mithyabhava** - Non-belief in the teachings of Lord Mahavira.

3) Lectures and conferences

4) Talks and gossips

On the other hand, a cultured atmosphere where the faith for Arihanta's teaching is glowing and the right conduct and virtues are seen is fading away. How will *Samyak darshan** stay in such an atmosphere ? How is it possible to resist temptations ? You need to become really courageous and strong minded to be able to survive and stay safe in such an atmosphere.

Jainism is very logical and amazing. However, when you have news about man reaching the moon, about the earth being like a sphere and revolving around the sun, the mind is bound to be confused. You will feel doubtful about the facts stated in our scriptures that the sun and moon are actually *anabode* (airplane) of celestial beings. The scriptures state that the sun revolves around the huge *Meru Parvat* which stands in the center of the earth- Is this true ?

Since we do not have enough faith and courage to believe in Arihanta Lord's teachings, we become suspicious. Accordingly, the mind begins to think against Lord Arihanta's teachings and is dragged in wrong thoughts. This is the outcome of today's era. Since the time when a child is sent to playgroup, he is taught things wrongly. He studies the same things for years and they get completely fit in his mind. In such a scenario can he keep his faith in Lord's teachings intact ?

Why can't you trust scientific beliefs ?

The one who is courageous and determined will possess strong faith and have complete belief in Arihanta Lord's teachings. He will not get attracted to new inventions and principles put forth by science because-

1) As inventions are made and new technologies come up,

* **Samyak darshan** - Right faith

Kamlata's Wicked Plan

principles and beliefs keep changing. There is nothing like a universal and ultimate truth.

- 2) Professor Einstein invented new Mathematics and the Theory of Relativity which was not in sync with the Law of Gravity and other such laws.
- 3) Even today, some American Scholars believe and have proved with logic and examples that the earth is not spherical like a ball and does not revolve around the sun.
- 4) Today's science tells us that the moon does not have its own light; it receives light from the sun and reflects it on the earth. This proves that the moon's surface should be some shiny mirror, glass or gem like substance. Only then can it reflect the sun's light that falls on it. If it is some non-shining or non-reflecting surface made of normal stone or mud, then the rays of light cannot reflect from it. Even though the rays of the noon sun in the summer are very strong, they do not get reflected when they fall on the tiles of our house. The house gets lightened but the rays of light are not emitted. Similarly, if the moon's surface is not made of some shiny or reflective substance but is made of just stone or mud, then the rays of light cannot reflect from it and envelope the earth with light. Today's science claims that man has reached the moon and they have brought a mud like substance from its surface.

This proves that today's man has not reached the real moon. The shining moon that we see and receive light from and the moon that we have found and reached are absolutely different.

- 5) 'The moon does not possess its independent light but shines because of the sun's light.' This belief is also wrong because the moonlight on the fourth or fifth bright day of the month and the moonlight on a full moon day cover equal area on

the earth. This is not possible without the moon's own light. If it is giving light borrowed from the Sun, then the rule is such that- If light falls on a small area, then its reflection also falls on a small area where as larger the area, reflection also falls on a larger area. For example, if a bulb high on the ceiling is covered completely and left open only on the lower part, it still lightens the entire hall. But if a mirror is covered with only a little corner left open and light is thrown on it from a battery, then the light that reflects from the uncovered part covers only a limited area. But if the light is thrown on the entire mirror then it reflects on a larger area. Here, whether it is the full moon day or the moon of the fourth or fifth day of the bright half of the month, there is absolutely no difference in the area covered by moonlight on the earth. This proves that the moon has it's own light and not light reflected from the Sun.

- 6) The vital point of this discussion is that instead of getting carried away by today's pointless talks and discussion, the path of salvation preached precisely by the Sarvagya* Arihanta Lords is worth consideration. They have perfectly described the difference between the right and wrong. How minutely they have thrown light on the life-sciences and described the Ekindriya, Beindriya, etc. living organisms! How effectively they have shown the Karma Theory! Professor Einstein showed the Theory of Relativity just a few years back while Sarvagya's preaching have showed the amazing Syadvad – Anekantavada and Sapekshavada ages back. The Sarvagya who has demonstrated such principles and elements accurately will definitely not be wrong in describing the form of earth, moon or sun.

* **Sarvagya** – The Omniscient i.e. One who possesses the knowledge of all 3 worlds - past, present and future

Without the Tirthankar Lord's omniscience, the invisible soul and minute karma theory cannot be described. How is it possible to elaborate on the minute details related to karma without actually seeing it? Omniscience of Tirthankar Lords can perfectly describe karma's various processes of Bandha, Udaya, Sankramana, Udvartana, Apvartana which are not visible to the naked eye. Since Tirthankar Lords do not possess attachment, hatred or ignorance which instigate them to lie, why will they lie or cheat? If the supreme Almighty Lords have described the position and movements of the sun, moon, earth and stars, there is no reason to doubt its authenticity. On the other hand, today's discoveries and beliefs are contaminated with many faults like calculation mistakes, vision difference, opinion-differences, long distance, etc. How can you be sure of its authenticity and consider it to be true?

In today's advanced science and technological era, one has to be very strong to be able to keep faith in Sarvagya's teachings intact. Similarly, in today's times where equipment for amusement are on the rise, where the sole aim of life is to maximize sensual pleasures, one needs to be very determined to be able to control one's senses and minimize one's desires. Only by doing this, can one stay in their limitations and not cross their boundary.

This means that we need to develop a strong will power and courageous mind for two things-

- 1) To not get carried away in today's scientific and so-called logical talks and stand by Sarvagya Tirthankar Lord's teachings.
- 2) To not get attracted in today's equipments and gadgets that satisfy our sensual pleasures and thus be determined to not cross our limits and maintain sanyam (a good, restricted code of conduct) in our life.

Kamlata Brahmani had become a queen, had lost her courage in protecting her character and purity and had got carried away in royal luxuries and comforts.

There is an ancient saying, “Ekda Bhrashtasya Shatasho Vinipat,” which means that the one who gets tempted and loses courage once will do the same hundreds of times.

Similarly Kamlata was tempted to do wrong once again. She explained to her husband in code language to meet her in the Goddess’s Temple in the jungle on the night of Kali Chaudas. She told him that she would come there accompanied with the King and find a chance to kill the King so that she can flee away with him.

She compromised her character and lost her purity once and now she fell to such an extent that she was ready to kill the King. Even her religious Brahmin husband forgot his Vedas and became ready to kill the King in the greed of getting his wife back. Isn’t it his duty to free his wife ? Yes, but not by cheating and killing the King.

Kamlata’s Ploy :

As Kali Chaudas approached, Kamlata told the King, “When you were down with fever and severe headache last week, I had prayed at Goddess Kali’s temple that if you will recover from your illness, both of us would go together to pray at her temple on the night of Kali Chaudas. Because of my prayer and oath, you are now fit and fine. Tonight both of us have to go together at her temple located outside the city and perform her Pooja.”

The King was crazy about her and told her, “How considerate and affectionate you are! We will definitely go and perform the Pooja together.” The Brahmin’s wife replied “No third person should come along with us.” Having blind faith in her, Kamlata's Wicked Plan

the King readily agreed to this demand also. He did not even have a second thought about his own security or the possibility of some soldiers waiting outside the temple while the two of them performed the pooja. He had absolutely no doubt or questions in his mind.

Blind love and blind trust is dreadful because it overlooks the possibility of any upcoming calamity. On the fateful night of Kali Chaudas, both of them reached the Goddess's temple. The queen pretended to devotedly bow in front of the Goddess and performed the Pooja with great respect and gratitude. She spoke aloud, "O Goddess! O Mother! My beloved husband got rid of his illness by your grace. I am so grateful to you." She then told the King, "Even you thank the Goddess Kali by falling in her feet."

The King who was blinded by lust had no idea about Kamalata's wicked play. Obeying his so called beloved wife, he fell in Goddess Kali's feet and bowed his head to thank her. In no time, the wicked Kamalata picked up the King's sword lying beside him and struck a heavy blow on his neck. A sharp sword and a heavy blow! The neck was bound to get severed. The head lay on one side and the body on the other. Such a betray of trust! Such a cruel act!

Protection of One's character :

Q : Wasn't this act appropriate for saving one's character ?

A : She had already sacrificed her purity. But now just to escape from the King's clutches, it wasn't appropriate to cheat and kill him in such a cruel way. Ram and Lakshmana had declared war against Ravana to rescue Sita and Ravana was killed in the war but he was already given a prior warning, "Hand over Sita or else be prepared to lose your life." Right till the end, even when Ravana threw his Sudarshana Chakra on Lakshmana and the

Sudarshan Chakra stood in Lakshmana's service instead of cutting his head, Lakshmana warned him, "Look Ravana! Your Chakra is now in my hands. So you can understand very well that if I leave this Chakra on you, it will surely kill you. This is my last and final warning to you. Free Sita, hand her over to us and live a peaceful life. We will forgive your great mistake."

Betrayal of trust did not reflect in Lakshmana's word. Infact, Lakshmana exhibited extraordinary generosity by showing the readiness to forgive him. But Ravana did not agree. Instead he answered, "O Forest roamers! You will not get Sita back so easily. Do what you wish." On these words, Lakshmana was compelled to throw his Chakra which ended up killing Ravana.

But here, Kamlata took the King in confidence by her fake show of love and affection and then silently beheaded him. Such a terrible betrayal! Great women of the past have cheated others to protect their character but not so cruelly. Mahasati Surasundari was abandoned in a dense forest by her husband Amar Kumar. Going forward she fell in a King's trap who wished to make her the Queen. She requested for a time span of 4 days during which she took the other queens in her confidence. According to their guidance, she escaped into the forest using a secret tunnel and thus betrayed the King. But this betrayal did not lead to loss of life or any other major loss.

Similarly, Narmada Sundari was also left alone in the forest. Eventually, she fell in the trap of a prostitute. The prostitute sent her to dance in front of the King. On her way, she purposely fell in a puddle of mud and started pretending as if she had gone mad. She started screaming, "How does it matter if he is the King? How does it matter if he is the Kamlata's Wicked Plan

King ?” When the King’s soldiers came to take her and heard her screaming and acting in a such a weird manner, they left her and went away. The prostitute’s workers got her back but her behavior did not change. The prostitute thought that it was dangerous to keep her in the house. She thought “What if she harmed anyone ?” Thus out of fear, she threw her out of the house. Thus, Narmada Sundari freed herself by fooling the prostitute but not by killing her.

Rati Sundari, Buddhi Sundari, Rushi Sundari, Guna Sundari, etc. are same Mahasatis who cheated and betrayed people’s trust to save their character but they did not do so by harming others. But Kamlata first succumbed to temptations and then cruelly killed the King.

While leaving the Chakra on Ravana, Lakshmana’s heart became tough, but if he had taken Ravana into his confidence, embraced him and then cunningly stabbed him in the back, his intentions would have been all the more wicked. When betrayal gets mixed with murder, the cruel intentions increase manifold.

Breach of trust is a terrible cruelty.



3. The Brahmin Dies...

Kamlata's husband dies :

Kamlata betrayed the King and killed him. What did she attain in return ? Let's see...

She started searching in the temple for her husband. She took a lamp and went to find him. Looking here and there, she finally found him sleeping in a dark corner. She tried to awaken him but no success. How can you be successful in waking up a dead person ? He had come early and had hidden in a corner. Without knowing about a snake lying there. The terrible snake bit him and he lost his life then and there. As if it was the nature's way of saying, "Come and take your fruits. As you sow, so you reap."

The disastrous outcome of being selfish and approving other's wrong acts :

The Brahmin had become party to his wife's cruel act of murdering the King because he saw his own self-interest of getting his wife back. Also, his wife had given him abundant wealth and was beautiful as well. Attracted by her beauty and carried away by the abundant wealth showered on him, he ended up agreeing to such a dreadful act.

A person who loves to gossip also ends up approving to such acts. One person may say, "Mr. X was so proud and arrogant that he would always roam about with an air of attitude. He happened to meet Mr. Y, who was an equal opponent for him.

He had to face a lot of trouble and insult because of him and lost all his arrogance. Good, he got a lesson.” Now, how will a person who loves to gossip respond to this ? Probably something like this, “Oh ya! Good for him.” Now, what did he do ? Agreed to the talks and indirectly consented to the problems that Mr. X had to face. What made him do this ? The approval of other’s talks and acts.

The interest for gossip is so terrible that it forcibly drags us in the approval of the opponent’s talks and acts, however dreadful they are.

During that time, it is difficult to stay strong, contradict the opponent’s talk and say, “Oh my God! Such a terrible act! How bad! ”Someone says, “My employer is a rascal. He makes us work more and more but gives us meagre wages. Some days back, he was cheated and incurred a loss of Rs. 1 lakh.” To this statement, one would reply on the lines of, “Serves him good. He deserved it.” Some person was cheated and you expressed joy!

Is it right to rejoice over someone being cheated or someone facing trouble ? While conversing with others, how many times would we have consented and approved other’s wrong acts ? Now, think what do we achieve out of these talks ? Nothing. We just end up indirectly giving our consent and expressing happiness in such terrible acts which we ourselves have not performed. Will the Karmasatta (The supreme Power of Karma) forgive us for this ? Will we not bind any karmas ? We will definitely accumulate a lot of karmas and also strengthen our interest in gossiping and participating in such talks. This will consequently invite such terrible acts in our life also.

Dhaval Merchant made a plan to throw Shripal in the sea. 3 of his friends agreed to his plan and eventually had to pay it’s price when Goddess Chakeshwari punished them.

In her previous birth, Anjana Sundari had stolen her co-wife's idol of Arihanta Lord and thrown it in a garbage dump because of jealousy. A friend of her supported her in this misdeed and therefore, she also accumulated negative Karmas. As a result, in the next birth when Anjana Sundari had to roam about alone in the forest, she became her friend Vasantilaka who had to face similar difficulties.

Wrong deeds and sinful acts definitely contaminate our soul, but talking to a sinner and supporting and consenting to his acts also leads to accumulation of Karmas, which contaminates our soul.

Thus, in today's times, it is dangerous to be interested in talks and gossips. You may think that during such conversations you may get to know something useful but you do not realise that actually you end up consenting to the opponent's sinful talks and harming your own self. Hence it is better to stay away from such talks.

Q : But what if such a talkative person comes and sits at your place? You have no choice but to participate in the talks.

A : If you are in such a position, then you should start some religious talks. Start talking about someone's good deed or benevolent act. If the opponent starts some negative conversation, then you can divert his talks and try to explain him by saying, "He is not responsible. His karmas are compelling him to act in such a manner. He may be successful today but one day he will have to pay for his acts. We should look at the better side of the coin. Otherwise there are many such bad things happening around. How much will we see and criticize?" Thus, you can stop the opponent's talks and then change the topic, "Look, he is such a gentleman." In spite of this,

if the opponent continues criticizing and accusing someone or the other and drags you into such low talks, then you can strongly stop him by saying, “I am really sorry but I am not interested in your talks.”

You yourself need to be courageous for this. Without having courage, it is not possible for a gentleman to live peacefully in today's time.

Even if you do not have the courage to stop the opponent on upfront, then you can atleast reduce your interest in such talks by chanting Navkar Mantra in your mind. For this also you need courage. Without it, it is impossible to live a good virtuous life.

Kamlata's husband agreed to her cruel act but Karmasatta gave him his fruits. Unfortunately, he was bitten by a snake and died a pathetic death.

By doing wrong and unnecessary acts, you lose the precious human birth which could have been used in a better way.

Remember, this human life is a great asset which can be utilized optimally to perform many good acts. Hence, we should not waste it. We cannot perform the same good acts that we can perform here in other births. In spite of tremendous troubles, we should never think of ending this life and committing suicide. This is because in this birth, even amidst our troubles we can still,

- 1) Chant Navkar Mantra
- 2) Meditate on Arihanta Lords
- 3) Save ourselves from sins
- 4) Have compassion towards others
- 5) Have a feeling of brotherhood for all

6) Appreciate great men in the history of Jainism

7) Condemn our own sins and repent over our wrong acts.

All these things are not possible after our death.

Q : Can't we wish to die due to the enormity of our sins and not due to our trouble and sorrows ?

A : Oh no! Even if you have committed some grave mistake you should not wish to die because if you are living, you can confess your sins in front of your Guru and repent over them. After death, it is not possible to repent over your sins and thus, erase them. This implies that the sins will come along with you in your next births.

Thus, consider this human life to be a great asset and use it optimally by thinking good about others.

The Brahmin died due to the snake bite, Kamlata realized that her husband was not sleeping but had died and that she had lost both ways. Neither the king, nor her husband was alive.

She panicked and thought, "I should leave this place immediately. In case the king's soldiers catch me, my death is certain. I should flee from here."

Thinking about where to go, she realized that there was a chance of being caught on the highway and hence, she rode on the king's horse and escaped through the forest. She travelled the whole night, crossed the forest and reached the outskirts of a city by morning. A prostitute saw her and asked, "Who are you ? Why are you alone ?"

She made up a fake story. "I was with my husband and we lost our way in the dense forest. Wild animals attacked my husband and made him their prey. I am now a widow. My fortune is now destroyed." Saying this, she started weeping loudly.

The Brahmin Dies...

The prostitute consoled her, “What is the use of crying ? Who can change God’s desire ? No one has the power to change our fate. Do not fear at all. Stay at my place for as long as you wish like my real sister. Come with me.”

The prostitute was tempted. She saw her own self-interest. She thought that this lady was very pretty and had lost her husband. If she agreed to become a prostitute and join my business, then great kings, princes, merchants and landlords will become my customers and my business will flourish. I will become wealthy.”The prostitute knew this world’s greatest weakness. Kings or princes, merchants or landlords-most of them are slaves of beauty and touch. They wouldn’t take long to get attracted to a beautiful woman like her.

Why is Vairagya (non-attachment) priceless ?

Those who are slaves of beauty will take their eyes where they get to see such beauty. Some are slaves of tender touch. As soon as they get to know about some tender touch, their mind is occupied in attaining and experiencing it. Some people are slaves of taste but they are better than the previous two because he will stop once his stomach is full. For some time, he will not crave for sweets or other such delicacies. But those who are slaves of beauty or touch have no such limit or restriction. Why will such people not get attracted to the beauty of pretty women ? People are dying in this way. Leave alone releasing themselves from the trap of this sansaar (material world), they do not even have the basic realization that this sansaar is a vicious trap. When they do not even have this fundamental realization, they do not possess vairagya, then it’s implementation by forsaking such temporary pleasures is bound to be impossible.

Why don’t the number of sadhus increase ?

Pure-hearted saints are the need of the hour but the number of

saints are not increasing. Why ? Because in today's times, the enslavement by beauty and touch has increased tremendously. Movies, serials, internet, Youtube videos, dressing sense of women have contributed to this increase. These enslavements are dreadful because not only do they lead to such acts but even when these acts are not being performed, the mind constantly remains preoccupied in such thoughts. Then it isn't surprising if thoughts related to the soul, Arihanta Lords and his teachings become unattainable. Isn't it a major loss if thoughts related to the soul and the mighty Arihanta Lords become impossible in this precious human birth ?

Enslavement of the senses makes one forget the welfare of the soul :

Even insects, animals and Anarya*, men have the chance to satisfy their sensual pleasures. However, only an Arya human's birth is the one in which a person can engross his mind in the thoughts of the soul, Almighty Arihanta Lords and his their supreme teachings. But when is such a thought process possible ? Only when the mind stops becoming a slave of beauty, touch and taste. Till the soul is a slave of such pleasures, that person cannot be trusted because his enslavement can pressurize him to cross his limits. Do not be surprised if a man is attracted to his daughter-in-law or a woman is attracted to her brother-in-law, the enslavement by touch is so terrible that crossing one's limit does not seem shocking anymore.

The weapon of Arihanta Lord's teachings :

Today, the purity and spirituality that was formerly present in our society is gradually decreasing due to this enslavement of touch and beauty. As a result, Tirthankar Lord's teachings

*Anarya – People belonging to the atheist Western culture

fall on deaf ears. How can they show their desired result and change our hearts ? Hence, we need to realize that if we want to follow our Lord's teachings, change our hearts and implement them in our life, then we should devote ourselves in the service of Jinshasan* and eventually strive to cut down our enslavement by beauty, touch and taste. We should be alert at all times that, "My sight should not get attracted to look at inappropriate or unnecessary things. I should not glance here and there without reason. I should not stare at any other woman's body. My vision should not rest on someone's wealth and property or else it will spoil my mind."

Why shouldn't we look at other's wealth and assets ?

If you look at someone's brand new BMW or a huge bungalow, what thoughts will cross your mind ? Either you will become a victim of jealousy or you will be consumed by unnecessary delight. You may think, "How lucky he is and how unfortunate am I ! " That means you will consider a luxurious car, bungalow, etc. to be the ultimate source of happiness. You will not think that, "Arre! This great instrument is destroying my spiritual welfare. These are only elements which nourish the soul's diseases of ego, pride and attachment." How many people will think on these lines ? Probably 5 out of 100. Majority of the people today have drowned in the huge ocean of material pleasures. Before Kumarpal become the king, he was running to escape from the clutches of Siddharaj. He witnessed a peculiar event at one place. On the bank of a river, in a small temple, the idol that was worshipped was only a head without the remaining body. Hence, he asked someone, "Why is only this head worshipped in this temple ?" The person told him a small story to clear his doubt.

* **Jinshasan** - The Jain religious order established by the Almighty Tirthankara Lords.

The story of the idol having only a head that was worshipped in the temple :

Once upon a time a head came out of the lake and said, “It is sinking”, “It is sinking” for 3 days continuously. After speaking, the head disappeared in the lake water. People staying close by searched a lot but in vain. They could not find anything in the water. No man and no man’s head. The king of a nearby city got this news and ordered the learned men in his court to find out it’s real meaning. “Find out what does this mean. Is the city going to sink ? Or is religion sinking ? Decide what it really means. I give you time of just 1 month. Give me a justified meaning. Am I giving you fees for nothing ? If I do not get the right answer in a month, then you all will be sentenced to death.”

The learned men were all tensed. They thought deeply for some time but did not find any satisfying answer to save themselves. They travelled towards Rajasthan (Marwad). Not to run away, because they themselves could escape but what about their family and belongings ? What if the king troubled them ? Hence they travelled abroad to seek guidance and get a satisfying answer from some other learned men.



4. Greed – The Root of all Evil

Travelling through various towns and cities, they did not get a satisfactory answer from any learned or wise old men and hence their travel continued further. They came across an old man in one of the villages of Marwad and told him about their problem. The old man thought that the troubled men had come from far lands and greeted them warmly. What is humanity? Worshipping the supreme Lord, the elderly ones and greeting the guests. When you go to listen to a Vyakhyan (religious discourse), do you first bow down and then sit? If you are late and you cannot stand to do the entire Guruvandanaas it can disturb the discourse, do you at least give a Khamasamana* before sitting? A saint is worth-worshipping and thus whenever you meet a saint, you should bow down in his feet. But when you go to the Vyakhana to attain the saint's precious teachings, then how can you listen to it without bowing down in front of him? Where is humanity here? Humanity means the virtues of a Marganusari* person.

The appropriate treatment and respect for Atithis, Sadhus and the helpless is the prime virtue of a Marganusari person. Atithi means a person who does not have a particular day (tithi) to practice religion but does religious activities at all times and

* **Khamasamana** - Bowing down in a way that both your hands and feet and your head touch the ground.

* **Marganusari** - A person who is close to the attainment of samyaktarshan (right faith).

on all days. The great ascetics (Sadhus and Sadhvis) who have renounced the material world come in this category. Appropriate respect should be shown to them in the following manner. First, one should bow down to them, then ask about their well-being and then request them to accept offerings of food, clothes, place to stay, etc. Then one should try to fulfill their requirements in the best and fastest possible way. This is how one should worship these great ascetics. Giving them appropriate respect in this manner is a form of humanity.

Sadhu means a gentleman who has come from near and far. On meeting them, you should first greet them warmly by saying, “Welcome. Where have you come from ? Please accept water and light food. Can I be of any other help to you ?” Serving them water and snacks is the appropriate treatment to be meted out to Sadhus*. Sadharmik* Bhakti also comes under this category.

Advantages of Sadharmik Bhakti :

How enthusiastic are you to greet others ?

That old Rajasthani man warmly greeted and served those learned men. Why did he waste his hard-earned money in feeding strangers ? Because he very well understood that,

- 1) Since innumerable births, we have fed only ourselves and our family which is an animal’s characteristic. Welcoming and feeding Atithis and Sadhus warmly is a human’s characteristic.
- 2) One becomes narrow-minded in just filling one’s own stomach. On the other hand, one becomes broad-minded and generous by taking care of Atithis, Sadhus and Sadharmikas. What should you aim to acquire in this life ?

* **Sadhu** - Jain monks

* **Sadharmik** – A person who follows the same religion as you.

Greed - The Root of all Evil

A generous heart and a broad-minded attitude. This earning will come with you in the next birth and not the wealth saved by not being considerate about sadharmikas. Your generous heart will accompany you in the next birth. What will be your state if you take a mean and miserly heart along with you ?

- 3) The nature gives you good fruits for what you have given and not what you have taken.
- 4) Due to such an understanding the old man felt like helping those travelers. But you have an additional benefit in doing Sadharmika Bhakti, as the Sadharmika is related to you because both of you follow the same religion. Thus, if you wish to increase respect and affection for your religion, you should harbour love and respect for Sadharmikas. You should greet and felicitate them warmly. This will strengthen your love and respect for religion in the true sense.
- 5) Not only this, but love and devotion for Arihanta Lords also increases due to Sadharmika Bhakti. On the other hand, hatred and indifference towards Sadharmikas is actually hatred and indifference towards the Lord himself. Why so ? Because Lord has shown Sadharmika Bhakti as a duty for those who possess Samyag-darshana. Now if you ignore this duty, you are actually ignoring Lord's words and in doing so, where is the love and respect for Arihanta Lords ? Because if you really respect him, you will respect his words too.

Thus, taking all this into consideration, you should greet and respect Sadharmikas warmly. You will not face any crisis or shortage in feeding them. On the contrary, if you do not do so, your heart will become narrow and shallow, mean and selfish. Marganusari means the virtues of humanity. Serving

Atithis, Sadhus and the needy is one of them. If you miss out on this duty, then where is humanity ?

The helpless and needy includes the poor, sad, beggars and handicapped people. If they seek food, water, clothes, etc. and if we possess the capacity to help them, then we should surely fulfill their requirements. Thus, having sympathy for them and helping them is the appropriate treatment to be given to them.

This is a great virtue of a Marganusuri person. This is humanity in real sense. Only a fortunate person will feel like practicing such activities. Leave alone the wish to practice them, an unfortunate person may think, “Why to waste money in such a way ?” In spite of acquiring such a precious human birth in an Arya country, such a person wants to remain unfortunate even when there are bright chances of becoming fortunate. Who can save such a person ? Arya country, Arya family, the Arya culture, ArihantaLords, the Gurus in this religion are all of serious help to those who wish to become fortunate. However, there is no remedy for those who wish to remain unfortunate.

That old man warmly welcomed those scholars and greeted them, “First come home. We will talk about this later.”

He then took everyone home and inquired about their whereabouts. After knowing their problem, he calmly replied, “No problem, the answer is easy. I will solve your query. First, have a bath near the riverside, fill your stomach and freshen up. After that I will give you such an answer that the king will be delighted. Do not worry at all.”

The learned men were tired. After receiving the warm welcome and the solution to the problem, they were now relieved. After getting freshened and having food, they now asked the old

man to unfold the mystery. The old man replied, “The answer is just one word. I will definitely tell you the solution but, as you have travelled such a long distance, why not utilize this visit ? Look, little puppies in our village are very cute. Each one of you take one puppy with you. Also, if you sell them at your place you will earn well. They are available for free here. No one will demand any money from you.”

Those learned men thought, “It is not a bad deal. We are getting it for free. Let's take them with us.” Thus, they went out into the village lanes, fondly called out to the little puppies and picked up one each. Seeing them coming back along with the puppies, the old man expressed surprise along with sorrow and said, “ Arre Arre! What did you do ? What did you get along ?”

Those learned men were suddenly taken aback and exclaimed, “O, old man! Didn't you tell us to get these puppies ?” He answered, “Arre! You are learned and wise man whereas I am an illiterate villager. Shouldn't you think on my words before implementing them ? You had become clean and pure on having a bath and now you again became impure by carrying these impure puppies. Now how will you chant the Lord's name in this impure state ? If you had been pure, then you would have chanted ‘Om Namah Shivay’ in your mind. But in the greed of a mere dog, you missed out on God's name till the time you have a bath.” The learned men realized their folly and said, “You are right. Now we will leave these puppies have a bath at the riverside and then get going on our way. But just tell us the answer to our query.”

The Mystery of ‘It is sinking...’ unfolds...

The old man said, “Oh, is the answer still left to be given ? Isn't the answer so obvious ? You became greedy for these puppies, lost your purity and lost chanting Lord's name.

Similarly, this entire world is sinking in greed. This is exactly what that head emerging in the lake wanted to convey to one and all. That's it. Goodbye and hope to see you sometime again.”

That man at the temple revealed to Kumarpal the secret of why only a head was worshipped as the idol. Continuing his story that man said, “Those learned men returned to their city and told the king about their trip and what they had learnt. Their explanation convinced everyone present in the king's court. To convey this message to all that- “If you want to save yourself from sins, do not want to lose your religion and do not want to sink in the ocean of greed, then reduce your greed,” a temple was made here and an Idol consisting only a head was established here.

Kumarpal was astonished on knowing the hidden truth behind the mysterious temple. He thought, “What an interesting mystery! The entire world is sinking in the ocean of greed and thus, performing unwanted acts. How dangerous greed is! Greed can invite numerous other sins along with it. I should learn a lesson from this instance and stay away from greed in my life.

Kumarpal's life events after he became a great king show that he had really implemented this decision throughout his life.

When did King Kumarpal overcome greed ?

- (A) Kumarpal received news that merchant Kuber had died without leaving any heir. The Mahajan addressed him, “O King! According to the state-laws, first, confiscate all his wealth. Only then can we perform the necessary rituals and take his body to the funeral.” How did king Kumarpal react on having this news? He was not delighted at the thought of getting enormous wealth

for free. His greed did not overcome him. Instead, he visualized the dreadful consequence of this act. He thought that, “If I confiscate all his wealth then,

- 1) The state of merchant Kuber’s wife, mother and other Mahajan-relatives would become miserable.
- 2) They would bind themselves with abundant sins because of grief, anxiety, negative thoughts and kashayas*.
- 3) I will have so many fathers because it is said that being a son you can enjoy your father’s money but not by being a father. Thus, I will become the son of as many people’s wealth I confiscate.
- 4) Also, confiscating someone’s wealth without our right means we are expressing our consent on someone’s demise. This is because the mind will surely feel, “Because he died, I received this wealth.” This means expressing happiness over someone’s demise.”

Seeing all these unwanted consequences, King Kumarpal did not become greedy for that wealth. He made a strong resolution to never take such wealth. He overcame the greed of the enormous wealth that could come in his hands legally by state law. Could you do something like this ? King Kumarpal was getting enormous wealth according to his status. Suppose, you are getting not so much wealth but a considerate amount of wealth for free without any major lies or fraud. Would you let go of the greed for such wealth ?

(B) Let's look at another example of Kumarpal's victory over greed.

* **Kashayas** – The negative traits of anger, greed, deceit and pride

He was crowned as the king at the age of 55 and was not a direct heir of King Siddaraj. Thus, some small kings revolted against him. It took him 15 years to overcome them which means that he was 70 years old when he became the Emperor of 18 States. After that, his one and only beloved queen passed away. His ministers told him, “Get married again. A couple is necessary at auspicious events. Thus a new queen is essential.”

You know what king Kumarpal did? He overcame this greed too. He had finally attained the opportunity to enjoy a luxurious, royal life at this age but he did not get married again. He told his ministers, “During such auspicious occasion keep a golden statue of my ex- queen besides me. In this way, both our problems will be solved.” Now think, when did he acquire material comforts and when did he accept complete celibacy ?

When did you acquire a good worldly life? Have you accepted complete celibacy now ?

(C) Not only this but even when his wife was alive, after becoming a Shravaka, King Kumarpal practiced complete celibacy for the 4 months of monsoon. His oath was so strong that even if he broke his vow by mere thoughts, he would fast without food for 1 day. He suppressed his desires for sensual pleasures to a great extent. If the Emperor of 18 states is required to do so, what is our duty ? If we have luxuries and comforts, why not enjoy them optimally ? Is there any need for restrictions ? No one is present to question or stop us. Are you going to be satisfied ? Haven't you seen such pleasures in the previous births ? How much is the attraction of such happiness ? To what extent is the addiction of such sensual pleasures ? And that too after acquiring Lord

Jineshwardev's Jainism? Don't you feel, "Is my soul really a slave of these senses and the joys of taste, touch, sight, etc. that they offer? Does my soul have any standing or command or does it always obey these arrogant senses and the temporary pleasures that they have to offer?"

(D) How much command did King Kumarpal have over his senses and its attractions? He did Ekashanas* for the 4 months of monsoon wherein he refrained from 5 vigais* and green vegetables. Why so many restrictions? Because he saw abundant sins and troubles in being greedy. We are talking about a man who lived in this era. If you want to glorify religion in your life, then take King Kumarpal as your role model, your idol.

King Kumarpal's sister's love for religion :

(E) Now let's see one more instance of king Kumarpal's victory over greed. Kumarpal's sister was playing chopat* with her husband, King Arnoraja. While playing, he mischievously said "Hit the Mundiya*, hit him." The queen immediately replied, "Do not speak like this. The word 'Mundiya' makes mischief of a Jain Sadhu. Jain Sadhus are my brother's Guru. You will have to pay a heavy price if he becomes aware of your folly." The king turned red with anger and said, "Go ahead, hit that bald one. What can your brother do? I made him the king."

The queen replied, "Do not challenge him. Do you really want

* **Ekashanas** - Having food once a day

* **Vigais** - Milk, curd, ghee, oil, sugar and fried items are the 6 vigais.

* **Chopat** - an old traditional game

* **Mundiya** - A person who is bald

to face the consequences ? Then get ready.”The king answered, “I am ready. I am still going to say ‘Hit the Mundiya’. Let’s see what he does.”The queen could not tolerate the mockery of Jain Sadhus and immediately went and told about the occurrence to her brother. King Kumarpal got ready for war. His sister was not concerned and was fearless about the fact that if her husband died in war she would become a widow. Real love for religion is unique and priceless. When one sees religion being insulted and religion in danger, a real lover of religion is ready to sacrifice anything for its protection and upliftment. “I will become a widow but not tolerate religion being insulted.” This was her loyalty and love for religion. If your children go against religion, do you bother ? Do you become ready to sacrifice anything that is required and bring them back on the right track ? As soon as the queen went to king Kumarpal, Arnoraja understood the upcoming trouble. Hence, he secretly bribed Kumarpal’s chief soldiers and commanders. Kumarpal marched towards Arnoraja with his army. But when he ordered his army to attack, they stood still. No one moved ahead. King Kumarpal was seated on the elephant. He asked the Mahavat*, “What is happening ?” The Mahavat replied, “O Noble One! The army seems to be bribed. Everyone is on the opposition’s side.” King Kumarpal asked, “Then who is ours ?”

The Mahavat replied, “The elephant and I. At present, only the two of us seem to be in our party.”King Kumarpal understood the situation. He was alert and cautious. The situation did not scare him because he knew that there was no use crying over spilt milk. It wouldn’t benefit him in any way. Instead it was wise to face the situation with courage and valor. You can hope for good results by taking appropriate efforts and not by weeping over the lost chance.

***Mahavat** - The one who controls the elephant
Greed - The Root of all Evil

King Kumarpal's timely action :

King Kumarpal did not go to talk and convince the chief soldiers because he very well knew that if they were bribed then they would hand him over to the enemy. In that case, he would have to live an imprisoned and disrespectful life till his last breath. Instead it would be better to take a chance to save himself. Thinking on these lines, he immediately ordered the Mahavat, "Do not worry. Be fearless. Take the elephant right near Arnoraja's elephant." Mahavat did as he was told. But Arnoraja got alert and ordered a Sinhnad* to be done so that the elephant would get scared. But intelligent Kumarpal was a step ahead. He immediately told the Mahavat, "Take this pachhedi* and insert it in both the elephant's ears." The elephant could not hear the lion roar anymore and ran ahead in full speed. As soon as he stood near Arnoraja's elephant, Kumarpal took a long jump and landed on Arnoraja's elephant right beside him. This was beyond Arnoraja's expectations. Before he could think or act, Kumarpal was standing right beside him. He was taken aback. At that very moment, Kumarpal sat on his chest and removed his sword.

"You rascal! You have been using the word 'Mundiya' ? What do you mean ? What do you now wish ? Should I kill you right now ?"

Arnoraja realised that death wasn't very far for him. He immediately begged for forgiveness and said, "I was mistaken. I am your servant. I request you to free me."

This turn of events occurred so swiftly that Arnoraja's army could not come to protect him. Also, they were astonished on seeing Emperor Kumarpal's valour and courage. Where was the chance to come for protection ? If they would come

*Sinhnad- Lion roar

*Pachhedi- A specific type of stick

ahead, Kumarpal would kill Arnoraja and then, where was the need for protecting him ? Thus, forcibly Arnoraja's army had to cry out loud, "Long live King Kumarpal", thus indicating Kumarpal's victory so that Arnoraja's life could be saved. As soon as Kumarpal's victory cries filled the atmosphere, King Kumarpal's army also rejoiced and stood by Kumarpal's side.

Now, isn't this a great example of Kumarpal's victory over greed. Arnoraja had committed two great crimes- insulting a Jain Sadhu and bribing Kumarpal's army. Both these crimes were so big that even if Kumarpal would spare his life, he could keep him imprisoned for life and capture his state. But he did not become greedy. Instead he forgave him and gave his state back to him.

Q. : But, didn't he do so, out of the love for his sister ?

A. : No. If he wanted to do it out of the love for his sister, he could have kept him as a prisoner in his huge palace and provide him with all the facilities and comforts. His sister's happiness wouldn't get hampered in this way. This means that he let go of Arnoraja's state by overcoming his greed and not out of concern for his sister.

Being greedy is not only harmful for the soul but may also cause problems in the future. Imprisoned Arnoraja could have made up some plan to take revenge against him. Hence, he considered it better to generously give his state back and ensure that he stayed under his obligation all his life.

Worldly benefits in overcoming greed :

This fact should be understood by one and all. Because of greed one runs ahead fast and seems to have earned a lot but he actually ends up making enemies on his way. But if he

acts generously instead of being greedy the opponent remains grateful to him all his life, forgets animosity and becomes his friend. For that along with generosity and overcoming greed, one needs to have a 'Let go' attitude.

Great Emperor Kumarpal had such a 'Let go' attitude because of which he forgave Arnoraja who had bribed his entire army against him. Arre! Not only this, he did not even scold or punish his chief soldiers or officers who had accepted Arnoraja's bribe. He had just one calculation, "Focus on the work. Once the work is done what is the need for envy, animosity or enmity? Why to keep prejudice for the opponent's fault which is now improved?" This is the secret behind the 'Let go' attitude.

Not having prejudice for anyone keeps the mind happy and pure. On the other hand, having prejudice for someone keeps the mind unhappy, irritated and deceitful. If we keep Kumarpal's principal in front of ourself, then we will be able to easily let go of small inconveniences. If a powerful emperor like him can forgive a person who has cheated him, then why can't a powerless person like me forgive someone who has committed small, silly mistakes?

We were talking about Kumarpal's efforts to overcome greed which is the root of all evils.

Kamlata at the prostitute's place :

The prostitute knew that she had struck gold in the form of Kamlata because she was so pretty, charming and young that even kings or princes would get attracted to her and become her customers. It was easy to trap this world in sensual pleasures. Hence she thought, "Let her come along with me to my house. Good days aren't far."

Kamlata did not recognize her as a prostitute but took her as a nice woman and thought, “This seems to be a good shelter. Where will I roam ? If she is inviting me so warmly, I should accept the offer,” Thus, she went along with the prostitute. She stayed at her place for some days and realized that her taste, clothes and living style matched with that of a prostitute. She became tension free and happy.

Q. : Isn't this tension free attitude and happiness good ?

A. : No. Look where is this going to lead her to. Many people become tension free and happy on marrying a pretty and caring woman. But it may happen that because of her affection and obligations, they forget their enthusiasm for religious activities and other virtues like generosity, kindness, etc. Sometimes if you meet such a person and ask him, “How much have you progressed in the matter of religion ?”

He will defend himself by saying, “What progress ? I still continue doing Arihanta Lord's pooja, etc. that I previously used to do.” When you retort by saying, “Arre! But your enthusiasm, contribution of time and energy seems to have decreased.” He will answer, “No. Nothing as such but because of these responsibilities, there will be an obvious decrease in time.” Nowhere is there any acceptance or regret over one's mistake. He will not even utter a word about the entry of the loving partner in his life which has actually led to the tension free attitude and the decrease of religion in his life. Women, wealth, house and office, respect and affection are all worldly objects. Happiness in relation to these worldly objects is dangerous because it makes one forget religion and the welfare of the soul and drags one in sinful activities. Men get married to their desired partner and then forget their parent's

favours and start living separately. When the chance has come to serve them, he forgets his duty. When he was unmarried, he was happy and relaxed because he had such caring parents and thus did not feel like exercising religious activities. Now, after he gets married, his beloved wife becomes the cause of his happiness and relaxation which makes him forget his duty towards his parents. Thus happiness and relaxation in worldly benefits makes him forget his religious duties and other acts of charity and humanity. Hence, we can conclude that it is wise to not become happy and tension free in worldly benefits and miss out on our duties.

Ilachikumar felt happy and relaxed in meeting an actress and thus, left the prestige of a respectful family, a flourishing business and became a dancer in her group. Konik felt relaxed in acquiring the vast empire of Magadh and imprisoned his father and whipped him 50 times each day. Also, he went to fight against his maternal uncle king Cheda. Merchant Mamman felt happy in hoarding abundant wealth and thus, binded karmas leading him to seventh hell. Lord Mahavira's soul as Triprushtha Vasudev felt relaxed in enjoying the luxuries and comforts of life which led him also to the dungeons of seventh hell. Do you understand the dreadfulness of seventh hell ? The sorrows and miseries of the first hell are so terrible. This misery keeps increasing in the consecutive second, third hell and soon. Now imagine it's intensity in the seventh hell! And tolerating such horrors, not for some 50-100-1000 years, but for an enormous time period of 33 sagaropama*. (One Palyopamais equivalent to innumerable years. When it passes 330 crore x crore times, it results in 33 Sagaropama) So much pain for such a long time!

* **Sagaropama** / * **Palyomana** – Unit of measurement of time

What led to such a dreadful consequence ? The feeling of relaxation, tension freeness, happiness in worldly wealth, fame, power, respect and luxuries. Hence be smart. Do not feel relaxed in these temporary worldly objects. Be relaxed on acquiring the great Tirthankar Lords, the supreme Jinshasan, respectable Mentors (Gurus), the beneficial religious activities and precious virtues like forgiveness, humanity, etc.

Poor Kamlata started experiencing relaxation and happiness on acquiring all her requirements at the prostitute's house and thus got trapped. She was now under the prostitute's favours. As a result, the prostitute trapped her in her talks.



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At times the prostitute would tell Kamlata, “Look dear, your husband met a sudden death and now you have no joy in life. Your youth is at its peak but you cannot derive any happiness from it. Are your relatives or friends going to come and check your activities ? Do not waste your youth like this.” Kamlata Brahmini felt relaxed in the shelter provided by the prostitute and felt obliged under her favours and replied, “Yes, you are right.” What was right here ? She did not have the awareness that, if you are supposed to think about only sensual pleasures and not protecting your purity and character when your youth blossoms, then the birth of donkeys and dogs are way better. In this human birth we have to restrict ourselves.

For eg. while walking on the road, we see a beautiful lady and get attracted towards her. But we cannot go and hug her at that moment. But dogs or donkeys don't need to restrict themselves. They can enjoy themselves without any control. Then is that birth good ? Should we pray to God, “Lord! Do not give me a human birth. There are so many barriers to my happiness here. Instead the births of dogs, donkeys, etc. are better where there are no barriers.” Do you want to ask God to give you such a birth ? No. Why not ? Because, restriction is not troublesome but beneficial. Those who do not have any restrictions or check on themselves, become like demons who cannot discriminate between the right and wrong and thus constantly keep going on the wrong track. There is no boundary for their desires. Will they become happy then ?

Do not rely on the temporary experience of happiness. Even a mad man finds happiness if he keeps on drinking wine. Can we call him happy ? If yes, then do you want happiness like him ? In reality, you can experience happiness only if there is a check on it.

Enjoyment of pleasures is a pain whereas forsaking them is happiness, relaxation and beauty in the true sense. Compare the lives of those who are enjoying pleasures and those who have left them. Who are happy and relaxed ? Where does a woman's beauty lie ? Even when there was a tradition of a man having many wives, have you heard of a woman having more than one husband ? Why not ? Because it looks weird to even imagine one woman amidst many husbands. If the youth gets wasted without enjoying sensual pleasures, then why this restriction of not having many husbands ? If the husband goes abroad for 6-12 months, then isn't the youth of the wife at home getting wasted ?

Kamlata becomes a prostitute :

But this is a prostitute's calculation that the youth gets wasted without enjoying sensual pleasures. Hence she tempted Kamlata to not waste her beautiful youth. Being under her great obligation, Kamlata started to agree to her talks, because of which the prostitute got the upper hand. She started brain washing Kamlata repeatedly. As a result, Kamlata finally surrendered to the prostitute's desires and began prostitution.

If one wants to fall for the wrong and does not wish to save himself, then who can save him ? Karmasatta does not punish one immediately or else one would save himself from doing the wrong by fearing the consequence. But karmasatta will show its colors at its own time. When majority of the times, the result is seen in the next birth, who will fear now ?

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Though karmasatta will show its effects in the long run, it will definitely not ignore or let them go.

In the present era also, why are so many innocent living beings undergoing terrible pain and trauma ? Why are innocent goats and sheep being slaughtered in slaughter houses ? What is the crime of small ants and other insects ? Why are they dying by being crushed ? Do those who kill mosquitoes and bugs with pesticides like D. D. T think about the fault of these little insects to whom they are such a pitiful death ? If Karmasatta is punishing them for the crime committed by them in their previous birth, then wouldn't Karmasatta punish me for my crime of killing others ? What will be my state in the next birth ? Due to the lack of such thoughts, people use pesticides and insect sprays freely and kill numerous innocent creatures.

Kamlata lost her conscience, fell into prostitution and did not even think about the consequences that she would have to face in the next birth. A good character Brahmin woman at one time turned into a characterless prostitute. What a vast difference! Once a man loses his determination, his downfall has no limits. Loss of determination in the attraction of sensual pleasures leads to Kashyas.

She lost her determination once to become the queen which eventually led her to the terrible clutches of prostitution. Hence, one needs to be alert in not losing determination and exercising the wrong even once, because it can lead to unimagined consequences. Do not become the slave of more and more sensual pleasures and thus invite vices like anger, greed, etc. Do not forget that this soul loses its courage and purity when it gets attracted to sensual pleasures and depends on the dangerous Kashayas.

Lord Mahavira's soul was a great, non-attached and pure

hearted saint named Vishwabhuti in one of his previous births. In spite of his strict penance and non-attachment he lost his temper on hearing the taunting words of his cousin brother. He could not suppress his pride (Kashaya). His determination was so much so that he not only flung a cow high in the air but after keeping it safely on the ground, he did a Niyanu* for his Bala (strength)

Loss of determination on mind getting disturbed: Vishwabhooti's Niyanu :

Saint Vishwabhuti's ego got hurt on being insulted by his brother because of which he ended up doing a Niyanu that, "May I possess abundant strength in the next birth as a result of my penance and worldly renunciation in this birth." Didn't he realize at that time that, "I have done this penance and renounced the world to attain salvation. Then how can I desire for this in return?" No but he could not think on those lines because his mind had lost its capacity to think rationally due to the taunting words spoken by his brother. He thought, "I do not desire anything like salvation. If my penance and renunciation are really fruitful, may I get my desired strength from it." As a result, he became the powerful Triprushtha Vasudev who possessed abundant strength but eventually he was sent to the seventh hell in the next birth. Can you imagine the terrible outcome of the mind getting disturbed? As his ego got hurt, he flung the innocent cow high in the air and due to this hurt ego, he forgot salvation and desired worldly strength. This gave him such abundant strength which made him the Triprushtha Vasudev but later sent him to the dungeons of seventh hell. This needs to be noted that, the mind that gets distributed in some meagre

* **Niyanu** - Asking for strength, wealth, beauty, power etc. in return of penance

worldly affairs can lead to numerous sins. Now, let's see how the mind gets disturbed. We lose some money and the mind gets hurt. Arre! We realize that a little handkerchief fell from our pocket and our mind gets hurt that, "Oh, my hanky! " Someone spoke just a little rudely that, "Can't you see and walk? You are walking so vaguely." Even if the opposite person is right, we cannot tolerate his words and the mind gets upset. We taste the dal and realize that salt is less, we take a sip of tea and realize that sugar is less and our mind gets disturbed. We immediately start yelling, "Arre! What kind of dal is this?", "Who has made this tasteless tea?" Also at times when the opposite person does not greet or respect us, we get upset and feel, "I am greeting him so warmly and he is not even concerned." If it so happens that the opposite person asks us, "How come you are here?", in such a case we will get extremely disturbed and think, "I came here out of affection and he is not even bothered. What an insult! "

This means that the mind gets disturbed in small and baseless things because it is extremely undetermined.

Q. : But if something unpleasant occurs, isn't it obvious that the mind gets disturbed?

A. : No. No such universal rule exists. Many people in our neighbourhood may be in trouble. But this does not disturb us. Don't wealthy Jain merchants know that many sadharmikas are facing problems and struggling in poverty? Don't they know the difficulties they are facing in trying to make meet ends? But does this disturb the minds of the affluent class? If their minds would get disturbed, then they would surely feel, "These people are in so much misery and distress. Let me use my wealth for their welfare. Religion has given me this wealth and comforts. If I do not utilize this for the cause

of religion, then won't I become a betrayer of religion! Helping sadharmikas is religion. Spending money for this cause is my duty. If I do not perform my duty won't I become disloyal?" Do the minds of wealthy Jain merchants think in this way on seeing the unpleasant state of Sadharmikas? No. Therefore you cannot make this a universal law that the mind gets disturbed due to an unpleasant occurring.

Q. : Can't we say that our mind gets disturbed when something unpleasant occurs with us?

A. : No. You cannot make this also as a rule. For eg. our mind does not get disturbed when our loving wife or dear son spill a jar of ghee. On the contrary, we console them by saying, "Do not worry. Nothing is lost. Such a mishap can happen by me also. What is the big deal?" Here, does the mind of the speaker seem upset?

Q. : Isn't this because the wife and son are more dear than ghee? The loss of ghee caused by them doesn't seem to be of any importance as compared to the affection and care of the family. Hence his mind does not get upset.

A. : Yes. But it means that we can conclude that the mind does not get disturbed on the loss of some object. In reality, if we have a precious thing with us, then our mind does not get disturbed when a thing of lesser importance or value gets spoiled.

Sita had overflowing affection and respect for Ramchandrajai and hence when Ramchandrajai accepted forest exile and they had to forsake all palatial comforts and luxuries, her mind did not get disturbed. Her calculation was such, "Whom have I married? Definitely not the palace, jewelry, servants, clothes and food. I have married Rama and there is no problem in my

married life. Then why should I get disturbed ? Why should I spoil my mind ? My husband is nothing less than 24kt gold. Why should I worry about other things ?” Thus, because of the overflowing love and respect for Rama, Sita’s mind did not get upset at all. We have to apply the same thing in our life.

The key to stop the mind from getting disturbed :

If we have overflowing love and respect for Almighty Arihanta Lords, our Gurus, the great Jain religion, the Navkar Mantra, holy pilgrimage places, etc. then our mind will not get disturbed by worldly losses of material objects.

We should feel that, “O, a virtueless person like me acquired the great, supreme Almighty Vitaraga Arihanta Lords! Can I get such a precious thing ? No one is as fortunate as me. Similarly, I have got a Guru who has showered abundant favors on me. He showed me that the path of the great Jain religion can save me from the clutches of sins done in infinite past births. The great Jain religion has obliged me in numerous ways. Also, the different rituals of Pooja, Navkar Mantra, meditation, compassion, charity, penance and various vows that I perform are so precious and marvelous. When I have attained such a great treasure in the form of God, Guru religion, rituals and virtues, then why should my mind get disturbed when any of my temporary material comforts or social status get spoiled ? Isn't it foolish that you have a treasure of millions and you cry over the loss of 4 pieces of glass ?”

Lord Rishabhdeva was a Chakravarti in his third birth and he renounced all this empire of 6 continents like a piece of grass and accepted Charitra (the path of renunciation). What would have been the value of Charitra in his eyes ? During this Charitra life, amidst various difficulties and troubles when there was a chance of mental disturbance, he would think,

“I have this precious Charitra with me. Now if I have to face some external problems, why should it disturb me ?”

To conclude, think about the dearest and precious path of Charitra that you have and there will remain no chance of unhappiness or stress.

Thus, by keeping his mind undisturbed on the power of his penance, Lord Rishabhdeva created the Punya of becoming, Tirthankar.

Everyone needs to keep this in mind that if on one hand, we perform religious activities and on the other hand, we keep our mind in tension and distress, then this is a terrible fault and Karmasatta’s great crime.

Q. : How can we call these mental disturbances to be a great crime ?

1) The first reason why mental disturbances are terrible :

We get upset by giving importance to little things and then worrying about its loss. But we forget about the strong consolation that, “I have the empire of the 3 worlds. Then why shouldn't I constantly remember the favors of the Arihanta Lords, chant Navkar Mantra and praise the good deeds of others ? Why should I dwell my mind in the external minor problems ?”

If we consider the above things to be precious and have respect and love towards it, then whenever any external unfavorable or stressful situations arise, we should start chanting Navkar Mantra. We need to recognize ourselves. Since infinite times, we have always been engrossed in external material things and have thus pampered and conditioned our mind. As a result, even little inconveniences trouble and stress our mind which makes us forget the valuable Navkar Mantra at that moment.

Then isn't this stress terrible that it makes one forget the precious Navkar Mantra ?

2) The second reason why mental disturbances are terrible :

When the mind gets disturbed repeatedly it becomes weak. If that very mind which is the most powerful instrument in our journey towards salvation becomes weak, isn't this a great loss ?

Any mental stress which leads to this great loss is terrible. The human mind can be made strong enough to ignore the worldly occurrences and engross it in penance and meditation. It can be trained in a way that it thinks only about spiritual welfare. When such a mind becomes weak, isn't it a great loss ?

Why does the mind become weak ? Because we lose our courage.

Why do we lose our courage ? Because our mind gets affected by worldly occurrences.

This is what happened in the case of Saint Vishwabhati. His mind got affected by his cousin brother's mockery and taunts. His mind got disturbed, lost courage and thus, become weak. As a result, he lost the great assets of forgiveness, equanimity and compassion which are necessary for salvation. Eventually, he ended up losing his desire to attain salvation. Such a great loss just due to mental disturbance and stress.

We need to give this a sincere thought. Our mind gets disturbed and stressed in little things and thus becomes weak. This will lead to unwanted acts and sins which will contaminate this precious human birth. Aren't you worried about that ?

Vasubhooti King was famous as an honest and just ruler. His Guru Mata (Mentor's wife) request him to give a false witness. She narrated the critical situation to him. "My son Parvat and Narad Brahmin are involved in a debate.

“Ajairyashtavyam” - My son says that this line from the Vedas means that you should perform the Yagya by goats. But Narad says that the above line means that you should perform the Yagya using old rice grains. Both claim to have been taught their meanings from their Gurus. You have also studied from your Guruji. We thus decided that the meaning that you will claim to have been taught by your Guruji will be considered right. The one who has given the wrong meaning will have to get his tongue chopped off. You have to thus become an evidence.”

King Vasu answered, “Guruji has taught me this meaning- “You should perform the Yagya by using old rice.” Hence I have to tell this meaning to be right.”

Guru Mata said, “Then do you wish that my son’s tongue gets chopped off? I beg you to save my son. I am your Guruji’s wife and thus at a position of your mother. You have to fulfill this desire of mine.”

The mother herself knew the right meaning but was attached to her son. Hence, she forced the king to testify the wrong meaning. Her mind had become weak due to the attachment of her son. Hence, it became disturbed and stressed at the thought of her son losing his tongue and thus forced the honest King to give false evidence.

At that time, King Vasu also got carried away and could not maintain his mental courage. “How can I refuse when my Guru Mata is begging in front of me? Thinking on these lines, he decided to give a false evidence. Thus, in this little incident, King Vasu’s mind become weak and he announced, “Guruji has said ‘Aja’ as goat.” As soon as he said so, the Kshetra Devta* hit him in the back and he fell from the high

* **Kshetra Devta** - The celestial god or goddess who guard that particular place.

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throne. This fall injured him deeply and spitting blood, he reached the dungeons of hell.

“How to displease my Guru Mata ?” this thought weakened his mind and he ended up speaking lies. He must have died in a state of Raudra Dhyana* (he went directly to hell and so we can deduce that)

Isn't this mental disturbance terrible which leads to such terrible consequences ?

Mental stress can lead to Raudra Dhyana :

Q. : “The celestial god came to punish him but today no celestial beings come down on this earth and hence we will not get punished for such mistakes like dishonesty.”

A. : It is a fact that celestial beings do not come to give such instant punishments like death but what about the Raudra dhyana caused due to such false words ? Don't you know that this dishonesty can also lead you to hell ? Do you realize that little greed for money or the desire to create a good image of yourself can make the mind so weak and lead to such dreadful consequences ?

Sinhgufavasi Muni who did upvas and stayed right at the mouth of a lion's cave for 4 months incomplete meditation got disturbed on hearing Sthoolibhadraji being praised more than him. His negative thought process continued, “Is my penance less valuable ? A person who stayed at a prostitute's house and enjoyed lavish food and comforts is appreciated more than me. Isn't this partiality ?” In spite of having a strong mind for penance, this little appreciation of other's virtues disturbed his mind and now look at the series of mistakes he committed.

* **Raudra dhyana** - A continuous wicked and negative thought process

The foolish man does not even realize that, “Arre! What is a great thing-fasting for 4 months at the mouth of a lion's cave or hearing someone being appreciated more ? Appreciation is a small thing. Does our progress rest on appreciation of the great penance performed by us ?” But the mind got disturbed on the other person being appreciated more than him and the weak mind invited numerous unwanted acts in his life.

The misdeeds caused by the mental disturbance of the Sinhgufavasi Muni :

- 1) He developed jealousy towards great Saint Sthoolibhadraji
- 2) His mentor, 14 Purvadhara, Shrutakevali Guru Shambhutivijaya Swami praised Sthoolibhadraji but he disrespected his words and accused him of being partial.
- 3) He became proud of his own penance and considered Sthoolibhadra's great penance to be small.
- 4) “One day, I will also show my Guru what I am.” Thinking on these lines, he developed an ego clash with his great Guru.
- 5) During the next Chaturmas (monsoon), when his Guru denied his desire to stay at the prostitute's place saying, “Oh no, it is not your cup of tea”, he did not accept his Guru's order and went to the prostitute's place.
- 6) He went to the prostitute's place got attracted towards her and asked her to satisfy his sexual desire.
- 7) When the prostitute asked for money he poorly said, “From where will I get money ?”
- 8) She gave him the solution and accordingly he started his journey towards Nepal in the season of monsoon and attained the precious Rathakambal from the king of Nepal. His journey in monsoon led to the violence of

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innumerable little creatures and he also committed the sin of ‘Maha Parigrah’* because of the Rathakambal.

- 9) He hid the precious Kambal in a huge bamboo stick and lied to the thieves by saying, “I do not possess anything.”
- 10) When the thieves opened the bamboo stick and took away his Kambal, he pleaded and begged in front of those thieves.

Why are we counting each and every little thing ? To realize that the little intolerance to bear other’s appreciation lead to such a terrible outcome and dragged the saint in so many sins.

Isn’t this mental disturbance dreadful ?

When does the mind become weak ?

When the mind becomes weak, it gets disturbed. If other’s praise, wealth and progress affect the mind, then it surely becomes weak. Similarly, if one feels bad about little inconveniences and scolding on the loss or spoilage of some things, then the mind becomes weak. Same is the case of mental joy. If you become happy in the little things like earning a little getting tasty food or good clothes or attaining fame and respect, then the mind becomes weak here also.

A strong mind has neither joy nor disturbance. The mind that is affected by either of this is weak. The number of sins that such a mind invites is endless.

Thus, if you want to save your mind from sins, misdeeds, vices or negative thoughts, then do not let it weaken. If you do not want it to become weak, then do not get pleased or displeased in small worldly affairs. To do so, you need to have strong faith in Almighty Arihanta Lord’s teaching.

* **Maha Parigrah** - Extreme fondness for a particular object

Why should the eternal soul not get hurt due to temporary objects, appreciation or criticism ?

Mental disturbance and sorrow in little things can lead to terrible results. In this context we can quote Konik's example also. Konik thought, "Not my queen, but Halla's queen attained the celestial necklace and ear- ornaments ?" His mind got upset and look where he reached - He fought with his grandfather, King Cheda who had given refuge to Halla and Vihalla for 12 years. When he was not successful in attaining the capital city of Vaishali, he lured Kulvalak Saint by way of a prostitute and ignited him to break the great stupa (pillar like monument) of Lord Munisurvata Swami and eventually destroyed the entire city of Vaishali.

What dreadful results of mental disturbance!

As we saw earlier. Saint Vishwabhati could not tolerate the mockery done by his cousin brother and as a result his mind got disturbed. Leaving aside the desire salvation, he did a Niyamu of acquiring massive strength as a fruit of his great penance and renunciation. Intense desire for material things converts the Punya accumulated due to religious activities to be papanubandhi.

What is Papanubandhi Punya ?

It means that when this Punya* comes into effect, one will attain luxuries and comforts but since its attraction had led to this Niyamu, the attraction towards these worldly comforts will also be present. This will spoil one's mind and lead to vices like desires, anger, greed, deceit and pride. Once these vices enter one's life, he will sink in the ocean of sins because the combination of wealth, power and pride is dreadful and can make one forget the difference between right and wrong.

* **Punya** - Fortune acquired due to good acts performed in the past

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Thus Punya which eventually results in Papa (sins) is called Papanubandhi.

Saint Vishwabhuti went to the seventh heaven because of the Punya accumulated due to his penance and renunciation. After that, due to the impact of his Niyanu, he became the strong and powerful Triprushtha Vasudeva. But since his Punya was Papanubandhi, he fell in the deep well of ignorance, enjoyed comforts without any control and due to the pride of his power, punished his subjects for little crimes.

Triprushtha Vasudev's life incidents :

When Triprushtha had not become the Vasudev (King of 3 continents) and his father Prajapati was the king, a messenger came from the greater king Vasudeva saying, "On the border of this specific region, a lion comes out in the season of monsoon due to which the farmers get scared. Hence the kings of various regions guard the border turn by turn. It is your turn this time. Hence you should go there for protection."

Sitting in the king's court, Triprushtha heard this and lost his temper, "Who is he to order me ?" He insulted the messenger but his father got scared that, "If the messenger went and told the king, then they would be in a fix," Hence, he accepted the king's orders. But Triprushtha Vasudeva was no less. When the messenger left, he followed him and beat him on the way.

When you develop any vice (bad quality) during one birth, it is sure to grow and increase in the coming births.

When Triprushtha saw his father, King Prajapati preparing to go to protect the farmers from the lion, he said, "Wait, you do not need to go along with the army. We both brothers are enough to finish the work." Saying so, he reached the village border. He asked the soldiers, "When does the lion come ?"

The farmers answered, "It cannot be said."

“Till when should we wait for him to come ? Instead show me the direction from where the lion comes.”

The farmers pointed out the direction and Triprustha guided the chariot on that way. He reached the specific mountain and made a huge lion roar. Why ? To instigate and call the lion. Today man is scared of even going in the direction where there is possibility of a lion whereas Triprustha deliberately called out to the lion. Imagine his strength! He had acquired this strength by strong penance and renunciation and not by gamble or eating tonics or various Rasayanas. For this, it is essential to have faith that, strength and beauty can be acquired by penance and renunciation and not by consuming tonics and Rasayanas.

Today’s polluted atmosphere has disturbed the mind and hence it does not progress on the path of penance and renunciation.

As the tiger gets more prey, he becomes more aggressive. Similarly, in today’s materialistic world, as the equipment and comforts increase, man becomes all the more desperate for more. Penance and renunciation does not come to him even in his dreams.

The strength of generosity, affection and serenity can be acquired due to renunciation. Without penance, it is impossible to get rid of narrow-mindedness and laziness. Without the habit of penance, the mind becomes lazy, narrow and weak in the matter of food also. A little change or shortcoming in food – one’s expression, mood and speech changes! Since strength is not attained by way of penance, it is difficult to stay generous, royal and courageous.

Penance and renunciation lead to emergence of an inner strength which can make you generous, royal and courageous

when required. Due to the incomparable strength attained by Tripurushtha Vasudeva by way of penance and renunciation, he had the guts to challenge the lion by making the huge lion roar. Why did he call out to the lion ? To kill him. This is the misuse of strength and the result of PapanubandhiPunya which leads to the sinful mind.

Papanubandhi Punya is the one which leads to a sinful mental process while experiencing the fruits of Punya. It means that you are accepting Papa (sins) at the cost of Punya.

How does Punya become Papanubandhi ?

- 1) Do not forget that you are getting all luxuries and comforts by your Punya. Pay the price of your Punya and attain wealth and other equipment. If you exercise dishonesty, cheating and deceit to attain this wealth, then the Punyais bound to become Papanubandhi. Thus, when you spend your Punya and perform such activities, it means that you bought Paap. This is one way by which Punya can become Papanubandhi.
- 2) Another way in which the Punya can become Papanubandhi is that even after earning money by rightful means, if you become greedy and proud about it, if you become possessive and obsessive about it, then the Punya is sure to become Papanubandhi.

Now the question is,

Q. : Can you change Papanubandhi Punya ? Such kind of Punya is binded in such a way that it leads to sinful mind while earning and enjoying the wealth. What can we do to stop it ? Can we do something ?

A. : This is just an excuse to continue your sinful mind and acts. But one thing that you should keep in mind is that it is not essential that this Papanubandhi nature of Punya is

unchangeable. If it is so, then no one can exercise religion and attain its good fruits. Because each individual has a sinful mind and is surrounded by sins before acquiring a religious outlook. Now if the previous sins were an outcome of Nikachit (unchangeable) Papanubandhi Punya then, the sinful mind would never improve and religion would never enter in his life. But infinite souls have overcome their sinful mind, attained a religious outlook and acquired salvation. This proves that, there are many such Anikachit (changeable) Papanubandhi Punya which change on getting a suitable factor and appropriate efforts.

1) Suitable factors can change a sinful mind :

A sinful mind is active during routine life but if you happen to visit a holy pilgrimage place its intensity decreases. Gautam Indrabhuti Brahmin was fuming in rage against Lord Mahavira. This was a sinful mind. But no sooner did he see Lord's Samavasaran, heard his name from Lord's mouth and heard the answer of his doubt, his ego and anger subsided. Now, compare this to the act of listening to a Vyakhyan (religious discourse). Before listening to the Vyakhyan, the mind and body is constantly engaged in sins but after listening to the sermon, the sinful mind becomes inactive. The intensity of sins decreases greatly.

The sight of a pure ascetic life also leads to decrease in the intensity of sins:

An opponent sent murderers to kill a Saint. Till they reached the innocent saint sleeping in moonlight, their mind had just one thought, "We will kill him with this knife." Such a cruel sinful thought! In the meanwhile, while they were standing there, the saint changed sides in his sleep. Before doing so, he picked up his Rajoharan lying by the side and did Pramarijana
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of his body and the place where he had to change his side to prevent any small creature from getting harmed or killed. After doing so, he changed sides.

The murderers changed mind :

The murderers were astonished, “Oh, this saint is careful to not harm the tiniest creature even in his sleep. Such a compassionate saint cannot have feelings of envy or hatred for anyone. He cannot think bad about anyone or even think of harming anyone. Then how can he think badly about his opponent who has hired us to kill him ? His opponent is really a fool to hire us for this work. But why should we behave like fools ? Should we actually kill this compassionate saint and enjoy the money earned by performing this dreadful act ? No, we should not kill his great saint.”

What happened to the murderers ? The sight of the saint’s pure ascetic conduct acted as a factor in changing the murderer’s sinful mind. If you cannot be altered at any cost, then such prime factors also cannot do anything. But it is a proven fact that such factors are instrumental in suppressing and gradually decreasing the intensity of the sinful mind. Also, many sinful people in the past have experienced a turnover which depicts that Anikachit Papanubandhi Punya can be avoided and changed. A sinful mind can be changed into a religious mind.

2) Appropriate efforts can change a sinful mind :

Just as a sinful mind can be changed due to some factors, it can be altered due to appropriate efforts too. Even though the mind is enveloped in sinful thoughts, if one constantly keeps in touch with saints, listens to their religious sermons, reads good spiritual books, then he can avoid sinful negative thoughts for that particular time span. Also, instead of roaming here and there, if you engage yourself in good activities like

Chaityavandan-stavan in Derasar, reciting Navasmaran stotras, doing Samayika, Pratikraman, then you can save yourself from sins during that period. If you are constantly engaged in healthy talks, religious discourses and contemplate on the Anitya-Asharana Bhavanas showed by Arihanta Lords then, due to such continuous efforts, the Papanubandhi surely get suppressed and eventually wither away.

Why should Jain saints constantly do Swadhyaya* ?

This is the reason why a Jain Muni is supposed to do Swadhyaya for 5 prahar out of the total day of 8 prahar. If the mind is engaged in Swadhyaya, sinful thoughts do not emerge in the mind. On the other hand, if the saint does not keep his mind occupied in Swadhyaya, then according to the saying, “An idle mind is a devil’s workshop”, the mind is bound to get engaged in negative, unwanted thoughts. These thoughts may be related to health issues, conveniences and inconveniences, hatred or attachment or just nonsense thoughts worrying about others. It is also possible that thoughts related to lust and sensual attractions envelope the mind.

Example of a saint who lost his way :

There is an example in our scriptures in which a saint’s mind was suddenly enveloped with sensual desires. He could not control his thoughts and feelings of lust and attraction. He shared his problem with his close companion. His companion answered, “Such a low thought in such a pure ascetic life! You are surely suffering from a severe Mohodaya. To suppress it you should do severe penance and fasts and leave delicious food.” The saint accepted his well-wisher’s advice and started severe penance and followed strict vows but did not attain any success in suppressing his desires. He again consulted

* **Swadhyaya** – the study of Jain Scriptures

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his co-saint. He said, “O Brother! It is better you talk to the Acharya Bhagwant. He will show you the right solution.”

The saint confided in the Acharya Bhagwant and he casually replied, “O, It isn’t a great problem. It will be solved in a jiffy. I will give you an effective solution. Look, you have deeply studied our scriptures and some monks here are in need of knowledge. Hence, you start imparting scriptural knowledge to them in the form of religious sermons.”

Why did the Acharya Bhagwant give such a suggestion? Because he saw that the disturbed saint was knowledgeable but was in such a troubled state due to the lack of the revision of scriptures. As a result, his mind was enveloped with thoughts of lust and sensual desires. If he would get engaged in imparting knowledge to others, then his mind would be constantly occupied in those thoughts which would automatically eliminate all unwanted desires and negative thoughts.

How will a mind engaged in scriptural fundas and principles be free for nonsense thoughts?

If the mind is engaged in nonsense thoughts it depicts that it does not have enough food for contemplation about various elements stated in our scriptures.

If you are supposed to count Rs. 10,000, will the mind be diverted in other thoughts? No. Because the mind is concentrating on counting every single rupee. Ask a person who is occupied in the work of passing little pearls in a thread, “Does your mind get diverted elsewhere while doing this work?” He will definitely refuse because if he did his work in bits and pieces while concentrating somewhere else, he would not finish his work on time and would not earn his livelihood. If the mere thought of livelihood can stop the mind

from getting diverted, then can't we keep our mind engaged in studying scriptures and contemplating on its various fundas with the great intention of eliminating past Karmas and attaining salvation ? Can unwanted thoughts enter in such a state ? Isn't the intention of salvation and liberation from the bondage of Karmas greater than the intention of earning a timely livelihood ? Then how can this aim be forgotten ? Why doesn't it stay in our mind at all times ?

Do not calculate in such a way that, "Anyways salvation cannot be attained this time. Also you cannot constantly keep on eliminating past Karmas. Then how does it matter if the mind gets disturbed by unnecessary thoughts in between ? As and when the mind gets engaged in Swadhyaya, Karmas are bound to get liberated. Hence it is not a big deal if the mind gets disturbed. Who is great enough to keep his mind concentrated at all times, 24 x 7 ?" Do not think in this manner because, the loss incurred due to wrong, unnecessary thoughts cannot be described.

Such thoughts weaken the mind and it becomes undetermined.

- 1) Once the mind is habituated with such thoughts, these thoughts envelope the mind repeatedly.
- 2) Gradually, the weak mind which is enveloped with such thoughts frequently, will not be able to concentrate in Swadhyaya. If such thoughts keep on entering in the mind, then they are sure to disturb the million dollar rituals of pratikraman also. The bad habit of succumbing to wrong, unnecessary thoughts and looking here and there will not keep the mind and vision engaged in the holy and precious ritual of worshipping Arihanta Lord. Then what will be the fruits even if you perform these rituals, thousands of times ?

Due to wrong thoughts and the habit of looking here and there, the mind does not remain steady in Arihanta Parmatma's worship and virtues.

Will worship done in such a half-heated manner help? After worshipping Lord in such a way, will Lord stay in our memory after leaving the temple? You climbed the great Tirthadhiraja Shatrunjay and worshipped almighty Adinath. After leaving the temple, for how long will Lord stay in your memory? Till you climb down the Shatrunjay Mountain or till you have Bhatu at the Bhatagar located on the Taleti road or till you reach your Dharamshala? When do you next remember Lord Adinath again? You will say, probably on the next day when we climb Shatrunjay again and worship Lord Adinath. What about the 22 – 23 hours in between? This is because you do not have the courage to save yourself from exercising those sins. Only if you remain determined, can you.

- (1) Save yourself from sins.
- (2) Not get dragged away in the greed of wealth and sensual desires.

What did Shrenik consider himself?

Q. : Shrenik had binded the great Tirthankara Namakarma and possessed Kshayik Samyaktva*. Will you call Shrenik undetermined?

A. : We cannot say so. Instead, we should think about what he said and believed. During his last times, when he was imprisoned by his son Konik, he taught, "Great are Meghkumar, Nandishera, Abhaykumar who renounced the world and accepted diksha from Lord Mahavira!

* **Samyaktva** - Right faith in accordance with the preaching of Lord Mahavira.

I am really a coward and undetermined to stay back in this trouble some world which leads to this miserable state today. In spite of bearing sorrows and troubles here, I cannot free myself from the clutches of Karmas as I am facing these sorrows due to dependency and compulsion. If I would have tolerated pains and sorrows out of choice by accepting Lord Mahavira's ascetic life, I would have done abundant Karma Nirjara. But I am not that fortunate. How can an undetermined person like me worship on the holy Giriraj ? Why is our state like this ? Because our mind had not become steady enough in Lord Adinath to enable us to consider the outer world and objects as futile.

Imagine a person who has a beautiful wife of his choice or an agent who got many business deals or a huge promotion in his job which resulted in a considerable increment in his salary – won't his mind become steady in all these outer benefits ? Won't he keep on remembering his fortune now and then ? Then why doesn't our mind remain steady like this in worshipping Lord ? Because unnecessary thoughts do not let it remain stable. An idle mind does nothing but gets dragged away in wild, unwanted thoughts. This bad habit does not let one concentrate in the great ritual of worshipping Lord.

Hence it is essential to keep the mind from getting idle. To ensure this, the mind should be kept occupied in the study of Scriptures. We spoke about one disadvantage of entertaining unwanted thoughts. Now let us look upon the second loss.

(2) The mind loses courage and becomes undetermined :

When does a man commit sins and mistakes ? Only when he does not have the courage to remain unmoved against the chance to commit sins. When he loses his determination, only

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then does he commit sins. The thirst for wealth and sensual pleasure is such that a man does not have the courage to avoid it and thus get dragged away in it. After getting dragged away in these pleasures, there is no looking back. He will exercise sins as per his wish without any control ?

How did Shrenik consider himself? Undetermined and a coward. As a result, he made constant efforts and exercised various rituals which resulted in the emergence of Kshayik Samyaktva and Tirthankara Namakarma. He did not succumb to various desires leading to increase in Mithyatva*. This can be considered his courage. In spite of this, he would not renounce the material world and the various pleasures it offered. This shows that Shrenik was indeterminate and a coward.

Indetermination lead to sins :

If you do not keep the mind occupied in the study of Scriptures, then it is bound to get dragged away in other worldly thoughts. This is sure to make the mind undetermined and weak which will again result in unwanted thoughts related to wealth and other desires. The result ? A sinful mind and life.

How did the saint overcome his unwanted thoughts ?

The wise Acharya Bhagwant had realized that his disciple saint's mind had become idle without the Swadhyaya of scriptures due to the past karmas binded by him. This had made him undetermined. Thus, the root of the problem was an idle mind. Hence, the most effective solution was to occupy his mind in some work so that it did not become idle.

According to the Acharya Bhagwant's guidance, the saint got engaged in imparting knowledge to his co-saints right from

* **Mithyatva** - false beliefs which are against the teachings of Lord Mahavira.

early morning to night. Additionally, he would help them revise all that was taught to them and also solve their doubt and difficulties. Thus, he did not get spare time to entertain unwanted thoughts and desires. Due to such tireless efforts throughout the day, he got a sound sleep immediately. Thus, eliminating any chance of unnecessary thoughts at that time too. Now, how could the past Karmas show their fruits ?

After 10 to 15 days, the Acharya Bhagwant called that particular saint and inquired, “How do you feel now ? You were complaining about the effect of the past negative Karmas leading to disturbance of mind. What is the situation at present ?”

The saint answered, “O Bhagwant! Since that time you have engaged me in the work of imparting knowledge to others, such futile thoughts have stopped harassing me.”

Acharya Bhagwant said, “Your mind was idle without this study of scriptures. Hence it was getting carried away in such futile thoughts. Now keep yourself occupied with this study of scriptures till your last breath. You will not face any problem. Great monks who have studied the enormous 14 Purvas also keep revising and contemplating upon them. Then, do we have any other option ? This is Jineshwar Lord’s words also which will keep the mind pure and happy.”

The humble saint fell in the feet of his compassionate mentor and said, “Oh Lord! You have done a great favour on me. You really saved me. You are absolutely right. My mind has remained pure because of being immersed in the vast ocean of knowledge. Now I am relaxed by your grace. You saved me from falling in the dungeons of hell. I am really grateful to you.”



6. Ignorance : A Curse

Kamlata's state worsened :

Initially, Kamlata had lost her courage and agreed to become the king's queen. Eventually, she stooped to such a level that she agreed to prostitution. Now something unexpected and horrible occurred. Prostitution in itself is a horrible act and imagine its dreadfulness when it results in physical relations with one's own son. Doesn't it sound horrible ? Now, look what happens :

Kamlata's Brahmin husband had come to pick up Kamlata at the temple. But he died an accidental death due to the snakebite. His son was a scholar of vedas waited for him at home. When his father, the Brahmin, did not turn up, he left his home town and travelled across various cities. He impressed kings and scholars with his knowledge of the vedas and thus, passed a happy life.

Now, can you imagine such a noble man falling for a prostitute ? But due to youth, the abundant wealth left by his father (given by Kamlata when she was Queen) and no supervision in unknown regions, he could not control his desires. He reached the same city where his mother Kamlata had become a prostitute. He reached the King's court and impressed everyone with his Vedic talks. He learnt that a beautiful prostitute stayed in the same city. He reached her doorstep, got tempted and attracted by her beauty. He considered his journey fruitful on acquiring such a beautiful woman.

The dreadful sin :

He had seen his mother at the tender age of two and never thereafter. Hence, he could not recognize her. Similarly, Kamlata had also seen him when he was a little child. Now, he had become a young man and hence, even she could not identify him as her son. To hide their sinful acts, both of them had hidden their real identities, too. As a result, without even the slightest idea of their relation, they fell in this horrible act of adultery.

The dreadfulness of ignorance :

Isn't ignorance really dreadful ? They shared blood relations of mother and son. But unawareness about it lead to such a dreadful act.

Scriptures state that ignorance is a greater crime than violence, deceit, theft, or lies because ignorance is the root cause of all these crimes. A person who is not aware of his soul does not realize that this soul will have to face terrible sorrows in the next births due to crimes like violence and theft committed by him. Hence, he does not stay away from crimes. In the short run, he believes that it gives him happiness. But he does not realize the bitter fruits that he would have to face in the next birth. Hence, he does not think twice before performing any sinful act. Thus, the root of all is ignorance.

Till ignorance about the soul persists, sorrows will not end :

Kalikal Sarvagya Shri Hemchandrasoorishwarjee Maharaja states in Yogshastra :

Sorrow emerges from the ignorance of the soul and hence this sorrow ends by the right knowledge of the soul. Severe penance done without such true knowledge is also not sufficient to eliminate sorrows.

Sage Kamath, was doing severe penance without any true knowledge about the soul. Hence, when Prince Parshwakumar removed a half- burnt snake from the wood used by him in his Yagna, he was astonished. Instead of thinking, “Oh no, what a pitiful state the innocent snake is in due to the fire of my Yagna! ”, he developed a feeling of hatred and animosity for Prince Parshwakumar. Sage Kamath had not identified the real nature of his soul. If he would have kept the eternal soul in front of his eyes which was roaming in this cycle of birth and death due to various sins like violence, dishonesty, etc., then he would have surely regretted his act and would have felt happy, after knowing the truth. But he was unaware about this and hence, he was trapped in dejection and unhappiness.

Arre! After this incident, he did more severe penance and followed stricter vows. Why ? To attain spiritual welfare ? No, but to take revenge against Prince Parshwakumar because of whom he had lost prestige amongst the people. He thought, “I will increase my penance and become a Deva* with super natural powers. I will show the world the result of harassing me.” He really become a Vyantor Deva in the next birth, but did he attain true happiness ? No. After Lord Parshwanath become a saint, he was fuming with rage against him.

Envy and hatred is such a strong negative feeling that in spite of abundant instruments of joy and comfort, it does not let one stay happy and relaxed. Instead, one is always burning with sorrow and anxiety.

Even in this example, Kamath had done severe penance. But did his sorrow end ? No. Because, end of sorrow is impossible without true knowledge about the soul.

Q. : This sorrow and mental disturbance is due to hatred.

* **Deva** - A celestial being possessing miraculous powers

Where does spiritual knowledge come in between? Wouldn't Kamath know his soul's real nature after becoming a Deva?

A. : Lack of spiritual knowledge definitely comes in here because hatred emerged due to ignorance of the soul. After becoming a Deva, he must have come to know by his Vibhang Gyana* that he had become a Deva due to the severe penance performed by him. But he did not use this knowledge to increase his religious sentiments and develop a calm and composed mind. Instead he thought, "That Prince Parshwakumar saved the snake from burning in the wood which was used in my Yagna and it led to my criticism amidst people. Fortunately, I increased my penance and became a Deva here. Now it is my turn to show him my power." Thinking on these lines, instead of calming down his mind, he burnt in the fire of hatred and animosity. Thus, in spite of knowing his past mistakes due to the knowledge in the Deva birth, he could not pacify his anger and hatred. Then, can this knowledge help one to identify the soul? Can you call this true knowledge?

Q. : In the Deva birth he acquired the knowledge about the nature of his soul in the previous birth. Then how can this knowledge vanish due to hatred?

A. : You first need to understand what do we call the real knowledge of the soul.

What does knowing the soul mean?

Is it possible that someone knows the soul, but does not know that how can it be binded or freed from the ties of Karmas?

* **Vibhang Gyana** - Knowledge about the limited past and future not supported by Samyak darshana.

Is it logical that someone claims to know the soul but does not realize that good deeds can lead to a good birth in future, whereas bad deeds can lead to a very painful birth ?

Negative feelings like anger, pride, deceit, animosity are the soul's weakness, while virtues like forgiveness, composure, humility, modesty, simplicity, kindness, compassion, etc. are all the soul's beauty and strength. The one who does not understand this, does not know the soul.

What does 'knowing' mean in the true sense ?

Knowledge generally comes with some responsibilities. For example, if one knows that unnecessary expenditure can prove disastrous, then he will think twice before spending money. If by chance, he spends more money, then he will regret his decision. If his son happens to spend more than necessary, then he will be displeased and will scold his son. At that time his son back-answers that, "I know that I should not have spent such a huge amount for this". He will immediately tell his son, "What is the use of such knowledge which you cannot apply ? In spite of knowing everything, you still spent so much ? Isn't this foolishness ?"

Only that knowledge is true which comes along with certain responsibilities.

Accordingly, after knowing (a) the reasons which bind or free the soul from Karmas, (b) the soul's strength and weaknesses and (c) the good or bad acts which lead to good or bad births, don't you have any responsibilities ? If you claim to know the true nature of the soul, don't you have any responsibilities to follow ? Do you remain cautious about staying away from the things that harm the soul ?

Early morning contemplation :

Wake up early in the morning. In the peaceful and serene

morning atmosphere, contemplate whether you really know your soul. Try to identify your soul.

- 1) If I really know and identify it, then am I cautious about it being binded or freed from the ties of Karmas ?
- 2) Am I enthusiastic about performing good acts of compassion, philanthropy, penance and renunciation ?
- 3) Am I selfish and wicked ? Do I act greedy on seeing food and wealth ?
- 4) Am I aware that anger, greed, deceit and pride are my negative traits ?
- 5) Do I feel bad on getting carried away by any of these vices ?
- 6) By great luck, I have acquired the Almighty Arihanta Lords in this birth, which showed me the real nature of the soul ? Do I live up to it ?

During the unpolluted and quiet atmosphere before day-break, contemplating on such thoughtscan bring a heart touching revolution in your life.

Prayer to Lord :

After such deep contemplation, pray to God in a soft voice, "O God! You did a great favour on me by helping me identify my soul but, it is my misfortune and weakness that instead of thinking about my soul, I am constantly worried about my body and wealth, relatives, family, status and business. I am not ready to understand the soul's vices and the causes that throw the soul in the dungeons of hell and other such low births. O Lord! Save me. Help me identify the true nature of the soul. O Almighty! Prevent me from exercising all that is harmful for the soul and even if I happen to exercise the

harmful then ensure that I have heavy regret for my actions. O compassionate! You gave a chance to the wicked snake Chandakaushik and enabled him to identify his soul, revert back from his sins and engaged him in religious activities. Then, can't you shower your blessings on me?"

If you pray to God in this manner every morning, then it will surely leave a deep impact on you. Prayers that are done from the heart will surely show colors. They will never go in vain.

It is necessary to identify the true nature of the soul and constantly keep on distinguishing between things that profit or harm the soul. If you do so, then you will experience a great change in your thoughts, actions and words.

One will feel inner desire :

"I have such a short life to live. Why should I spoil my soul's well-being? Why should I welcome vices in this soul for the sake of temporary objects? Favourable food and drinks, latest clothes and luxuries are not going to provide satisfaction even on the next day, then why get carried away by it?"

In this material world, we have acquired many such objects and can still acquire them according to our desire but, it is extremely difficult to attain Almighty Jineshwar Lords and the religion propounded by them. When we have already acquired them by our great luck, then we should devote ourselves in its reverence. There is no greater duty, courage or path of welfare, other than devoting oneself in the reverence of Jineshwar Lords and their teachings.

The soul's miserable state due to ignorance :

If you have not identified your soul in the real sense and have not thought about its loss or welfare, then it is surely going to result in many abnormalities like :

- i) The mind constantly worries about acquirement of wealth, food and luxuries.
- ii) No control in fulfillment of sensual pleasures and constantly enjoying all that is acquired.
- iii) Exercising violence and other sins without any restriction.
- iv) Considering only self-interest.
- v) Having conflicts with even near and dear ones due to anger, greed, pride, deceit, envy, etc.
- vi) No duty towards following Jineshwar Lord's commands.

It is truly said that sorrow emerges due to ignorance of the soul.

The one who has recognized his soul has ended his sorrows in the true sense.

Great men in the past had to undergo many pains and afflictions like getting their skin peeled off, having burning coals put on their head, getting crushed in the flour grinder, etc. But since they had truly identified the soul, they considered these difficulties to be a great source of Karma Nirjara for the soul and did not consider them as sorrows.

Almighty Lord Mahavira was enveloped by great tortures and difficulties in his period of penance but he kept his eternal soul in front of his eyes and accordingly, those difficulties did not pain or trouble him. All sins are an outcome of the soul's ignorance.

It is rightly said, the soul's ignorance is a greater crime than sins like violence, theft, etc.

The entire world is engrossed in sins due to this great sin of ignorance. Kamlata and the Vedic scholar shared a mother –

son relation, but they did not recognise each other and hence committed this grave mistake due to ignorance. Insatiable sensual desires on one side and ignorance on the other, then what will remain ? Even if one is blinded by lust, if one is aware that ‘This is my mother’, ‘this is my own son’, then in spite of great beauty and attraction, one will not even think of engaging in such sinful activities. But here recognition is absent and hence grave sins are also exercised with much delight and gay.

Thus, ignorance is the greatest sin. In fact, it is the father of all sins.

The importance of a good family.

The Son revealed his identity :

Days passed as Kamlata and her son enjoyed physical pleasures while being completely ignorant of the relation they shared.

One fine day the Vedic scholar said, “Tomorrow I will depart from here.”

Due to the blood ties they shared, Kamlata felt closely attached to him. She became sad and requested him to stay a little longer.

He replied, “No. I cannot stay any more. I will now have to go. It has been many days.” Kamlata inquired, “When will we meet again ? Where do you stay ? What is your occupation ?”

The Brahmin scholar thought that as it was anyways time to leave so there was no harm in revealing the truth. Hence, he started his story, “I am a Brahmin’s son. My mother Kamlata had gone to fetch water from the well located outside the city when the enemy king abducted her. I was only two years old at that time. The King kept her imprisoned at his palace.

After some years, she started doing charity and my father went there to get some money. Kamlata gave him abundant wealth and called him at the Goddess's Temple on the fateful night of Kali Chaudasa to help her flee from the king and come back home. But he never returned home. Hence, I am now an orphan without either a mother or a father. I left my home town to travel across the country and eventually ended up here."

Kamlata was shocked on hearing this. A chill ran down her spine. "What did I do ? Such a dreadful act with my own son! But if I unravel the truth to him, he will also be shocked. What if he cannot face the truth ? What if he ends up committing suicide ?" Thinking on these lines, she did not utter a single word.

Now the question that arises here is that why didn't the Brahmin ask about the prostitute's history or how she ended up becoming a prostitute.

The answer is that people on this Arya land have a strong faith that women from renowned and good families would never accept such a low occupation of prostitution. They thought that only women from low families or those born due to some injustice or those who are abandoned right after birth or those who had come accidentally in the hands of some prostitute would accept such a low-profile occupation. Otherwise, a person from a noble family would never engage in such a profession. "What to inquire about the life of such a woman from such a downtrodden family ?" Due to such an understanding, the Brahmin scholar did not question Kamlata.

The characteristics of a noble class :

In the past, there was such a firm belief related to people hailing from a noble family that they would never cross the

society norms in routine life. Hence, belonging to a noble family was one of the virtue of an ideal Shrivaka (a Jain householder). It is also one of the requirements to be fulfilled in order to accept Diksha. Why so ?

i) Because those who hail from noble a family will never walk on the wrong or prohibited path. They will never perform bad activities which would lead to criticism of religion. Otherwise, if a sadhu or shravaka engaged in wrong activities, it would lead to criticism of the entire religion that, “Look, what kind of religion these people follow ? Does religion give them the permission to perform such activities ?” This is the reason that a person from a low family is not considered suitable for giving Diksha. A person hailing from a noble family will definitely glorify religion in future.

A question that is bound to rise here is,

Q. : Why can't people from low, backward families be given Diksha ?

If a person from a low and backward caste has developed a feeling of non-attachment towards the material world and desires to renounce the world, can't he be considered appropriate for giving Diksha ? After having such a realization will he still perform any wrong activities ?

A. : The prohibition to give Diksha to such people is basically to avoid the criticism of Jain religion. Because if such a person is accepted as a Jain saint, people would comment that, “This Jain religion seems low and valueless to accept such low caste people. If the religion is of a high quality, then can it be given to low people ?” To avoid such criticism, such low caste people should not be made a Jain saint. Jain saints should not obtain Gochari

(food) from such low caste houses because people may comment, “The one who accepts Gochari from such dirty houses, their religion must also be so dirty! ”

While we follow a million-dollar religion, our actions must not be such that people criticize our religion.

Why should we not be instrumental in causing criticism of religion ? Out of compassion of others.

We cannot think that, “Let people criticise religion. They will pay for it. What can I do ?” The reason here is that if we have the power, we should strive to stop the criticism of religion, leave alone becoming instrumental in causing such criticism. If someone is dying due to hunger or thirst, it is our duty to save them by providing water or food. But can we play a role in causing their death ? Similar is the case here.

If people criticise religion, it leads to 2 major disadvantages.

- 1) If criticism of religion is happening on a widespread scale, innocent and normal creatures will keep away from religion. They will think, “Why to accept a religion which is bad and criticized all around ?” Thus, innocent people will stop from getting attracted towards religion, stay immersed in sins and will fall in the dungeons of hell and other low births.
- 2) The second disadvantage is that those who criticize religion eventually became Durlabh Bodhi, that is, by criticizing religion they will bind such deep Mithyatva Mohaniya Karmas that in the coming births they will not be able to attain Bodhi i.e. faith in Jain religion. Poor people! They have not attained proper religion in this birth and they have created a position due to which they will not attain religion in the coming births. On the other hand, if we

would not have given them a chance to criticize religion and ensured that others appreciated our religious activities, then they would become Sulabh Bodhi i.e. reserved Jain religion in their future births. But providing them wrong reasons to condemn religion will surely drag them away from this priceless Jain religion.

“Not getting Jain religion in the coming births, getting dragged away from religion” means that one develops a feeling of irritation and hatred for religion and likes to stay engrossed in sinful activities. Thus, he is bound to suffer in a series of bad births. Thus, we can say that the one who criticizes religion and the one who hears such criticism are both at fault. Both of them are engaged in sins and eventually end up in bad births. But it can be said that the real culprit is the one who gave a chance to criticize religion in the initial stage. How great is this crime ? By giving a chance to criticize religion, he made the speaker as well as the listener devoid of religious sentiments, thus keeping them away from the acquisition of religion in future.

To avoid such a situation by feeling sorry for the consequences that innocent people will have to suffer, one should avoid becoming instrumental in such criticism of religion.

If you can understand this, then you will be able to understand the reason behind the prohibition to give Diksha to a person from a low class in spite of his detachment towards the world. Innocent and ignorant people will condemn the religion which accepted him. As a result, becoming a saint, may prove beneficial to his soul, but it may harm the spiritual welfare of many other souls for a long time. Shouldn't such carelessness be avoided ?

Other reasons as to why a person hailing from low, scheduled caste should not be given Diksha :

Apart from criticism of religion in the society, it is a question as to whether such people can follow all the vows and oaths of the strict Diksha (ascetic) life. This is because:

- i) It is quite possible that during some occasion the saint would go back to his roots i.e. while following his code of conduct, his original slang language would come out or he would behave in an indecent manner. Due to this other good saints would face difficulty and people around would criticize Sadhus.
- ii) Secondly, if a situation arises where his previous Charitra Mohaniya Karmas come into action, then due to a low family background, he will get dragged towards that wrong act. On the other hand, a person hailing from the noble family will be worried about saving the prestige of his family and will think twice before exercising any wrong act. But the person from a low family is not worried about his family status and will plunge into wrong acts.

Thus, it is the characteristic of a person coming from a noble family that he will properly follow the path accepted by him and not break the code of conduct laid down for him. He will not take wrong turns in life.

In this case also the Brahmin scholar believed that the prostitute would not be from a reputed family and hence did not inquire about her family background. Next day he left the town.

But Kamlata was extremely disturbed on hearing the truth from the Brahmin scholar. She suffered a major setback and heavily regretted all her past acts.

Kamlata's deep remorse :

“Arre! Where did I reach ? Physical relations with my own son! A decent, loyal Brahmin's wife at one time and now the

prostitute who had crossed all limits! I left my husband to become the King's Queen, then a prostitute and now physical relations with my own son? No woman would be a greater sinner than me on this earth. What should I do? Where to go? Who will give me shelter? O God! Why did you not shower any mercy on me? No, but how can God help those who want to deliberately exercise sinful acts? God is the protector of the poor and helpless, he provides comfort to the distressed and those who regret their acts. Why will he care for a sinful person like me? I have no purpose to live. The more I live the more sins I will commit. It is better that I commit suicide and shorten my life. The earth will also be relieved of the burden of a sinful woman like me."

The turn-over :

This is the importance of a noble and reputed family background that sometime in life, the person will greatly regret his deeds.

The example of Asamat Nastik is famous in our scriptures. He was born in a noble, reputed family, but due to the past Mithyatva Karmas which came into action, he had become a total atheist. He kept on saying that "Nothing like the soul, Punya, Papa or rebirth exists" and engaged in heated arguments to prove himself right. He could not accept anything (Punya, Papa, etc.) and hence was named Asamat (unaccepted) by one and all. If saints happened to arrive in the city, he would trouble them to the core. Someone had diverted his mind to complete atheism. Can such a person ever feel regretful about his acts? Does it seem likely that he regretted his deeds. How did this change occur?

Once a saint named Lalitangmuni arrived in the city. To avoid getting into baseless arguments with Asamat Nastik and to

peacefully continue his penance and daily rituals, he decided to do complete Moun, stay outside the city and concentrate on meditation. Nastik spread rumours all over the city that the saint did not have any evidence to prove the existence of the soul, punya, paap, etc. and hence preferred to sit silently outside the city. But one fine day even the egoistic atheist suffered a setback.

It so happened that during monsoon it poured cats and dogs. The lowlands outside the city fort were completely flooded. But the surprising event was that the area around the meditating saint was completely dry due to the impact of his strict penance and severe fasts. People who climbed the fort walls to witness the floods happened to notice this miracle and were totally amazed. Word spread like wildfire, “Look, at the effect of religion! ” After witnessing such a miracle who would believe in Asamat Nastik’s words ? People started condemning him and his beliefs.

Does religion really show miraculous results ?

History is the witness to Shankaracharya’s attack on the great pilgrimage place, Jiravalaji. At that time, an Acharya Bhagwant gave a tough fight with great valor and courage to save the holy place and the Chaturvidha Sangha. Had he not demonstrated such exemplary courage, the Lord's idol would have been reduced to bits and pieces and the sangha would have been destroyed.

Shripal charitra describes the situation where Dhaval Sheth threw King Shripal in the sea and then moved ahead towards his two beautiful wives to make them his wives. As he approached the princesses, his eyes lost vision and he could not track their whereabouts.

A few years ago, the desert region of Kutch was hit by a
Ignorance : A Curse

massive earthquake. Great Acharya Bhagwant Kanaksooriji Maharaja was present in an Upashraya* there. For the ongoing work of Jirnodhar (reconstruction), thousands of tons of stone were lying on the Upashraya terrace. Imagine the state of the building with such a heavy weight lying on the top. But due to the impact of the great Acharya Bhagwant's strict Sayam*, no damage was incurred.

In Lord Naminath's temple located in Mumbai, thieves raided the temple one night and the locks were found broken. But to everyone's surprise. Lord's ornaments and Mukut (crown) were intact. Nothing was stolen. What do you think happened that night ? The thieves seemed to have lost vision and could not find anything. Eventually, they got exhausted and left the temple without stealing anything.

A Shravaka who observed strict penance and used to meditate on Navkar Mantra was assessed by the Income Tax Dept. and a demand of Rs. 33, 000 was levied. On the day of final hearing, he went to the court sat down peacefully and started chanting the Navkar Mantra. Why ? To win the case by Navkar Mantra's impact ? No, but because he believed that the efforts put to attain wealth or for material pleasures are secondary. Efforts for religion are of utmost importance and beneficial to one and all in this birth as well as in future births. Such was his strong faith and due to the impact of his religious faith, the court rejected the Income Tax Department's assessment.

These are just a few examples of the impact of religion. Due to Lalitang muni's strong penance, the space surrounding him was not flooded. People saw this and told the foolish atheist, "Look, you said there is nothing like the soul or religion. But here, the miraculous powers of religion can be seen for everyone. Stop ridiculing religion, now! "

* **Upashraya** - A place where Jain monks stay

* **Sayam** - A strict ascetic life

Nastik's wickedness :

Nastik was criticized and condemned by one and all. He felt insulted and blamed the saint as the root cause of his state. He was fuming with rage against the saint. To take revenge one night he placed woods around the saint, lit them and ran away. Someone else's fault and someone else faces the punishment!

This is the weird state of people in the world today. In spite of facing problems due to their own mistakes, they blame others for it and harbor hatred and envy towards them. Was the saint at fault here? His only act was staying strong in his penance and fasts. Now can this be considered a fault? Is this a mistake? No. This was Nastik's meanness that he considered the saint to be the cause of his defamation and public criticism.

Cowards overlook their mistakes and blame others.

We should analyze this in our day-to-day life and try to understand whether we commit the same mistake. For eg. you came back late from office and the food was a little cold. What will you think? Seeing your own fault, will you console the opposite person saying, "Do not worry. You prepared the food on time but I got late and food got cold. But it isn't ice cold, so do not worry." Or instead of staying calm and composed, you start blaming the opposite person by saying, "I work hard all day so can't you just ensure to serve hot food?" If you say so, then it implies that you are seeing the opposite person's fault. This happens due to cowardness. If you consider this from the spiritual angle, the problems that one faces may seem to be arising due to some person or place but in reality, they are the outcome of one's own past karmas. It is a thumb rule that no one except our own Karmas can trouble us.

If you are courageous, only then you will be able to blame your own karmas for your troubles instead of blaming others. You can also say that once you understand and start seeing the fault of your karmas, it will increase your courage and reduce hatred towards others.

There are many occasions in life where you can get a chance to increase your courage.

Human being is a goldmine of courage and valour.

Importance of courage :

You should develop the art of extracting gems from the mine. Do not undervalue the importance of courage. Human life is considered valuable only due to the presence of courage. Many other virtues follow courage. Also, courage stops the emergence of many vices. Hence, courage is of utmost importance. In day-to-day life also, courageous person is valued everywhere, not a coward.

How to overcome anger, pride, jealousy, etc. ?

One needs to make a strong resolution that, “I do not want to lose my courage by lusting over temporary material objects.” What is the benefit of such a resolution ? It will lead to a gradual decrease in anger, jealousy, attraction of beauty and good taste and improve control over sensual desires and temptations because one will think, “If I succumb to anger, my courage will decrease. Let me not get angry and burn in the fire of envy. Let me not get tempted in delicious tastes.”

Asamat Nastik was a coward. Hence when people started singing the holy saint’s glory, he burned with envy, saw the saint’s faults, blamed him for his criticism and attempted to burn him alive. A mind without courage engages in such cowardly acts and thoughts.

Asamat Nastik arranged woods around the saint and ignited them. But attracted by the saint's religious steadiness, the Kshetra Devta burnt the woods and left the saint unharmed. Not even his hair was burnt. On the next day, Nastik came to look at the saint's state and was amazed to see the saint standing steady amidst the heap of burnt ashes around him.

Nastik's regret :

Seeing this, Nastik's mind changed. He analyzed, "Arre! What happened? The woods have reduced to ashes but the saint is still intact! It doesn't seem that the saint had run away somewhere because in that case the woods would have been scattered here and there. But here the ashes are arranged in the same manner as the woods which I had assembled. This proves that the saint did not leave his place. The fact that the fire did not burn him proves the miraculous power of religion. Does religion really possess such incomparable power? I believed that nothing like religion exists. But now I have to believe that, religion is not imaginary but a solid fact. Only then can it possess such unmatched powers. This great saint exercised his religion and experienced such a magical effect. Then why should I deny the presence of religion? Why am I misguiding people? I am such a sinner to drag people away from religion and engross them in sins."

Nastik attains Kevalgyan :

Asamat Nastik now deeply regretted his atheism and his act of misguiding innocent and ignorant people. While doing so, he acquired Jatismaran Gyan (i.e. knowledge by which you can recollect your previous birth) and recollected that he had taken upcharitra in his last birth. But while following that pure path, he had left some loopholes in faithfully exercising Samyak darshan (right faith) and as a result, he became prey to such

criticism of religion in his current birth. He began a journey of deep remorse and regretted each and every sin done by him. He despised his ego and his body which lead to such grave sins. He developed a strong feeling of non-attachment to temporary worldly objects including his body. Additionally, he further progressed in the sentiments of Charitra and thus eliminated all his worldly ties of attachment and hatred. Eventually became a vitaraga sarvagya. He attained Kevalgyan (omniscience).

Can such a hardcore atheist attain Kevalgyan ? Yes, only the one who is prepared to cut the ties of love and hatred and develop a feeling of non-attachment towards all worldly objects including one's own body can attain Kevalgyan. Though he was an atheist in the past and a criticizer of religion, but he was ready to forsake his atheism and become a staunch follower of religion. Then who can stop him ?

Just as an atheist will have to forsake his atheism to move ahead, similarly we have to believe in the existence of God and religion and resist our sensual temptations. We are still enveloped by feelings of love and hatred. We can move ahead only if we have the inner desire to forsake them. On self-realization, the atheist Nastik deeply regretted his atheism. Does our attraction to worldly pleasures, our vices like anger, pride, etc. pinch us ? Do we regret our wrong acts ? Do we whole-heartedly strive to cut down our attractions and vices ? If no, then can we be called believers of God ? Atheists are wrong and we are right. But what on basis can we say so ? Here, the atheist eventually uprooted his negative thought process completely and we do not even attempt to decrease our worldly ties, then can we be called real and loyal believers of God ? Can we accuse the atheist to be guilty ?

If you want to progress in life then, leave alone your past wrong acts behind and develop a strong feeling of regret towards them. Accelerate your efforts to reduce your attractions and worldly ties. To do so, start performing various vows and fasts which can prove instrumental in elimination of vices.

We were talking about the importance of a good family. A person hailing from a good family is bound to accept responsibility for his acts and feel sorry for his mistakes. This possibility is negligible in the case of those hailing from a low class. Asamat Nastik was of noble origin who got carried away in such negative thoughts. But his royal family background enabled him to regret his acts and divert his life on to a better path.



7. Kamlata's Misery

Why was Kamlata's thought of committing suicide inappropriate? A brahmin's wife, Kamlata had become a prostitute but as she hailed from a reputed family, she repented her misdeed with her son. So intense was her repentance that she considered the earth to be burdened with her sinful self. Hence she decided to commit suicide and end her life.

But, we need to understand that the decision to commit suicide is completely inappropriate because suicide can reduce one's life span but cannot reduce one's sins or the sinful thought process that has developed in one's mind. When Dradhaprahari wished to shorten his life, he was advised by a wise Saint, "By committing suicide you will die but your sins will not die."

To repent one's sins and sinful mentality, one should practice non-violence, penance and strong resistance over temptations.

Q. : Isn't taking Anshan*, a kind of suicide?

A. : No. While taking Anshan, the intention is not to die and hence it cannot be termed as suicide. The real purpose and thought process behind Anshan is this, "I have done maximum possible penance and renunciation with the help of this body. Now this body has become weak and fragile. It will collapse anytime. To avoid its unexpected farewell and to be able to utilize it optimally, let me

* **Anshan** - fasting till death

become alert and take Anshan. Let me make maximum use of it.”

Thus the final goal of Anshan is to utilize the last moments of life fruitfully and not to die quickly. Those who commit suicide have two major negative thoughts in their mind which are absent in the case of those who take Anshan -

- 1) Frustration towards their life
- 2) Love for death

Q. : Frustration towards a life full of sins- isn't this a positive thought ?

A. : Yes. The frustration arising due to the sins we have committed is a positive feeling and should be inculcated because it will reduce the occurrence of sins in future. But if one gets frustrated from life and commits suicide to shorten his life, then how can sins be eliminated in the next birth ? If sinful activities continue in the next birth who will stop them ? In this precious human birth, we are lucky to be able to recognize the nature of our sins and hence it is easy to avoid them. If we cannot bravely avoid them, we can at least feel regretful after committing such acts. On the other hand, if the next new life is such where we cannot even recognize our sins, then how can we avoid or neglect them ? Hence, frustration towards this valuable and knowledgeable life is negative feeling in true sense.

According to this principle, one should not get frustrated from life because till you have this precious human life in hand, you can perform some or the other religious activity. You can chant God's name, appreciate the noble qualities of God and other great men. Here, amidst many sins, even a small religious activity can save you. If you lead a completely sinful

life without even a little religion, then it will not become your savior for the next birth and instead you will be stuck in the infinite cycle of birth and death.

The life of human on this Arya land is a golden opportunity to exercise good religious deeds, wash away past sins and stop the inflow of new sins.

Can we waste such a golden chance? Can we give away this opportunity? The great saints who take Anshan do not destruct this life but extract the maximum possible fruits from this life whereas those who commit suicide desire to destroy their precious life.

Kamlata's remorse over her sinful acts instigated her to end her life by committing suicide. She confessed to the lady who had given her shelter and told her, "I have committed gravesins in this life. I am now frustrated with this life and wish to end it by sitting on a burning pyre. Hence make the necessary arrangements for it."

The lady was astonished on hearing about Kamlata's decision. She tried to convince her, but in vain. Her neighbours also tried to persuade her against her decision but could not get any success. When they realized that she was headstrong about her decision, they started singing her praises that, "O how deep is her regret! Committing sins is easy but having such a strong feeling of remorse over those sins is really difficult. So much remorse that she wishes to burn herself alive?! Hats off to her!"

Kamlata in the middle of the pyre :

According to Kamlata's wishes, all arrangements were made. A pyre made of wooden sticks was arranged outside the city. Kamlata sat in the middle of the pyre. The woods were ignited. The people standing there could not bear to witness such a dreadful scene and dispersed towards their houses.

The wooden sticks started burning intensely but the fire had yet not reached the center. It's heat started increasing and Kamlata felt that her body would burn anytime. In spite of this she did not get scared because her mind was pre-occupied by all the grave sins she had committed of character loss, murder of the King, prostitution and physical relations with her own son. Compared to those low acts, the sorrow of burning was negligible.

Getting roasted by the increasing heat from all four sides- isn't this a cause of great pain and sorrow ? No, because in her mind the sins committed by her were so painful that in order to escape from its burden, she was ready to accept the shelter of the glowing flames.

If one really repents his sins, then the fear of losing one's self esteem by confessing those sins and the fear of attaining and completing prayashchitta is negligible.

We cannot bear even a small pin piercing our fingertip. But we can tolerate the doctor pierce the injection needle deep inside. Why so ? Because the great benefit of good health is in front of our eyes. Can we listen to someone who abuses us ? No, but if our employer pays us well and occasionally loses his temper and insults us, then we are ready to tolerate the tough words. Can we bear hunger and thirst ? No, but if it is peak season and there are a lot of customers, then a smart businessman will readily tolerate his hunger and thirst.

This proves that it is not right that we cannot tolerate sorrows because if a greater benefit is seen, the sorrows are tolerated without a second thought.

Hence, if one visualizes great benefits due to religion then the difficulties endured will not seem painful.

During winter season, if someone invites you early in the morning at 4 a.m. to write their accounts related to the black

income made by him and promises to pay you Rs.5000 for doing this work what will you do ? Run to do his work. On the other hand, if Acharya Bhagwant calls you not at 4:00 a.m. but at 5 a.m. to do Pratikraman, then will you be equally enthusiastic for it ? You will argue, “We get tired after toiling hard throughout the day and need a sound sleep. After sleeping at 11:00 p.m. how can I get up so early at 4 during such a chilly weather ?” In the former case the income of Rs.5000 was right in front of your eyes but you do not see any benefit from the activity of Pratikraman and hence do not consider waking up early to be worthwhile.

Do you have any idea about the advantages of pratikraman ?

In day- to-day routine life, one exercises many sins :

- 1) Due to the non-restrained nature of sins and because of the fact that Pachakkhana (vow) for forsaking / giving up these sins is not taken, all the sins happening around the world will harm our soul.
- 2) Due to negative thoughts, words and actions.
- 3) Due to anger, pride, ego, attraction and other vices that take a toll on us.
- 4) Due to the hatred and attraction towards the innumerable material objects present around us.

Just 1 day or night can result in the accumulation of abundant sins which cannot be washed away even by donating tons of gold. But these can surely be eliminated by doing the holy act of Pratikraman.

Charity can lead to increase in religion and accumulation of Punya but it cannot erase your sins. Only Pratikraman and prayashchitta have the power to erase your sins.

Imagine the benefit of doing just 1 pratikraman! ! But, we cannot visualize these benefits. Why so ? Because we don't have great repentance over our sins. If we have enough repentance, then we will definitely understand that just a single day or night can bind the soul with enormous amount of karmas and to eliminate them, we will automatically feel like doing a pratikraman. It has the power to eliminate our sins and misdeeds and ultimately purify our soul.

In spite of this, we do not feel like doing such a beautiful and beneficial ritual in the morning but we readily agree to engage in some monetarily beneficial occupation. Why ? Because we are getting our desired result here and hence we are ready to wake up early in the morning and bear other difficulties for it. But we do not see any benefits in doing the pratikraman and hence are not ready to face difficulties for it.

The reality is that we are not even aware about the abundant sins that we accumulate throughout the day. Then how can we repent over them ?

When there is no recognition and consequent repentance over sins, how will one feel like doing pratikraman or prayashchit to eliminate them ?

Isn't this a hopeless manner of passing your life ?

Can the one who is completely thoughtless about sins called a believer of God ? Or an atheist ? Is he living a life of a human or an animal ?

Since eternity, this soul is roaming in the cycle of birth and death due to the sinful life we lead. In this birth, we have been fortunate enough to get a chance to understand the nature of sins. In spite of this golden chance, if we do not give it a serious thought, then what will be the disastrous outcome ?

Does your life become sinless and fruitful just by going to the

temple once a day ? Do all sins get eliminated by worshipping God ?

Worshipping God results in emergence of fresh Punya but the innumerable misdeeds performed in our life do not get washed away.

Increase in sins :

If by worshipping God, our sins get washed away, then even the cruel butcher would live a tension free life after committing the worst possible sins.

Terrible times are coming. Sins are on the rise in the society. No sooner does the sun rise, the newspapers present various news. Reading them,

- 1) The mind is enveloped with love and hatred.
- 2) Numerous negative thoughts erupt in the mind which lead to Artadhyana and strong Raudradhyana as well.
- 3) People's lives get filled with injustice and dishonesty.
- 4) The pure limits of an Arya's life get contaminated.
- 5) People consume inedible and stale food.
- 6) Unwanted fashions and cheap trends prevail.
- 7) People remain engrossed in the discussion of temporary, non-living objects.
- 8) Necessities increase and luxuries get termed as into necessities...

All these sins have multiplied tremendously.

Why is it difficult to avoid indulgence in misdeeds ?

In today's terrible times it is difficult to stay away from sins because :

- 1) Looking around can prove poisonous.
- 2) Hearing and reading can also prove poisonous for the soul.
- 3) Good company is a prerequisite.
- 4) The temptation to look good among people also plays a part.

If 3-4 people gather at the end of the day, do they even bother to talk about the increase of sins and ways to avoid them. Instead they talk about new ways to increase luxuries and comforts in life, indirectly inviting sins in their life. When anything that you see or hear is bound to be a reason for inviting sins, then how can you save yourself from sins ?

Consider yourself lucky to be born in a Jain family which has gifted you the precious Jain religion right from birth.

It is our great fortune that by way of Jainism, we can recognize these acts as sins, which the world is otherwise unaware about.

Other religions existing in the world may show sins by the medium of thoughts, words and acts but Jainism shows the emergence of sins even by a particular state or belief of the soul.

For e.g. You may not exercise violence in your routine life, you may not be speaking or reading anything related to violence and your thoughts are also not violent. But if your soul's belief is not firm that, "I retrain from violence completely," if you do not have the oath to avoid violence by means of body, speech or thought, then the soul is in a state of non-restraint towards sins which can lead to abundant sins. This is what Jain religion says. This means that even the elimination of the thought of violence is not enough. To completely refrain from violence, you need to have an oath

to stay away from violence. Without this oath, you are still in Avirati* (non-restraint) which itself is a great sin.

Also not considering sinful activities to be sinful, things to be forsaken worth forsaking, true religion to be the religion, Almighty vitaraga Gods to be the real God, sadhus walking on the path of renunciation to be the real Gurus is a characteristic of Mithyabhava. Such a wrong belief i.e. Mithyabhava is also a major cause of binding the soul with karmas.

Can one bind karmas in his sleep ?

Now you will be able to understand that in spite of complete absence of sinful thoughts, actions or words in sleep, karmas get accumulated because there is Mithyabhava and Avirati. This binding of karmas continues even in sleep as well as when one is awake. If we do not overcome this Mithyabhava by way of samyaktva and positive feelings, then the Mithyabhava is bound to continue in sleep also.

Similarly, you have not taken a pledge to not engage in sins like violence, theft, etc. which means that Avirati still prevails and continues in sleep too. It isn't surprising then if it becomes a cause of binding sins.

Also, though you do not get angry or greedy while sleeping but if you have not suppressed your anger or greed while being awake, then they are sure to prevail in your subconscious mind while sleeping too. Hence, in case of a bad dream these kashayas get instigated.

During such incidents there is not even a single thought of sins but still binding of karmas is going on. Jain religion reaches such great depths.

* **Avirati** – non-restraint of sinful activities and thoughts

Q. : In spite of not having a single sinful thought, how can the mere absence of an oath to avoid restrict those sins lead to the accumulation of karmas ?

A. : Karmas are banded because there is no vow taken to stop sins which means deep inside the heart, the possibility to exercise the sins is still open. For eg. Since morning you thought that. “I wish to do an Upvas (fast) today but I will not take any pachakkhan (vow) because what if I feel hungry in the afternoon ? If I can control my hunger, then I will definitely complete the Upvas.” Now what was the hidden thought here ? The thought was that if you feel hungry, you will eat. It means that the possibility to consume food is open. Even if you do not eat, the possibility is present. This is also a sin. Similarly, even if one does not eat roots (kandamoola), but does not take an oath because of the fear of breakage of the oath, it means that the underlying thought is, “if the situation demands, I may have to consume roots.” This possibility to consume the inedible kandamoola is also a sin and leads to the accumulation of karmas.

Jinshasan says :

- 1) The Mithyabhava where in you consider sinful acts be worth doing is a sin.
- 2) The possibility of exercising those sins which is rooted deep in your mind is also a sin.
- 3) The love or hatred towards sins is a sin, too.
- 4) Sinful thoughts, actions or words is also a sin.

Sins are exercised in 3 ways :

Now, there are various ways of exercising these sins i.e. you can exercise those sins on your own, you can inspire

someone to exercise those sins or you may accept or appreciate someone's sinful acts. All these are sins i.e. exercising sinful activities on your own is definitely a sin but inspiring others to perform such deeds is also a sin. Not only this, but if you consider someone's sinful acts to be good and appreciate it, then that is a sin too.

For eg. you created conflicts and fought with your brother. This is a sinful exercise. Also if you purposely instigated someone and made him fight with his brother, then this is also a sinful act. Additionally, you had conflicts with someone and his own brother fought with him and defeated him. Seeing this you got delighted. This means that you became happy in someone's wrong act which is an appreciation of the sin of creating unnecessary conflicts.

It is mandated for Jain saints to not accept the food made by shravakas for other saints. It means that neither that particular saint has allied for the preparation of food nor has he indirectly asked someone to prepare that food but the devotional shravaka has prepared the food with the intention of giving it in alms. Then why are Jain sadhus prohibited to accept that food ?

Because accepting that food in alms means that you permit the violence of the living beings of fire and water which has occurred during the preparation of that food. This is a sin of appreciating a wrong act.

Now the question that is bound to rise here is that,

Q. : If the householder shravaka has prepared food for his own self and the sadhu accepts it in alms, then isn't he said to permit and agree to violence ?

A. : No, because the sadhus have an oath to refrain from violence done by him, done by others for him and appreciation of violence done for him. Hence, if the

householder prepares food for himself and the sadhu accepts it, then he is not said to agree to the violence caused in making of the food.

- Q. :** Does this mean that the sadhu is allowed to exercise violence, motivate someone to exercise violence and agree to the violence done for others ?
- A. :** No, he has an oath to avoid that too. Hence, he does not exercise violence or motivate someone to do violence for him or others. Also he does not consider the violence done for others to be good. It means that he accepts the food made by householders for themselves but does not get delighted by thinking, “Good, he made this for himself. I got it Nirdosha* (faultless).” A sadhu can be happy for attaining it Nirdosha but he cannot be pleased about the householder preparing it. This minute difference should be understood carefully.

* **Nirdosha** – Faultless ie. Without exercising violence in any of the 3 ways.



8. The Depth of Jainism

Nirdosha means that the fault preparing food specially for the sadhus is not there about the person for whom this food is made. It is only the fact that the food is not made for the sadhus. Hence when sadhus accept such food the acceptance is only limited to the fact that the food is not made for sadhus. The acceptance of the food made for the householders does not come in there.

Here we want to emphasize about the depths till which the Jain religion goes. When the sadhus take food made for them, it means that they approve to the violence caused in the preparation, even if he convinces his mind that, “I do not consider food made to be good.” Jainism preaches that even if you do not consider it to be good, why do you accept and eat it? Your act of consuming such food shows that in your heart, you agree to this fault.

This agreement to the sin of violence is also a sinful act. This is the broadness and depth of Jainism.

Buddhists belief :

Buddhists believe that you cannot kill a living creature on your own but you can consume the creature killed by someone else. For eg. you can consume the animal's meat cut by the butcher. Also, you can eat the fish already caught by the fisherman. This is not considered violence and cannot bind karmas according to them. But it is very obvious that if there

are no customers for this fish or meat, then why would they kill them ? You are consuming it and they are being caught and killed. Hence even though you do not kill them your selves, by buying them you are supporting their act. This approval of sins is a sin in itself. In this Buddhist religion where there is no understanding and prohibition of even violence of such big five sensed animals, this is also not considered a sinful act, then how can they understand the approval of violence of minute one-sensed living creatures to be a sinful act ?

The glory of Jainism – The limit of sinful acts :

Compare this to the understanding and depth of Jainism. This is the depth of Jainism. That not only doing violence or motivating others to do violence is considered a sin but even giving your consent or appreciating such an act is a sin. Till the extent that if a saint accepts food made for him by causing the violence of innumerable one-sensed living beings, he is considered to approve and appreciate the violence caused which is a sinful act in itself.

If you understand this depth of Jainism, then you will realize the greatness and purity of this religion. You should feel, “O, what a real, deep and true religion I have attained! How lucky I am! What an outstanding religion! How amazing are the principles propounded by Lord Mahavira! What a clear path of salvation is shown here! ” This thinking is sure to invite Samyak Darshan (right faith for the principles preached by Arihanta Lords).

Till you do not understand the depth and extent of exercising sins stated in our religion, how can you possibly forsake those sins ? Till you do not stop exercising even the smallest sin, how can you progress towards the path of salvation ?

Q. : Can only Jainism lead you to salvation ? Don't other religions have this power ?

A. : Arre! If you could attain salvation by following other religions it will definitely not stop by our refusal. The point is that, if salvation is possible in the presence of minute sinful acts, then any religion can help you attain it. If it is not possible, then you can search the entire world for a religion except Jainism where the approval of the violence of small one-sensed living organisms is also considered a sin. Which religion shows a method to forsake these sins ? If there is such a religion, then we do not deny the possibility of salvation by following that religion ?

But the marked truth is that others do not even know that such one-sensed living creatures exist. They do not know that they also have a soul like ours. Then how can they even make the efforts to save them ? The knowledge related to one-sensed, two-sensed, three-sensed, four-sensed and five-sensed (i.e. Ekindriya, Beindriya, Teindriya, Chauindriya and Panchindriya) living beings and their classification is a speciality of Jainism. No other religion can stand against it because such deep knowledge related to living creatures does not prevail anywhere else.

Why did Indrabhuti get attracted to the Jain ascetic life ?

All the other Brahmin scholars including Indrabhuti left their Yagna and Vedas and accepted the shelter of Lord Mahavira. They realized that their religion of performing Yagnas was absolutely futile because, till you do not leave the sinful act of the violence of minute one-sensed living organisms, approval to violence and non-restraint of sinful acts, how is Moksha (salvation) possible ? How can any religion bring you closer to salvation ?

Who other than Vitaraga Sarvagya can show such a wonderful religion ? After we have acquired this religion, what is the point of still living a life complete with the violence of living creatures ? Now if you desire salvation, then leaving even the smallest possible violence is absolutely incredible.

“A good breeze is passing by.” This thought is also considered a sin, why so ?

Non-violence of minute living beings is a unique characteristic of Jainism. For e.g. if a cool breeze passed in the hot days of summer, you are not supposed to think that, “Good, this breeze passed by.” Why ? Because such a thinking means that you approve the violence of Vayukaya (living beings of air). When will you feel that the breeze passing is good ? Only when the breeze touches your body. Hence the root of this thought is the joy of the cool breeze touching your body. But the living beings of wind (Vayu) are so minute and delicate that they die as soon as they bang against our body. Hence the joy of the cool breeze means joy of the death of these delicate living beings. This is the approval of the violence of innumerable Vayukaya living beings which is a sinful act. Nowsitback and think, which religion in the world will call this thought to be a sinful act ? They may call temptations to sensual desires to be a sin but who will call such minute violence to be a sin ? “How tasty and hot this tea is! ”, if the mind gets delighted in such a manner, it binds the sin of appreciation of the violence of the minute Agnikaya (fire) living beings. Which religion other than Jainism calls this a sin ?

Why does Jainism consider Charitra (ascetic life) to be a sharp sword's edge ?

In the strict conduct of Charitra life, from the very first day,

saints have an oath to refrain from the violence of one-sensed living beings on their own, to not motivate others to exercise such violence and to not consider the violence exercised by others to be good. Hence, if they feel happy about acquiring good and hot tea, it means that they consider the violence of Agnikaya creatures that occurred in the preparation to be good. This breaks their oath.

Accordingly, an ascetic needs to be alert all the time. The mind is like a monkey. Since eternity, the mind is trained to get delighted in temporary material comforts. Hence in absence of alertness, the mind is bound to get carried away in such thoughts. There are many such things which will sway the mind and strong efforts and high alertness is necessary. Hence, it is said that a pure ascetic life is like a sword's edge.

Q. : In Jainism is the violence of Ekindriya (one-sensed) living beings permitted to householders ?

A. : Do not think that it is okay for householders to appreciate the preparation of good food and hot tea because they do not have the oath of refraining from the violence of Ekindriya living creatures. This is a wrong understanding even though there is no chance of breaking the oath, because there is a chance of breaking the soft feelings of compassion towards all living creatures.

Just because shravakas (Jain householders) do not have the oath of non-violence, it does not mean that they should be devoid of the feelings of compassion for all.

How can one feel like leaving this material world ?

A true shravaka shivers at the thought of the compulsory violence of Ekindriya living beings done while carrying out

his business or routine household chores. A chill runs down his spine on thinking that he has to kill innocent living beings who have not harmed him for his selfish purpose. He possesses such a strong feeling of kindness and compassion for all living beings. Due to this feeling, he feels like leaving this material world. He considers the worldly life to be like poison.

Today, you are enjoying a worldly life and it doesn't seem poisonous because you have attained some money, a good wife, obedient children and the business is doing well. Do you have any regrets, "For how long do I have to run this sinful world of mine?" No, because the violence of innumerable minute one-sensed organisms does not bother you. Your heart does not overflow with the compassion of all living creatures.

If you feel compassionate towards these Ekindriya beings, then you will definitely consider this material world which is dependent on their violence, to be poisonous. In the Poshadha vrata Pooja of the Bara Vrata Pooja, we recite this line,

“Sheetal nahi chhaya re aa sansaarni....”

It means that the shelter of the sansara (i.e. material world) is not soothing, but burning. During hot summer days, the shelter of a tree seems to be soothing while the shelter of the top floor of the building roof made of metals seems dreadful. Similarly, the shelter of this world is like the hot burning metal roof of the house because in spite of having compassion for the innocent living beings, a shravaka has to slaughter them.

A true shravaka has a very compassionate heart and hence when he is served delicious hot food which pleases him, he

will definitely think twice about the violence of Agnikaya (living creatures of Fire) caused in the preparation of this food. Such violence will pinch him and he will not be delighted in acquiring tasty food.

Which other religion can demonstrate such detailed and minute compassion and non-violence ?

Without complete compassion and non-violence, how can you attain salvation (Moksha) from some other religion ?

The true friendship :

Claiming to have friendship and brotherhood for one and all seems easy but really living up to this is totally different and really difficult. This is because all living beings include Ekindriya organisms also and if we harbour friendship for them, then it is not possible that we can cruelly harm and kill them.

Consider those innocent Ekindriya (one- sensed) living beings to be our friends, then can we enjoy seeing them being slaughtered ? Can we enjoy and happily utilize the things made by slaughtering them ?

Consider yourself lucky to have acquired this great Jain religion which deeply preaches the virtues of friendship, non-violence and compassion. It teaches us to harbor feelings of non-violence and compassion on a wide scale and practice it as much as possible.

- 1) It helps us identify even the small one-sensed living beings. As we discussed earlier, it throws light on the fact that even considering hot tea to be good or feeling happy about the cool breeze passing by, is a sinful act because of the approval and appreciation of the violence caused. These are just 2 special features of Jain religion.

2) Syadvad, Anekantvada, Nyayavada are also the unique features of Jainism.

Syadvada and Anekantvada mean having a broad outlook and to eliminate a one-sided narrow outlook, while Nyayavada means considering one thing from different perspectives, for e.g. Gyana Nyaya- Kriya Nyaya, Shabda Nyaya-Artha Nyaya, Dravya Nyaya-Paryaya Nyaya, etc. Jain religion deeply considers these angles.

3) Karma Vigyana is also Jainism's exemplary characteristic.

The 8 different karmas like Gyanavarniya, Darshanavarniya, etc. and its subtypes alongwith the difference in various processes like Bandha- Udaya- Udirana- Sanbramana-Udvantana, Apvartana- Upshamana and Kshapana that act on these karmas are shown only by this Jain religion.

4) The process of climbing the 14 Gunasthanakas is demonstrated only in Jainism.

5) Only Jainism can depict the real universe i.e. the 14 Rajlok which includes the Adholok (the lower world i.e. hell), the Urdhva Lok (the upper world i.e. heaven) and the Madhya Lok (the middle world where humans and animals dwell).

6) The description of the 9 tatvas i.e. 9 elements (Jiva – Ajiva – Punya – Papa – Bandha – Nirjara – Aashrara – Samvana and Moksha) is Jainism's monopoly.

7) Only Jainism can truly value the importance of Samyaktarshana (right faith).

8) Also, only this supreme religion can show the priceless path of Virati. (i.e. stopping the inflow of sins) It means

that even if you do not exercise sins, if you have not taken an oath to refrain from these sins, then due to this Avirati you will still continuously be binded by karmas. Only Jainism possesses this depth.

9) The real form of Almighty Paramatma is acquired only in this Jain religion.

Almighty Paramatma is Vitaraga Sarvagya (free of love and hatred and omniscient). To become like Him, one has to strictly exercise penance and observe vows. After becoming vitraga i.e. possessor of infinite knowledge and faith, he doesn't have to follow any penance but being complete in himself, he shows people the real universe. This nature of Almighty Arihanta Lords is available only in Jainism. Helping us to recognize these Arihanta Lords is a unique characteristics of Jainism.

10) Also, the Samitis and Guptis of an ascetic's life, the Gochari (food) attained by avoiding the 42 Doshas (faults), the method of performing Pratikraman is a specialty of Jainism. Such beautiful rituals supporting non – violence are shown nowhere else.

11) The ideal method of doing Paramatma Bhakti (revering God) is demonstrated here in detail. For e.g. you should not carry any eatables inside the temple. Also, going to the temple empty – handed, without any offerings for God is a type of disrespect. The process of saying 3 Nisechis, Ashtaparakari Pooja, etc. all lead to spiritual welfare which is possible only in Jainism.

12) Also, the minute and detailed 12 Vratas of Shravaka, the method of doing samayika, paushadha, 14 Niyams is available in this supreme religion.

Like stated above, Jainism has many other specialities which are not seen elsewhere. It would take not days or months, but years to justify and describe all those specialities.

We were talking about the importance of pratikraman. A householder who is enveloped constantly and 24 x 7 in the abundant sins of Avirati, Mithyatva, love and hatred can get rid of these sins not by donating gold and silver but by performing the ritual of pratikraman. The main question here is do we repent the sins performed throughout the day ?

If we repent those sins from the bottom of our hearts, then the morning and evening pratikraman done to wash away those sins won't seem like a burden.



9. Kamlata Saved...

Kamlata in the hands of the Shepherd :

Kamlata had so much remorse over her sins that she sat amidst the burning pyre of fire to die. As the fire spread, the heat increased and she felt as if she was getting roasted but her resolution to die was strong. This was because she wished to get rid of her sinful life.

But destiny always has something different in store for you. Suddenly black clouds enveloped the sky and it started raining heavily. Not only did the burning fire get extinguished but the entire city was flooded with water. Kamlata got carried away in the turbulent water flow. She was getting dragged away when a shepherd happened to see her. He flung in the flood water and got her out. He made her lie down on her stomach and removed water from her body. He warmed up her body with the heat of fire. Kamlata gained consciousness. She opened her eyes and looked around, but was confused. She could not recollect where she was. She thought, “What is this ? Where is the pyre of fire ? Why didn't I get burnt in the fire ? Where am I ?” She was lost in her thoughts when the shepherd asked her, “O sister! Where do you stay ? How did you get carried away in this water ?

The shepherd addressed her by saying ‘sister’ but was attracted by her beauty. He had seen Kamlata in those wet clothes and had himself carried her to his place. He was no saint to not get attracted by her beauty. He too, was a young man and

was bound to get moved by sensual desires. What if it is a saint in this position ?

The sight of a young beautiful lady is dangerous while her touch is all the more dangerous. It can harm not only common man but saints also.

Parashar Rishi's (Sage's) incident :

This incident is famous in other religions.

Sage Vyasa created Mahabharata. He showed his creation to Sage Parashar. It said,

“Balavanindriyagrama Panditanapi Pidayet! ”

It means that the group of 5 senses is strong which can trouble the learned ones also.

Sage Parashar told Vyas, “Omit this line. If these senses can trouble the learned ones, then you cannot call him learned in the true sense. A learned man who has studied scriptures knows that the senses kept uncontrolled are bound to take one to hell and hence he will constantly be aware about keeping his senses in his control. Then these senses cannot harm him. Hence omit this line immediately.”

Vyasa answered, “Think on this for some time. Give me also sometime to think. Then we will omit this if necessary.”

Parashar said, “I do not have to think at all. But sooner or later you will have to omit this.”

Vyasa takes the form of a young lady :

Sage Parashar did not realise that Vyasa was going to plot a smart ploy to prove his point. He thought that he had to do nothing and only Vyasa had to re-think and consider his point. But Vyasa created a ploy wherein with the help of his vidya (magical powers), he took the form of a fairy-like beautiful,

delicate young lady. He wore thin silky clothes and reached the jungle in vicinity of Parashar's hut. He started screaming, "Hey! Hey! Arre, I am going to die. Please someone save me."

Sage Parashar heard the fearful scream, left all his chores and came running out. As he moved ahead towards the direction of the noise, he saw a young woman lying in the middle of the path, wet in the rains and crying out loud. The sage was kind-hearted and hence he melted on hearing the woman's pitiful cries. He approached her and asked, "Lady! Who are you? How did you arrive here? Are you scared of anything?"

The melodrama :

The woman cunningly made up a fictional story, "I am a princess married to a charming prince. We were going towards my in-laws' house when we lost our way and ended up in this scary forest. Suddenly a ferocious tiger came by and seized my husband away." Save him! Save him! Someone please save my husband," saying this, she started crying loudly again.

How would the sage know that this was all a drama? He considered the princess's pain to be real and started consoling her, "What is the use of crying over spilt milk? Destiny can change colours anytime. It is raining heavily and you are shivering due to cold. Come with me to my hut. I will show you the way once this rain stops. But no one can rescue your husband. Stay calm and handle the situation courageously."

The woman continued crying and said, "What! Won't I get my husband back? My happiness is now destroyed."

The sage again consoled her, "As of now come with me to my hut or you will catch a cold."

Shivering with cold the lady said, “But my legs are aching a lot and I am also down with fever. I cannot even get up. What should I do ? I think death is better than facing so many problems.”

How can the sage catch her ploy ? On one hand, her wet and transparent clothes revealed her fair body parts which attracted the sage a little. On the other hand, considering her sorrow to be true, the compassionate sage’s heart was moved. Hence, he told the lady, “Come, I will give you my hand’s support. Get up.”

Saying this the sage caught her arm with one hand and her waist with another hand and supported her to stand up. He led her towards his hut and made her sleep on the bed.

“BalvanaIndriyagram.”

(The desires of the senses are powerful. Under its control, the soul becomes powerless.)

Here, the sage saw the beautiful lady’s almost naked body through her wet clothes and then he got her delicate touch also. What was left now ? Deep inside, a feeling of lust enveloped his heart. But he was a sage and hence understanding the reality he made his mind strong and thought, “She is like my daughter. How can I get attracted towards her ?”

Vyasa hidden in the woman’s attire thought, “Sage Parashar has not melted completely.” Hence he continued his drama. He increased the shivers in his body and again started weeping out loudly loud, “Ohhh! It is so cold. I cannot bear this.”

Parashar covered her body with his tiger skin and said, “I do not have anything else to cover you. Take this.”

But the lady (Vyasa in disguise) was also smart. She stayed silent for a minute and again started shivering and screaming,

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“With your tiger skin my body got covered but my legs are still open. I am feeling very cold. How can I bear this ? It is better to die rather than tolerate this shivering.” Saying this she again started banging her legs.

How did the sage fall for her ?

How could the soft-hearted sage bear to hear the lady’s pitiful cries and pain ? He now considered pressing her legs. Is this a sage’s job ? But he innocently made up his mind that, “I am following celibacy since so many years. Pressing her legs will not cause any harm to me.” He was proud that, “We, Sages, very well know the reality of this temporary body made of mud and blood, stool and urine. We know that this fair skin is a mere cover of the garbage lying within. Hence, if at times the need arises to touch a body, we can still remain pure.”

Carried away by this over-confidence, he forgot that leave alone touching a woman, even thinking about a woman is dangerous and can envelop the mind with lustful thoughts.

Mere knowing and understanding the reality is different and actually experiencing it with the help of these senses is different.

“There is nothing fruitful in a woman’s body.” However well you understand this, but the sight of a half-clad woman is bound to stir different sentiments which bring delight deep inside the heart and keeps the understanding far at bay. Similarly, hearing a woman’s sweet voice or a romantic song melodiously is definitely going to prove dangerous.

The delight experienced by the touch sense is far more dangerous than other senses. The touch of a delicate young lady’s body stirs such emotions that the knowledge and deep understanding of many years is forgotten.

Mental emotion usurps mental understanding :

Hence, a woman's sight creates a deeper impression than Paramatma's darshan to many strong hearted people. This is because Lord's darshan is mere knowledge whereas a woman's sight creates a different feeling in the heart. The heart experiences delight and glee.

A truly devotional person experiences such delight and peace on seeing God. The heart feels ecstatic and the mind becomes emotional with thoughts like, "Such a beautiful posture! How fortunate I am to have acquired Vitaraga Lord's darshan! How can a person like me acquire Lord's darshan?" Such thoughts send a chill down the spine and one experiences delight and happiness. Even if the body is afflicted with some disease or even if one is facing some financial crisis, a man drawn by sensual desires is bound to get delighted by a woman's sight or touch. Similarly, it isn't surprising if a devotee's heart gets pleased by Lord's sight.

The attraction towards women is such that the even sight of a half-dead woman is bound to delight the heart. Hence, even the sight of a woman is dangerous.

Thus, we can conclude that the feeling of delight is different and mere knowledge is different.

Does the sight of Vitaraga Lord give you mere knowledge that, this is Vitaraga Lord or does it really touch and delight your heart ?

Are you indifferent at the sight of a pretty woman or does it please you ? Does it happen that your eyes do not rest on the woman for even a moment and get closed immediately ? Does it get engrossed in the contemplation of the Lord ?

It is difficult due to the fact that negative thoughts and ideas have been inculcated in the soul since eternity. The eyes

overlook God and rest on the sight of a woman. If just a woman's sight has this effect, then imagine the effect of a woman's touch!

Sage Parashar held that lady's hand and led her to his hut. This delighted his heart a little. Now look at the disastrous outcome which a mere touch can lead to...

Sage Vyasa wanted to test Parashar. Hence, he continued his drama. The woman shivered and cried, "Your rug provided my body a little warmth but my uncovered legs have no help! Save me! "

Moved by her pitiful cries, the sage's heart melted and he said, "O lady! I do not have anything else to cover you with. Let me press your legs if that can help you a little."

She calmly replied, "How unfortunate I am! My birth has gone waste. How can I take your service? Won't I go to hell?"

The sage replied, "Do not worry. This is a crisis situation and such a thought is not appropriate at such a time."

Saying so, the sage started pressing her legs. Her clothes were already wet. Additionally, she had slyly kept her clothes in such a way that they revealed her body parts. As the sage started pressing her legs his heart became all the more delighted and his hands automatically moved ahead.

Scriptures call woman's touch as the meeting of wine and fire.

If wine happens to meet fire, can a blast be avoided? Leave alone the actual touch of fire but even the proximity to fire melts the ghee. Hence, to protect the oath of celibacy, it is necessary to follow all its rules and regulations, like staying in a place where women don't stay.

How is it possible for people watching cinema to stay pure ? Won't the actresses' revealing attire, romantic expressions, dances and arts, sweet talks and songs delight the spectator's heart ?

By influencing people with the western culture, cinema has led to the death of our original Indian culture and traditions.

What to follow ? The atheist and shameless western trends, wherein the youth are not ashamed to run and dance naked in public ? When sensual desires overcome one's mind, one is bound to forget his identity and previous Aryan culture. If this is not the case then tell me, do revealing clothes suit a prostitute or a shravika ? Can the attire of today's shravika be considered appropriate ?

Parashar's Downfall :

Parashar was overcome with lust! As he pressed her legs and his hands moved ahead, the young lady cunningly exclaimed, "O, O, Thank God! " The sage thought that his act provided comfort to the lady and eventually the sage's heart completely melted. The feeling of delight increased. His desires were not in his control now. Considering this to be for the lady's welfare, he went ahead to hug the lady Vyasa realised that his plan was successful and reverted to his true form.

Obviously Sage Parashar could not look him in the eye and realised his folly which led to his downfall. His head hung low in shame.

Sage Vyasa asked, "Speak up, should I remove those words ?"

Parashar shamefully replied, "O Brother! Forgive me. A person should not deliberately stare at women and should avoid touching them. In spite of having a pure character,

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if you take such risks, the mind is bound to get occupied in negative thoughts.” As a result, following celibacy on tithidays and even in old age will become difficult.

Lesson to be learnt :

If you wish to save yourself, then you need to think on these lines, “Till when will I have to satisfy these greedy senses which are craving since endless times ? Its hunger is such that it will not get satisfied. On the contrary, as you delight yourself with sensual pleasures, your liking and attachment towards them will strengthen which will eventually increase your desires. Sitting amidst a crowd, you get tempted to throw a quick glance at the pretty woman sitting in the corner. You see her for a moment and immediately pull your eyes back. But instinctively your eyes will go there again and then they may get tempted to look at other women too and get delighted. If mere sight can prove to be so harmful, then imagine the consequences of the desire to touch. A woman’s sight and touch drives one crazy and makes the mind so weak that it cannot concentrate on the Almighty Paramatma. Even after worshipping God and singing devotional songs, the mind will remain hard and indifferent.

It is dreadful to become a slave to these greedy senses.

The shepherd got attracted to Kamlata :

The shepherd had saved Kamlata from getting drowned and got her to his hut in an unconscious state. He had seen her in dripping wet clothes and had experienced her delicate touch. Additionally, he was trying to revive her by providing her warmth and was continuously staring at her. He was now attracted by her beauty and wished to make her his wife. He asked her, “Who are you ? How did you get dragged away in this water ?”

Kamlata was now lost in her thoughts. She felt, “I was sitting on the burning fire to die. Then how did I reach here ? Then she recollected that it poured heavily and the floods would have eventually led her here. She realised that it was useless to share her actual story with the shepherd. Hence she made up a story and said, “I was with my husband on the forest path. We slept under a tree at night. But it rained heavily and both of us got carried away in the floods. How is our union now possible ? It seems that the strong water currents must have dragged and drowned my husband. I was fortunate to have been saved. But what is the use of such fortune ? My husband has got carried away by floods. I am the most unfortunate person.” Saying so she started weeping loudly. All a mere drama!

That shepherd was pleased on hearing this. He saw that the fulfilment of his desire to make her his wife was now easy. He said, “What is the use of crying now ? What will you do by going home ? What is the value of a single woman ? Come, be my wife and take care of my house. I will take care of you.”

Hearing this Kamlata was again lost in thoughts.

She was puzzled, “What to do ?”

Once upon a time, she was ready to burn herself alive because of regret. She sat in the middle of fire but as it rained and she was carried away by floods, her strong feeling of regret died and her mind engaged in different thoughts. The shepherd tempted her to become his wife. He had carried her to his place and had provided warmth to her wet body. In spite of Kamlata being in an unconscious state, the male touch had delighted her. This inner joy had diverted her thoughts.

Someone may ask, “Can this delight be felt in an unconscious state ?” Yes, because since eternity the soul has been attracted towards the opposite sex. This attraction takes its effect in an unconscious state also.

Incident of Shasak-Bhasak’s sister Sadhvi* :

In our Scriptures there is a noteworthy incident of Shasak-Bhasak’s sister who was a sadhvi (Jain nun). She was extremely beautiful and whenever she would go out on the city streets, young men would follow her. With a strong desire to catch a glimpse of her, they would wait outside the upashraya too. Hence her two brother sadhus who were ferocious warriors at one time, would stand outside the upashraya to protect her.

The sadhvi thought, “How I hate my beauty which traps innocent and foolish people in it! Also, my brother saints have to forsake their penance and studies in order to protect me. Instead it is better that I accept Anshan and shorten my life which will eliminate all these problems” After having such thoughts of regret for many days, the sadhvi finally accepted lifetime Anshan.

Due to the fact that innocent and foolish people are fascinated and crazy behind beauty, women use this beauty as an asset to trap the innocent men. Just as a spider weaves a web and traps innocent flies, or a bird hunter who spreads a net alongwith food grains to catch the birds, a beautiful woman also uses her beauty as a weapon to trap the innocent ones. The pure-hearted sadhvi contempered this very beauty and accepted Anshan to get rid of it. Where do these seductive women of today stand and where does this pure-hearted sadhvi stand ?

All the attractive beauty, wealth, food and clothes in this outer world are dreadful because they make one lose the

* **Sadhvi** - Jain nuns

sense to discriminate between the right and wrong and lead to abundant sins.

This is the prime root of all the fights and feuds, pride and ego, deceit and cheating that happens all around.

In such a situation bhavya* souls should sit back and think, “For whose sake am I committing so many sins ? What is the fruit of all this, pride and deceit ? For whose sake am I spoiling relations with my real brother ? For these dreadful, temporary things ?

Is it appropriate to fight with my parents for the sake of my beautiful wife ? Is it appropriate to suppress my religious activities just because my business is flourishing ? Is it appropriate to behave badly with one and all ?

Check your life, where is your inner purity ?

Occasionally you may be generous and do charity or observe penance and other religious rituals, but you should check that amidst all this, what is the level of your innerpurity ?

Inner impurities :

If you sit back and think, you will realise that the heart is full of impurities. Can you bear the appreciation of another person’s intelligence, wealth or virtues ? If you do not like it, jealousy and hatred are bound to arise. There are times, when a person cannot even bear the appreciation of the person one likes. A father is fond of his son, but if someone says that, “Your son seems to be smarter than you,” then he cannot accept it and his heart burns with envy.

Why does a man burn with envy on hearing praises of even his loved ones ? This is because of the dreadful desire of acquiring respect and prestige in the society.

* **Bhavya** - those who are suitable to attain salvation

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Do some self-introspection and check whether you possess the inner impurity of not being able to bear the prosperity of others and accordingly, you are burning with jealousy and hatred.

In spite of following religions rituals throughout your life, isn't it the soul's misfortune if it cannot forsake the impurity of jealousy? Doesn't religion teach you to leave this very trait? This inner impurity comes along with us to the next birth. Will we be able to forget it?

Mind well, a mistake committed due to ignorance remains here and does not get carried forward to the next birth while the impure state of the soul developed here is bound to be carried along in the next birth because it is the soul's own doing.

By being jealous of the happy, wealthy or virtuous people, you have inculcated such a state of the soul which is sure to accompany you in the next birth. Other impurities similar to these are also likely to follow.

Another inner impurity is of becoming egoistic and proud in every other thing. You attain knowledge and feel like showing it off in front of people who do not possess such knowledge. Similarly, you attain a little wealth or status and pride envelops your mind. Even after doing some penance or charity, if you wish that people know about it, then it is a song of pride. If you feel that people should respect you at all times or that you should always look good, then this also depicts an egoistic nature. All these are inner impurities. Check the level of impurity in your life.

Another such impurity is of selfishness. A person who is blinded by such selfishness is not bothered by the sufferings or sorrows of others. He is just concerned about his own

happiness and comforts. Due to such a mentality, why will he even care about sadharmikas ? Why will he think twice before committing sins for his self-interest ? Will he care about assisting those in need ? If one has become stone- hearted, then one will not even think about others. Is such selfishness imbibed in us ?

One such impurity is the nature to develop animosity and fight with family members over petty issues. How much religion is required to be practiced to eliminate this nature ? Nothing at all. How can such a nature be changed ? Doing samvatsari pratikraman can also not alter this nature. Such a person will not remember his big mistakes and will not forget the small errors committed by others also.

Those who call themselves religious, should check their life and understand how many such impurities contaminate their soul ? If you want to really become religious by keeping all the impurities in your heart, then how can you become a religious person in the real sense ? You are just exercising external religion with impurities present inside.

A truly religious person is the man who has not only exercised external religion but has experienced religion inside also.

Lord Jineshwara Bhagwant's religion is so beautiful that if it touches the inner heart, the inner impurities are bound to run away. Only then can one become a religions soul and not a sinful soul.

If one exercises religion from the bottom of his heart,

- i) Can he get angry on his elders ?
- ii) Can he become angry and engage in unwanted fights ?
- iii) Will he harbour animosity and hatred towards other ?
- iv) Will he blow up with pride ?

- v) Will he waste away time in gossiping about others ?
- vi) Can he cheat or betray others' trust ?
- vii) Will he bribe people or earn money through wrong means ?

If one does not even have regret over such inner impurities then where is the chance of eliminating them or even trying to avoid them ? If such a state is not attained in this human birth then what kind of a spiritual state will we take along in the next birth ? Noble souls should understand this and should strive to decrease these impurities instead of strengthening them. They should exercise religion with the intention of eliminating these weaknesses.

Can religion uproot these impurities ? Yes.

Then why can't we see this result in people who exercise religion ? Because they do not have the goal of uprooting these impurities. If people do not possess the understanding and desire to eradicate these impurities, then what can religion do ? Can religion help you attain salvation ? Yes, but only for those who wish to reach there. Similarly those noble souls who have the desire to eradicate these impurities and exercise religion with that goal, can harbour the strength to eradicate them.

The desire to eradicate these inner impurities depicts the onset of the "rising period".

Do you wish to utilize this precious human birth as a 'rising period' ? Then this intense desire to eliminate these vices will lead to right efforts in the direction of eliminating hatred, selfishness and ego which are the soul's impurities." Hence,

- i) When the situation to succumb to such impurities arises, one should become alert.

- ii) Whenever, the thought process gets diverted, one should stay strong and think about ways to get rid of these impurities.
- iii) The mind should always be engaged in the thoughts of Arihanta Lords, their lives and teachings and the lives of other great men.
- iv) Take their inspiration to understand that trials are made to overcome these faults.

Saint Shasak-Bhasak's sister condemned her beauty which attracted the young men and drove them to the wrong way. This created a barrier in her brother-saints penance and studies.

The pride over one's beauty and the intention of attracting innocent people towards it is an inner impurity. On the other hand, considering this beauty to be a trap for innocent people and hence condemning it, is the soul's purity.

The pure hearted sadhvi not only condemned her beauty but to avoid the dreadful consequences, she decided to destroy her beauty and hence accepted Anshan. As days passed, she become pale and dry and one day she became unconscious and couldn't move. People assumed her to be dead and as a result, her brother-saints themselves picked her up and threw her body in the jungle. How great were the sadhvi's efforts to avoid her heart from getting impure!

Efforts to stop the heart from becoming impure are visible in Lord Mahavira's life too. Snake Chandkaushika bit Lord's leg but the great Lord did not harbour even a little anger or hatred towards him. Indrabhooti Brahmin had come to challenge Lord and debate with him, but Lord remained calm and eventually Indrabhooti Brahmin became Lord's disciple. Even when Avadhigyani Lord Mahavira was a child and

his parents sent him to study at school, he did not utter a single word saying that, “What are you doing ? How much knowledge does the teacher possess compared to me ?” Not even a tinge of pride or ego.

Q. : Why did Lord Mahavira, as a child, hit the deva’s shoulder with his fist when the deva had come to test him and had taken the form of a ferocious demon ?

A. : Lord Mahavira hit him not due to pride but to make the Mithyatvi* deva aware about the unmatched powers of Arihanta Lords. He hit him with the fist to remove his Mithyatva and eventually the Deva realised his folly and asked for forgiveness. Similarly even when Lord had moved the gigantic Meru Parwat during his Janmabhisheka, (ceremony held to celebrate the birth of Lord) it was not out of pride but to eradicate the doubt regarding Lord’s strength in the mind of the Indra* and thus save him from Aashatna*.

It was evident from Lord Mahavira’s humble life that he did not possess any pride or ego. Otherwise why would he accept going to school on his parents’ wish ?

Continuing our story ahead,

Presuming their sister sadhvi to be dead due to Anshan, her brother- saints carried her and left her in the jungle. But after they went back, the cool breeze passing by brought life to the sadhvi. She opened her eyes and saw herself in an isolated forest. She tried to figure out her whereabouts for a moment

* **Mithyatvi** - One who does not believe in Arihanta Lords and the religion propounded by them.

* **Indra** - Head of all celestial beings.

* **Aashatna** - Sins committed due to the disrespect of Arihanta Lord and their religion.

and then realised what must have occurred. She recollected that due to the weakness on account of Anshan, she must have lost her consciousness and assuming her to be dead, she must have been left in this dense forest.

Here, the situation was similar to Kamlata's. Because of this similarity, we are discussing this example. Just as a woman's touch delight a man, similarly a man's touch delights a woman, even if it is a touch that was experienced in an unconscious state.

Here, the strong-minded sadhvi had experienced only her brother saint's touch, who had carried her in an unconscious state. But this delighted her slightly.

The feeling of even the slightest delight on the sight and touch of the opposite sex is dreadful. It destroys the celibacy followed since many years.

Do you want to avoid such a downfall in life ?

Then avoid the sight of the opposite sex. If you happen to glance, then avoid the feeling of delight experienced at that time.

That strong-minded sadhvi who had accepted Anshan had experienced her brother-saint's touch even in an unconscious state. But it was enough to stir delight in her heart. Now, look where it led her. After regaining consciousness, she was still lost in her thoughts as to where she was and where she would now head towards. At that time, a caravan passed by and the caravan owner asked, "Who are you and how are you here ?"

The sadhvi met the caravan :

The sadhvi thought about her future course of action. She had firmly decided that she was no longer capable of
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following Anshan. Hence, she thought that going back to her mentor and fellow sadhvis would decrease her reputation and lead to unwanted consequences. There was a chance of facing trouble from the young men and though she wished to die through Anshan, the current situation showed that destiny had something else in store for her. Now, she thought that waiting was the best option. She told the caravan-owner, “I am a foreigner who is here due to Karmas.”

The caravan owner understood that, “She must have been abandoned due some crisis situation which she was not willing to share. But her beauty is so attractive and charming that she must belong to some noble family. Hence, I should provide her shelter for the time-being.”

Based on such thoughts, he said, “Sister! You seem to be lost, also you seem very malnourished. Are you suffering from any disease ? Whatever it is, do not worry. Come along with me in my caravan.”

The caravan-owner had sly intentions in his heart. Hence, he talked sweetly. Now the sadhvi’s mind had also become weak. She had abandoned the thought of death as well Sanyama (Renunciation of the temporary material world to lead an ascetic life). ‘How to break the Anshan and stay amidst the sadhvis ? ’this shame stopped her from going back. This made her agree to go along with the caravan owner. The caravan owner nourished her by feeding her with healthy, rich food. Eventually, her beauty blossomed to the fullest. Now how could the caravan owner control his desires when he saw the young woman’s beauty ? He was no saint.

How can even a saint, save himself after staying in constant touch with a beautiful, charming woman ?

Saint Sthoolibhadraji was truly an exception who remained

unmoved in spite of staying at prostitute Kosha's place for a period of 4 long months. Even the great Sinhgufavasi saint who had performed the great test of bravely staying outside a lion's cave for 4 month could not control his desires. Hence, a woman's contact is dangerous.

If a woman constantly goes to a sadhu's place, there is a chance of the sadhus becoming mentally weak and hence, scriptures forbid sadhvis from going to a sadhu's upashraya in absence of a strong reason like listening to vyakhyan (religious sermons) or practising specific rituals. If this is the case for sadhus, then obviously there will be restrictions for sadhvis, too.

Knowledgeable men have foreseen that the union of sadhvis and women is similar to the union of wine and fire, which is bound to create a blast.

The caravan-owner was in constant touch with the young lady who was gradually losing her determination. He got attracted towards her and tried persuading her with romantic words to become his wife. The once determined sadhvi who was also delighted so slightly by her brother saint's touch, was now in constant touch of the caravan owner. As a result, even she was moved by sensual desires and eventually succumbed to them. She accepted the caravan-owner's proposal and ended up becoming his wife.

How dreadful is this outer world! It can lead to the downfall of a once-greatly determined and courageous sadhvi too.

Q. : Where did the essence of sanyam (ascetic life) followed by her since years evaporate so suddenly ?

A. : Here, you need to understand that the taste of sensual pleasures enjoyed since infinite past births is far more powerful than the essence of sanyam followed since a few years.

Q. : How can Jain monks and nuns stay determined ?

A. : They can stay determined because they keep safe distance not only from the contact of these sensual pleasures but also from their remembrance. Otherwise, if they also use soft clothes, delicious gochari (food) and stay in touch with women, they will not be able to live a smooth ascetic life. Their fondness for a pure, ascetic life will eventually die down and the temptation for sensual pleasures will overcome their heart and mind which will lead to a gradual downfall.

Not only saints but householders, too cannot stay firm in such circumstances. It is said by a famous poet,

“Rasana Rama Ne Rmaji, E Tava Pataka Moola.”

It means that, tongue, women and wealth are the root of all sins.

One who has succumbed to the temptations of his tongue commits sins of one or the other kind. The tongue wishes to savour various tasty delicacies and to fulfil its desires, one has to fight or speak lies. If one does not control the tastebuds, a little problem in the food made is bound to lead to temper and fury.

The ever unsatisfied taste buds make one ignore religion and scriptures too. Today, everyone has started having banana vegetables and ripe mangoes on tithi days. What for ? Just to satisfy the taste buds by ignoring the religious preaching that all green vegetables and fruits should be avoided on 5 parvatithi days every month. This is due to the slavery of the tongue, which is not satisfied after having bananas and mangoes for 25 days a month. Hence it's consumption for the rest 5 days also cannot be controlled. This slavery of the tongue has led to Ratribhोजना* on holidays, ceremonies and

* **Ratribhोजना** - Eating after sunset

even at holy pilgrimage places. Where is the religion and duties of shravakas ? People understand that a real shravaka will not eat at night, but if the shravaka loses his self-control, then even the regret of eating at night is not there. Isn't this really disgraceful ?

So much slavery even after attaining such a noble birth! Imagine the slavery in other low births!

As a Jain, one should avoid doing Ratribhोजना at home except for adjustments in accordance with one's job timings. Ratribhोजना at public ceremonies should obviously be avoided. But the slavery of this crazy tongue does not let us follow this also. The consumption of abhakashya food (inedible items) also does not pinch us. Can we consume moong dal or chana dal with shrikhand ? No, the union of pulses and dal with milk or buttermilk which are not heated leads to 'Dvidal'. The slavery of our senses does not make us strong enough to avoid these abhakashya items also. Isn't this our misery ?

Q. : There are sins in such small activities also. Then what about the greater sins prevailing in society like injustice, cheating, bribery etc. that happen during day to day life ?

A. : One should understand that the intentional violation of the basic fundamentals of Jainism is not a small sin but a great one because the heart becomes tough due to ignorance of such sins. Once the heart becomes tough towards such sins, it is bound to become tough and ignorant towards other sins also. Thus, the intentional violation of the basic fundamentals of Jainism leads to it's ignorance which inturn invites other sins, too. Not only this, it also creates disrespect towards the Lord's teachings which depict these acts as sins. Thus, it eventually leads to Mithyatva. So, where did these so called small sins lead one towards ?

Which are the greater sins ?

Some people call injustice, cheating, etc. to be great sins in daily life. But they may criticize Jain saints and sing praises for the rivals of Jainism as if they are not a sin at all. Actually, these are greater sins compared to other sins and can take one to the seventh hell.

Why is the violation of basic fundamentals of Jainism terrible ?

A Jain cannot afford to commit even a single sin, may it be sins committed during daily activities, criticism of religion or sangha or that of violation of the primary fundamentals of Jainism. Remembering Lord Arihanta's teachings, a true follower of Jainism does not violate the code of conduct, thinking that the great Almighty Lord has laid down this code. On the other hand, there may be people who do not practice injustice, cheating or bribery as it is against the society norms and not by remembering Lord's teachings. Thus, considering the violation of the primary fundamentals of Jainism to be minor is actually the disrespect of Lord's preaching.

You have to understand the minute difference here. We are not trying to say that sins that are forbidden in the society are not sins. They are also great sins but not living in accordance with the basic fundamentals laid down in Jainism is a sin which is worse than the sins forbidden in the society because it involves disrespect of Arihanta Lords .

The difference between Jainism and other religions :

Jainism is the only pure and true religion.

This is because Jainism is preached by the omniscient Lords. Only Jainism recognizes the tiniest living creature, right upto the one-sensed creatures. Other religions consider only non-violence, to be the pure and complete religion.

Jainism's superiority is based not on mere non-violence but on the pure rites and rituals shown by Lord Arihantas. Comparing these rituals and conduct with rituals and conduct of other religions is ignorance and foolishness.

Jainism's holy practices of Panchachar, doing Pratikaman to eliminate the mistakes and to take prayashchita for bigger errors made; all these distinctly separates Jainism from the rest. No other religion has so much depth as Jainism. Criticizing such rituals is nothing but foolishness.

Western scholars are also amazed by the rituals and the code of conduct laid down in Jainism.

The duties laid down to be followed by Jain shravakas during festival, Paryushana and on an annual and daily basis, show that no other religion's practices can stand against the superiority of Jainism.

Hence, England's famous dramatist Bernard Shaw wished to be reborn as a Jain in his next birth.

German Lady Crauzen was also greatly fond of Jainism's code of conduct. When she was attending a gathering and was served mangoes after Adra, she got furious and said, "Are! Adra Nakshatra has already set in, then why are you all eating and serving mangoes? Isn't mango considered Abhakshya (inedible) after Adra?" All the people gathered for the meal felt shameful and were astonished on seeing her strict code of conduct.

Dr. Jacoby was also an ardent lover and follower of Jainism's rules and regulations.

Similar to considering only non-violence to be true religion and disgracing other religious practices, there is another popular

trend these days, which says that, ‘all religions are equal’.

Is all gold the same ? No, some may be artificial or some real. Are all woman same ? No, someone is your mother, someone your wife or someone your sister. Are all traders the same ? No, some may be fake also. All these have variations but religion has no variations ? Why so ? Can’t there be fakeness or variations in religion also ?

There is another widespread belief these days which states that religion is the root cause of all the fights and feuds in this world. Don’t you see that the fights are happening for power or position ? Isn’t the court overflowing with cases related to property and wealth ? Why are their feuds prevailing amongst family members ? Do countries fight for the sake of religion ? Were the first two world wars fought on the name of religion ?

There is another trend which says that, “It is only science which can help mankind.” Only material science ? Or spiritual science also ? Does science consider the welfare of the soul ? Or it just marches towards the development of non-living technologies which are enough to attract men who are always inclined towards the external material world ?

If you sit back and contemplate, you will realize that dependence and attraction of material pleasures has drastically led to an increase of necessities also. As a result, the mental thought process is constantly engaged in it. The comfort loving people find relaxation and solace in these temporary objects. Its absence leads to disturbance.

Hence, all these elements are dangerous.

The facilities and luxuries provided by science make one forget the welfare of the soul and the ideal destination for mental solace-Arihanta Paramatmas.

As scientific technologies advance, man sees additional comfort in the new development and thus, gets attracted towards them. First man travelled only by bullock carts and now he has various means of transportation like cars, trains and planes to choose from. Now think, with this development did the love and faith for Lord increase? Were our forefathers more devoted to God or are we more devoted? If you think and answer neutrally, you will definitely know that our forefathers were more devoted and religious than us.

Who is responsible for our lack of faith in religion and its rituals? What does not let our mind rest in Arihanta Lords? The increasing attraction towards material pleasures and technologies created by science is the sure answer.

The technological advancement made by science has led to many sins like killings in slaughter houses, increased violence amongst humans, betrayal of trust, etc.

Do you think it is appropriate to sing the glory of this science which has led to the decline of religion and the increment of dreadful sins?

To conclude, it is foolish to get carried away in trends and rumours which are baseless.

We were talking about the 3 elements which are the root causes of sins. The sin of not controlling one's taste buds may seem to be very small but the intention of avoiding such sins is true religion. This is why we got into the above discussions.

Why is the slavery of tongue dreadful?

Because the slavery of the tongue leads to the attraction of other sins also. The slavery of the tongue is the outcome of the attachment for delicious food. This in itself is dreadful. Also,

if one considers this slavery to be a small thing, one needs to understand that such slavery eliminates the limitations for other sins and the respect for Lords' teachings.

Hence, this slavery as well as attachment is horrible.

Women and wealth :

Similar is the case for women and wealth. Both are the root cause of sins. Sins caused due to wealth are prevalent in the world around while the sins caused due to women on account of sensual pleasures is evident in the incidents of Shasak-Bhasak's sister sadhvi.

We saw this in Kamlata's incident also, that driven by sensual desires, the king committed a mistake and so did Kamlata. Down the line, she became a prostitute and unknowingly ended up having relations with her own son. Deeply remorseful for her actions, Kamlata was ready to burn herself in fire but was unexpectedly saved and landed up with the shepherd. She was on the verge of committing another mistake. Was this possible ? Would she really agree to become the shepherd's wife ?

Yes, because the soul's ignorance and attraction for sensual desires is so powerful that if one fails to stay alert, than his downfall knows no limits. It can lead to a crazy thought process.


Taking the excuse of destiny, Brahmani Kamlata thought, "O! What a strange turn my life took! What does destiny have in store for me ? I wanted to end my life by committing suicide but destiny did not find it right. It seems that more sins are written in my destiny. Why else wouldn't I die ? It's better that I stop thinking and let destiny take charge. Let it take me wherever it seems appropriate." Thus, she succumbed to the

shepherd's requests and became his wife. Kamlata was now a shepherdess! The desire for sensual pleasures motivated her to take such a decision.

Look at her foolishness. She thought, "Destiny kept me alive because I still had sins left to commit or else I would have died." But is it appropriate to commit sins and mistakes till the last breath and then die ? Instead, it is better to stay alive and repent over your sins, and try to decrease them and then die. But she did not think on these lines.

What foolishness and ignorance!

Today, many such ignorant people exist who have the false belief that committing sins is written in their destiny and thus, blindly and heartlessly exercise abundant sins.



10. Harmony of the 5 Causes

Q. : Can we commit sins which are not written in our destiny ?

A. : This is lack of right understanding. Committing sins requires effort whereas destiny is karma.

The job of karmas is to give you good or bad fruits whereas acting, speaking, walking or thinking comes under purushartha (efforts).

There are various factors involved in accomplishment of a task namely-

- 1) kaal (time)
- 2) swabhava (nature)
- 3) bhavitavyata (destiny)
- 4) karma (action)
- 5) purushartha (efforts)

All these are individual factors and all of them possess a separate, individual identity. In the accomplishment of any task, kaal cannot play the role of swabhava. Similarly, karma or purushartha cannot play the role played by bhavitavyata or the role played by karma cannot be played by bhavitavyata or purushartha. To conclude, the identity of every factor is kept intact. The individuality of every factor means their own specific contribution towards a particular task. For e.g. when a child is born,

- i) Only after the stipulated period of approximately 9 months, the child comes out of the womb in this world. Here, kaal played it's role.
- ii) Out of the Audarika pudgala* consumed as food by the mother, the child makes it's audarik body. Here the nature of the pudgala played a role.
- iii) It was the mother's Punya* and kshayopshama* of labhantraya* karmas that she attained a good child. Also, it was the child's punya as well as the kshayopshama of labhantraya karmas that he attained a good mother. Hence, the mother gave birth to a child and here karma played it's role.
- iv) The punya was only limited to the fact that the child attained a good mother but the mother got this specific child and the child got this very mother. Here, bhavitavyata played it's role. It is this very destiny that led to their union.
- v) The child's birth is a result of both the parents' efforts and here, purushartha played a role.

How do these factors work ?

Here, can you call any of these factors useless ? You cannot include one factors work in the other. For e.g. the womb ripened after a period of 9 months, so can you say that swabhava's contribution got included in kaal and Swabhava did not play any role ? Can you say that it was only the nature

* **Audarika Pudgala-** Substance which make's a human body.

* **Punya** - Good karmas or fortune.

* **Kshayopshama** - The decrease in karmas done by intentional efforts

* **Labhantraya karmas** - The karma which stop the acquisition of goodthings.

of the food consumed which created the baby's body ? In spite of all this, the requirement of 9 months was fulfilled only by kaal. Every factor here plays a role according to its specialty. Hence, you cannot even say that, "It was bhavitavyata which enabled the union of these 2 souls." What was karma's role here ? Can't karma be included in bhavitavyata and can't bhavitavyata included in karma be ? Why so ? Because, one factor cannot play the role of another.

Only karma can give a good or bad life. But the small specifications and special features that vary in everyone's life are due to bhavitavyata. Hence, bhavitavyata's role is brought by karma i.e. If the mother has bad karmas (paap karmas) working, then she may have a bad or naughty child who does not respect her. But it is bhavitavyata who decides that this specific soul will become her child.

The role of destiny can be best illustrated from the life of Lord Parshwanath who got troubled by Kamath.

Lord Parshwanath's soul succumbed to death in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th births due to external affliction and pain. Even in this last 10th birth, after accepting sanyam (astatic life) and attaining Kevalgyana*, he had to bear serious pain. What was the main cause of his pain ? Lord's own Ashata Vedniya* karmas. Pain does not arise without these karmas.

Pain is a result of one's own negative karmas irrespective of the living or non-living object which becomes instrumental in causing that pain. Pain is primarily caused due to one's own karmas.

* **Kevalgyana** - Omniscience wherein all the 3 worlds are visible to one

* **Ashata Vedniya Karmas** - Karmas which lead to disease, pain and sorrow.

Here, in Lord Parshwanath's case, Kamatha was responsible for his pain in each birth. Why so? Because bhavitavyata was such that it would lead to their union in any possible way. It must have been Lord's previous negative karmas which resulted in this pain and bhavitavyata afflicted this pain through Kamath.

Lord Parshwanath was Marubhuti in his first birth and it was his negative karma that led to his head being hit with a huge stone. It was Kamath who hit the stone. During his 2nd birth, Lord was reborn as an elephant and his karma of dying due to a severe snake bite was in action. Thanks to bhavitavyata, it was Kamath's soul which came there as the snake. In the 4th, 6th, 8th, births of Lord, his soul was born as a king who had accepted monkhood eventually.

His Ashata karmas were going to cause painful deaths by means of a crocodile, adivasibhill (person from a tribal area) and lion respectively. Due to bhavitavyata, Lord's soul ended up in the in the same jungle as the crocodile, adivasi and lion which afflicted Lord Parshwanath's soul with pain and trouble.

He had to endure the pain on account of his own karmas but due to bhavitavyata, these specific souls became instrumental in it.

Lord's soul very well understood this principle and since his very first birth, did not get venomous, anxious, angry or excited. He did not consider Kamath to be responsible for his pain and held only his own karmas at fault and accordingly he tolerated all the pain with utmost composure and patience. Only then could he attain salvation in such a short span. This proves that if we uphold bhavitavyata as the pain giver, then Lord's belief of his karmas giving him pain would stand wrong.

No Tirthankar Lords in the past have considered bhavitavyata to be the cause of pain. Infinite Tirthankara Lords have believed and preached one's own karmas to be the cause of pain. The medium or the person responsible for causing that pain is due to bhavitavyata.

Thus, Tirthankar Bhagwants have clearly distinguished the roles of karma and bhavitavyata.

Good and bad karmas result in the joys and sorrows caused and the specific person or medium who becomes instrumental in causing them is due to bhavitavyata.

After understanding this principle, can someone say that, "Everything works in accordance with bhavitavyata? All the joys and sorrows experienced at all times are decided by bhavitavyata."

This is mere ignorance related to Jainism. Isn't it a total contradiction of innumerable Tirthankar Lord's teachings? How can true followers have this ignorance and contradict Lord's beliefs in this way. They are not in sync with Jainism's ideologies and speak according to their own free will. This is not Jainism in the true sense.

Thus, according to Jainism, these 5 factors contribute to the accomplishment of any task. They all co-ordinate but still maintain their individuality. Each contribute differently and are not capable enough to take one another's place.

Kamlata Brahmani was under the false belief that, "My destiny is such that I still have to commit sins further. Thus, she again started a marital life with the shepherd. Her belief was wrong because, the job of fortune (destiny) is just to create favourable or unfavourable circumstances. But the job of committing sins is the department of one's own purushartha (efforts).

Though the shepherd came to woo her, it was in Kamlata's hands to make the decision. Here, she made the wrong decision and conceived a new marital life.

Even we need to understand the difference that though the favourable and unfavourable situations are due to good or bad karmas but thinking, speaking and acting positively or negatively in that situation depends absolutely on our efforts.

There are 3 prime things to understand here :

- i) Kala, Karma, Bhavitavyata, Swabhava and Purushartha – all possess their individual characteristics.
- ii) All mutually co-ordinate with each other.
- iii) Also one needs to understand as to which factor plays a major role in which task.

If one pays attention and keeps in mind the above things then,

- i) It is possible to maintain mental composure in favourable and unfavourable situations.
- ii) Incidents occurring in the world outside can lead to anxiety and artadhyana (a negative thought process).
- iii) In accordance with this principle, one can beautifully contemplate on one's own and other's experiences.

For an example, one may wonder

Q. : Is Kaal powerful today ? Or karma ? Or purushartha ?

A. : You can contemplate on this question by thinking that each of these factors are powerful in it's own unique way. One's efforts are independent to enable or disable the person to maintain parity of thought, actions or words.

Here, we saw the independence of each of the 5 factors from the point of view of it's special characteristics Karma, Purushartha, Bhavitavyata all possess distinctive features.

For e.g. Kaal cannot give birth to swabhava and vice versa. The nature of the soul to be bhavya or abhavya is independently fixed since eternity. No one has given birth to it. To illustrate, the nature of fire is to heat and the nature of water is to cool. They are independent and have not emerged out of Kaal or Bhavitavyata.

Similarly kaal has also not emerged out of the remaining 4 factors but is independent. The nature of being bhavya is independent and hence even if the abhavya soul attains the best human birth, the best Arihanta Lord and gurus and the great Jain religion due to good karmas, it is still not sufficient to give rise to the nature of being bhavya. The nature of being bhavya or abhavya is independently present in each respective soul since eternity. It cannot be born or changed. In a similar manner, Kaal is also independent. Even if the soul of Almighty Tirthankar Lords possess the nature of bhavyatva, it cannot bring ahead the favourable karmas through Kaal. Similarly, good karmas or intense efforts of accepting charitra are also not capable to bring in the Charmavarta Kaal*. It will come only chronologically when all the initial pudgal paravartas pass and the Charmavarta Kaal comes. This is the Kaal's independence.

Karma is also independent and they do not emerge out of Kaal, Swabhava or Bhavitavyata.

Q. : It is said that all the past, present and future states are decided priorly. Then can't it be said that the fluctuations in karmas arise from bhavitavyata ?

* **Charmavarta Kaal** - The final period during which the soul can progress and eventually attain salvation.

A. : The one who says so has not understood the element called ‘bhavitavyata’ (destiny) rightly and completely in the first place. They call it bhavitavyata but are actually talking about a kevalgyani’s sight, but it also is not a creator, it’s just a spectator.

The sight of a kevalgyani is not the creator of the past, present or future states, but is just a spectator. For e.g. if a mirror reflects the rain, can you say that the rain is pouring just as the mirror shows ? This does not mean that the mirror is the creator of rain. The mirror merely shows the rain which has emerged out of its own reasons. Similarly, even though a kevalgyani’s knowledge covers all the present, past and future times, it does not mean that a kevalgyani’s sight gives birth to the course of events happening around at all times. Those specific states or events emerge due to their own causes and not due to the kevalgyani’s sight. A kevalgyani merely reflects these events or states through his knowledge.

It is an offence to consider the kevalgyani’s sight to be the creator.

If some soul is bound to go to the seventh hell, then can you say that he has to bear the severe pains in hell just because the kevalgyani’s sight was such ? Is it appropriate to say this ? Is the kevalgyani’s sight a giver of such unbearable tortures ? Won’t they be called wicked to forecast about things that cause so much pain and misery to others ?

Actually, it is the soul’s own bad acts and sins which lead to the soul’s pitiful state. A kevalgyani’s knowledge merely reflects these acts. To conclude, knowledge can only see and not generate.

Using this calculation as an excuse, many people do not make efforts in the directions of religion thinking that, “Kevalgyanis have not seen religious efforts in us.” This excuse is baseless

because as we discussed earlier, a kevalgyani's sight is not the generator of right efforts, but is just a spectator. If religious efforts are present, it will simply show these religious effort emerge out of their own causes. Following are the reasons which lead to efforts towards religion -

- i) Attraction and appreciation of religion
- ii) Listening to religious discussions
- iii) The desire and need for religion.

If one does not possess the above things, then religious efforts are not possible. If you desire to eat something, efforts are made in no time. Hence the excuse of a kevalgyani's sight is baseless here. This was about a kevalgyani's sight but, bhavitavyata (destiny) is completely different from a kevalgyani's sight. Bhavitavyata is responsible for the specific turn of events.

For e.g. Why did Lord Parshwanath meet Kamath only in each birth ? Thanks to destiny. Were Lord's karmas responsible for this ? His negative Karmas only possessed the capacity to afflict him with pain. It was bhavitavyata which decided that Kamath would be instrumental in doing so.

Lord Mahavira taught the tejoleshya to the unsuitable, and arrogant Goshala. What was the reason behind this ? Not Lord's ignorance because Lord is alert at all time. The scriptures state that here too, destiny played a significant role. It was destiny that Goshala asked Lord and accordingly, Lord showed him the method.

To simplify, when the remaining 4 factors become incapable to justify an act, destiny becomes the reason. Thus, destiny also has a separate identity and is not a subtype of karma, etc.

No factors are included in one another. They all are different.

Q. : Karma is a fruit of your efforts (purushartha). Then how can karma be called independent ?

A. : Though karmas arise due to purushartha, but they function independently in the accomplishment a task. Just as Kaal and purushartha work independently, so does karma. You cannot say that while the task was done, the purushartha led to a specific karma or the karmas led to a certain kind of purushartha. The karmas were previously binded and the soul makes fresh efforts. Both these causes combine to result in such a task.

Major and minor reasons :

It is possible that in some instances, Kaal plays a major role while others become unimportant. Somewhere swabhava plays a major role and the rest have a minor contribution. So all the 5 factors play major or minor roles at different instances.

For e.g. If one soul attains salvation, one soul comes out from the Nigoda (algae which are one-sensed living organisms). But which soul will come out ? Only the soul whose bhavitavyata is powerful. Thus, bhavitavyata plays a prime role here.

Out of the souls which come out, some can attain and enter the charam pudgala paravarta while some are not fortunate enough to do so. Those who are abhavya cannot do so. Swabhava plays a pivotal role as the unfortunate abhavya soul can never attain salvation and hence, there is no question of entering the last avarta.

Even for the bhavya souls, this period comes chronologically and not by increasing efforts or due to any specific karma. After the previous Kaal passes, only then can the new phase begin. Here Kaal (time) plays the significant role.

After entering the Charmavarta Kaal (final era), bhavya souls

can attain salvation only from the human birth and not any other births. However, noble the soul is, it cannot progress towards the path of salvation without a favourable human birth. Hence, the karmas of the human birth become useful in attaining salvation. In that birth also, finding the right path and coming in contact with the Almighty Tirthankar Lords and Gurubhagwants is due to karmas. From this point of view, karmas gains importance.

Why is purushartha (efforts) an independent factor ?

The question now arises that inspite of attaining the precious human birth and coming in contact with good gurus, not everyone can pave the path towards salvation. What is responsible for this ?

Purushartha will solve your queries. Karmas provide an individual with favourable situations and commodities. But using it optimally for your spiritual progress rests on an individual's own efforts. Every individual possesses his own inner strength. Using it effectively is termed as purushartha. For e.g. a mother can at the most feed a child, but the child himself has to take the efforts to chew it to enable it to pass down the foodpipe.

Karma can gift us favourable objects but whether it is effectively used or not depends on the efforts made.

On entering the last pudgala paravarta, karmas give a soul everything right, from a human birth, long life, 5 senses in working condition, good health family and the contact of Arihanta Lords and gurubhagwants. But then, holding on to religious preachings and having faith can be done only if the soul makes efforts in that direction. Karma cannot do this task. There is no human whose 8 karmas can give rise to purushartha. Purushartha is the accumulation of the soul's

inner strength. The soul is independent to go to his opponents place for some work and when he is invited for lunch, if he does not wish to have food there, he will flatly refuse. But if the opposite person insists and he is a little hungry, he will not take the efforts to avoid having a meal there.

Q. : But it is his opponent who tempts him to have food, cannot it be said that karma led him to do purushartha in this direction ?

A. : No. Karma tempted him but getting tempted and accepting the invitation for lunch can happen only if an individual does purushartha in that direction. This proves that purushartha is an individual factor. If one does not wish to get tempted, then he will take all possible efforts to avoid it.

From this we can deduce that,

Those who do not want to exercise religion, give the excuse that, “It is not in our destiny.” This is absolutely wrong because they do not wish to accelerate their efforts in the field of religion. They are just interested in working for the sake of gaining material benefits.

The decision to exercise religion is also dependent on purushartha and not karma How come ?

The desire to commit some sins arises due to the Mohaniya Karmas. This karma leads to negative traits like hatred, ego, anger, etc. but engaging the mind in these sinful thoughts and taking the decision to commit sins is possible only if the soul makes efforts in that direction. Just as one has to make efforts for speech and action, similar is the case for thoughts. Hence, due to some previous karmas if a religious soul happens to develop a sinful thought, he will not let his thoughts dwell on it. Instead, he will immediately switch over

to some thoughts related to our scriptures or start chanting Navkar Mantra to stop such unwanted thought process. With such efforts, he will change to good acts and thus, stop the sinful acts exercised by him.

Haven't you experienced this ?

You happen to glance upon a beautiful lady wearing revealing clothes and get carried away in wrong thoughts for a moment. But then if you make right efforts and direct your mind thinking that, "Why did I get lost in such unwanted thoughts ? Am I an evil and wicked man ?" It can stop your sinful thoughts and acts. Who stopped these unwanted thoughts ? If Karma was actually responsible for the emergence of the sinful thoughts and acts, then how can it stop them ? It was the soul's purushartha which stopped the sinful act. This proves that karma leads to the desire for exercising sins but purushartha is responsible for the thoughts, action and speech in that direction. Purushartha is dependent solely on an individual. Hence, if an individual makes right efforts, then it will lead to pure acts, thoughts and speech, while if one makes wrong efforts, then it will give rise to sinful thoughts, acts and speech.

Now one can counter argue that,

Though the development of thoughts related to religion are dependent on purushartha, but the sinful thoughts are dependent on karmas. Is it ? No, it is also dependent on purushartha.

What are thoughts ? The activity of the mind. Just as speech is the action of the tongue and behaviour is the action of the body, thoughts are the acts of the mind. How does karma function here ? Karma provided a body to perform a task, a tongue to speak well and a mind that can think. Now to engage the body, tongue and mind in the right direction is the work of the soul.

Hence scriptures say that, “The onset of the Mohaniya Karmas leads to feelings of anger, pride, etc., but the efforts to nullify its effect is in our hands. Think rationally about the disadvantages of anger and stop the efforts in that direction, i.e. Don’t let anger take control of your thoughts, actions or speech. This will ensure that the negative feelings and karmas leading to anger get nullified. If purushartha is not an independent working factor different from karmas how can this become possible ?

Q. : What about the case of Nandishena ? Did karmas lead to the downfall of the saint wherein he engaged in physical relations with a prostitute ?

A. : This is said in a general sense. But if you think rationally you will realise that karma just led to the rise of his desire for physical indulgence, but his desire was so intense that his right efforts could not overcome them. The sinful thoughts, romantic conversation with the prostitute and the physical relations were all done using the strength of the soul which is termed purushartha.

Karma can lead to the desires for sins and can also give us a strong mind, tongue and body to experience them, but it cannot push or insist us to indulge in the sinful acts. The individual does this on his own.

If karmas lead us to the acts of the body mind and tongue, can’t the karmas enable us to do all that is required to attain salvation ? No. Salvation is possible only by the complete elimination of all karmas. Then who can enable one to perform the positive acts which can lead to salvation ? Of course, the individual purushartha is responsible for the wrong acts which lead to karmas sending an individual to the dungeons of hell and other low births. You have to admit that it is the wrong efforts of the individual which leads to this.

In this manner, if you differentiate between karmas and purushartha and consider them to be independent, then you can motivate yourself thinking, “Irrespective of the favourable and unfavourable circumstances that karma gives me, I am independent to think, act and speak positively. I will engage myself in good religious activity, speak softly and not keep my mind occupied in thoughts of hatred, lust, anger etc.” Can’t such a thought process strengthen one’s fight against karmas and increase one’s enthusiasm manifold ?

Such is the power of purushartha that it attacks the negativity generated by negative karmas! It can nullify the impact of hatred, love, ego, etc.

Do not assume that the great men and sages of the past did not possess these negative karmas. Lord Mahavira, after being worshipped by even the Indras, still had Mohaniya karmas after accepting diksha. That is why he became Vitraag* Sarvagna* after 12.5 years from the time of his diksha and not immediately. This proves that till then, even Lord experienced the fruits of his Mohaniya karmas.

Q. : How did Lord Mahavira ultimately overcome these negative feelings of love, hatred, etc. ?

A. : Lord had stopped the thoughts, actions and words which boosted the negative feelings of love, hatred, ego, etc. The emergence of these thoughts boosted the negative feelings but efforts were made by Lord to overcome them. Lord had completely stopped the negative efforts by constantly engaging his mind in the contemplation of Jain ideologies, staying almost silent and exercising non- violence, restraint and penance with his body.

* **Vitraag** – One who is free of love and hatred

* **Sarvagna** – One who possesses omniscience i.e. infinite knowledge

Then isn't it obvious that the negative feelings of love, and hatred etc. would get nullified? One should not restrict love for those who are concerned about your well-being and harbor no hatred towards those who betray you.

One should harbor the same detached feeling for both. How is this possible? Only by the efforts undertaken by the Lord's soul. At the end of 12 years, 6 months and 15 days, this purushartha reached a different level and Lord finally became Vitraag Parmatma, by destroying all the remaining Mohaniya Karmas. In no time, he destroyed the Gyanavarniya, Darshanavarniya and Antraya karmas which opened the doors for kevalgyana. Isn't this the enormous strength of purushartha? Is this situation possible if purushartha was working under karmas or dependent on karmas.

Purushartha is an independent factor above karmas.

If you understand the individuality of all the 5 factors, you will not participate in or spread talks like,

“All the states of existence of future, past or present are written in our destiny.”

“Efforts in religion are possible only if karmas are favourable.”

“Right efforts are also not possible unless the right time has arrived.”

“If destiny is favourable, it will surely lead to right purushartha. Since we cannot make efforts towards religion, it means that destiny is not in our favour.”

“Karma is a non-living object. One object cannot influence another. Hence, the living object-soul's efforts are not influenced by any non-living object like karma.”

All these are mithya (false) talks not in accordance with Jainism.

How can you call the above talks false ?

i) Destiny (bhavitavyata) fixes the states of existence in the world. Why is this a false belief ?

This belief belongs to Goshala's Aajivak sect. This is absolutely false because the state of existence is due to karma as well as the soul's right and wrong efforts. Does it mean that destiny creates all these states ?

Are the karmas dependent on the mithyatva*, avirati*, kashayas* practised by a soul or is purushartha regulated by the soul itself or by destiny ?

If it is destiny which regulates the state of karma, then why are mithyatva, avirati etc. called the causes of binding karmas ? Also the path of samyaktarshan, gyana and charitra laid down by Lord Mahavira and the efforts preached to achieve them will also become futile. Because according to the above belief efforts cannot do anything productive. Did Lord establish the path of salvation without understanding the law of destiny ? No, this implies that all this is absolutely false.

Alongwith destiny, karma and efforts also have an independent identity. If only destiny is considered powerful, then other factors will not exist.

In such a case, you will have to consider destiny to be the cause of curd and not milk, destiny to be the cause of food cooked and not fire, destiny to be the cause of a full stomach and not a good meal, because according to the above belief, destiny has fixed all the states of existence. Hence, the one who puts curd in milk to attain curd may be considered foolish. Also, the one who tries to explain this importance of destiny

to other, will also be considered a fool because if the listener is bound to understand, then his particular state is fixed in destiny. Why take the efforts to make him understand ? And, if one is taking the efforts, then destiny will become useless. The individual and his effort will overpower their destiny.

To conclude, this is a false belief that the universal state of existence are pre-determined by destiny and it contradicts the teachings of Lord Mahavira.

“Religious efforts are possible only if supported by destiny or karmas.” Why is this belief considered false ?

These beliefs are wrong primarily because this formula is not applied while doing sinful acts in day to day life. No one says that if it is in my fortune, I will exercise these sins. In this case, everyone believes that, “I will have to work myself to acquire the result.” And thus, they run without thinking about their fortune or karmas. The notion that, “Efforts are possible only if it is written in destiny,” will also be proved wrong.

Also, there is no specific karma which can lead you towards the religious acts of penance, compassion, charity or character. Just as sins are a result of efforts, similarly religion is also a result of efforts made in that direction. The problem is that we are not fond of religion or do not feel the need to exercise religion. Then, why will we direct our energy towards it ?

Lord Mahavira practiced a strict, noble ascetic life. With whose help is this possible ? Is there any punya karma which can enable one to do so ? Any karma which can increase one’s tolerance levels and help to bear pains and troubles peacefully ? Any karma which can enable one to do strict penance ? No, instead one needs to believe that peace, tolerance, restraint of body and mind is possible if the Mohaniya, Gyanavarniya and Viryantraya karmas are made weak.

This shows that karma stops the religious feelings and does not give rise to pure feelings and desires. These pure feelings arise only if efforts are made by contemplating on the different bhavanas, thus breaking the previously accumulated karmas.

The job of karma is to give rise to sinful thoughts and desires while the job of right efforts is to destroy karmas and give rise to religious sentiments and desires.

Know the 8 karmas :

The 8 karmas are classified into 2 types - 4 Ghati karmas and 4 Aghati karmas.

Ghati karmas means the one which totally obstruct the soul's original nature of infinite knowledge, faith, etc. The rest are Aghati karmas.

Aghati karmas include

- i) shata-ashata vedniya karmas (karmas causing physical pain and comfort)
- ii) Ayushya karmas of all 4 gatis (karmas which lead to a stipulated life span in all the 4 places of existence-humans, animals, hell and heaven)
- iii) High-low Gotra karma (karmas which lead to birth in a noble family or a lower one)
- iv) Good/bad Naam karma (karmas which decide the good or bad structure of the body)

You will realise that none of these karmas can give rise to good or bad feelings in the heart.

- i) Gyanavarniya karma envelops the soul by ignorance.
- ii) Darshanavarniya karma obstructs right vision and is responsible for sleep.

- iii) Antraya karmas makes the heart miserly, acts as a barrier in our attainment of material things, makes us incapable to enjoy the acquired comforts and decreases our strength and enthusiasm.
- iv) Amongst Mohaniya karma, Darshan Mohaniya leads to false beliefs while Charitra Mohaniya leads to passionate feelings of love, hatred, sensual desires, anger-greed-pride-deceit, joy and fear, etc.

Q. : If love and hatred are negative feelings, then is the love for Almighty Lords and hatred for sins also wrong ?

A. : No, these are positive feelings when they come under the shadow of non-attachment (vairagya) and samyaktarshana (right faith). “If you love Paramatma because he gives wealth, material benefits or while doing business if you have hatred towards theft because it reduces your customers and earnings, then this love or the God or hatred for sins is also not a virtue.

To conclude the feelings of love and hatred are impure by nature but the shadow of vairagya and samyaktarshana make it pure.

You can thus deduce that it is the Mohaniya karmas which lead to impure feelings. Mohaniya karma is the king of all karmas because it acts on the fruits of the other seven karmas.

For e.g. Gyanavarniya karmas lead to absence of knowledge but if it is accompanied by Mohaniya karmas then the absence of knowledge leads to disturbance, stress and sorrow.

Similarly rejoicing on attaining a peaceful sleep or considering it to be spoiling your work is again due to the Mohaniya karmas.

Also pride or joy on attaining shata, the desire to savour

Harmony of the 5 Causes

delicious food, the engrossment in business attractions or sensual pleasures is all the strengthening of Mohaniya karmas. The feelings of frustration, sorrow, anxiety in case of ashata is also food for Mohaniya karma.

Even in the case of Gotra karma, the higher karma leads to pride, ego, greed and the lower karma may lead to frustration, depression, anger, etc., thus nourishing Mohaniya karma.

Same is the state of other karmas, like Naam karma, Ayushya karma, etc. the effect of Mohaniya karmas is such that it gets nourished by the effect of the other karmas.

Looking at the other side of the coin, if one becomes successful in suppressing these Mohaniya karmas by developing a feeling of non-attachment, having faith in Arihanta Lords, gurubhagwants and Jain religion, putting a stop on the acceleration of kashayas, having right faith, it can eliminate the effects of all the remaining karmas. For e.g. due to strong Gyanavarniya karmas inspite of working hard, an individual cannot remember well and remains ignorant. But if he possesses a spiritual insight, then he will consider his problem to be an outcome of Gyanavarniya karmas. He will think, “I myself have binded these karmas and hence they depress me ?” Thus, he will maintain mental composure and refrain from committing a new mistake. Who is responsible for this? The spiritual insight developed by suppressing Mohaniya karmas.

How to suppress these Mohaniya karmas? Here, the independence of purushartha gets highlighted.

The Mohaniya karmas contaminate the feelings of the heart and gives rise to inner impurities. The efforts undertaken to fight these karmas give birth to positive, pure sentiments. The Mohaniya karma (karma causing anger) leads to eruption of

anger. But at that time, if one thinks about the disadvantages of anger and the path traversed by great men even in adverse situation, sentiments of composure and tolerance can be developed. This has to be understood for all type of Mohaniya karmas.

Thus, karma and purushartha are independent factors because both lead to different results. Also, karmas have been previously accumulated while one has to make new efforts here. If we think deeply and rationally, we will be able to make the correct move or else, efforts in the wrong directions will lead to unwanted thoughts, words and acts.

We talked quite deeply about the 5 factors required to accomplish any task. Hence, do not get carried away by other's views and beliefs.

Just as destiny is not the sole cause, karma is also not the sole cause. Hence, on the occasion of making religious efforts, it is inappropriate to blame destiny or karma for it, why ?

- i) Mohaniya karma just has the power to give rise to sinful feelings of violence, hatred, ego, etc. in the heart.
- ii) The remaining karma just give us good or bad circumstances and commodities.

But after that whether to move ahead in that direction is the work of purusharatha. Stopping these thoughts and enveloping the body, mind and speech with religious thoughts also rests in the hands of purusharatha.

The sinful thoughts give rise to Mohaniya karmas whereas if you want to give rise to a religious outlook, you have to break the Mohaniya karmas. To do this, it is essential to make efforts like listening to religious sermons, giving charity, worshipping God and performing other devotional acts.

If this discrimination is made rationally, one can live a peaceful life.

Kamlata did not think rationally in this manner and hence when the shepherd tempted her to become his wife, she thought, 'It is written in my destiny to commit more sins and hence the pyre got extinguished which lead to such a situation. "What a wrong thought! Karma averted the above circumstances but did not push one to engage in sins. One has to do purushartha by one's own self to exercise sins. If this purushartha is not done, then sinful activities are not possible.

Shepherdess Kamlata :

Kamlata succumbed to the temptations and become the shepherdess. She helped him manage his house, went out to sell milk and curd and indulged in sensual pleasures with him.

When will this soul be satisfied with sensual pleasures ? At what cost ? After how many births ? The obvious answer is that there is no limitation or criteria to this.

The sensual desires will die only if one has the intense desire to overcome it. For that it is necessary that one considers these desires to be poisonous. Then, forsaking it and leading a controlled life becomes easy. Eventually, the thirst for sensual pleasures will start withering away.

The thirst can be controlled by forsaking and not consuming.



11. Secret Revealed

Kamlata's re-union with her son :

Shepherdess Kamlata went to the city to sell curd and milk. The special noteworthy thing here was that her son who was a scholar of Vedas had become the chief purohit (priest) of that city's king.

Once it so happened that Kamlata was passing through the city streets with a pot of curd on her head and she accidentally collided with a lady walking with a pot of water. Both their pots clashed and fell on the floor. At that time, the other women carrying water started weeping but Kamlata was laughing aloud.

The Vedic scholar happened to pass by at that very time and was astonished to see the situation. The one who had lost water was crying while the one who lost curd was laughing!

He asked the woman who was crying, "Sister! Why are you crying so much over spilt water?"

She replied, "Brother! The loss of water does not bother me. If only the water had fallen off, I would have gone back to the well to fetch water. But my pot has broken into pieces and now my mean mother in-law will get angry and not let me enter the house. That is why I am crying."

The learned man felt sorry for the lady and gave her money to buy a new pot. She happily went home.

He then approached Kamlata and inquired, “Sister! Why are you laughing in spite of the loss of a pot full of curd? Kamlata answered, “How can such little sorrow affect a grieving person like me?”

The question is that, didn’t they both recognize each other? No.

The scholar could not recognize Kamlata because when he had first seen her she was dressed in fancy silk clothes and loaded with ornaments. She was now dressed shabbily as a shepherdess. How could he connect between the attractive prostitute and the shabby shepherdess?

The Kamlata also did not recognize her son because it is quite possible that he would not dress as a scholar when he used to previously come to the prostitute. Dressing in his scholarly attire and going to a prostitute would become shameful. People would ask, “Being a learned man, you are engaging in such a low act? Hence, driven by shame, he would have dressed differently. But now he was dressed in a royal priestly attire complete with a golden turban, sandalwood applied on his forehead, a big robe with a silk dupatta and shining mojadis* on his feet. How would Kamlata recognize him?

He asked Kamlata, “Sister! What great sorrow do you face which has nullified the loss of a pot full of curd?”

Shepherdess Kamlata found him as a compassionate, learned and mature Brahmin and to lighten her heavy heart, she told him, “If you really want to know, come to the garden located nearby. I will narrate my fateful story to you.”

Kamlata’s words created an impact to the scholar, his curiosity rose and his kind heart felt that, “It is quite possible that she

* **Mojadis** – an Indian type of shoes

will feel better if I listen to her story. May be I can help. I will get a chance to do some benevolence.”

The golden touch of benevolence-

A selfish man will always find a chance to nourish his self-interests while a selfless man will always find a chance to do generosity.

Who lives longer ? A selfish individual or a selfless man ?

A selfish individual is always enveloped by negative thought while a selfless one is occupied with positive thoughts. Where do we stand ? This life is anyways going to end someday. Those who are always in search of opportunities to help and benefit others do not die fast while those who always think about their self-interest do not live less. Both live their own stipulated life span. It is possible that the one motivated by just his own self-interests, cannot accept a sudden huge loss or betrayal of trust and dies due to cardiac arrests or such similar problems. A selfless soul does not because such sorrows would not be great enough to cause his death.

So, which opportunities should we wish for in life ?

Which activities should we have the urge to perform ?

Those of self-gains or those which benefit others ?

Can animals have the chance to help or benefit others ?

A dog guards the house the entire day but with what intention ? Just so that his owner will give him some chapattis.

Real benevolence means that you do not expect anything in return and wish to help and comfort others in all possible ways. Such a benevolent nature makes one's heart great.

Less sins enter the heart of benevolent people. They do not bother about the incompleteness of their own self-interests,

instead they are over enthusiastic to forsake their interests whenever necessary.

The great scripture, Lalit Vistara, shows the unique characteristics of Tirthankara Lords.

It states that the original nature of Tirthankar Lords is that they are addicted to the acts of benevolence and are always concerned about other's welfare. What does addiction mean ? Something which interests you a lot, without which you don't feel relaxed and whose acquisition will give you joy. Have you seen those who are addicted to tobacco, cigarettes or other drugs ? The Tirthankar Lords possess this level of addiction for other's welfare and the negligence towards one's own selfish interests.

If you really wish and desire spiritual welfare, then neglect your self-interest.

One should learn to ignore their self-interests and strive to develop an addiction for benevolent acts. If this is not achieved, then what is the use of worshipping God and performing rituals ? To uplift our soul from such meanness and selfishness, we pray to God every day in 'Jaya Viyaraya'sootra, to bless us with the virtue of 'parathakaranam' i.e. helping others.

Q. : Can this virtue be achieved just by praying in front of God ? Or do we have to actually exercise it our self ?

A. : Great Sage Haribhadrasooriji Maharaja said, prayer can lead to fulfilment of desires. Just asking in front of God can lead to the acquisition of all that we wish. The one who says this is a learned, intellectual scholar. But he still has so much faith on Arihanta Lords. Now can he make such a statement ?

How can prayers lead to fulfilment of desires ?

A true prayer is possible only if one strongly desires the

object that he is praying for. When you pray to God that, “Lord! Due to your immense power, may I attain the capacity to perform benevolent acts. I cannot do without it, I really require it.” This intense desire and urge for benevolence leads to increasing efforts in that direction, which eventually lead to the attainment of the desired object.

The prayer which is done whole heartedly, with intense desire to acquire the desired object, leads to strong efforts, which in turn leads to the fulfilment of desires. Thus prayer leads to fulfilment of desires.

There is another way by which prayer can lead to the fulfilment of desires. The Arihanta Lords to whom we are praying possess infinite and incomparable strength. Having faith in their strength breaks our Antraya karmas which were stopping the acquisition of the desired thing and thus the fulfilment of our desires becomes easy.

Q. : Do Arihanta Lords possess such incomparable power ?

A. : Yes, that is the reason why the devotion, worship and remembrance of other Gods and Goddesses cannot give the result attained by the devotion, worship and remembrance of Arihanta Lords. This is possible only if Arihanta Lords possess infinite, incomparable strength.

King Ravana devotionally worshipped Arihanta Lords on the holy mountain Ashtapad. Dharnendra, the king of the celestial beings was delighted on seeing Ravana’s devotion and granted him a boon of his choice.

Ravana replied, “You are not capable to give me the thing which I wish in return for my devotion. What you can give is something I do not wish or need.”

Dharnendra accepted this because he very well understood

that the fruits of Vitraga's devotion was salvation and that he did not possess the power to give it. He could just give devotees' worldly pleasures which cannot be compared to Arihanta Lord's salvation.

Here we have to rationally think that, our efforts definitely contribute to the attainment of the goal but Vitraga Lord's contributions are tremendous. You can deduce this because even if similar efforts are made in the worship of other Gods and Goddesses, the ultimate fruit of salvation cannot be attained. This denotes that, rather than the power of devotion the power of the person to whom the devotion is offered plays an important role here.

Hence, Arihanta Lords are considered to possess the unmatched power to give us the supreme fruits i.e. salvation.

What is in a mantra ? Chanting a specific mantra can give you specific results. Who has the power here ? The chanting of the mantra or the mantra itself ? If the mantra itself does not possess any power, then how can chanting it help ? Also chanting of the mantra which has less power will not give you the same results which can be achieved on the chanting of a specific, powerful mantra. Chanting Navkar Mantra on the death-bed can give you a noble birth, etc. Do other mantras possess the energy to do so ? If no, then you have to admit that the efforts of our chanting does not have exceptional powers. It is the Navkar Mantra which possesses infinite powers.

Just as mantras possess such powers, Arihanta Lords also possess incomparable powers. Hence, it is stated in the scripture named Panchsootra that Vitraga Sarvagna Parmatma possess incomparable powers.

If the fire is controlled properly, food can be cooked well.

Whose contribution is significant ? Proper control of fire or fire itself ? Fire can be considered as the key factor in food preparation only if it is controlled properly. But fire itself is only considered to possess exceptional powers. Similarly, in the case of devotion, whose contribution is considered significant here ? Ofcourse, Arihanta Lord's.

Based on this calculation the prayer is made in Jay Veeyaraya sootra that, "Hey Vitraga Lords ! May I attain benevolence by your immense power and grace."

Having this unmovable faith in Arihanta Lord is an extremely positive feeling and leads to strong Samyakdarshan. This can eliminate the great antrayas which cause obstacles and eventually result in the accomplishment of the desired goal. Thus, we can say that prayers lead to fulfilment of desired goals.

Hence to summarize we can say that due to our intense desire and urge and due to Arihanta Lords immense power, prayer can lead to the fulfilment of desires.

The Vedic scholar's conversation with the shepherdess :

That Vedic scholar was more inclined towards benevolence rather than his self-interests and hence he gave money to the other woman to buy a new pot whereas to help Kamlata, he agreed to listen to her sad story.

Look at the coincidence! Once the scholar had got a chance to narrate his life history to the prostitute. Now the shepherdess got a chance to narrate her life incidents in front of her son. Who creates such coincidences ? Destiny leads to many such weird circumstances which cannot be justified by any other things. Hence destiny is also considered as an independent factor. Destiny is powerful. It can lead to weird circumstances.

Here nothing occurs according to an individual's expectations. Though karma results in joys and sorrows, it is destiny which creates specific kind of circumstances.

If we keep this in mind, then we can console our mind in case of some unexpected sorrow or distress by thinking that, "The sorrow has come to me because of my own negative karmas and my powerful destiny played a significant role in creating such unwanted circumstances."

This understanding and accepting the contribution of destiny is extremely useful in consoling the mind and avoiding mental disturbances.

There are short-tempered people who get aggressive over little issues. Noone wishes to have them around. Everyone thinks, "It is good that he is not at home." What a pitiful state! He may be the one who craves for the entire family. In spite of this, he is not liked by all. Why? Due to his angry nature. In such a case if he understands that the unexpected turn of events is a result of destiny, that destiny is responsible for a certain nature of his son or mother and that their intentions are not mean then he can overcome his angry nature.

If one can find solutions with the help of destiny, then anger can be taken into control.

Here the weird situation that arose was that shepherdess Kamlata herself did not recognize her son and narrated her story to him. As she commenced her story and proceeded ahead, the scholar got doubtful that this was his own mother's story. But the shepherdess was completely unaware of the fact that she was narrating her story to her own son. She saw him as a learned man and started narrating, the sins committed by her to lighten her heart and mind.

The shepherdess's story :

She stared right from the beginning,

“I was a Brahmin's wife. I left my 2-year old son and went to fill water but the angry king kidnapped me... I became a prostitute and my son came to me as a customer. Not recognizing him till the end, I had physical relations with him. While he was going, I asked him his life story and when he narrated his story, I recognized him. I was shocked that, “He was my own son!” But I was so ashamed and to avoid giving him a shock, I did not reveal my true identity.” Now the scholar was sure that this was his own mother. She was driven to such a miserable state wherein she ended up becoming a prostitute and he had also got attracted towards her.

He repented greatly for this actions. He considered his precious human birth futile wherein he committed such a grave sin suitable for an animal! Scriptures considered having relations with other women or prostitutes to be extremely condemnable. He had gone a step lower and ended up having relations with his own mother ? How could he face himself!

Kamlata's story had still not ended and hence, the scholar suppressed his sorrow in his heart. She continued her sad tale by narrating the incident wherein she decided to burn herself alive, the unexpected rain, the fire getting extinguished, getting dragged away in strong water currents, getting saved by the shepherd and then finally becoming his wife. She then addressed him by saying, “Tell me Gentleman, amidst all these grave sins and sorrow, how much will be sorrow of a pot of curd getting broken ? The sorrow of losing the clay pot or curd is nothing, but being burdened by such dreadful sins, where will I go in the next birth ? “Saying this she could not control her tears and started sobbing heavily. She continued saying, “Now it seems that I have crossed

all limits of committing sins. Mother Earth has become heavy because of a sinful person like me. You seem to be a good natured gentleman. You helped the other woman. Now help me also. Get me some poison so that I can consume it and go to sleep.”

Seeing the scholar sitting silent without any facial expressions, she said, “Why are you lost in thought ? Why don’t you speak anything ? Do not ponder over my grave sins. Just do this little act of compassion and fetch me some poison.”

The scholar gathered courage and said, “Mother! Why will I cry over your sins ? I am a sinner myself. When you were a prostitute, I had come to you as your customer. You were not very educated, but I had deeply studied all the Vedas. In spite of that, I succumbed to a prostitute and committed such an unforgivable sin. If an uneducated person commits sins, he is worth sympathizing with, but if an educated person like me commits such an error, he is just worth condoning.”

The scholar continued, “I was small when you left me. Hence, I could not recognize you as my mother which led to this dreadful state of events. You are my mother and I am your son. Both of us are badly contaminated with sins. But mother! Dying by consuming poison does not kill the sin. If you want to kill them, then you should do prayashchitta : “Come on! Let’s go to the upashraya nearby where sadhus are present. Let’s narrate our sins to them and ask them to give us prayashchitta. This is the real solution. Get up, do not lose hope.”

Kamlata approached the learned Acharya bhagwants :

Kamlata got consolation. Both of them went to a Jain Acharya residing nearby. They both bowed down to him and asked, “Do your scriptures show any prayaschitta for a mother and

son who have engaged in physical relations with each other or do they go to hell ?”

Acharya Maharaj calmly replied, “Not only that but even those who have committed graver sins have the path of becoming pure again till life is in their hands.”

This is the unique characteristic of this precious human birth that the prayashchitta of grave sins is also possible here and the sins performed in the previous births can also be eliminated by penance, restraint and non- violence.

The scholar inquired, “What is the solution ?”

Acharya Bhagwant replied, “First and foremost, you should innocently narrate all your sins in front of a suitable and learned guru. After that, you should follow and practise the prayashchitta given to you.”

Without feeling shameful, Kamlata and the scholar narrated their sinul story. They said, “Bhagwant! How will you rescue us from the great ocean of our grave sins ? But you are learned. Save us as we are tired of our sins.”

The path of prayaschitta of grave sins :

Acharya Bhagwant replied, “If you really despise each and every sin you have committed, then renounce this sinful world. Take an oath to refrain from all sins and accept the sinless ascetic (charitra) life. Live a beautiful life complete with non-violence, penance and restraint. All your previous sins will get washed away and you will definitely get a spiritual upliftment.” Saying so, the learned Acharya Bhagwant, explained in detail, the nature of non-violence, penance and restraint described in Jainism. He helped them identify the Almighty Tirthankara Paramatmas who have done abundant favours and preached the path of salvation to the world.

He further explained the basic ideologies and the path of salvation which comprised of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct (samyak darshan – gyana-charita).

The learned scholar was impressed by the path of religion preached by the great Acharya. In that too, the knowledge right upto the minutest living creatures of algae, the path of charitra showed to stop its violence, the other codes of conduct to follow after accepting charitra – it all left the so-called learned scholar spell bound. He felt, “This is such a high-end philosophy. The Vedas do not comprise any of the things present here. Who other than a Sarvagna can show all these minute details? How much can one rely on the religion preached by someone who does not possess complete knowledge? How can he demonstrate the method to swim over the great ocean of birth and death?”

Kamlata did not have a lot of knowledge but the Acharya’s simple method of explaining acquainted her with the realities of life.

Kamlata got saved :

That was it! Both mother and son decided their future course of action. They renounced the material world and accepted charitra – the noble, ascetic life. Their grave sins were floating before their eyes and hence they exercised strict penance, tough code of conduct, bore difficulties with composure and engrossed themselves in the study of scriptures and meditation of God with the goal of washing away all their previously practiced sins.

They lost their courage while experiencing sins and now accelerated it while exercising religion. Now it isn’t surprising if their past sins got burnt and destroyed in the fire of their courageous and strict conduct. Is it?