



SHREE UPASAKDASHANGA SUTRA

AN INTRODUCTION

RASHTRA SANT YUG DIWAKAR PUJYA GURUDEV
SHREE NAMRAMUNI MAHARAJ SAHEB



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Rashtra Sant Yug Diwakar Puja Gurudev

Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb

ENGLISH EDITION

First Edition - February 2013

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PUBLISHED BY



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JAIN AAGAM MISSION

Mission:

Jain Aagam Mission promotes the eternal truths of Jain Āgama (precepts of Lord Mahāvīra) to build a compassionate and nonviolent lifestyle in the world.

Goals and Objectives:

- Translate all Jain Āgamas (scriptures) into English and other world languages
- Make Āgamas available in all electronic forms
- Promote awareness of Āgama throughout the world
- Encourage and promote research on Āgamas to develop approaches to the world challenges (ecology & environment, global warming, world peace, psychology, health, scientific principles, etc.)
- Be a resource for information and referral

Translation of Jain Āgamas into English:

The Jain Aagam Mission has embarked on a project to translate and publish all Jain Āgamas into English. The English translation of the Āgama will help youth of today to learn Lord Mahāvīra's preaching. The goal is to reach every household in the world to impart the Āgama's wisdom. In a non-sectarian way, this Mission

will endeavor to deliver the Lord Mahāvīra's message to people. The translated Āgamas will be distributed to libraries, universities and Jain institutions of India and abroad. In addition, it will be made available on the Internet and in electronic forms. Many learned intellectuals from different countries and cultures have supported this project of translating the Āgamas into English. This mission is receiving guidance and blessings of many spiritual leaders from different religious traditions.

Invitation to Participate:

We invite scholars, spiritual aspirants and shrāvaks to join us in making this mission a success. Your contribution of knowledge, time, and money will be appreciated.

Please contact by email at info@jainaagam.org or by phone to:

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THE AAGAMS IN A LANGUAGE THAT WE UNDERSTAND

From time infinite, varied languages have been used by the common man. Languages get modified and new languages come in use as per the time period, region and environment. About 2500 years ago, Ardhamagdhi was used in the times of Bhagwan Mahavir. Presently, the language that is used by majority of the people in the world, in other words the most popular, upcoming and dominant language is English. One can say it is a global language.

Bhagwan Mahavir gave his sermons in Ardhamagdhi. He enlightened us by unfolding the truths and secrets of life. These were inked in Ardhamagdhi and these compilations of religious verses were called Aagam. What if Aagam were only written in Ardhamagdhi? How would the precious words of *Parmatma* ever touch our lives?

Therefore, keeping the need of the present generation in mind and to revive the use of Aagam, a massive task is being undertaken by RASHTRA SANT YUG DIWAKAR PUJYA GURUDEV NAMRAMUNI MAHARAJ SAHEB. This mammoth project is the “AAGAM TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH” by the Jain Aagam Mission. We are fortunate that Aagam have been passed down to us by our ancestors. Now, it is our responsibility to see that they are passed down to the future generations. Therefore, today, let us all resolve to turn this dream of “AAGAM TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH” into reality.





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PREFACE

Shree *Upasakdashanga Sutra* is of great value to everyone as it provides detailed real life examples about the do's and don'ts of an exemplary devout follower (*shravak*). The code of conduct, the discipline and the path towards liberation (Moksha), whilst living amidst the worldly life and responsibilities, is carved out for us in this *sutra*.

We can learn great lessons from the lives of the ten exemplary *shravaks* mentioned in the *Upasakdashanga sutra*. Their love for Bhagwan Mahavir (*Parmatma*), their dedication, focus and their ability to live a worldly life and yet rise above the attachments toward these worldly pleasures and relations is truly inspiring. Their lives teach us how to become ideal *shravaks* and how to strike the right balance between responsibility and spiritual progress. By giving examples of how each of the *shravak* overcomes his shortcomings, be his fear of evil, attachment to his mother, children or wife and attachment to the body, health or wealth. It guides us on how to overcome the hurdles that occur on our way of spiritual pursuit. The importance of proper understanding of spirituality (*dharma*) is also reiterated so that one can defend one's spiritual goals and remain steadfast on the path of liberation without getting drifted by other beliefs.

The 12 vows (*vrats*), the restraints (*pratimas*) and the ideal qualities of a great *shravak* are clearly spelt out with specific examples so that one can slowly follow the guidelines and the vows while treading their path shown by *Parmatma*.





THE AAGAMS

Man's quest of finding the ultimate truth is unquenchable. Many questions plague the human mind.

- "What is the purpose of my existence?"
- "Where did I come from?"
- "Where will I go after my death?"
- "What is birth and death?"
- "Does the soul exist?"

Bhagwan Mahavir has given us all the answers in the *Aagam Sutras*.

The *Aagam Sutras* show great reverence for all forms of life and has stated strict guidance on vegetarianism, asceticism and nonviolence. The composition of the scriptures has a specific purpose of showing the seeker the path of everlasting happiness and liberation. The *Aagam Sutras* teach the eternal truth about conduct, equanimity, universal affection, the principle of relativity and the principle of multi dimensionality. These *sutras* showcase a large spectrum of spiritual philosophies including great reverence for all forms of life, the soul, the karma theory, universe, strict code on asceticism, rules for householders, compassion, non-violence and non-possessiveness.

Language and literature, apart from art and architecture, constitute the most important records of the cultural history of a country. Hence, the study of the

Aagam is bound to reveal the most important observation of Jainism and its contribution to the Indian culture.

In almost all religions there is one scripture book that the followers have immense faith and follow to the core. Hindus follow 'The Bhagwad Gita', Christians follow 'The Bible', Muslims follow 'The Quran' while the Buddhists follow 'The Tripitika', Similarly, the Jains follow 'Aagam', which are also known as the 'Jain Shrut.'

It is said in one of the Jain Scriptures :

“Having climbed the tree of perfect knowledge, the Omniscient Lord Tirthankar showered the flowers of this knowledge to enlighten worldly creatures and His chief disciples (Gandhars). They gathered all these flowers in the cloth of intellect and interwove them into the garland of Dvadasangi - the twelve Anga Pravistha Aagam”.

In the olden times, Bhagwan Mahavir's preaching was orally memorized and passed down to disciples. To make it easy to memorize, the preaching were composed by the *Gandhars* and *Shrut Kevalis* (one who has the knowledge of all scriptures) in *sutra* form known as Jain *Aagam* (scriptures). This method of imparting knowledge orally was transferred from the *Aacharya* to the disciples over a course of 1000 years. About 1000 years after Bhagwan Mahavir's emancipation, the Jain *Aacharyas* realized that it was extremely difficult to memorize the entire Jain literature as man was becoming more forgetful than their predecessors. In fact, significant knowledge was already lost by then. In the last Synod, these scriptures were written down.

Aagam literature is further divided into two groups:-

The *Anga Pravistha Aagam* - These texts contain the direct preaching of Bhagwan Mahavir and were compiled by the *Gandhars*.

The *Anga Bahya Aagam* - These texts are the extensions of *Anga Pravistha Aagams* and were composed by the *Shrut Kevalis* (monks who had knowledge of the minimum ten Purvas).

Shree Upasakdashanga Sutra is one of the *Anga Pravistha Aagam*. The name of this *sutra* is 'Upasakdasha" (as it is an *Anga Aagam*, the word *Anga* is added at the end). It is derived from two words, *Upasak* – meaning one who follows the Jain religion and *Dasha* - meaning ten. Thus, as the name suggests, this *sutra* has ten chapters in which we find detailed narrations of the ten followers or *shravaks* and their severe austerities. In all the *Aagams*, one finds discussions on ascetic conduct, but complete description about the ideal conduct of a householder is available only in the *Upasakdashanga Sutra*.



THE UPASAKDASHANGA SUTRA

What is the meaning of *Upasana*?

Upasana means dedication, ardent devotion, deep love and undeterred faith towards *Parmatma*. A devotee or an *upasak* may not be physically present before his *Parmatma* or may not be with Him all the time, yet he is one with his Lord. He constantly belongs to Him.

‘Just as a threaded needle is secure from being lost; a person who is aware of his true identity cannot lose his way.’

Everyone cannot renounce the worldly life, so Bhagwan Mahavir has shown the way even to a householder to attain Moksha. Every person desirous of attaining liberation should accept this prescribed code of conduct of a *shravak*. A true *shravak* is an ideal householder.

This *sutra* emphasizes that a person who is not yet free from his responsibilities and is leading a life for his home and family should also devote time for social welfare and activities. The moment a person feels strongly about this spiritual growth, he should renounce and dedicate his life in *sadhana* (discipline for the attainment of Moksha), *aradhana* (worship), *upasana* (devotion), *parupasana* (service) and sacrifice. In those days, people kept a special prayer hall in their

house, known as a *paushadhshala*, for prayer and worship. They practiced spirituality in this room without being disturbed by others, in the midst of peace and silence.

The ten devotees of Bhagwan Mahavir, namely Anand, Kamdev, Chulnipita, Suradev, Chullashatak, Kundakaulik, Sakadalputra, Mahashatak, Nandinipita and Shalinipita, followed the commands of *Parmatma* with honesty and devotion.

This *sutra* contains information about their early life, which was prosperous. Most of them had as many as 10,000 to 60,000 cows and equally large amount in their treasury. They looked after all the animals with love and care. They would also distribute all the milk and milk products fairly. They were extremely wealthy, happy and well respected by everyone.

These devotees were already leading citizens and community leaders of their cities. Their generosity extended to family, friends, and other deserving people. They offered them livelihood by providing them with employment, housing etc. Their gates were never locked so that people can come to get their support and advice. As you will see they maintained large households to support all these people. The food cooked daily was such that it provided food to anyone who walked to their door. As generous and pious men, they were well regarded in their community and beyond.

However, after they met Bhagwan Mahavir and listened to His sermons, they were thoroughly moved and awestruck. They experienced a deep sense of indifference and aversion towards worldly pleasures.

They took the oath from Bhagwan Mahavir to follow the twelve vows (*vrata*) of a *shravak*. Significance of these vows was that they became even more generous as they limited their wealth to what they had then requiring them to use all their

income for charitable and community purposes as they could not add any more income to their assets.

After observing *shravak* vows for a period of time, they handed over all the family responsibilities to their sons and led their life like an ascetic. All of them, upon completing their life, became celestial beings (*devs*) in the first heaven. After finishing their life span in the first heaven, they would take birth in the Mahavideh Kshetra and will attain Moksha in that birth. In the *Upasakdashanga Sutra*, we find a well-defined and clearly outlined description of the *shravak*'s vows, the qualities of a *shravak* and the pledges of a *shravak*.



ANAND SHRAVAK

Blessed are those souls who came in contact with Parmatma. They boarded the right bus and reached their destination.

अनन्द श्रावक को अवधि ज्ञान

सौधर्म कल्प

पश्चिम लवण समुद्र

वृत्त शिखर पर्वत

पूर्व लवण समुद्र

लोलुपायुत नरकावास

ANAND SHRAVAK'S AVADHIGYAN

The first story in the *Upasakdashanga Sutra* is about Anand Gathapati who was a wealthy, influential and most respected citizen of Vanijyagram, a town near Vaishali. His main profession was agriculture and cattle breeding. Everyone in the society respected him and came to him for advice, including the king who took his advice on matters related to the administration of his kingdom. He was the pillar of support to his large retinue of family. He was always engaged in the development of his family and the society at large.

Anand's virtuous and sweet tempered wife, Shivananda was beautiful and faithful. She showered love and respect on her husband. A calm person by nature, she never lost her equanimity even in adverse situations.

Anand Gathapati and his wife were content with their large house, rich clothes, plenty of servants, chariots, horses, cattle, gold, silver and precious stones. All material pleasures in abundance! Nothing! Nothing at all was amiss! Though they enjoyed all the worldly pleasures and luxuries, yet what was it that made Anand Gathapati and his wife give up all these pleasures of life and lead the life of a *shravak* and *shravika*?

What infused in them the belief that the life they led was faulty and inapt?

At that time, during the course of his travels from one place to another on foot (*vihar*), Bhagwan Mahavir reached the outskirts of Vanijyagram. King Jitshatru and many citizens of the town accompanied by their families and friends went to pay their homage and respect to Bhagwan Mahavir. Anand Gathapati learnt that Bhagwan Mahavir had entered the Dhyutipalash Garden on the outskirts of the town.

Being a pious and devout person, he knew how beneficial it was to listen to even a single discourse of Bhagwan Mahavir himself. Hearing even a single word from the Lord's mouth was so important in one's life.

Thus, he decided to go and offer reverent salutation (*vandana*) and pay his homage to *Parmatma*. He heard that Bhagwan Mahavir is beneficent (*kalyankari* and *mangalkari*), possesses the ultimate knowledge and seeking his blessings will be beneficial and auspicious. With such thoughts in his mind, he got ready to get a glimpse of Bhagwan Mahavir. Dressed in his finest robes and premium jewelry, surrounded by his family and friends, Anand walked towards the Dhyutipalash garden.

On seeing *Parmatma*, he bowed down to the Lord three times to pay his respect and offer his reverence. Bhagwan Mahavir delivered a religious sermon to his congregation of worshippers that had gathered there. His deep voice resonated and touched the hearts of the people. His melodious voice transformed into a speech which was automatically understood by everyone.

The Ardhamagadhi language uttered by the Lord was understood with ease by the nobles and other classes. Bhagwan Mahavir gave sermons on the nine fundamental elements (*nav tatvas*), 18 types of sins and how to avoid them, good and bad karmas and the fruits they bear, the two types of dharma - householder-discipline and mendicant discipline (*aagar-dharma* and *anagar-dharma*).

In householder practice (*aagar-dharma*) Bhagwan explained the 12 vows (*vrats*) of a householder and the importance of *Samayik* which is a necessity

for every *shravak* for achieving Moksha. Further elaborating, Bhagwan Mahavir said that the final aim of every soul was to abandon the physical body after practicing the ultimate vow and austerity of fasting unto death (*samlekhna vrat*) with forbearance.

The sermon of Bhagwan Mahavir was so effective that it stirred the large congregation. Some took mendicant vows and became an ascetic, some took shravak's 12 vows and some achieved true spiritual insight (*samyak-darshana*). They all left with complete bliss and happiness.

Anand went through an emotional upheaval. He was feeling a complete sense of detachment. He stood in front of Bhagwan Mahavir with folded hands and said, “*Bhante!* Your sermons have given me boundless joy and bliss which I have never experienced before. O Beloved of the Gods! Many kings, queens, nobles and householders have accepted refuge at your pious feet and dedicated their whole life to you. I am not courageous to do the same. However, I wish to undertake the 12 vows of a *shravak*.”

In reply Bhagwan Mahavir said, “You may do as you wish, but remember, never to delay a noble deed.”

At that instance, Anand Gathapati solemnly affirmed before *Parmatma* that he would give up gross violence, his spiritual journey thus began. He accepted the first vow, the *ahimsa vrat*. He vowed that he himself would never commit any violence or cause harm nor encourage and support others to do the same. He would never commit violence through his body, mind, speech or actions. One after the other, Anand accepted the remaining *Anuvrats* and the seven *guna vrats* and *shiksha vrats* in the same way (kindly read the section on the 12 vows).

After bowing down to Bhagwan Mahavir, he returned home jubilant and told his wife, “Beloved, today I heard Bhagwan Mahavir’s sermons and it has changed me. I have accepted the twelve vows of a seeker (*shravak*). My joy knows no bounds and my heart never knew more happiness.”

Shivananda was overjoyed at seeing her elated and excited husband. She, too, decided to attend the assembly of Bhagwan Mahavir. After listening to Bhagwan’s divine words, she too felt extremely elated and accepted the 12 vows of a *shravika*. Anand Gathapati became Anand Shravak in the true sense.

He and his wife led an exceptionally pious life. They spent 14 long years following the five *Anuvrats* and the seven *Guna vrat* and *Shiksha vrats* meticulously.

In the 15th year, one night Anand Shravak was meditating, a thought crossed his mind like lightning, “Many kings, the noble and elite of society consult me on various matters but too much of my time is spent in these activities, which has become a hindrance to follow the twelve vows that I have accepted”. Therefore, I will bestow all my responsibilities on my eldest son and free myself from these worldly affairs.”

Having bestowed all responsibilities to his son and establishing him as the head of the family, Anand Shravak left for the prayer hall (*pausadhshala*), and therein, accepted the vows to live like an ascetic. Thereafter, Anand Shravak accepted the eleven restraints (*pratimas*) of the *shravak* (kindly read the section on 11 *Pratimas*).

Anand’s body became thin and weak as a result of practicing the austerities for five years such that his body reduced to bones. However, Anand never lost his faith and courage and the keen desire kept burning within him to shed his karmas. He accepted the *Maranantik Samlekhana* vow - to completely stop the intake of food and water thus spending life in spiritual quest, not desiring death or life.

What did he gain from this? As a result of his pious determination and pure mental state, he attained remote knowledge or clairvoyance (*avadhigyan*). As time passed, Anand's self-introspection deepened.

Bhagwan Mahavir and his disciples once again had stationed themselves on the outskirts of Vanijyagram. Gautam Swami, his chief disciple, while seeking alms (*gochari*), heard about Anand who had accepted the *Maranantik Samlekhana* vow. He decided to visit him and thus, proceeded to the prayer hall where Anand was meditating.

Seeing Gautam Swami coming, Anand was overjoyed and asked him, "*Bhante*, can u tell me if a householder residing in his house can attain *avadhigyan*?"

Gautam Swami said, "Yes, Anand! He can."

Anand then replied to Gautam Swami that he had attained *avadhigyan* and could now see up to 500 *yojnas* (measurement of distance used in ancient India) in the southwest and east direction and in the Lavan samudra, upto Lolupachyut (the first hell) below and upto Saudharma (name of heaven as per Jain cosmology).

Gautam Swami was astonished, "Though a householder can attain *avadhigyan*, it is not possible for him to attain it to this extent. You should seek pardon for your falsehood and accept austerities for your mistake."

"But *Bhante*!" said Anand, "Does a person have to ask for forgiveness when he is speaking the truth?"

Without arguing further, Gautam Swami left with a doubtful mind. With imprecise understanding of the situation he came to Bhagwan Mahavir and narrated the whole incident and said, "Bhagwan, shouldn't Anand repent for his falsehood?"

Lovingly, Bhagwan Mahavir looked upon his disciple and said, "O Gautam! You should seek forgiveness and repentance as Anand speaks the truth."

Gautam was noble and humble at heart and a true devotee. He immediately went and sought forgiveness from Anand Shravak.

Anand Shravak practised all religious activities and penance with faith and devotion and then finally, after one month of observing *Samlekhana* vow, he left for the heavenly abode and his soul took birth as a celestial being (*dev*) in Saudharma Devlok's Saudharmavatamsak Arun Viman (a celestial vehicle) which is located in the north-east direction. After completing his life span as a *dev* in heaven, he will be reborn in the Mahavideh khestra and will attain Moksha.



KAMDEV SHRAVAK

Faith, tolerance and patience are the key qualities. Only that will help make an individual's spirituality pure and bright.

कामदेव को उपसर्ग



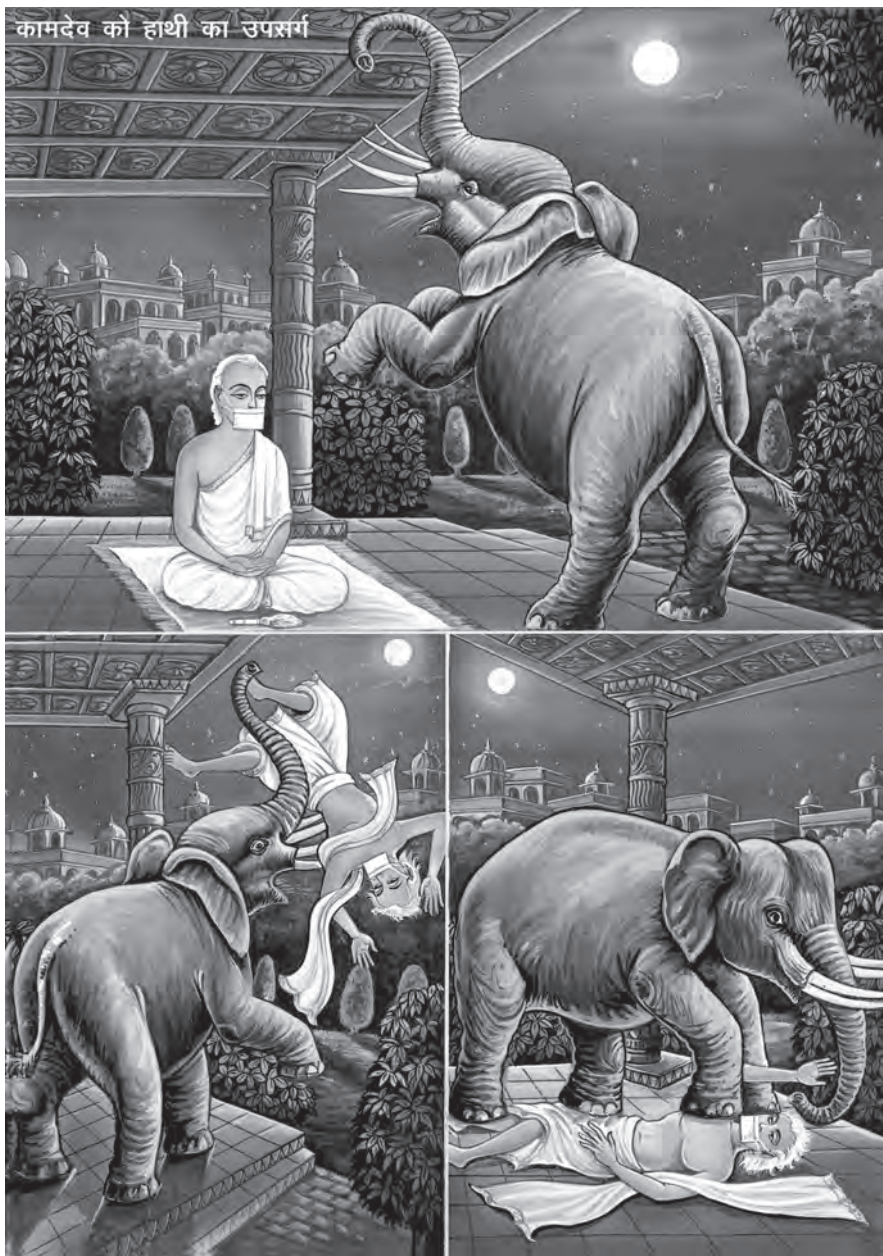
**KAMDEV SHRAVAK OVERCOMES THE TRIBULATIONS
OF THE DEMON**

Another pious and devoted soul was Kamdev Gathapati. Like Anand Shravak, he too, was a rich and affluent citizen of Champa city in Bihar. He was respected by all and consulted on important matters by the administrator of the city, leaders, important residents of the city and his family members. Infact, the *Upasakdashanga Sutra* says that Kamdev was richer than Anand Shravak in terms of wealth, the number of cows he owned and the barns (*gokuls*) he had. A large retinue of people worked for him and in no ordinary terms did Kamdev lack anything. He and his wife Bhadra had all the comforts money could buy. The family life of Kamdev and Bhadra was filled with happiness. They were loved and respected by one and all.

When a person possesses all that one can imagine, what brings about a sudden change in him? Which is that moment which brings about a turning point in his life? Why does one who has so much happiness in life search for “true happiness”? How does one realize that the happiness from the worldly comforts is a mirage?

Like Anand, there came a turning point in Kamdev's life. Bhagwan Mahavir reached Champanagari. It seems many a times as if Bhagwan, who is Omniscient, deliberately came to such places to meet his *shravaks* and uplift them. Take the case of Chandakaushik Naag and Sakdalputra and many more. They never went with any intention to Bhagwan.

On the outskirts of Champanagari was a beautiful temple of Puran Bhadra Yaksha dev. Adjoining, the temple was a hall and a spacious garden where *Paramatma* and His disciples stayed. People of all faiths scurried to listen to Bhagwan Mahavir's



**KAMDEV SHRAVAK OVERCOMES ADVERSITIES CAUSED
BY AN ELEPHANT**

preaching. When Kamdev learned about Bhagwan Mahavir's arrival, he also decided to go to the congregation and listen to His sermons.

What happened to Kamdev when he heard the sermons? What touched his heart and mind that he felt the urge from within to give up all the luxuries and take the vows of a *shravak*?

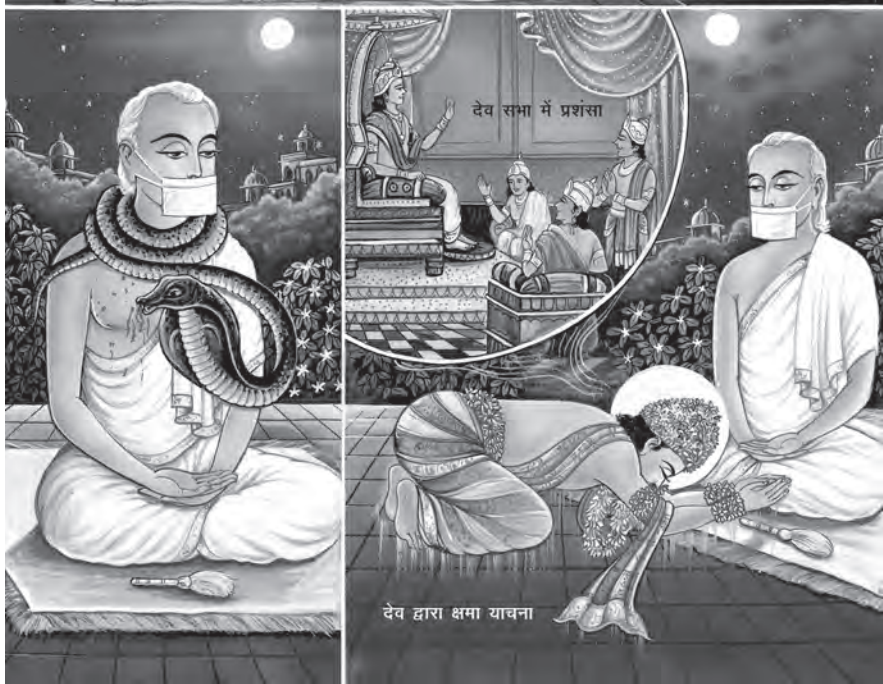
Peace comes from within. Do not seek it elsewhere.

After the sermons, Kamdev offered his reverence to Bhagwan Mahavir and with His blessings, accepted the vows of the householder. He passed on his family responsibilities to his eldest son and decided to stay at the *prayer hall*. He completely detached himself from everyone and became completely engrossed in the religious practices and spiritual meditation. Like Anand Shravak, he too accepted the *pratimas* one by one.

Kites rise highest against the wind, not with it.

Any practitioner who observes religious austerities of the highest order has to face many tests to prove himself and his steadfastness in religion.

There are some treacherous celestial beings that make instigative efforts to distract the ardent followers of religion and bring them back to the world they have already left. They try and evoke feelings of attachment or dreadful fear in the *shravaks* from time to time. Kamdev was not spared either. The tribulations he had to face at the hands of a satanic demon are detailed in this *sutra*. They are thought-provoking and a lesson for us.



KAMDEV SHRAVAK OVERCOMES HIS OBSTACLES

On life's journey, faith is nourishment, virtuous deeds are a shelter, wisdom is the light by day and right mindfulness is the protection by night. If a man lives a pure life, nothing can destroy him.

As usual, Kamdev was in deep meditation in the *prayer hall*. At midnight, there appeared the most dreadful of celestial demons before him. Any ordinary man would have fainted seeing the sight of this horrific demon. But not Kamdev, in whom calmness, equanimity and steadfastness of mind were seeped deep inside due to religious austerities.

The celestial demon was the most ferocious of all. His hair was scattered. His bowl sized eyes bulged out and oozed fire. His teeth looked like he was carrying two razor sharp swords in his mouth. He wore a garland of mice around his neck. Mongoose dropped down his ears instead of ear rings. His body was covered with snakes. He stood with a sword in his hand. The celestial demons wreak havoc among mortals, but Kamdev was no ordinary mortal.

In a deafening voice the demon roared, "Kamdev! At this moment, give up your faith and practices or else I will not hesitate to kill you and cut you into pieces. You are not a true devotee. Forget this fake religion that you have adopted and be the householder you used to be. You desire death! I shall give you one that no one has ever seen or heard. It is not within you to carry on in this manner. You are weak and devoid of courage. Give up, I say! Or suffer a torturous death. I will make you suffer to no end and you will die before your destined life span. Forget this fake religion which you have adopted and be the householder you used to be."

Was Kamdev afraid? Did he give up his faith? Did he even once think of it?

Kamdev remained calm and quiet. Not once did he lose his equilibrium. Not once did he get foxed by the celestial demon, nor did he deter from his meditation. Seeing Kamdev quiet and undaunted by the threats, the demon got enraged and repeated his threats more fiercely than before. He again ordered Kamdev to relinquish his vows and get back to the householder's life. Kamdev remained deeply absorbed in his meditation even when the threat was repeated the third time. This infuriated the demon to no end. He brutally attacked Kamdev and with a severe blow of the sword, cut him into pieces. Kamdev was a true follower of Jain tradition (*shramanopasak*). With no ill thoughts at all he endured the unbearable pain belted out on him.

However, the celestial demon was not going to give up. He had failed miserably in bewildering Kamdev and shaking his faith. He then discarded his demonic form and in that place took the shape of a large four tusked dreadful elephant. He once again threatened Kamdev, "Kamdev! Be ready to give up your vows right now or else face the consequences. I shall hold you in my trunk and pierce you with my tusks. I will throw you on the ground, trample and stomp you under my feet and grind your bones to powder!"

Was Kamdev even listening? Was he perturbed or bothered? He was serenity incarnate, with no fear on the face whatsoever! The elephant held Kamdev in his tuskers and raised him up and flung him down with force. The earth must have shuddered at that time! He then trampled him under his weight. Kamdev bore anguish with calmness of mind and heart.

See what a person seeped in religion can bear! Isn't this a beautiful message for us! Doesn't it inspire us to learn how to bear difficulties in life with peace and calmness? The stories of all the shravaks are truly enlightening.

Once again, the demon assumed the form of a serpent. Long and poisonous, anyone would run away seeing a serpent even if it is harmless! And here was a snake resembling a python with venom so poisonous that one sting and it would lead to instant death, was as dark as the moonless night with blood red eyes which exuded evil and cruelty. His hissing was horrendous. He came to Kamdev and said, "Oh Kamdev! Your time is up. I shall entwine myself around your body. Take refuge at my feet and give up your religion. Else I will bite you with my venomous teeth in a thousand places and the lethal poison will spread through your body with the speed of lightning and kill you instantly."

But Kamdev was his usual self even in face of these threats, unperturbed and calm. No threats, menaces and terrors were going to deter him to give up his spiritual practices.

The serpent encircled Kamdev's throat. Not once, not twice, but three times! Imagine the unbearable pain Kamdev must have gone through.... He choked.... The serpent then pricked on his chest and bit Kamdev all over his body. How did Kamdev bear all this? First the demon! Then the elephant and now the serpent! A normal human would have gone crazy by now. However, Kamdev understood religion. He had not only studied the Jain *tatvas* but made them a part of his life. He thought the pain was to the body, not to the soul. He kept meditating and directed all his thoughts on Bhagwan Mahavir.

What can happen to such a devotee? Nothing! A staunch and ardent follower of Bhagwan Mahavir, a *shramanopasak* who has merged with *Parmatma*, what can happen to him? Kamdev remained unhurt!

The celestial demon then discarded this form and assumed his original form. He then fell at Kamdev's feet and bowed to him, giving his true introduction. "O beloved of the world! You are truly praiseworthy. Once Saudharmendra (head of the heavenly abodes), during the course of his address in his assembly of 84,000 celestial beings praised you for your deep faith and involvement in religion. He applauded you saying that no demon, no *dev*, no *gandharva* can ever taper your faith in *Parmatma*. There is no one like you who is stronger in your faith towards Bhagwan Mahavir. However, I was doubtful about how long you would stay committed to the religion in the face of adversities. Thus, I decided to test you. Forgive me O blessed One! I have put you through undue pain. But you have proved your worth and strength of character. Kindly forgive me for my doubts and evil actions." Saying so, the *dev* once again bowed to Kamdev and left for his heavenly abode.

Why did the dev want to trouble, give so much pain and discomfort to Kamdev? Did he have any personal enmity with Kamdev or did he bear a personal grudge?

No! The *dev* (celestial being) was a *mithyadristi dev* (one following the wrong path)! In his past life he had no faith in Jainism. He had complete distrust in *Parmatma's* teachings. Though a *mithyatvi*, he had performed lots of austerities, thus, accumulated good karmas and the result was that he was reborn as a *dev*.

But he carried his past life's transgressions and thus even in the life of a celestial being (*dev*), he had no trust, no faith in the *nirgrantha's* (free from all attachments and aversions) teachings. When Indra praised Kamdev, this *mithyatvi dev* became skeptical and doubtful. No Jain *shravak* can be so deeply engrossed into his religion and *sadhana*. He decided to test him.

Kamdev then peacefully completed his *pausadh* and observed *samlekhna*. He left his body for heavenly abode in a meditative state. He too was reborn in *devlok* (abode of celestial beings) from where he will be born in the Mahavideh kshetra after which he will attain Moksha.

His life is such an inspiration to us. So strong was his faith and so deep was his devotion towards Bhagwan Mahavir. He was praised by Bhagwan Himself in the presence of all His disciples. By giving an example of Kamdev, Bhagwan Mahavir addressed all male and female ascetics and told them that a *shravak* who has not renounced the world could have undaunted faith in the religious practices. Spiritual aspirants should never bend down against adversities like cowards.

Kamdev Shravak was an ideal example of faith, tolerance and patience.



CHULNIPITA SHRAVAK

One can advance spiritually only when one discards the feeling of attachment, which is a cause of bondage.

Chulnipita Gathapati, a prosperous man lived with his wife Shyama. He was wealthier than Anand and Kamdev Shravak. Chulnipita Gathapati possessed 80 million gold coins in his treasure, 80 million gold coins worth of money was invested in his business and the same amount was invested in his household items. He was revered by the king and the elite of the society and was consulted on important matters by them just like Anand Shravak. During those times, people used to live a very balanced life; they spent and invested equal amounts of money in maintaining their lifestyle as well as their businesses. During that time, cow rearing was a very popular business. Anand and Kamdev had four and six barns of 10,000 cows each respectively, whereas, Chulnipita had eight barns.

Though people lived amongst comforts and luxuries, their prosperity did not obsess them. They were socially active and followed a disciplined and pious life.

Bhagwan Mahavir brought a turning point even in Chulnipita's life. While travelling from one place to another Bhagwan Mahavir entered Varanasi city and settled in Koshtak. King Jitshatru ruled the city of Varanasi. It had a garden called Koshtak.

Chulnipita also went and heard Bhagwan Mahavir's discourses which changed his life. He started following the principles taught by Bhagwan Mahavir in his daily life. He adopted the path that an ideal spiritual aspirant would follow and hence, began his journey towards the purification of his soul.

Once when Chulnipita was observing celibacy (*brahmacharya*) and praying in his prayer hall (*paushadhshala*), a *dev* with misbeliefs decided to trouble him at night. With a very sharp sword, he threatened Chulnipita, "Give up your vows now, else, I

will kidnap your eldest son and cut him into pieces in front of you. I will boil those pieces and then sprinkle his flesh and blood on your body.”

Chulnipita was not terrified and continued with his meditation. This annoyed the *dev*. With his powers, an illusion was created! He dragged his son from the house and right in front of Chulnipita killed him, cut him into bits, and fried those pieces and with his son’s blood smeared Chulnipita’s body. The flesh and blood of his son was sprinkled on his body. This was an awful and a terrifying act. Even a person with a strong heart would be shaken but Chulnipita remained stable in his spiritual path.

The *dev* became furious and warned Chulnipita, “If you don’t give up your vows, I will repeat this with your second son. Again, Chulnipita ignored the *dev*’s threats and remained firm in his belief. The *dev* repeated the same deed and created an illusion of torturing his second son. Yet, Chulnipita stood unperturbed.

The *dev* intimidated Chulnipita the third time saying, “I have killed two of your sons and now if you do not do as I say, then I will kill your youngest and most loved son. The *dev* repeated the horrifying act with the youngest son, but Chulnipita was deeply engrossed in his meditation and he remained unshaken by this act.

After repeatedly testing the patience, tolerance and mental balance of Shravak Chulnipita, the *dev*’s hatred increased towards Chulnipita and now he warned him, “If you don’t do what I have asked you to do, I will torture your mother Bhadra Sarthvahini in the same way. I will sprinkle her flesh and blood on your body.”

When the *dev* threatened to kill his adorable mother, he lost his patience and got angry with the *dev*. How could he bear to see his mother being butchered in front of him? He lost focus and rose up to catch the *dev* and stretched his hands, but it was all an illusion created by the *dev*. The *dev* disappeared and Chulnipita

ended up gripping the pillar of his *paushadhshala*. Chulnipita panicked and started screaming in fright. His mother, on hearing her son's cries rushed towards him. On coming to know about the incident, she consoled him and explained to him that it was nothing but just adversities created by the *dev* to test his faith. His mother advised him to seek forgiveness for being shaken by this incident. She asked him to repent for his wrong deeds of being attached to his mother and being angry in the *Paushad* vow. Chulnipita understood what his mother was trying to explain and obeyed her. The mother is the ideal teacher to her children.

Chulnipita again got involved in his spiritual journey and spent the next 20 years in purification of his soul. He lived a spiritual retired life for six years and observed the 11 special austerities too. After observing *Samlekhana* vow for one month, Chulnipita Shravak passed away and his soul was reborn in the Saudharma Devlok's Arunprabha Viman. After completing his life as a *dev*, which will last for 4 *palyopam* (a unit of measurement which spans for billions of years) in heaven, his soul will take birth in the Mahavideh kshetra and will attain Moksha.

The description of Chulnipita inspires us to overcome the feelings of attachment, whether it is for our children, wife or parents.



SURADEV SHRAVAK

To reach its purest form, gold has to go through many tests in the flames of fire.

Another wealthy and affluent Gathapati during the times of Bhagwan Mahavir was Suradev, who lived in the city of Varanasi. Suradev was extremely rich. He had sixty million gold coins in his treasury, sixty million in trade and another sixty million he had spent in building his house and buying household items. He had a total of sixty thousand cows. His wife's name was Dhanya.

Once during his visits to various cities, Bhagwan Mahavir came to Varanasi and gave sermons in the beautiful gardens situated along the temple of Koshtak. Suradev, too, went to hear the preaching and was inspired by them just like Anand and the other *shravaks*. Then and there, he accepted the 12 vows prescribed for a householder and followed the spiritual path like other exemplary *shravaks*. Then he renounced everything, handed over the family affairs to his eldest son and retired to the *prayer hall* to get firmly rooted into meditation.

Once at midnight, when Suradev was in deep spiritual meditation, a celestial demon appeared before him. He had a sword in his hand. He addressed Suradev in a ferocious voice, "You desire death! Come to my refuge O Suradev! I will give you death if you do not give up your vows and surrender yourself to me."

Suradev remained steadfast and unbending. When the celestial demon realized that there was no chance that Suradev was going to abandon his vows, he brought Suradev's eldest son to the *prayer hall*, roasted him in oil and cut him into five pieces. He then sprinkled the meat and blood on Suradev.

Imagine this gruesome sight where one's own family member is killed, cut into pieces, roasted alive and then sprayed with the meat and blood!

Can anyone survive such atrocities? Yes! Only those who are completely drenched with Parmatma's love can! Only those shravaks who have adopted each and every word of Bhagwan Mahavir into their life can bear anything and everything.

Living through an ordeal without protest or self-pity, and accepting life as it came is impossible without equanimity. As Suradev was not getting affected by the killing of his eldest son, the enraged demon then committed the same tortures with his second son and youngest son also. However, he got no reaction from Suradev. He was deep into his meditation and was not getting perturbed with the presence of the evil demon.

The demon had to do something different now. He threatened Suradev that he would infect him with sixteen deadly diseases at the same time. All souls have great attachment to different things but they have the greatest attachment to their own body. That is why the *dev* decided to threaten Suradev by warning him that he will infect his body with the sixteen dreadful diseases at the same time, if he did not give up his vows. He said that he will suffer with diseases like asthma, cough, fever, burning sensation, stomachache, piles, constipation, blindness, headache, depression, eye pain, ear pain, itching, fistula, fissure and leprosy. In its intensive stage, each of these diseases can make his body weak and give him unbearable pain.

One might say today, what is the big deal about these diseases. They are curable. Even today, at a stage, these diseases can have the unbearable intensity and have no cure. As such every person desires to protect himself from the smallest of pain and diseases whether curable or incurable.

All these sixteen diseases will appear simultaneously in his body! Suradev was not at all frightened at the threats and remained stable in his meditation. However, when the demon threatened the third time, Suradev lost his concentration. He fell into the trap of the illusion created by the *dev* and thus, deviated from his meditation and faith. He got perturbed thinking, “How evil is this demon! He killed my sons in a dreadful manner and now he wants to inject my body with sixteen diseases! I have to catch him. It is appropriate for me to do so otherwise; he will not let me continue my meditation.” Thinking so, he got up from his place to catch him. That very moment the demon disappeared and returned to heaven. Suradev held the pillar in his hand and started shouting. Dhanya, his wife, heard him scream and came to him.

He narrated the whole incident to her. Dhanya pacified Suradev by saying that none of his sons were harmed. The demon had come with a purpose of creating fear in Suradev’s mind and deviate him from the religious path. She then explained to him that the fear of the sixteen diseases was in his mind. She advised him not to allow such deterrent to come in the way of his spiritual progress and once again get steadfast in his *sadhana*. He purified his soul through repentance and completed rest of his life in strong faith, determination and commitment.

Like Chulinipita, after observing *Samlekhana* vow, Suradev left his body and was born as a *dev* in Saudharma Devlok. After completing his life span there, he will be reborn in the Mahavideha kshetra from where he will attain Moksha.

The Jain *shravaks* were often tested and put through many tests, tribulations and calamities, which they all passed with flying colors.



CHULLASHATAK SHRAVAK

The bonds, fixations and attachment to wealth and relations in this world are the reasons for man's inability to make spiritual progress. The more we remain detached from it and free ourselves from their clutches, the more we progress on the path of our spirituality. This is the only real religion - The true Dharma.

Alabhika was a city in India ruled by king Jitshatru. Chullashatak Gathapati lived in this city with his wife Bahula. He was extremely wealthy and happy. Accumulation of good karmas in the past life had resulted in a life which many envied. He lacked nothing in his life.

A Jain *shravak*'s ultimate desire is to attain Moksha. The karmas cover the soul as clothes cover the body. Due to these karmas, just as water takes the shape of the container it is filled in, similarly, the soul resides in the body. From infinite times, the soul is in conjunction with karmas. They obstruct the soul from regaining its true state. This association of the soul with the karmas causes emotional and passionate vibrations in the soul. The Jain karma theory is based on what science today can say is the theory of cause and effect. One reaps what one has sown.

Is there any way out of this circle of binding karmas and freeing the soul?

Jain religion shows ways in which the embedded soul can be set free from the clutches of the material particles. As soon as one realizes the eternal truth, one attains the true spiritual insight and faith, enlightened knowledge and proper conduct. Then being in connection with a *Satguru* the bonds of karma start to loosen. Efforts on part of the *shravak* are a must. One may need to move against the current, against the flow to free oneself from the bondage of karmas and attain the ultimate aim of life – Moksha.

During the thirty years of his omniscient (*kevali*) state, Bhagwan Mahavir - the peaceful liberator, travelled on foot from one place to another inspiring people

by giving the message of love and peace. One and all irrespective of faith, caste, race or age fell at the feet of the great teacher. Once during his travels, Bhagwan Mahavir reached Alabhika. Like all other citizens, Chullashatak too, went to attend the congregation knowing how beneficial it was to listen to even a single discourse of Bhagwan Mahavir himself. These exemplary *shravaks* got inspired by listening to Bhagwan Mahavir and accepted the vows of *shravak* one after the other. It was no different with Chullashatak.

Chullashatak was an ardent follower of Bhagwan Mahavir. Though he was a householder, he was completely focused on spirituality. He led a very balanced life by fulfilling his social responsibilities and religious duties. It seemed as if his mind was pondering only on one question, “Who am I?” Chullashatak went deeper into austerities like vows, spiritual practice and study.

One day, he was in the prayer hall, when a demon appeared before him at night. He wanted to influence Chullashatak into giving up his faith. Similar incidents occurred with Chullashatak as had been with Chullipita and Kamdev. The demon killed his sons one after another, cut them up into pieces, roasted the pieces and sprinkled the meat and blood on him.

A father had to see his own sons cut into pieces, roasted and the meat and blood sprinkled on him! But what did his sons mean to him? He was above the feelings of attachment. What did these worldly relations and attachments signify to him? Nothing at all! He did not grieve over the death of his three sons. He did not waver from his meditation even for a moment.

The demon was now enraged and furious. He wondered, “How can Chullashatak not falter from his meditation when I killed his sons in such a gruesome manner? How can he not have even an ounce of emotion for his own kin? He is surely attached to his wealth.” With these thoughts, he roared like a lion, “Wealth

is power; wealth is man's best friend, wealth is Goddess Laxmi and wealth is a man's life line. Without money you will have no friends left. A person with money and wealth has some standing in the society. Without it where will you be? If you still persist on not giving up your vows, I shall scatter your entire wealth of sixty million gold coin and all the household items worth sixty million gold coins on the roads of the city. You will become broke and a destitute." Such a dreadful scene was created in front of Chullashatak.

Dismayed and discomfited at the thought of being poor, Chullashatak got enraged and forgetting his *pausadh vrat*, he went chasing the demon who wanted to destroy his wealth.

As he tried to catch the demon, the demon vanished and Chullashatak banged his head against the pillar. In desperation, he shouted loudly. Hearing his desperate cries, his wife Bahula came to his rescue. When she heard the details of the events that had occurred at night, she immediately understood everything. She then explained to him, "Why didn't you understand that you were being tested by some *dev* who wanted you to move away from your chosen path? You have been so firm until now. Why did you lose control over yourself? Wealth, relations and everything in this material world is temporary. You should have realized this. You should give up your attachment towards wealth, repent for your actions and get stabilized in your spiritual path once again." This pacified Chullashatak.

He repented and once again became firm in his vows and in the end accepted the *Maranatak Samlekhana* vow. He left his body peacefully. He was reborn in the Saudharma Devlok and upon completion of his life there, his soul will transverse to the Mahavideh kshetra and attain Moksha.

It must be said that the role of women folk is praise worthy in most of the shravak's lives. They inspired and guided them when it was needed.

The life of Chullashatak is an inspiration in today's materialistic world. It would be an easy task to follow the vows, pray and recite *mantras (jaap)*, but it's very tough to get detached from wealth.



KUNDAKAULIK SHRAVAK

A spiritually illumined soul lives in the world, but yet is never contaminated by it.

In Kampilyapur lived another rich merchant named Kundakaulik. Kampilyapur is an ancient town in India. In the times of Bhagwan Mahavir, it was one of the richest cities. Evidence suggests that this old town exists today on the banks of Ganga in Uttar Pradesh by the name of Kampil. In those times, this city was under the rule of king Jitshatru. There was an abundance of mango trees in the city. Thus, the garden which was in the city was named Sahastra Amra Bhavan, possibly on the basis of the trees which the city had.

Kundakaulik Gathapati was a rich and well to do householder. He owned eighteen crore gold coins. He had six barns with ten thousand cows in each. His wife's name was Poosha.

Once Bhagwan Mahavir reached the city of Kampilyapur and stayed in the garden of Sahastra Amra with his disciples. A *samovasaran* was built by the *devs* and a congregation was held where Bhagwan Mahavir gave his sermon. Like Anand Shravak and others, Kundakaulik also listened to the Lord's preaching, got inspired and accepted the code of conduct prescribed for the householder. He started spending more and more time for his religious practices living a life of an ideal *shravak*.

One day, Shravak Kundakaulik went to Ashok Vatika in the afternoon. He removed his ring (engraved with his name) and upper body cloth (shawl) and placed it on the stone platform nearby and got deeply engrossed in his meditation.

How can a true devotee not be tested by the *mithyatvi devs*?

The troublemakers are always present. It is up to us not to get agitated and to remain firm.

Kundakaulik too, had to face one such troublesome *dev*. The *dev* picked up his ring and the shawl from the stone platform and went high up into the sky. From there, he started yelling loudly, “O Kundaulik! Beloved of the gods and people! Why are you practicing this false faith? Your religion is hollow. Give it up. The teachings of Makkhaliputa Goshalak are better. “There is no place for effort (*purusharth*) and karma”, the great Goshalak says, “Whatever is to happen, will happen as it is all pre-destined”.

The teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir are misleading and totally wrong (*mithya*). There is no place for destiny in His teachings. All He believes in is effort (*purusharth*) and karma. No change in this world is pre-determined. How can that be? How can you agree to this philosophy? Give it up!”

After patiently listening to the *dev*, Kundakaulik Shravak asked, “O Dev! How do you have such an angelic and fine body? From where did you get this magnificence and brightness in your persona? You say that Bhagwan Mahavir’s teachings are wrong and that whatever has to happen will happen. All is pre-destined. If there is no place for effort and karma in your philosophy, then tell me how you got this life, this body and all the luxuries? Was that with effort or without?”

“O beloved of the gods! I got this splendor, magnificence and brilliance without any effort. Yes, I have achieved my status, position, my divine state, without any effort. I have not done anything, no effort to gain all this.”

“Then, O *dev*!” asked Kundakaulik “If you are blessed with these things without any effort, as you say, then kindly explain how those living beings who do not take any efforts aren’t blessed with angelic life that you are enjoying?”

The *dev* knew he had lost his debate. He was extremely dejected as he had no answer. He returned Kundakaulik’s ring and cloth and left with a heavy heart.

During his travels, Bhagwan Mahavir once again came to Kampilyapur. His ardent follower, Kundakaulik was extremely happy when he came to know this and went to seek the blessings of Bhagwan Mahavir. Addressing Kundakaulik, Bhagwan said, “I am very pleased with you Kundakaulik! You are praiseworthy.” Then, Bhagwan addressed the congregation of monks and nuns there, telling them that Kundakaulik was indeed praiseworthy as he, a householder, had given logic based answers to the celestial beings thereby refuting the theory of fatalism (*niyativadis*). The dogma that everything happens as it is pre-destined is not practical.

Kundakaulik spent fourteen years purifying his soul, progressing ahead by practicing the vows without lapsing and accepting the *pratimas*. In the fifteenth year, he entrusted all his responsibilities to his eldest son and devoted all his time in practicing austerities. Five years later, he left his physical body and was reborn in the first heaven. From there he, too, will be born in the Mahavideh kshetra and will attain Moksha.

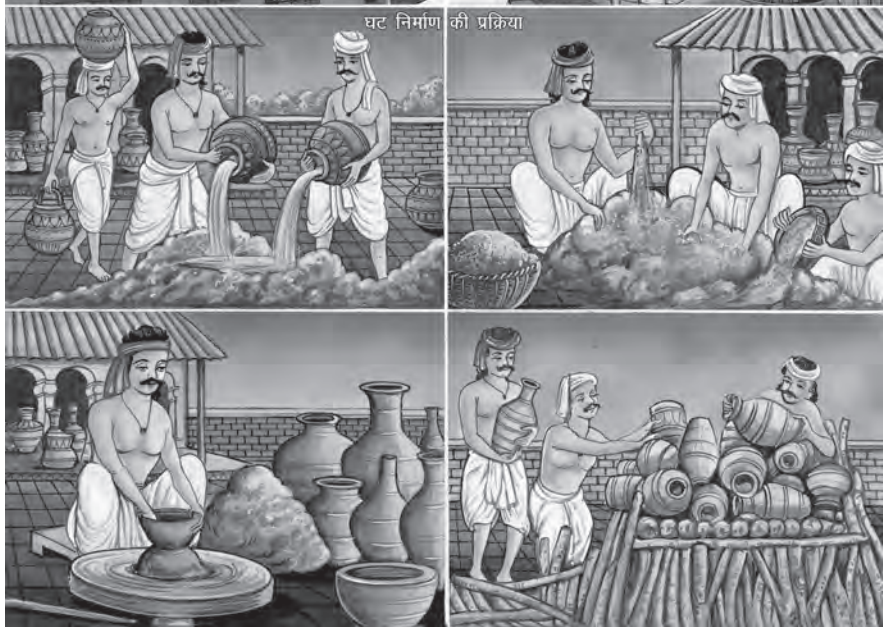
Why did Bhagwan Mahavir give so much importance to this incident and narrate it at the congregation? What was the motive? What was the hidden message in this narration? Any Jain is capable of following his religion. He may be educated about his religion and have immense faith in its principles. But a learned person has to be able to place his principles beautifully and present them with conviction when needed.

A devout person should be able to present that knowledge and understanding to others so that people with other beliefs cannot misguide them. Such a person will never waver from his path. Kundakaulik proved to be one such staunch shravak.



SHAKDALPUTRA SHRAVAK

In the Jain scriptures, after Parmatma, Guru is most revered and respected by the shravak. It is he who shows the path of spiritual progress by imparting moral teachings. He is the dispeller of darkness. He who faithfully follows a true Guru becomes like him, for the Guru helps to elevate the disciple to his own level of realization. The Guru - disciple relationship is the highest expression of friendship, for it is based on unconditional divine love and wisdom. It is the loftiest and most sacred of all relationships.



BHAGWAN'S CONVERSATION WITH SHAKDALPUTRA SHRAVAK

During the times of Bhagwan Mahavir, there existed 363 different faiths, rituals and practices in the name of religion. Many teachers existed in those times who called themselves omniscient beings (*arhat, jin or kevali*).

Goshalak was Bhagwan Mahavir's disciple. Later on, he separated from Bhagwan Mahavir and established himself as a *niyativadi* (firm believer in destiny alone). He, too, became a preacher and called himself a Tirthankar. Many would visit him and listen to his preaching. These were the people who did not have a fixed direction and were easily swayed by others.

Shakdalputra, a potter, was a firm follower. He had five hundred factories outside Polaspur. He was rich and wealthy. He was an ignorant and simple hearted soul. He, too, started visiting Goshalak and gradually started believing in the philosophy of rigid destiny (*niyativad*) preached by Goshalak. He preached that what is destined to happen will happen, come what may. Everything is fixed and decided. We cannot change anything. We just have to be observers as it is not in our hands. Many were impressed by this idea and so was Shakdal!

Once during his travels, Bhagwan Mahavir came to Polaspur. Shakdal had started believing in the philosophy of fixed destiny taught by Goshalak. However, *Parmatma* very tactfully proved him wrong. Bhagwan Mahavir first asked him that while he made pots, What if someone tried to break them what would he do? Shakdalputra said that he would stop the person from destroying the pots. Bhagwan Mahavir then questioned him that if someone tried to hold the hand of his wife, Agnimitra, and forcefully took her with him, what would Shakdal do? Would he protect her or would he sit idle thinking that why should he do anything when everything is fixed in life and we cannot change anything? Shakdalputra replied that he would strongly oppose and surely try his best to protect his wife.

Bhagwan Mahavir then smiled and in a soft and melodious voice proved to Shakdal

the hollowness of *niyativadi* theory and the importance of *purusharthvad*, “O Shakdalputra! O simple hearted soul! According to your thinking, there is no place for effort (*purusharth* or *prayatna*). Everything according to you is pre-destined. Thus, if anyone breaks your pots or misbehaves with your wife, Agnimitra, you should only watch without trying to protect. Everything is pre destined so you should accept this incident as part of your destiny and not react. However, if you take action against such people who break your pots or had misbehaved with your wife, then the belief of *niyativadi* will be wrong.”

Hearing the sermons of the Lord, Shakdal was completely convinced that Shraman Bhagwan Mahavir is the true *mahamahan* (one who never commits nor encourages nor approves violence), the possessor of true and infinite knowledge. Shakdal was deeply impressed with his knowledge and preaching and thus, became a staunch follower of the Lord. The entire episode is beautifully described in the *sutra*. One feels totally moved. *Parmatma* has approached this episode in a very interesting and effective manner.

Shakdalputra realized his mistake and asked for forgiveness. He accepted before *Parmatma* that he had blundered by deviating from the path of true religion and so he became a victim of false ideas and principles. He now understood reality, true faith and true knowledge from none other than the Omniscient Lord.

Shakdalputra falls at the feet of *Parmatma* and weeps and he says, “O *Parmatma*, I will never deviate from the right path. Neither will I go anywhere nor will I sit and listen to anyone else’s speech. I surrender myself totally at your feet. I will constantly worship you and even when you are not here with me, I will only think about your principles. Shakdal was fortunate that *Parmatma* Mahavir had come personally to save him. Shakdal then accepted the vows prescribed for the householder.

Every devotee has to face the test of time. There will always be worry and grief of some type due to some situation or because of someone. There is no escape to it.

Goshalak was agitated when he learnt that his chief follower had left him and had now become an ardent follower of Bhagwan Mahavir. He decided to bring Shakdal back to his fold. Thus, he came to Polaspur. Goshalak was an extremely clever person. He realized that if he wanted to bring Shakdal back to his fold, he had to praise Bhagwan Mahavir and not say anything against him. During his stay, Goshalak had a chance to have many spiritual discussions with Shakdalputra. He made great efforts to change the views of his former devotee but all his efforts were in vain.

For fourteen long years Shakdal firmly followed the religious practices. In the fifteenth year, a demon appeared before Shakdal in order to test his faith and deter him from his chosen path. He threatened him that he would kill all his sons one by one. The demon god created an illusion wherein he showed Shakdal the murder of his youngest son by cutting the body into several parts and sprinkled the meat and blood on him. Nothing affected Shakdal and he remained undeterred in his spiritual meditation. This enraged the demon god and he now threatened Shakdal that he would kill his wife, “O Shakdalputra! If at this very moment you do not give up your spiritual practices and your faith, I shall kill Agnimitra, your beloved wife, and cut her into several parts, fry her in hot boiling pot of oil and then sprinkle the meat and blood on you. How will you like that?”

The follower of *Parmatma*, Shakdal was now affected. His dear wife had been his lifeline and strength in his spiritual practices. He could not let her die. He thus tried to defeat the demon. However, once again, Agnimitra came to his rescue. She gently made her husband aware of the tricks played by the demon was taking to deviate him from his faith. She advised Shakdalputra to get back to his spiritual

meditation and remain steadfast on the path shown by Bhagwan Mahavir. Shakdal then realized the truth that attachment for one's sons, wealth and riches, one's own body and one's own wife is a form of bondage and a true follower must subdue it.

An ideal devotee is one, who does not go to anyone else except his *Parmatma*. He does not love anyone else or have attachment for anyone else. After becoming a devotee of *Parmatma*, there comes a vast transformation in one's lifestyle and thoughts.

Shakdal was reborn in the Arunbhoot Viman heaven after completing his life here. From there, he will be reborn in the Mahavideh Kshetra where he will attain Moksha.

Bhagwan Mahavir is not going to come physically for all of us but Parmatma's presence will be felt through His message for us.

“Believe in the right one and worship only the right one. If you keep wandering from one place to another, from one person to another, a lot of mixed and odd thoughts will get into your mind and will confuse you.”



MAHASHATAK SHRAVAK

A man may read the Holy Scriptures by the light of a lamp, and another may commit a forgery by that very light; but the lamp is unaffected. The sun sheds its light on the wicked, as well as, on the virtuous.

Rajgriha was a large city under the rule of King Shrenik. Mahashatak Gathapati, another devotee of *Parmatma*, lived there with his thirteen wives. He was one of the rich, influential and respected persons of the city. He was one of the financial pillars of the community. He readily helped the needy and the poor. He was popular and loved by the people.

All his wives were beautiful. Revati, his thirteenth wife, had received the most gold coins and barns with loads of cows in comparison to the other wives. It was gifted to her by her parents. She was thus, the richest amongst them.

Bhagwan Mahavir came to the city of Rajgriha. All the people from far and wide went to seek his blessings and to listen to His preachings. Mahashatak Gathapati, too, went along with his family and friends. Just like Anand Shravak, he too was inspired and awakened by the Omniscient Lord and thus, accepted the vows of the householder one by one. Shravak Mahashatak plunged himself in acquiring the knowledge of the Jain *tatvas* and thought upon each and every word that Bhagwan uttered.

Revati, the head wife of Mahashatak, was a troublemaker. She had an insatiable desire for wealth and carnal pleasures. She tried to create problems in the relationship between Mahashatak and his other wives. However, he was a very understanding man and he could understand all her vicious motives. He ignored whatever she did.

One day, Revati thought that if she killed all the other wives, she would have full control over the entire wealth and property of the family. She would also receive all the attention of her husband. Fuelled by ill thoughts, Revati finally poisoned the twelve wives and killed them. Since Mahashatak was busy with his business, Revati became a free person to roam wherever she wanted. She was influenced by some friends into alcoholism and eating non-vegetarian food. Two calves were killed every day because Revati got accustomed to eating the fresh tender liver of a newly born calf. Revati's brothers and cousins now ruled Mahashatak's household.

Mahashatak progressed in his *sadhana* and did not say a word to anyone. Few years later, he handed over the business to his son and devoted all his time to his spiritual growth.

King Shrenik, who was an ardent follower of Bhagwan Mahavir, declared that no living beings would be killed in the kingdom henceforth. Revati got agitated as she was addicted to eating meat every day.

“How can I give it up for some foolish command of the king? I am not a follower of Bhagwan Mahavir and do not care for his feelings and ideas. I will defy the king.” All these ill thoughts aroused in her mind only because of her addiction to eating non-vegetarian food! Did she care for anyone? Did she bother how many innocent lives she was killing? Two calves were killed every day only because Revati wanted to eat meat!

Being an extremely crafty woman, she arranged for the meat to be brought to her by killing cows from her own barn. Mahashatak followed the ascetic life of vegetarianism, but she liked meat of newborn calves. His efforts of explaining to her failed and each time he was met with ridicule and arrogance. Ever since Mahashatak handed over his business and family affairs to his son and concentrated on his spiritual growth, Revati's hatred for him increased manifold. She started insulting him publicly by abusing him in the prayer hall. She hated his religious devotion.

Mahashatak kept his calm and equanimity. He tried to talk to her and make her understand but all his words fell on deaf ears. Finally, he gave up and stopped talking to her. He increased his restraints and when he took the vow of complete celibacy (*brahmacharya*), Revati's rage knew no end.

Whenever Mahashatak was in the prayer hall engrossed in meditation, Revati would enter completely intoxicated, and try to abandon his religious practices. She would try to lure him with lusty dances. However, Mahashatak remained steadfast.

Revati murdered the other 12 wives of Mahashatak; she was an alcoholic; ate meat and fresh liver of calves; created nuisance for him every day while he practiced his spiritual austerities; but in spite of all these unpleasant situations Mahashatak did not deter from his chosen path. He stayed steady, had faith in his Guru and successfully continued his practices.

Mahashatak accepted the eleven restraints (*pratimas*) one after the other. His health deteriorated and his body started weakening. He thus, accepted the final vow of *samlekhna* - the voluntary meditative religious death. Due to the shedding of the knowledge obscuring (*gyanavarniya*) karmas, he attained supernatural knowledge - the *avadhigyan*.

The mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work unless it's open.

On the other hand, Revati's avid hunger of sexuality grew. She came again to the prayer hall to lure her husband. With her addiction to wine and meat she lost complete sense of what is good and bad and stooped down to sinful activities. Revati came from a very respectable family and was the wife of one of the most influential persons in the kingdom and yet, she completely lost all respect and honour due to her behavior.

Mahashatak bore all her advances with great self-discipline. But when she repeatedly tried to tempt him. One day, Mahashatak lost his patience and in a rage broke his vow of silence (*maun*). Enraged, he shouted back at her. He saw through his *avadhigyan* the future of his wife. He told her, "You are a wicked and crafty woman. You have sinned to no end. Do you realize the outcome of your hideous behavior? You have sinned so much that you will die in seven days' time due to a painful disease and will perish in hell."

The mention of death can disturb anyone. Revati came back to her senses as she was very scared. What is the outcome of a person who is addicted to meat and alcohol? In the face of death, we can see our sins. At the end of our life what does the mirror show us?

In a state of tension and depression, many diseases attacked her and within seven days Revati died due to a painful stomach disease which Mahashatak had predicted. She died with ill thoughts and was reborn in the Lolupachyut hell where she will remain for eighty four thousand years.

Bhagwan Mahavir had come to Rajgriha at that time. When the compassionate and kind Lord came to know of Mahashatak's rage, he asked Gautam Swami to go and advice Mahashatak. "It is improper for the practitioner of the final *samlekhna* vow to speak unfavourable, harsh and rude words in rage even if they are true. Thus, he needs to repent for his actions and ask for repentance (*alochana*). He should also pledge to refrain from such actions in the future. This conduct is completely against the principles of spirituality."

Gautam Swami came to Mahashatak and conveyed the Lord's message. Mahashatak realized his mistake, repented for his conduct and accepted penances for his actions.

It is better to conquer yourself than to win a thousand battles. Then you would be victorious. It cannot be taken from you, not by angels or by demons, heaven or hell.

He followed his vows for 20 years and died in peace and equanimity and was reborn in the first heaven from where he will be born in the Mahavideh kshetra and will attain salvation from there.



NANDINIPITA SHRAVAK

The main purpose of sadhana is to learn to control one's emotions. No one in sadhana should ever lose his temper; it is important to be calm and quiet by keeping emotions under control.

In the city of Shravasti, there lived a rich and prosperous man called Nandinipita Gathapati with his wife Ashvini. Nandinipita was leading a happy and prosperous life with his wife. Once, Bhagwan Mahavir came to the town of Shravasti. All the religious citizens, as well as, Nandinipita went to worship Bhagwan Mahavir. His preaching inspired Nandinipita to lead a spiritual life and advance in his spiritual endeavours. Like Gathapati Anand, he also accepted the 12 vows of a *shravak* from Bhagwan Mahavir.

Nandinipita advanced spiritually by adhering to 12 vows. He handed over his family and social responsibilities to his son and started concentrating in his spiritual aspirations. Fortunately, he did not have to face any adversities on his religious path. He followed the *shravak* duties for 20 years with right faith. Then, like Anand Shravak, he too took *Samlekhana* vow and left for heavenly abode within a month. His soul has taken birth in Saudharma Devlok's Arungav Viman. After completing his life as a *dev* in heaven, his soul will take birth in Mahavideh Kshetra and attain Moksha.



SHALINIPITA SHRAVAK

Vision is the art of seeing the unseen! Take a step forward in your spiritual journey!

Shalinipita Gathapati lived happily with his wife Falguni in the city of Shravasti. He was very rich and influential. He had wealth equivalent to 120 million gold coins. One third of it was deposited in his treasury and the same amounts were invested in his business and household items. He also had four barns of 10,000 cows each.

Shalinipita lived a very happy and prosperous worldly life. It was an incredible moment for him when Bhagwan Mahavir came to Shravasti town. All the citizens along with Shalinipita went to worship Bhagwan Mahavir. On listening to Bhagwan Mahavir's preaching he got inspired to lead a spiritual life. Like Gathapati Anand, he also accepted 12 vows from Bhagwan Mahavir. He spent 14 years in the purification of his soul and handed over his family and social responsibilities to his eldest son to fully concentrate in his spiritual aspirations. He observed 11 special austerities too.

Fortunately, he did not have to face any adversities on his religious path. Then like Kamdev Shravak, he accepted *Samlekhana* vow and after one month he left for heavenly abode. His soul took birth in Saudharma Devlok's Arunkil Viman. After completing his life as a *dev* for a span of 4 *palyopams* (a unit of measurement which spans for billions of years) his soul will take birth in Mahavideh kshetra and attain Moksha.



THE DESIRE

The “desire” is the cause of misery in human being. Although the desire is desirable for the worldly life as it motivates one to achieve successes, it can be detrimental for the spiritual life.

The desire manifests into greed and fear which in turn drive anger, ego, deceit, aversion, attachment, etc. Although the ten shravaks took vows, some of them had not yet gotten rid of all their desires which resulted in the inner fear (of losing that they were attached to most). The celestial beings knowing these fears played on those fears to deviate them from their path of salvation. They lost their equanimity when that fear was faced by the illusion created by celestial beings. However, these experiences showed them their weakness and they were able to overcome them and achieved higher level of spiritual growth.



THE TWELVE VOWS OF A SHRAVAK

Bhagwan Mahavir has prescribed two sets of vows:

- Those for the monks that have to be followed rigidly without any laxity.
- Those for a householder which are slightly relaxed and can be followed by the *shravak* as per his control of body, speech and mind and his capacity to follow them. Thus, the *shravak* can follow them easily even when leading his family life.

Every *shravak* desirous of liberation has to accept the twelve sets of vows:

5 *Anuvrats*, 3 *Gunavrats* and 4 *Shikshavrats*. *Vrat* means vow, *anu* means small, *guna* means enhancement and *shiksha* means learning or training.

There are nine ways in which sins are committed. They are called the nine *kotis*. *Koti* means the multiplication of *yoga* and *karan*.

The three *yogas* are mind, speech and body, while the three *karans* are:

- Committing sins yourself.
- Getting them done for you by someone.
- Supporting or applauding sins done by others.

The monks follow the *kotis* to the highest level and are always alert of not committing them. The householder follows the vows with lesser *kotis*.

THE FIVE ANUVRATS

When an ascetic follows these principles to the extreme limit, their vows are called the *Mahavrats*. But the same vows when followed by the householder, has some exceptions, as he has to commit sins knowingly or unknowingly while conducting his daily duties. Thus, his vows are called the *Anuvrats*. These five are the main basis of good conduct.

1) *Ahimsa* (Non-violence)

A *shravak* will do his best not to intentionally hurt any living beings or their feelings either by thought, word or deed, himself, or through others, or by approving such an act committed by somebody else.

Nonviolence is the foundation of Jain ethics. Bhagwan Mahavir says: 'one should not injure, subjugate, enslave, torture or kill any living being including animals, insects, plants, and vegetables.'

In the daily routine, harm can be minimized by drinking filtered or boiled water, not eating at night, avoiding wastage of water fire etc., not hurting any animals or insects, eating vegetarian food and not consuming underground roots and stems (*kandmool*).

2) *Asatya* (Truth)

A *shravak* will always speak the truth and take the vow not to lie in the five ways mentioned below:

- Making false accusations.
- Revealing secrets of others.

- Divulging the secrets of one's spouse.
- Giving wrong suggestions and opinions.
- Preparing a false and forged document or maintaining false accounts.

The vow is to be followed in thought, action, and speech, and by doing it himself or by getting it done through others.

3) *Achaurya* (Non-stealing)

A *shravak* will not steal or support and encourage stealing which are of five types:

- Buying stolen goods.
- Getting things stolen, encouraging the act of stealing and giving shelter to thieves.
- Breaking the government rules relating to customs, taxes and imports and exports and also smuggling goods.
- Keeping false weights and measures and wrong balances.
- Adulteration of commodities.

4) *Bramacharya* (Celibacy)

The vow not to have sexual relations with other than one's husband or other than one's wife and not to engage oneself in talk or gossip that provokes sexual desires.

The *shravak* thus vows not to:

- Have sexual intimacy with unmarried men/women or widowers/widows.
- Keep a mistress or go to a prostitute.
- Gossip about sex or make sexually provocative gestures.

- Arrange the marriages of people other than his/her own children.
- Wear indecent clothes or consume any intoxicating things that enhance his/her sexuality.

5) *Aparigraha* (Non-possession)

Aparigraha is the vow to limit possessions and determine their number or quantity to be used or consumed. A *shravak* may vow to only earn a certain amount of income in a year or possess certain quantity of gold at a time. This limit to possessions applies to everything like earnings, jewelry, clothing, food etc.

THE GUNAVRATS (ENHANCING VOWS)

They enhance the *Anuvrats* in a certain matter. Following these vows bring out the inner qualities of a person and makes him mentally stronger and more powerful. They inspire discipline and restraint in every action of the *shravak*. Thus, he is always alert.

The three Gunavrats are:-

6) *Disha Pariman Vrat* (Limits in directions - Restraining travel)

The vow is to limit and determine the extent to which one can move about; and the extent to which one can travel. For example the *shravak* takes the vow:

- Not to travel overseas.
- To travel overseas only a specific number of times in a year.

7) Bhoga-Upbhoga vrat (Restraint in the use of resources)

This vow is to fix a limit for things relating to *bhog* and *upabhog*. *Bhog* implies to one time usage of things like food grains, water, etc. and *upabhog* implies the repeated usage of things such as the house, ornaments, clothes etc. For example, a *shravak* takes a vow to fix a limit as follows:

- Avoid eating more than a certain numbers of food items in a day.
- Avoid using flowers for decoration.
- Avoid eating *kandmool* (underground roots and stems).
- Avoid using more than a specified number of buckets of water while having a bath.
- Avoid doing the 15 types of businesses which are prohibited in our religion.

8) Anarthadanda vrat (Refraining from unnecessary violence)

This is a vow to renounce activities which are unnecessary and meaningless. It means to avoid actions that are harmful to self and others. A *shravak* thus, takes the vow to avoid:

- Uttering words that promote indulgence in sensual pleasures and passions.
- Engaging in meaningless talk; gossip and mockery.
- Manufacturing and keeping weapons.
- Having intense attachment to possessions.

THE SHIKSHAVRATS

These are also called the disciplinary vows. Following these, the *shravak* learns to restrain his lifestyle, discipline his body and mind, advances in spiritual practices, charity and service to others. The four Shikshavrats are about practices that slowly but steadily lead one towards the eventual goal of Moksha.

9) *Samayik vrat* (Equanimity vow)

The vow to be seated in a place following disciplines and self-control for 48 minutes, thus making one aloof from sinful tendencies of the world, thoughts and deeds and thereby enabling him to carry out spiritual studies, meditation, recitation of hymns, etc.

10) *Desavagasik vrat* (Directional limits)

The tenth vow of limiting movement in different direction, as well as, the consumption and use of articles for one day.

For example, a *shravak* takes the vow of:

- Not stepping out of the house/office without reciting Navkar Mantra.
- Not traveling more than a certain number of kilometres in any direction.
- Sacrificing one of the *vigayis* namely milk, curd, ghee, oil, jaggery, sugar, butter or honey.

11) *Pausadha vrat* (Limited vow from an ascetic's life)

This *vrat* enhances the speed of spiritual endeavours and provides strength.

Renouncing eating of food and drinking of water, fasting for nourishment of one's own soul and renouncing worldly activities for 24 hours by staying at one place. When observing the vow, the *shravak* lives like an ascetic for the day.

12) *Atithi Samvibhagvrat* (Limited charity vows)

The vow to offer to ascetics necessary items like food, water etc with a feeling of selflessness, love and respect. *Atithi* means someone who may come unexpectedly without invitation, for e.g. an ascetic and *samvibhag* means sharing, with love and respect.

Any person can take these 12 vows till lifetime or for a fixed period of time and keep exemptions for mistakes or for medical reasons. After accepting the 12 vows, the *shravak* may express his desire for *santharo*, the peaceful, voluntary and planned religious death. He always remains alert to stay away from the eighteen types of sinful acts and the twenty-five types of wrong beliefs.



THE PRATIMAS (RESTRAINTS)

Pratimas are special vows, rules and regulations or a mental restraint (*abhigrah*) adopted by a *shravak* for a certain time period. By accepting them, the *shravak* can annihilate large number of bad karmas. The word *pratima* denotes the stages of ethical progress in a householder's life. There are eleven *pratimas* which the *shravak* accepts one after the other. When the *shravak* accepts one *pratima*, he does not give up the previous one. He adds on to the first one.

The eleven *pratimas* are:

1) *Darshan Pratima* - The Right Perspective

Shravak must possess the perfect and well-reasoned faith in Jainism without any exceptions or reasons. He must have sound knowledge of the Jain doctrines and their application in life. He must be free from all misconceptions and attachments. The time period of this *Pratima* is one month.

2) *Vrata Pratima* - The 12 Vows

The *shravak* accepts the 12 vows, namely the *Anuvrats*, *Guna Vrats* and *Shiksha Vrats*. He follows the partial vows without any partial transgression. After the acceptance of right faith, the *shravak* makes progress towards the right conduct. The time period of this vow is two months.

3) *Samayik Pratima* - Periodic meditation

Engaging in meditation or worship on a regular basis alleviates the *shravak* to the status of an ascetic. A *shravak* engages in *Samayik* for 48 minutes three times a day. Time period of this *Pratima* is 3 months.

4) *Prosadhao Pratima* - Periodic fasting

In this stage the *shravak* fasts six times in a month and the entire period of fasting is spent in prayer, study of scriptures, meditation and hearing religious discourses. It is practiced for 4 months.

5) *Kayotsarga Pratima* - Detachment

The *shravak* takes the vow of detached meditation. He is completely detached from his body, clothes, wealth and riches, property, family, etc. He meditates to go deeper within, on a regular basis for 5 months.

6) *Brahmacarya Pratima* - Celibacy

While following the above 5 *pratimas* the householder takes on the 6th one and that is of observing complete celibacy by refraining from sexual activities. He/ She puts an end to all sexual desires and even avoids the usage of things which increase his/her sexual desires. This is followed for 6 months.

7) *Sachitta Tyaga Pratima* – Abstinence from food that has life

Until now, the *shravak* had still not given up food containing life. But when he accepts this *pratima*, the *shravak* abstains from eating any food which has life (raw or uncooked). Time period of this *pratima* is 7 months.

8) Swayam Aarambh Tyaga Pratima - Giving up occupations

This means indifference towards this world, body, and the pleasures of senses are lessened by way of detachments and abandoning of external indulgence in any *shravak's* affairs. The *shravak* abandons all trade and commerce and other sinful occupations e.g. fighting, agriculture and trade of all kinds to avoid all kinds of *himsa*. However, he can get his work done through means of agents and servants for the sake of livelihood. The time period of this *pratima* is a maximum of 8 months.

9) Presya Tyaga Pratima – Complete Sacrifice

In accepting this *pratima*, the *shravak* has to lay down all his worldly duties and stop all means of livelihood, which he is carrying out through means of servants and agents. He accepts food specially prepared for him. However, he does not prepare it himself neither does he instruct anyone to prepare food for him. At this stage, he reduces his requirements to the bare minimum and desires Moksha which is his final goal. Time period is maximum 9 months.

10) Uddista Tyaga Pratima – Complete Detachment

Here the *shravak* gives up food that is prepared for him by others. He also completely detaches himself from the worldly affairs. He observes silence and does not give consent or consultations to any activity. The minimum time period is 10 months.

11) Shraman Bhutt Pratima – Living like a Sadhu

The *shravak* plucks out hair from his head with his own hands if he can do so, or shaves it off with the help of a razor. He starts dressing like a monk, carries

pots similar to that of a monk and observes all the vows prescribed for a monk without any partial transgressions in them. Since he lives like a monk and his lifestyle is that of a monk, he is called *shramaṇa bhutt* (like a monk). He goes for *gochari* (seeking alms) like a *sadhu* but will visit only his family or social circle. Maximum time period for this *Pratima* is 11 months. The total time period for all the 11 *pratimas* is 5 and half years.



THE FOURTEEN PLEDGES

These fourteen pledges have a special place among the code of conduct prescribed for the *shravak*. They discipline the *shravak*'s life and strengthen his mind and purify the soul. After devotees take the 12 vows, they can further purify their soul by sub limiting their consumption of single usage items such as food and water. Similar restriction is observed for not so frequently used items such as shoes, woolens etc.

The objectives of these fourteen pledges are to:

- Bring contentment in life.
- Reduce sinful activities.
- Minimize bondage of new karmas.
- Eradicate old karmas.
- Have a meditational death.

Such souls attain Moksha in the near future.

These vows are to be taken as a daily routine, while keeping in mind to make exemptions for mistakes or medical reasons.

1) *Sachitta* (having life)

How many items of raw vegetables, fruits, grains, salt, un-boiled water, etc. will one consume in a day?

2) *Dravya*

How many total numbers of items will I eat or drink today?

3) *Vigai*

How many *vigai* (namely milk, curd, ghee, oil, jaggery-sugar and butter-honey) would I not eat today?

4) *Pagarkha*

How many pairs of shoes, sandals will I use today?

5) *Tambol*

How many items in the category of *tambol* like betel nuts, betel leaves, cardamom, cloves, mouth fresheners, etc. will I consume today?

6) *Vastra*

How many pairs of clothes will I wear today, including clothes used for bedding, towels, *Muhapati*, etc?

7) *Pushp*

How many flowers will I use today?

8) *Vahan*

How many types of Vehicles (car, cycle, horse cart, train, rickshaw, airplane, etc.) will I use today?

9) *Shayan*

How many beds, sofa sets, chairs, etc. will I use today?

10) *Vilepan*

How many cosmetic items like powders, perfumes, soaps, creams, etc. will I use today?

11) *Brahmacharya*

How long (number of hours/days) will I refrain from having an active sexual life?

12) *Dishi*

How much distance will I travel today in each of the directions (East, West, South, North, Up, Down)?

13) *Snan*

The number of times I will have a bath today and the quantity of water that I will consume for bath today?

14) *Bhojan pani*

How many times and what quantity will I eat or drink in a day?

In addition to the above, one must try to avoid dinner after sunset, the use of weapons and leather products, reduce the number of ornaments and other possessions.



THREE MANORATHS

A *shravak* and *shravika* should recite and desire these three Manoraths (pure feelings) every day.

O *Parmatma*! since infinite time due to my involvement in endless desires, sinful activities, excessive possessions and negative traits such as anger, pride, deceit, greed, attachment and hatred, I am wandering in this world suffering from birth, old age, death, worries, problems and pains. Likewise, I have been wandering in endless lives in the past, by suffering and enjoying bad and good karmas. Due to some extremely good deeds and due to your blessings and grace, O *Parmatma*! Finally, I begot this best human body, best caste, all body parts and the Jain religion. But despite having these comforts and favourable circumstances, due to my adverse nature of numerous lives in the past, by remaining careless and lazy, I am afraid that I will lose this precious human life. And therefore, O *Parmatma*, O compassionate one, O kind hearted Lord, please give me the wisdom so that I understand that all these worldly pleasures are a cause of misery. Attachments and possessions will make me suffer in these worldly lives for infinite time. Having known this, I wish to give up all these worldly sinful activities, pleasures and excessive possessions and take the 12 limited vows and follow them honestly. O Lord! I desire to live like a *shravak* and would consider myself very fortunate when I reduce my requirements and possessiveness and will be able to live a life of a perfect *shravak*.

O *Parmatma*! After I take the 12 vows and with the passage of time, when my soul becomes firm, I also wish to take 5 great vows of *sadhu* and live like one, which I have not lived since ages, which is rare. I would consider myself very fortunate when I will be able to do it.

O *Parmatma*! I wish that when I am about to die, I am able to recall all my mistakes and confess them to my Gurudev. I am able to apologize for them, get rid of the sinful acts of deceit, greed and false belief. By forgiving all souls, I am able to get rid of the eighteen types of sins, four types of food and let go off the attachment for body. With pure feelings and without having any desires to prolong this life or die an early death let me embrace death in equanimity. O *Parmatma*! I will consider such death very fortunate.



SOME LIFE EMBELLISHING FACTS

- 1 *One should not be egoistic about his meritorious achievements.*
- 2 *Make this human birth virtuous and useful for the welfare of home and society.*
- 3 *Do not delay or hesitate to accept the 12 vows of a shravak despite the busy daily schedule.*
- 4 *A shravak should think and strive to practice at least 6 paushads every month.*
- 5 *Inspire all members of the family; mother, father, sister, brother, husband, wife etc to follow the 12 vows of a shravak.*
- 6 *Take appropriate time out of the numerous worldly activities and engage in spiritual activities.*
- 7 *Do not remain attached to worldly activities till the concluding stages of your life.*

8 *Remain firm and steady in your faith and spirituality even in worst adversities or unbearable circumstances.*

9 *Do not get carried away by miraculous feats performed by others. Even during times of adversities, a devoted person should not lose faith in Bhagwan; respecting the disciplines completely.*

10 *Harsh and unpleasant words should not be uttered. Attaining equanimity is the true fruit of spirituality.*

11 *Though circumstances at home are unfavourable (similar to those of Mahashatak and Revati), one should not refrain back from practicing spiritual austerities.*

12 *One should definitely contemplate over these three desires -*
1. When will I renounce the use of all luxurious and materialistic things? 2. When will I become an ascetic by following 5 major vows? 3. When will I be able to take Samlekhana vow to attain santhara (death with complete spiritual control)?

13 *One should plan their life span and then accordingly at a desired age retire completely from worldly activities and engage in spiritual practices.*

14 *One should build qualities like simplicity, politeness and compassion to rectify one's mistakes to make life successful.*

15 *One should be humble towards his Guru in spite of one's spiritual evolution, progress in penance and advancement in knowledge.*

16 *The humbleness of Gautama and Anand Shrivastava; Kamdev's stability; the conflicting situation through which Mahashatak passed are examples that are worth remembering to keep one stable and steady in their spiritual faith.*





ABOUT THE BOOK

This book is a summarized version of the Aagam Shree *Upasakdashanga Sutra*. It explains that despite being very affluent and well known, when true devotees met *Parmatma* or *Satguru*, they understood the worthiness of human life and changed their lifestyle drastically. When one understands the significance of the priceless human life and takes the 12 vows, not only his future births are improved but one can also attain Moksha in the end.

‘Let’s begin the journey of *Aatma* to *Parmatma*’.



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₹ 80/-