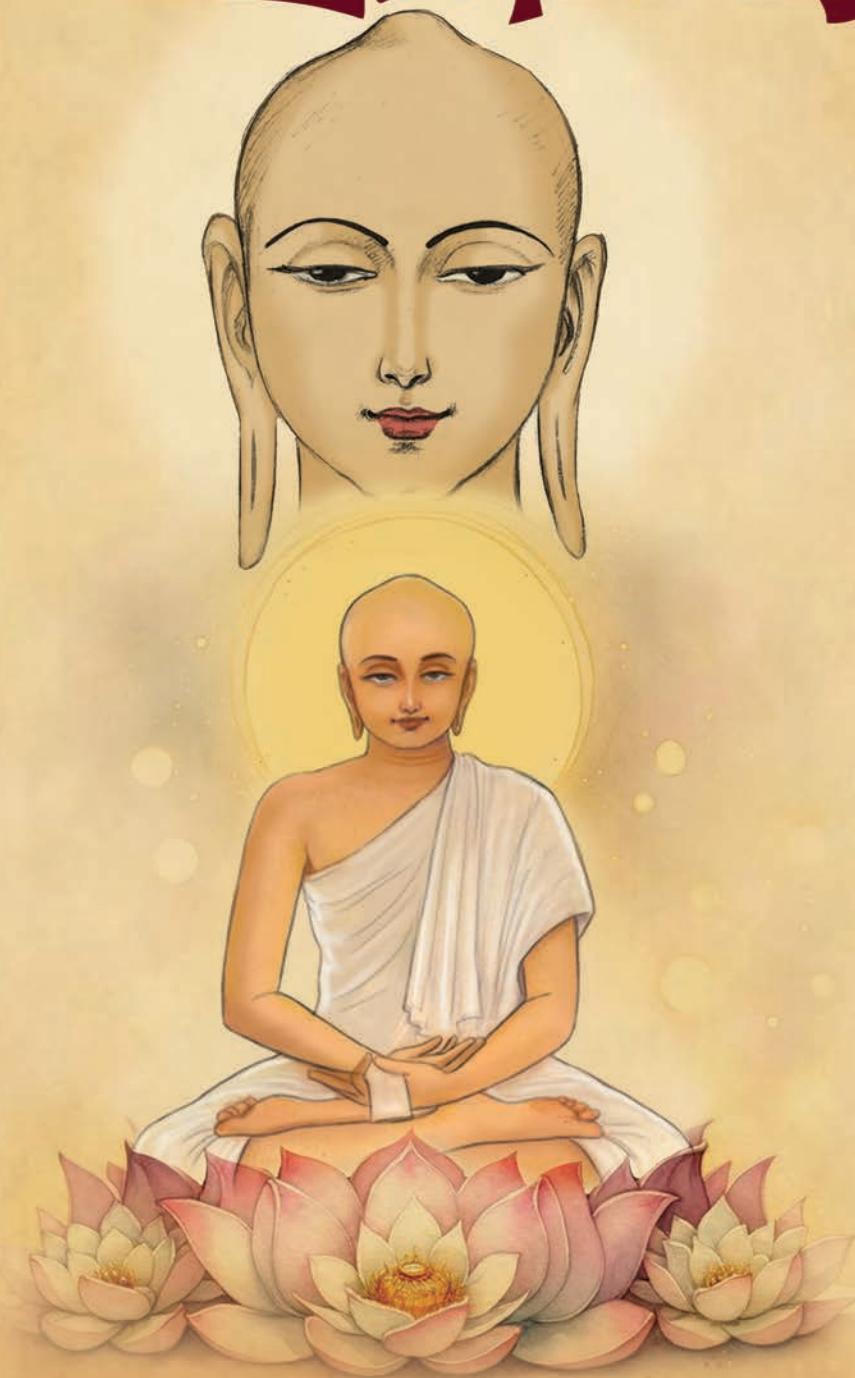


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October 2024

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AKRAM Express



Editorial

Friends,

Gautam Swami devoted his life to Lord Mahavir, the 24th and last Tirthankar Lord of this time-cycle, who lived during the 6th century BCE. Even today, people experience changes in their own lives when they read about examples of Gautam Swami's humility and simplicity. The desire to do good for everyone flowed through every fibre of his being. Just by uttering his name, people's troubles would disappear and they would instead receive good fortune. Despite being Lord Mahavir's first disciple, he did not have the slightest hint of arrogance about his level of knowledge or status.

Who was Gautam Swami? In this issue, let us get a true introduction of Lord Mahavir's first *gandhar* (chief disciple). Let us remember him and embrace the sentiment in our hearts to attain his level of devotion, humility, simplicity and modesty.

-Dimple Mehta



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GNANIS SAY>>

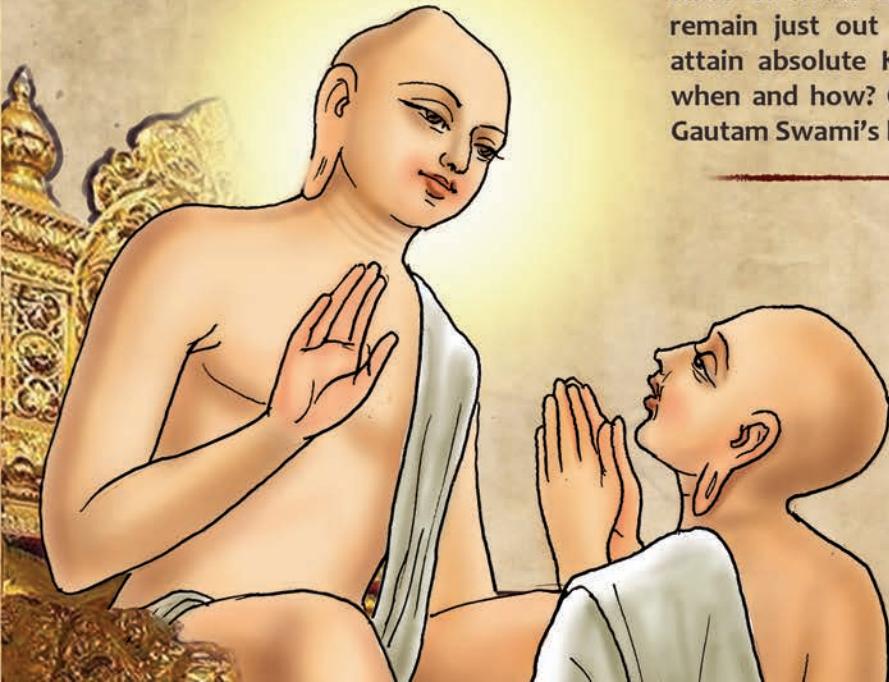
Gautam Swami had unwavering devotion towards Lord Mahavir. He was the Lord's first chief disciple. He had immense attachment for the Lord. This kind of attachment is known as *prashasta raag* (attachment of the highest kind which leads to liberation). *Prashasta raag* means that there is no attachment for any materialistic thing in the world, but only for God.

For Gautam Swami, Lord Mahavir was always physically present with him. Hence, he had tremendous attachment for the Lord's physical body as well as for his speech. *Prashasta raag* is the most superior form of attachment. Only a rare few attain this. Gautam Swami had *prashasta raag* for the physical presence of the Tirthankar Lord, so the Lord would have no choice but to take him to *moksha* (ultimate liberation) with him.

Gautam Swami's humility and his *prashasta raag* towards the Lord are truly praiseworthy. The benefit of *prashasta raag* is that it diverts all the worldly attachments and focuses them solely unto God. It is when one has no expectations from the being they revere, and sees not a single flaw in them.

Gautam Swami had so much power that if he preached to someone, then that person would get immediate results. His disciples would often spontaneously attain *keval Gnan* (absolute Knowledge). Meanwhile, their teacher, Gautam Swami, remained just short of reaching *keval Gnan*.

So, did Gautam Swami ever reach the state of *Keval Gnan*? Or did it always remain just out of reach. Did he ever attain absolute Knowledge? If so, then when and how? Come, let's learn about Gautam Swami's life story.



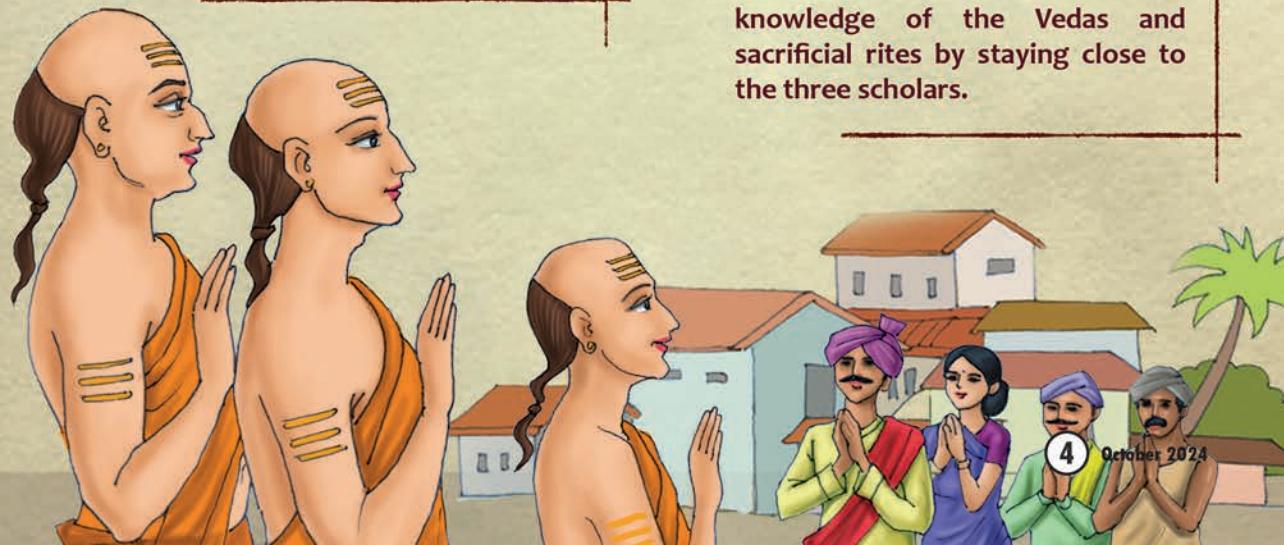
INTRODUCTION TO GAUTAM SWAMI



Lord Mahavir's first chief disciple, Indrabhuti Gautam, was born in a village called Gobargaon in the state of Magadha. His mother's name was Pruthvi and his father's name was Vasubhuti. He had two brothers, Agnibhuti and Vayubhuti. Vasubhuti started imparting knowledge of the Vedas (Hindu scriptures) to all three of his sons from when they were very young.



From a young age, the three brothers became such great scholars that they began to receive requests to attend rituals and sacrificial ceremonies. Soon, talk of the three brothers' knowledge spread throughout the country. Hundreds of students received knowledge of the Vedas and sacrificial rites by staying close to the three scholars.





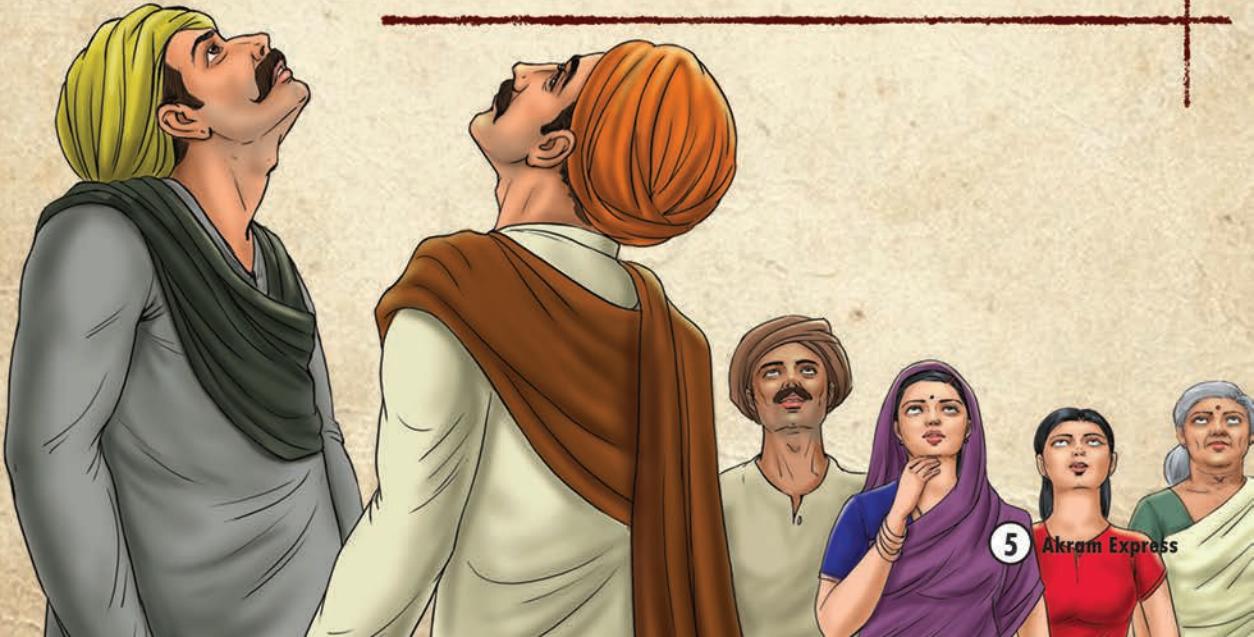
AND THUS HIS ARROGANCE WAS SHATTERED

In a sacred town called Madhyama, there lived a brahmin (member of the priest caste) named Somilacharya. One day Somilacharya had organised a grand *yagna* (sacrificial ceremony) in a nearby city. The ceremony was so unique that no king had commissioned it in a thousand years. Many learned brahmins and popular scholars from all over the country were invited to participate in this sacrificial rite. Indrabhuti, Vayubhuti and Agnibhuti were also invited to attend, accompanied by their students.

On the day of the ceremony, Lord Mahavir happened to be in a nearby forest.

At the crack of dawn, the people of the town saw the sky filled with chariots. Celestial beings adorned with finery were descending from the heavens.

Seeing the deities, the townspeople started talking amongst themselves, "It is not surprising that deities also wish to attend this momentous sacrificial ceremony when such learned and renowned brahmins and scholars have all gathered here. All these celestial beings are eager to attend the great brahmin Somilacharya's sacrificial ceremony."



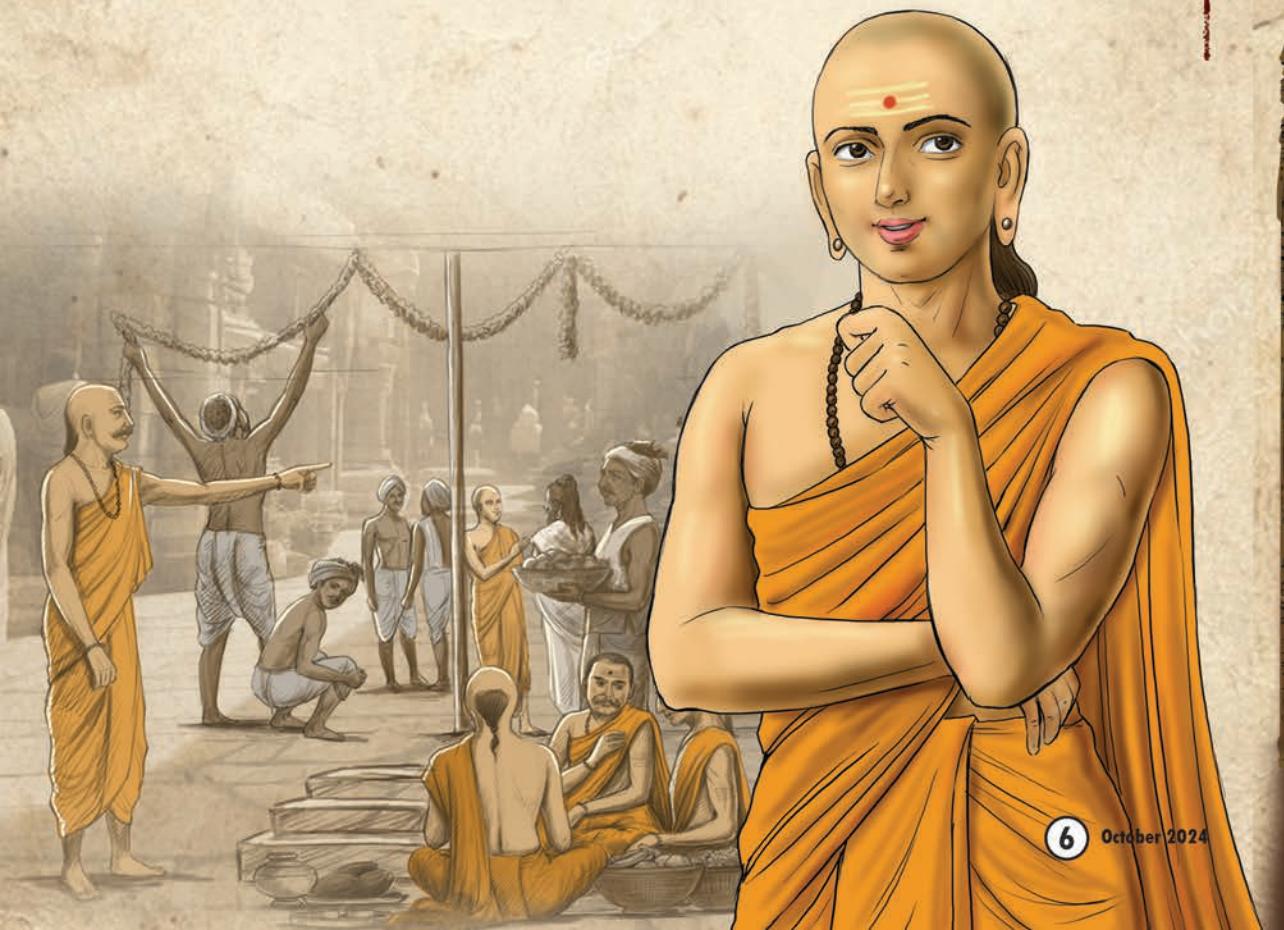
As these words fell on the ears of the three brothers, they inwardly rejoiced. They felt so proud of how impressive this sacrificial ceremony was that even the deities felt compelled to attend it.

But their pride did not last long. Instead of alighting in the courtyard where the sacrificial rite was taking place, the deities' chariots continued past, heading towards the other side of the town. Everyone was surprised, "What is this? Were the deities not pleased with the sacrificial rite? Did they get upset and go elsewhere? How did this happen?"

As Somilacharya and Indrabhuti Gautam were discussing the matter, an informant arrived and announced, "Lord Mahavir has arrived on the other side of the town. He is a God. His grand assembly is taking place in Mahasen Forest and all the deities are going there."

Indrabhuti was shocked and outraged upon hearing this. He firmly believed that there was no being greater or more educated than him. So, he decided to defeat Lord Mahavir in the hope of raising his own status and knowledge.

In Mahasen Forest, the moment Indrabhuti Gautam entered the assembly and laid eyes on Lord Mahavir, he was captivated by the Lord's unique radiance and beauty. This left Indrabhuti frozen in awe and bliss for a few moments. Lord



Mahavir welcomed Indrabhuti Gautam with a warmth akin to motherly love in his speech, "Welcome, Indrabhuti Gautam!"

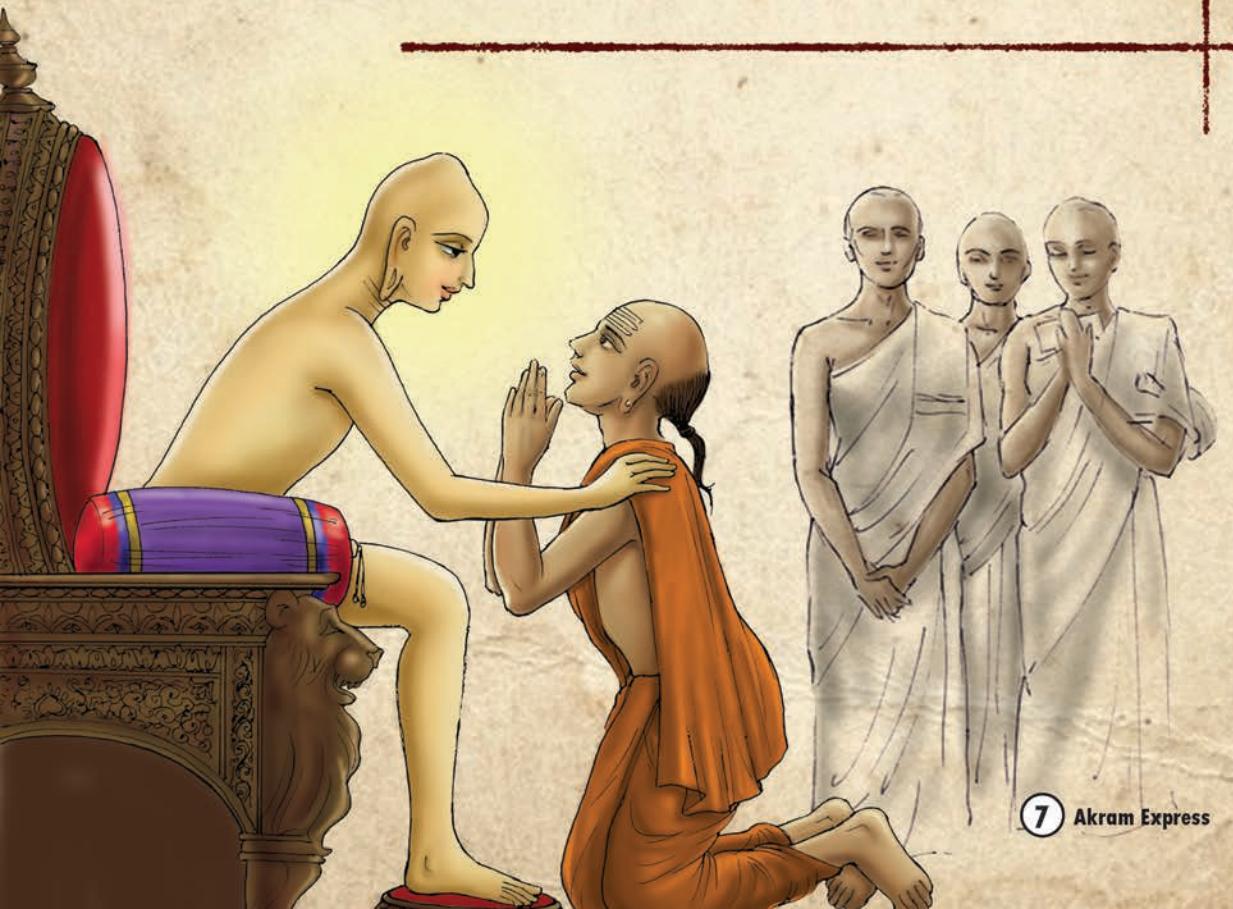
Indrabhuti was surprised for a moment and thought, 'He has warmly welcomed me by my name, even though we have never met. Is he all-knowing?'

However, he then thought, 'Who could be wiser than me in this world? Who would not be aware of the name of a famous and renowned scholar like me! It is nothing special when a stranger calls me by my name. I will only consider him a true *Gnani* (fully Self-realised spiritual master) if he is able to foresee all the doubts in my mind and resolve them with divine vision and knowledge.'

As soon as this thought concluded in Indrabhuti's mind, Lord Mahavir immediately became aware of all his questions and provided the answers.

All of Indrabhuti's doubts were dispersed and his arrogance was completely dissolved. He bowed down to Lord Mahavir with the utmost devotion and, in a voice choked with emotion, he said, "Lord, please give me shelter. Ordain me as your disciple."

There and then, Lord Mahavir gave *diksha* (initiation of disciple) to Indrabhuti Gautam as well as his five hundred disciples. This was how Gautam Swami became Lord Mahavir's first chief disciple.





OH! WHAT WONDERFUL MODESTY!

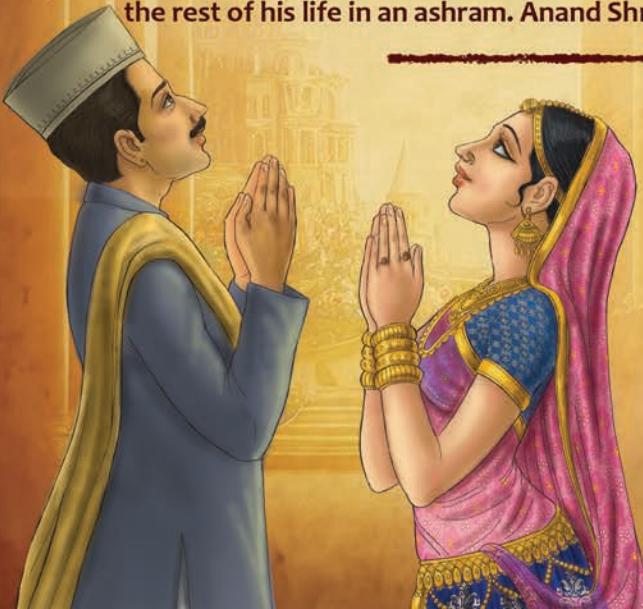
In a large town called Vanijya there once lived a man called Anand. He was a very successful businessman whose trade had spread far and wide. Anand had a wife called Shivanand. Both husband and wife were religious and Anand was well liked by the townsfolk.

One day, Lord Mahavir was near Vanijya. Anand went to listen to the Lord's *deshna* (ego-less speech accepted by all; spiritual sermon by a Tirthankar Lord), which he had wholeheartedly immersed himself into.

After the sermon, Anand spoke to the Lord and sought blessings to follow religious vows while remaining in worldly life (i.e becoming a *shravak*, a lay follower).

Anand went home and informed his wife. As she was also religious, both of them started strictly following the vows.

Twenty years passed. Anand Shravak's religious practices became more and more powerful. Then one day, Anand Shravak decided to hand over all the responsibilities of his house and family to his eldest son, and decided to spend the rest of his life in an ashram. Anand Shravak had not assumed monkhood but



“
In the end, Anand Shravak asked Gautam Swami to seek clarification about the matter from Lord Mahavir.
”

his religious practices were of a very high standard.

One of Anand Shravak's final austerities was to fast until death. The news of this spread throughout the town. The townspeople came to see him for one last time and pay homage.

At same time, Gautam Swami had been fasting for two days. When he went into town to break his fast, he heard about Anand Shravak's severe penance.

It occurred to Gautam Swami that as Anand Shravak was a great devotee of Lord Mahavir who had done such excellent penance, he should go visit him and ask how he is doing. With this thought, Gautam Swami went to Anand Shravak's ashram.

Seeing Gautam Swami, Lord Mahavir's first *gandhar* (chief disciple), standing there before him, Anand Shravak was overjoyed. He seated Gautam Swami next to him and asked, "Can a shravak who practices religious vows while staying at home, attain a certain level of enlightenment?" Gautam Swami agreed that it was possible.

Anand Shravak was extremely pleased to hear that and he informed Gautam Swami that he had attained a level of enlightenment. He then narrated to him the level of Knowledge that he had attained.

After listening to the narration, Gautam Swami said that it was impossible for Anand Shravak to have attained the type of knowledge he described. He further said that Anand Shravak had committed a misdeed by stating such a claim and that he must repent for that.

Anand Shravak very earnestly asked, "Is it necessary to repent for telling the



truth? There is no mistake in what I said." There was a lot of discussion between the two. In the end, Anand Shravak asked Gautam Swami to seek clarification about the matter from Lord Mahavir.

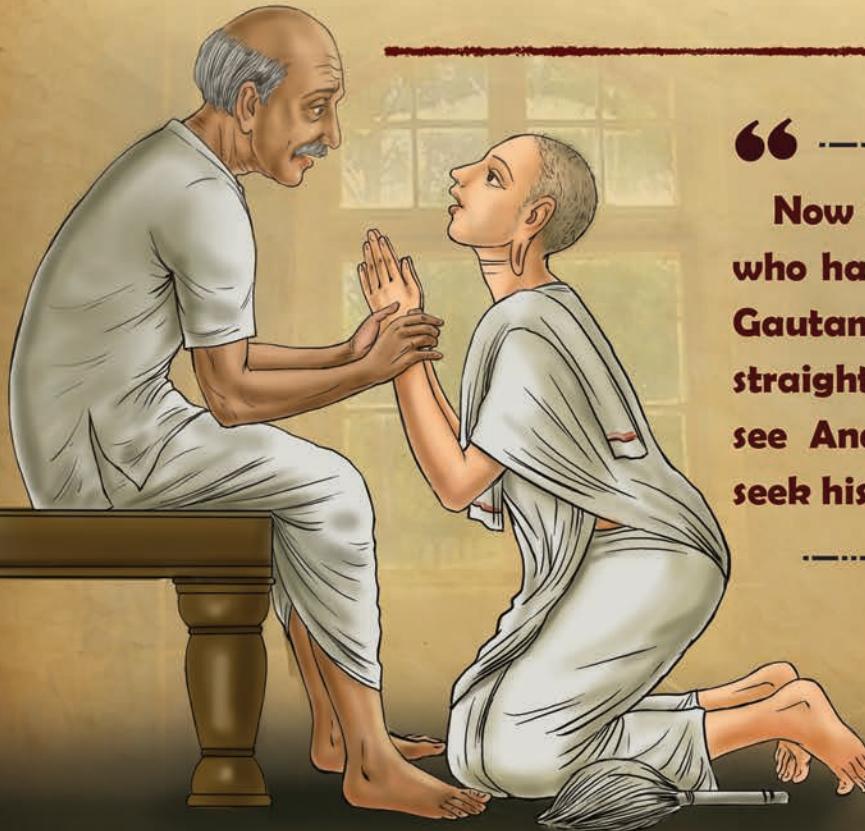
Gautam Swami was extremely simple and straightforward. He went to Lord Mahavir and explained everything. He requested the Lord to reveal who should be the one to repent in this situation.

Lord Mahavir told Gautam Swami, "Anand was telling the truth. You should not insist on holding on to your viewpoint. You are the one who has to repent on this occasion. Go to him and ask for forgiveness for your mistake."

Now that he realised who had been at fault, Gautam Swami left straight away to go and see Anand Shravak to seek his forgiveness.

Witnessing such a great and wise guru's humility and straightforwardness, Anand Shravak was overwhelmed with joy and he heartily saluted Gautam Swami.

Thus, Gautam Swami went to seek forgiveness from Anand Shravak without being concerned about not having eaten anything during his two-day fast. Gautam Swami had complete surrender towards Lord Mahavir, so he immediately accepted his mistake without any hesitation. And as per the Lord's instruction, as a matter of priority, he wholeheartedly asked for forgiveness from Anand Shravak.



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**Now that he realised
who had been at fault,
Gautam Swami left
straight away to go and
see Anand Shravak to
seek his forgiveness.**

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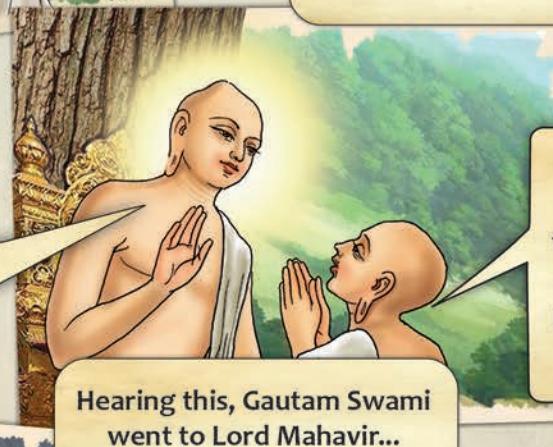
WHEN WILL ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE BE ATTAINED!



Souls who have received enlightenment by me attain absolute Knowledge. But I am still stuck at the same spiritual level. Will I be able to attain absolute Knowledge in this birth?

One day during Lord Mahavir's deshna...

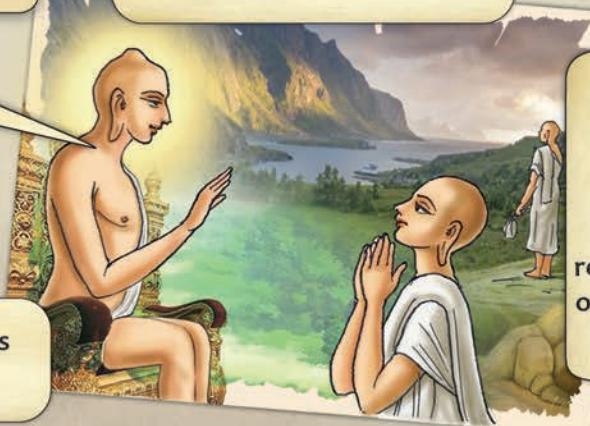
Any seeker who goes to Mount Ashtapad with their own extraordinary abilities (*labdhi*), to worship the sacred idols located there, and stays there for one night, becomes entitled to *moksha*.



Lord, I want to attain *moksha* in this lifetime. Will you give me permission to go to Ashtapada?

Hearing this, Gautam Swami went to Lord Mahavir...

Gautam, of course you can go to Mount Ashtapad.

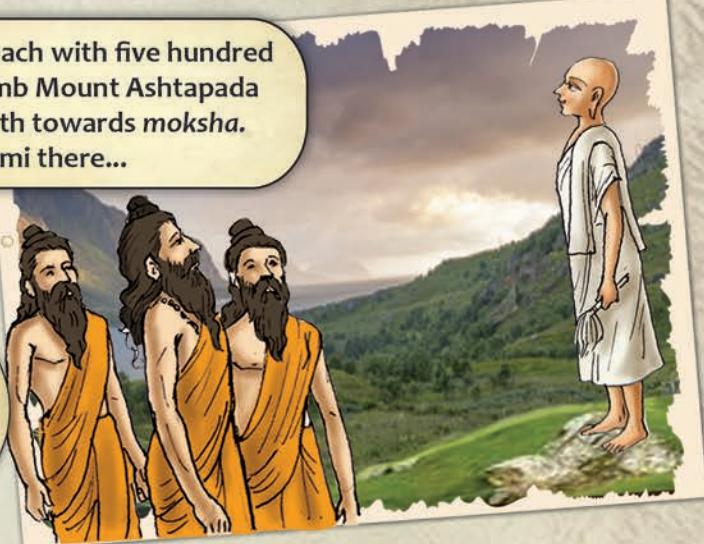


Gautam Swami was overjoyed.

Gautam Swami possessed many abilities, including super speed. By virtue of this, he reached the foothills of Mount Ashtapada in a short time.

At the same time, three ascetics, each with five hundred disciples, were attempting to climb Mount Ashtapada with the aim to progress on the path towards moksha.

They saw Gautam Swami there...



We are not able to climb this mountain even though we are great ascetics with a lean body. So how will someone with a big body like his be able to climb it?

But just like that, Gautam Swami quickly ascended the mountain with the help of the sun's rays and disappeared out of sight.

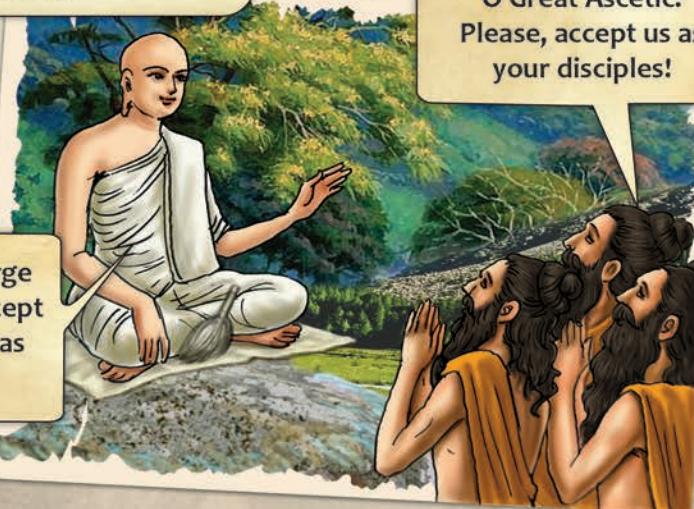
This great person must surely have a super power. If we meet him on our descent, then we will become his disciples.



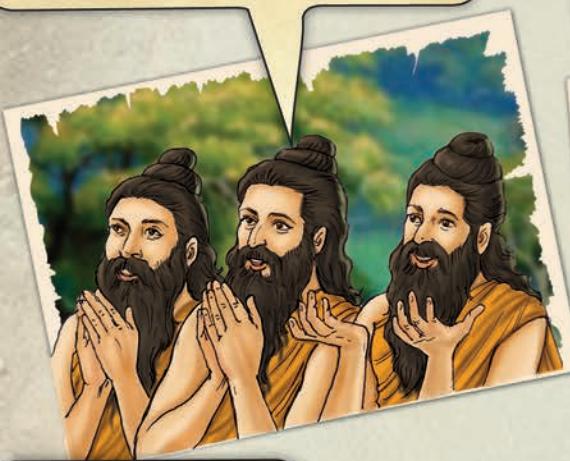
They were overjoyed when they saw Gautam Swami the next day.

O Great Ascetic! Please, accept us as your disciples!

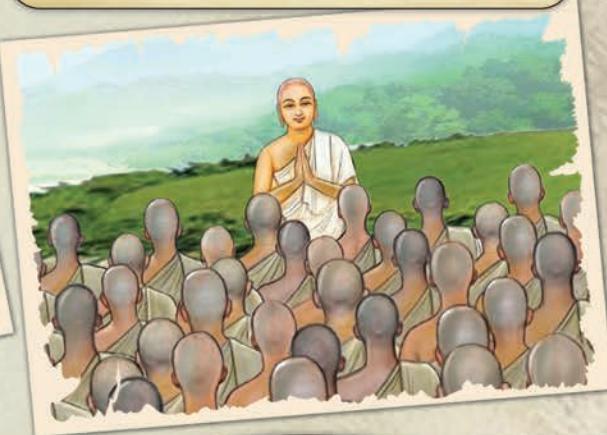
O Ascetics, I urge all of you to accept Lord Mahavir as your guru.



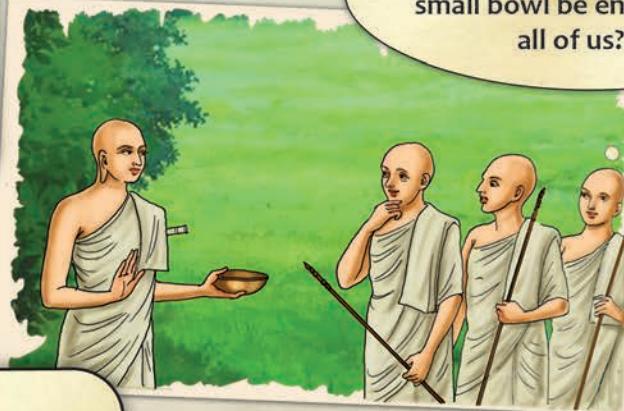
Do you have a guru? If so, then how great must he be! But right now, we want to receive *diksha* from you.



Gautam Swami gave *diksha* to the three ascetics and all fifteen hundred disciples, initiating them into the religious order of Lord Mahavir. After that, they all went to the Lord.

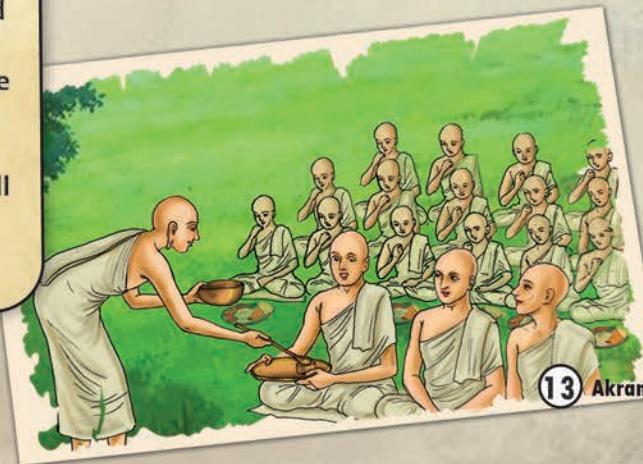


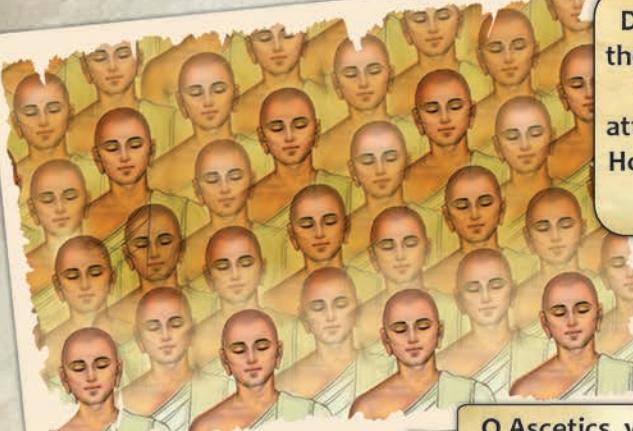
On their way, Gautam Swami asked the ascetics to sit down to eat. Gautam Swami filled a small bowl with kheer (rice pudding).



How will the kheer in such a small bowl be enough for all of us?!

But Gautam Swami possessed the ability to make inexhaustible anything that he touched with his thumb. And thus, Gautam Swami, by the means of his divine gift, fed all the ascetics with kheer, till they could eat no more.



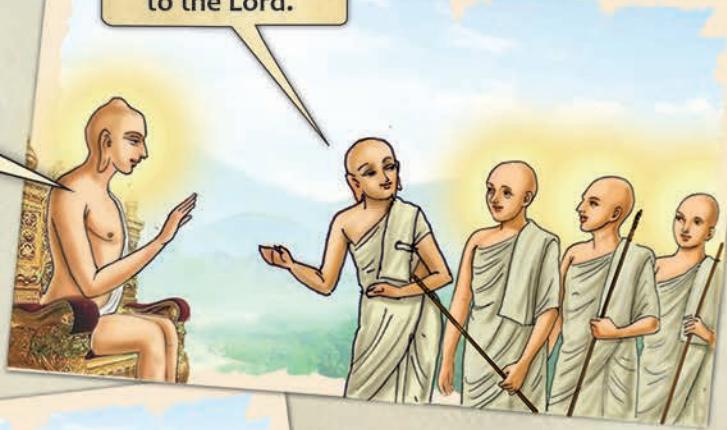


During their return journey, the three ascetics and all their fifteen hundred disciples attained absolute Knowledge. However, Gautam Swami was not aware of this.

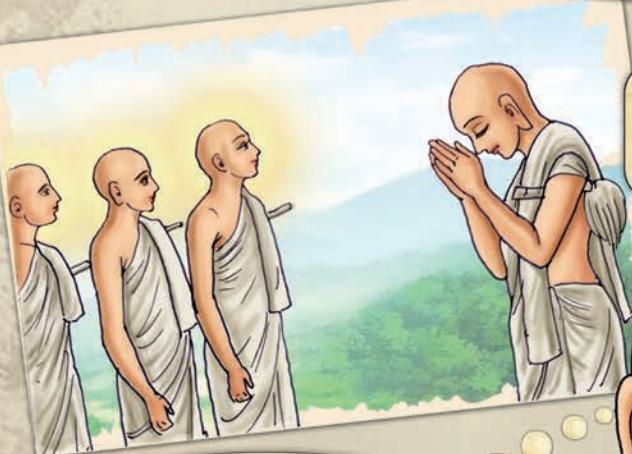
They reached Lord Mahavir's *samovasaran* (divine assembly hall of a Tirthankar Lord, where people, heavenly beings and animals gathered to listen to the Tirthankar's ego-less speech).

Oh, Gautam, one cannot speak to omniscient beings who have attained absolute Knowledge in this manner. You must ask for forgiveness.

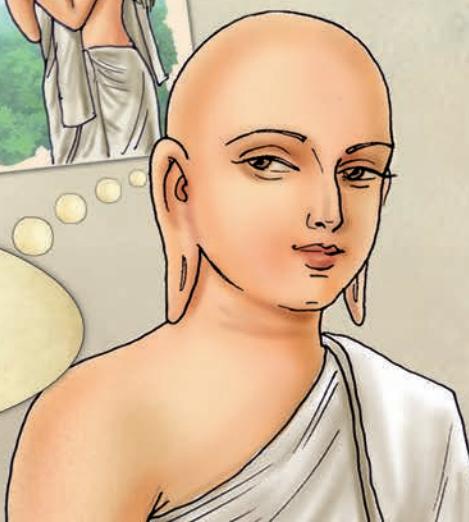
O Ascetics, you must bow down to the Lord.



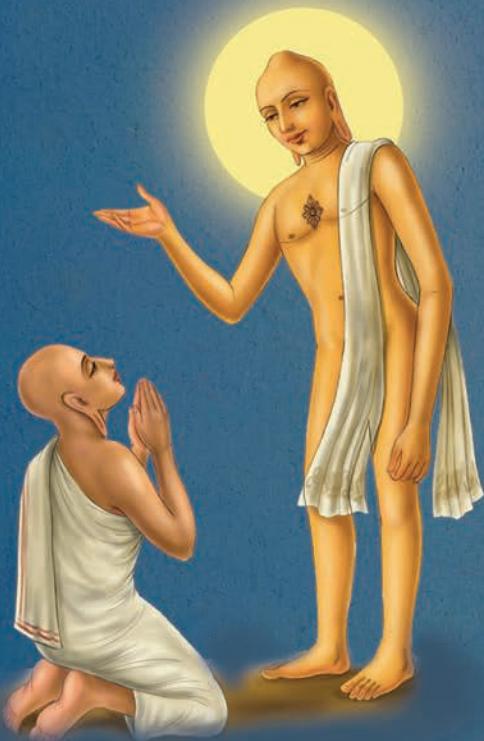
Gautam Swami immediately asked for forgiveness from them.



All these beings have attained absolute Knowledge? Was my pilgrimage to Mount Ashtapada done in vain? When will I attain absolute Knowledge?



DIVINE DWALI

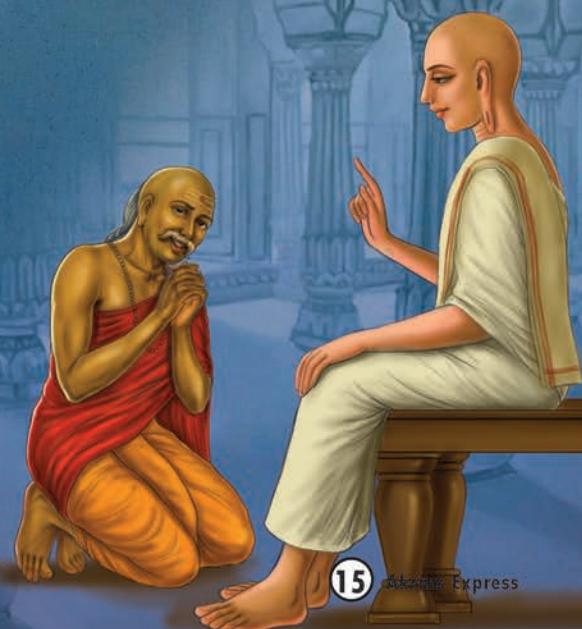


Lord Mahavir's command was dearer than life for Gautam Swami. He was always ready to receive any directive from the Lord. Gautam Swami immediately left for Devsharma's village to enlighten him.

Gautam Swami was eager to return to the Lord as soon as he had enlightened Devsharma. It was very difficult for him to stay away from the Lord for any length of time. Gautam Swami reached Devsharma and gave him the right Knowledge. Feeling the joy and satisfaction of obeying the Lord's command, Gautam Swami immediately set out to return to be at the Lord's feet.

Lord Mahavir's human lifespan was coming to an end and it was time for Gautam Swami to attain absolute Knowledge. Lord Mahavir thought, 'Gautam's 'prashasta raag' towards me is the final thing preventing him from attaining absolute Knowledge. Until this attachment is broken, he will not attain absolute Knowledge.'

To break that attachment, Lord Mahavir instructed Gautam Swami, "O Gautam, in a nearby village there lives a brahmin called Devsharma. Go there and enlighten him with spiritual knowledge. By doing this, you will also make spiritual advancement."





Meanwhile, at midnight, Lord Mahavir left his physical body and went to *moksha* (attained nirvana, final liberation from all karmas). That day, the land of Pavapuri became holy. People lit lamps and celebrated the Lord's nirvana. When Gautam Swami, who was on his way back to the Lord, came to know about this, his heart was torn into shreds and there was no end to his suffering. Floods of tears fell from his eyes.

'Why did the Lord send me away from him? Why did the Lord leave me? Now how will I attain absolute Knowledge?' Thinking this, he went into shock. Suddenly, he remembered the Lord's words and thought, 'What fault is it of the Lord that I have not yet attained absolute Knowledge? It must be my own fault.' After a great deal of introspection, he realised his mistake. The final remaining veil of ignorance shrouding his soul (his attachment towards the Lord) broke and he attained absolute Knowledge.

And so, the day Lord Mahavir attained nirvana was the same day that Gautam Swami attained absolute Knowledge. We celebrate this auspicious day as Diwali by lighting lamps.



Let's Play...

Find which key can open the door.



Chilly has told you a lot. Now, let me tell you a few things. Do you remember Chilly feeling dizzy after listening to Parsley's song? Do you remember Chilly feeling dizzy after listening to Parsley's song? I don't know why that happened! I went to call Chilly in the morning for practice and Parsley was singing...

O brother Chilly! Will you win the singing contest?
O brother Chilly! Because your voice is not the best!
O brother Chilly! But don't worry, don't get stressed!
O brother Chilly! Become like Aaloo, and we'll be impressed!

AALOO CHILLY



To tell you the truth, I didn't understand his song. And that's probably because Parsley doesn't sing very well. It sounds like his mouth is full while he is singing. But I danced a little so that he wouldn't feel bad.

Parsley finished singing and I said, "Hi" to Chilly. But Chilly was so red that I thought maybe he had put too much chilli in his 'Chilly Shake' today.

I gave him a big smile, but he left the house without saying anything. Maybe he couldn't stand Parsley's singing.

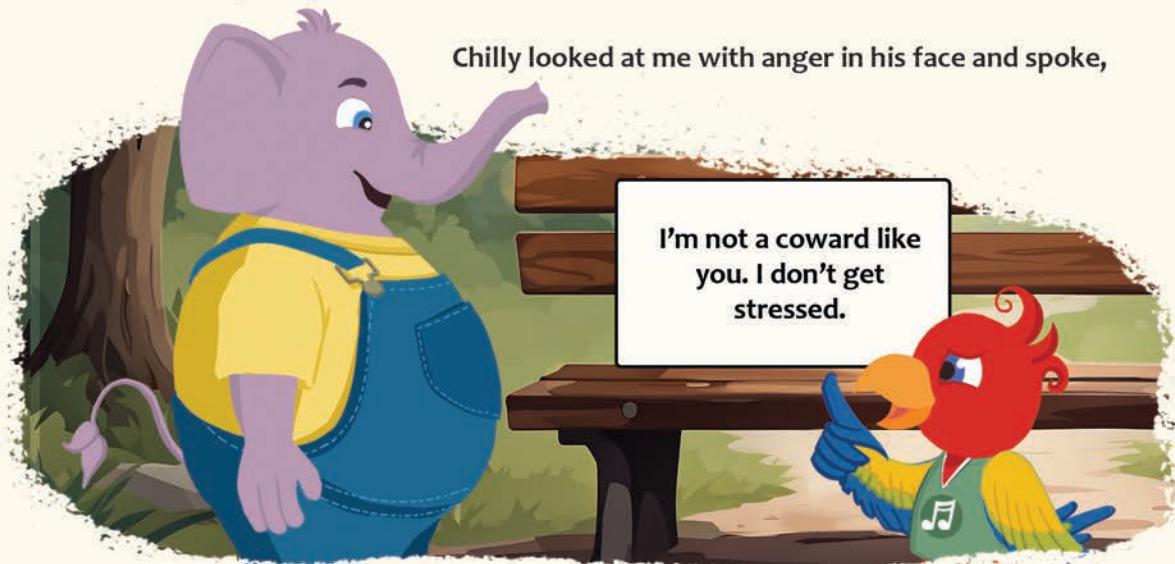
I ran after him and said, "Chilly, I've been waiting for so long for us to practice your singing. I haven't heard your songs for such a long time!"



Where shall we practice?
On the mountain or
while swimming in the
river?



I don't know why Chilly didn't say anything. Sometimes he gets lost in his thoughts during practice time, but he had never gone so long without saying anything. Finally, I asked him, "Chilly, are you stressed?"



Chilly called me a coward! He has never spoken to me like that. I wasn't sure what was wrong with him. Then he asked me, "Why did you dance to Parsley's song?"



Why did Chilly feel bad when I danced to Parsley's song? I didn't understand what was going on.

Will Aaloo realise that Chilly is hurt because of the lyrics of Parsley's song? Why would Chilly get so upset over such a trivial matter? Will the argument between Aaloo and Chilly ever end or...

Information about the discontinuation of Akram Express magazine printing

Jay Sat Chit Anand Mahatamas,

Today's youth are reading magazines online. Therefore, the number of Akram Express (both Gujarati and English) members is decreasing. As a result, the printing of Akram Express magazine will be discontinued starting in January 2025.

Soft copies of the magazine will be available for free through Akonnect and at kids.dadabhagwan.org website.

Those with Akram Express magazine subscription extending beyond December 2024 will receive a full refund.

To receive the refund, please scan the provided QR code, which will prompt you to enter your subscription and bank account information.

QR code



Please fill out this form by January 15, 2025. The refund will be processed to your bank account by January 31, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact the magazine team at dadavani@dadabhagwan.org or call +91 8155007500.

-Magazine Team, Adalaj

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2) In case if you don't receive your magazine as per your subscription, then please inform us on WhatsApp number 8155007500 and provide us with the following details:

1) Receipt number or ID number 2) Permanent address with pin code 3) Which month the magazine was not received



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