

# ATTRACTIVE PREVIOUS BIRTHS (PART - 2)



**P. Panyas Shree  
Nirvaanbhooshan V. Gani. M.**



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(Part - 1)

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Since P. Muniraj Shri Nirvaanbhooshan Vijayji has a good command over English language, even before this book, the English books written by him have been welcomed. In the same style and words, Mayanasundari's life events have been illustrated in English language. The pictures are stunning. English speaking readers will find such English publications useful. The most popular talks of Jain Ramayana are included with exclusive pictures. ‘Bhadrabahu’ is also too good. Pradyumna & Shamba with exclusive pictures is also best. Each book will inspire new generation, to walk on the path of humanity and Jainism

(Kalyan Magazine – Top magazine of Jainism) Yr.- 79/81. Volume -12/12

Guide: H.H.P.A.D.S.V. Purnachandra S.M.

This is the experience of years that the children learning in English medium don’t have full understanding of Gujarati language. Gujarati discourses pass over their heads; even they feel Gujarati books boring. This is the condition of whole new generation. The age of cultivating moral values is being wasted in education and entertainment. This is the great matter of concern for the well-wishers of Shri Jain Sangh. All of them are concerned about how to make children virtuous, cultured, pious and afraid of sin .

Among many solutions, one solution, perhaps most simple and successful, is : tell the children the stories of Tirthankars, ascetics, great men and great women of virtue. All like stories; children like the most. In addition, it is a matter of experience that an inspiring life-character is more effective example than an inspiring preaching. The horrible results of sins and the sweet fruits of *dharma* can be explained in a simple way through stories.

The learned Muniraj Shri Nirvaanbhooshan Vijay understood this thing years ago and started right efforts in this direction. As a result, today 24 books compiled by him have been published. As these stories of Jain history is reaching to people, their demand is ever increasing. New editions of many books are being published.

It is a matter of delight that Munishri is making his contributions in this great *yagna* for familiarizing lakhs of children of Jain families with the best conduct, thinking, philosophy and history of Jain religion. May Munipravarshri continue to get more and more success in this challenging task – this is my heartfelt greetings!

Vijay Mokshrati Suri

V.S.2081 Mahasud 10, Akota, Vadodara

**Thanks for Appreciable Letters / Opinions/ Guidance**  
**which will give us the most potent force.**

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# INDEX

<u>Sr. No.</u>	<u>Chapter Name</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1.	The previous birth of King Shalivahan	1
2.	Shrimata's previous birth	4
3.	Minaldevi's previous birth	5
4.	The previous birth of Buddhist ruler Yaksha	7
5.	Aaramshobha's previous birth	9
6.	The previous birth of Mayanavalirani	14
7.	The previous birth of Sage Bhuvantilak	16
8.	Vidyutprabh and Vidyutsundar Dev's previous birth	19
9.	The pitiable previous birth of Jayraja	20
10.	The previous birth and rebirth of six Gopdevata	24
11.	The previous birth of Pratyekbuddha Nagagati Rajarshi	27
12.	Prince Subahumuni's previous birth	33
13.	Umberdutt's previous life	35
14.	The previous birth of Queen Devdatta	38
15.	Harikeshmuni's previous birth	41
16.	Angarmardaksuri's previous birth	43
17.	The previous birth of Sarvangsundari Sadhvi	45
18.	The previous birth of Purnabhadra Dev	47
19.	Indushen and Bindushen Kumar's previous birth	49
20.	The previous birth of Ashnighosh Vidyadhar	51
21.	The previous birth of Dhandutt snake	54
22.	The previous birth of Dhansen and his camel	56
23.	Ratnasar Kumar's previous birth	57
24.	Sumitra Seth's previous birth	60

25. Dhanmitra's previous birth	62
26. Dharmadutt Kumar's previous birth	63
27. Lakshmivati's previous birth	65
28. Vijaysheel Kumar and his previous birth	67
29. Arundev Vidyadhar and his previous birth	69
30. The previous birth of Dheerraj, Veerraj, Heerraj and their Mitra Dev	71

# 1. The previous birth of King Shalivahan

Born to a widow, raised in a potter's family and then started the job of pottery, he achieved such mastery that crafting hundreds of clay sculptures of humans, animals, and soldiers became a sport for him. It's surprising, isn't it, that such an ordinary man became the emperor of all of South India and established a *Samvatsar* (a new year) in his own name?

This wonder is a reality that happened two thousand years ago in India. The world recognized him as "**Shatvahan the potter.**" When a person's virtuous power becomes powerful and is supported by divine power, impossible events take shape that are unimaginable.

When this "Shatvahan the potter" defeated Vikramaditya and became the king of Supratishthanpur, the world started praising him by the name '**Shalivahan**'.

When Vikramaditya grew old, he asked the astrologer "Will such a virtuous man really be born on earth to take away my kingdom?"

Fearing the king, all the astrologers looked at each other, but one truthful astrologer said, "Your Majesty, you believe that the one who will usurp your kingdom won't be born for years. However, such a radiant being has already been born. Today, he is living as a young man. He is fighting with poverty as the adopted son of a potter living in **Supratishthan Nagar**, South Maharashtra."

Vikramaditya's hair stood on end. Wasn't the fortune the astrologer had predicted was very painful?

The aged Vikramaditya arrived in South India with his chosen troops. Arriving at Supratishthan Nagar, he immediately surrounded the potter's house. He didn't harm anyone else but launched such a fierce assault on Shatvahan that could send him to the abode of Yama.

At this time, crying and wailing, crawling on the ground, with her own cries making all the directions scrying, that widow started pleading to Vikramraja: "Lord, please leave my child."

Vikram refused to relent. His plan was to kill the enemy as soon as he appeared. Then how could he usurp my kingdom?

At this moment, this helpless woman remembered the Nagakumar deity who had conceived this child by playing with her. The deity immediately appeared. The yearning woman asked the deity life for her son, and the deity immediately granted Shatvahan the "**amoghshakti**" (infallible power). As soon as this divine power was used, the clay soldiers and elephants and horses created by Shatvahan became real soldiers. Shatvahan then responded so resolutely to Vikramaditya's attack that Vikramaditya had no choice but to flee.

On one side Vikramaditya was fleeing, on the other, Shatvahan was pursuing him. This continued for miles, as if this boy had taken the breath out of Vikramaditya's mouth.

Finally, Vikram returned to the Tapi River and made a treaty with Shatvahan, guaranteeing that Vikramaditya would rule North India from Tapi, while King Shalivahan would rule South India. To avoid defeat, even a historical figure like Vikram had to enter into such a

treaty with a potter. Vikram believed that such a treaty was preferable to facing defeat in the twilight of his life.

This single incident brought so much fame, glory, power and wealth to this young potter that the people of the South started considering him a divine man and crowds started gathering to have a glimpse of this young man.

After that, his kingdom was established in Supratishthanpur. The potter of one time now became famous by the name of '**Shalivahan**'. Such was his fame that over time, just as Vikram Raja's *Samvat* began in north-eastern and western India, the '**Shalivahan**' *Shak* began in the south.

The question arises: how did an ordinary person suddenly reach such unimaginable heights of success? The answer lies in his past life. Let's read it:

Shalivahan's empire had expanded to the far reaches of the earth, and he had established a firm grip over it, a necessary condition for a *Shak*-founding emperor. The king's time now began to pass in a carefree manner. Once, King Shalivahan was riding a horse through the border areas of the capital.

Supratishthanpur was their capital. Traveling through its borders, they came to the banks of the Kshipra River. The river was teeming with water, creating high waves. The cheerful Shalivahan yearned to gaze at the river's rippling waves. He stopped his horse and gazed at the river with smiling eyes.

Suddenly, a large fish leaped from the river's waves and landed on the shore. The king was astonished. So he approached the fish. Seeing the king, the large fish burst out laughing. Frightened, the king retreated. He reached a distant bank of the river. There, too, the same incident occurred again. The large fish, as before, leaped from the waves and landed near the king, laughing.

The king's fear grew. He thought, "Fish never laugh; moreover, this massive fish must have an aggressive nature. It never laughs. Yet, upon seeing me, it is laughing repeatedly. This is an unusual change in its instinctive nature, so it must be a sign of some misfortune. These must be signs of something ominous.

The king immediately left the scene. Accompanied by his bodyguards, he immediately returned to the capital. Upon reaching the capital, he called an emergency meeting, inviting all the city's fortune tellers, astrologers, and soothsayers. The atmosphere of Supratishthanpur changed instantly. The royal court erupted in uproar. Shalivahan recounted the events that had occurred and asked what ill omen they were foreshadowing.

The scholars of astrology were present, but everyone was scratching their heads. The prophecies were made, but none of them impressed the king. At this point, a Jain nobleman informed them that the Jain monk Gyan Sagarji was in town. Jain monks are the bottomless wells of knowledge. They don't jump, but they possess incredible depth. He wouldn't have come to this gathering either. Why would he? **Why would someone who doesn't desire position, doesn't crave fame, and doesn't even covet rewards have any interest in the royal court?**

If you send an invitation, perhaps he will be pleased to visit. Then, if you ask the present question, it is possible that it will be fundamentally resolved.

The king invited the sage Gyansagar and summoned him to the royal court. The sage must have possessed exceptional erudite knowledge or divine assistance. It didn't take long to unravel the mystery behind the king's question.

He came to the royal court and gave the solution that Fish never laughs, yet he laughed because he was your benefactor in your previous birth.

“Lord, how is this possible? Tell me what was my previous life? Please bless me”, said the king. The sage said, “Rajan, in your previous life, you were a woodcutter living in this very city. You used to earn your living by selling bundles of wood. Poverty was inextricably linked to your life. You would go to the forest, cut wood, make bundles of it, return to the city, find the buyers, and sell it to them. With the little money you earned, you would buy *Sattu* (roasted gram/chickpea flour) and come to the river bank. You would spread *Sattu* on a rock, mix it with river water, make a ball of it, and eat it to satisfy your hunger.

Once, a Jain monk of *Maskshaman* went out for *gochari* (taking alms). It was his *Parna* day (day of breaking fast), so he was heading from the forest towards the city for alms. He passed by a river.

It was a coincidence that at that very moment you were preparing to eat a meal by making *Sattu*. At that moment, such thoughts arose in you: "This sage is a great ascetic! How wonderful it would be if I offered him my food! I would be blessed... What difference does it make if I eat less for a day?"

You pleaded with the sage and, jumping with joy, offered your lump of *Sattu* to the sage with great respect. The sage departed, saying, "**Dharmalabh**", but you accumulated a great deal of virtue by offering your donation to a worthy person."

**In this way, it is the miracle of the virtue you accumulated by donating to worthy people that after completing the life of a woodcutter, you were born in the human race and today you have become King Shalivahan.**

That ascetic Jain sage finally attained *kaldharma* (death) with *samadhi* and became *Vaimanik Dev* in the first *Devlok*. He was roaming the skies of *Bharatakshetra* today when he saw you. Learning about the relation of past life through his *avadhigyan*, he felt a deep love for you.

To express his affection from his previous life, he entered the body of a fish and came to the riverbank, laughing. Thus, he greeted you and informed you that you, a woodsman, had risen to the position of king due to the effect of donation to a sage. This is the amazing power of *dharma*. Do not forget *dharma*.”

Hearing this, Shalivahan was so stunned that he immediately fainted. When he awoke, he had the knowledge of his past life revealed to him. Through this knowledge, the king witnessed his own past life, exactly as the sage had said. This awakened King Shalivahan's inner love for Jainism. He once again began making donations to worthy people.

**- Reference books: Prabandhachintamani and Tirthakalpa.**

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## 2. Shrimata's previous birth

This is about the same Shrimata whose spire-shaped temple was built by King Shripunj in the memory of his daughter at the foothills of Abu-Achalgarh.

Shrimata was a princess born in the fifth era, yet her body, her life and the ups and downs in them were full of wonders that cannot be imagined.

Near Rajasthan-Marwar, there was a city called Ratnamal, ruled by Shripunjraja. This king was a man of immense power and unparalleled virtue. Like his foster father, he too faced obstacles in the joy of having a son. Eventually, a daughter was born, but her condition was such that her father was consumed by despair day and night.

The rest of the daughter's body was full of beauty. Her radiance was enough to beguile even the best of men, but her face was utterly ugly. As she grew older, her facial beauty, instead of increasing, became completely ape-like. By the time she reached adulthood, her entire body had become like that of an angel from heaven but the face is completely like that of a monkey. If you look at the shape of the nose, eyes, cheeks, ears and lips, then it appears to be that of a female monkey. Think, which father would not be worried beyond words in this condition of his daughter? It has to be considered the power of the Yoga Vidya mastered in the previous birth and the renunciation of childhood awakened by this power, that in this situation, Shrimata did not become even slightly disturbed, or did not get distraught and walk on the path of suicide. Had any other princess been in this situation, the very thought of her cries would have made one impatient and she would have become like that.

When she reached full adulthood, Shrimata became dispassionate about the misfortunes of her life. Worldly pleasures seemed like poison. Once, while immersed in such thoughts of childish renunciation, the knowledge of past life emerged. She saw a glimpse of her past life. This deepened her detachment, and the yearning for yoga practice she had experienced in her previous life was rekindled.

She approached her father and said, "Father, in my previous life I was a monkey on Mount Abu. Some ascetics, strict practitioners of *Hatha Yoga*, lived in my grove. I was engrossed in observing their yoga practices and the miraculous experiments they performed with their knowledge. Days and nights were spent in this way. I, too, would observe their experiments and follow them with animal instinct.

Once, I leaped from one tree to another, but unlucky, I missed with a slight of distance. I couldn't reach the branch of the tree and fell with a thud. Below was a pond called "**Kamit**." The water in the pond was imbued with the power of yoga, having been used by yogis in their practice. My body fell into it and drowned, but my face remained completely untouched.

As I fell from the tree into the pond, a sharp branch struck my head, causing a severe cut and bleeding. This wound was now causing life-threatening pain, yet I began to think of the water practices of yoga. I died in this state and was born as your daughter.

In the life of a monkey, when my body was drowning in the water of the pond and dying, I had thought of improving my body with that 'yoga' water, today I am suffering the bad consequences of that.

**Due to *mithya yoga* and its passionate use, such karmas were created that the body was of a princess but the face was like that of a monkey.**

King Shripunj immediately sent Shrimata to Abu with his trusted ministers. The ministers, as the king had instructed, repeatedly dipped her face into the Kamit Kund, submerging her completely. They didn't even fear what if she died.

Truly a miracle happened that the monkey-like face of Shrimata became like that of a princess.

This further increased Shrimata's fascination with *mithya yoga*. After that, she never returned to the city. She spent her entire life in Abu. She practiced the science of yoga so deeply, it's beyond description. Be careful, she also observed a lifelong vow of celibacy. She was the beloved daughter of a wealthy father; she could have enjoyed as much happiness as she desired, yet she maintained her childhood renunciation. Finally, she left her body in Abu.

In memory of his beloved daughter, King Shripunj built a spire-topped Jain temple at the foot of Abu. It was originally intended to be built on the mountain's summit, but ancient traditions dictate that spire-topped temples cannot be built on Abu's peaks. A serpent god named Arbuda resides at the base of Mount Abu, and he refuses to allow a spire-topped Jain temple to be built atop the mountain.

- Reference book: Prabandh Chintamani

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### 3. Minaldevi's previous birth

Where is the name of **Siddharaj Jaisingh** unfamiliar to those who know Gujarat's history? And how is the name of his mother, **Minaldevi**, unfamiliar to those who know Siddharaj Jaisingh? Yes, undoubtedly their previous lives may be not familiar to many.

In the series of articles on previous lives, we travelled years ago to read about the past lives of Kalikalsarvagayashri and Kumarpal. During this journey, we also learned about the past lives of Siddharaj Jaisingh, as they were related to his past lives. Now, let's explore the previous birth of his mother, Minaldevi, who created Siddharaj.

A unique feature of Minaldevi's previous life is that her marriage affects the country and state in which she got married and not the person with whom she got married.

Generally, the events of the previous birth are seen to have an impact on matters like progress, relatives, religion etc. in the present birth, whereas here this tradition has changed a bit and instead of impact on traditional matters, the events of the previous birth have an immense impact on the choice of the country of the spouse.

This happened in the first half of the 12th century of Vikram Samvat (VS). On Monday, Chaitra Vadi 7, VS 1128, Karnadev was anointed to the throne of Patan. At that time, Jaykeshi was sitting on the throne of Karnataka in South India. He was the son of the merciful Emperor Shubhkeshi. Jaykeshi's daughter was named Minaldevi. When Minaldevi reached adolescence, Karnadev became king in Gujarat.

Minaldevi, who carried the family traditions of the royal family, suddenly insisted to her father that if she would marry, it would be Gurjar King Karnadev.

Jaykeshi was stunned. He couldn't digest the idea of his own daughter asking for a husband.

"Father, I'm not in love with Karnaraj, but I want to marry the master of Gujarat, so I mentioned Karnadev. Sorry." Minaldevi lowered her eyes. Sensing something secret in her words, Jaykeshi showered his daughter with love and said, "Tell me the truth. What you say seems to be a mystery. Why should my family, my daughter, mention Gujarat and Karnadev?"

"Father, some time ago I met a Shiva devotee Brahmin in my town. I heard the name of Someshwar Mahadev from his mouth. On hearing the name Someshwar, I remembered my past life. I saw my previous birth. I have an unbreakable connection with Someshwar Dev from my previous birth. I have been born here after giving up the difficult vow of visiting him. I am eager to complete this vow. The speciality of that vow of mine is such that it will be completed only if I surrender myself in the hands of Gurjar King. That is why I took his name. Otherwise, I know the values given by you: a girl from a noble family never expresses her likes or dislikes regarding her 'husband'. She considers the husband given by her father as God", said Minaldevi.

Jaykeshi's curiosity grew. He interrupted and asked, "Tell me, what is your connection with Somnath in your previous life?"

"Father, in my previous life I was a Brahmin woman, very poor. I observed alternate fasts for twelve months to worship Somnath Mahadev. Living in a faraway land, I started walking on foot. On the way I came across the town of **Bahulodh**. The king of Gujarat collects tax from every traveller going to Somnath here. I did not even have the strength to pay the tax. Despite pleading a lot, the king's servants did not let me go further, due to which I became extremely distraught. Finally, with the devotion towards Somnath Mahadev that was deep within my bones, I accepted the fast unto death there itself. While fasting, I resolved that **"If the penance of this life has any power, then in the next life I will become the wife of the king who collects taxes and get this tax system abolished."** Thus, by fasting and dying with determination, I became your daughter."

Tears started pouring from Minaldevi's eyes like the rains of Shravan- Bhadarva.

Jaykeshi stared at her unblinkingly. As per his daughter's wishes, he requested Karnadev to accept his daughter. But upon learning that **Minal is ugly**, Karnadev rejected Jaykeshi's request.

When this was known, Minaldevi agreed to go to Patan with her eight friends and take the fire bath (self-immolation). Defeated by his daughter's stubbornness, the king had to give up his love for her. She was sent to Patan with a few friends. Minaldevi came to Patan with her eight friends and told her decision to Karnaraja's mother. '**Udemati**' was her name.

**'You marry Minal, otherwise I will also take the fire bath with her'**, Udemati put pressure on Karnaraja. Unparalleled pressure. Karnaraja had no choice but to marry Minaldevi.

Finally, at his mother's insistence, Karnaraja married Minaldevi. Minaldevi was unable to fulfil the vow of her previous life with her husband Karnaraja, but when her own son, Siddharaj, became king, she had him fulfil the vow, meaning she permanently abolished the tax levied on pilgrims to Somnath Mahadev.

The income from this tax for one year was 72 lakhs, hence Siddharaj was initially not ready to abolish the tax, but when Minaldevi gave up food and water, it became necessary for Siddharaj to cancel this tax.

- Reference book: Prabandh Chintamani.

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## 4. The previous birth of Buddhist ruler Yaksha

This is a matter of centuries ago. A Yaksha, drawn to Buddhist monks through his previous life acquaintance, had become distant from the Jain faith that he originally belonged to. This Yaksha now initiated deceptive practices designed to dissuade Jains from Jainism, particularly turning them away from Jain teachers and making them enamoured to Buddhist monks.

Whenever Buddhist monks sat down to eat, this Yaksha would manifest a hand filled with a large quantity of sweets called modaks. The hand would come to the monks, place the sweets in their bowls, and then disappear.

In this way, he made Buddhist monks biased towards him and also increased the prestige of Buddhist monks in the world. This tendency became more prevalent especially among Jain communities, and discussions began among Jains that Buddhist monks were more noble and powerful. Being trapped in this delusion, many ignorant Jains started becoming devotees of Buddhist monks.

At this time, the Jain Shravaks with steadfast right view invited a learned Jainacharya. They asked him the reason for this disturbance. He replied, "This is the mischief of the Buddhist Yaksha. And the reason for his strange behaviour lies in his past life. **If you hear about his past life, you also will understand the dire consequences of introduction with false monks.**"

Acharya Bhagwant paused for a moment and then the *Gangotri* of his words flowed towards the shore of Yaksha's previous birth.

In Saurashtra, there was a Shravak named Jindas. He was a staunch practitioner of the *Navatattva* and had a strong interest in the teachings of the Arihant. Unfortunately, his financial situation was somewhat weak.

Once, a famine struck Saurashtra. Jindas's plight worsened because he was not wealthy and the famine made it difficult to earn a living. He decided to emigrate. A caravan of Buddhist monks was heading towards Avanti. Having no other option, he joined them. The Buddhist monks told Jindas: "If you carry our luggage, we will take care of your food for the rest of your life. You will also have a share of the alms we receive. You will no longer have to worry about food."

Jindas, who had such faith that Buddhist monks should not be introduced, became foolish due to greed after seeing the pain of hunger being alleviated during famine. He accepted the shelter of Buddhist monks. As per the condition, he started carrying their luggage. Due to this, now he has to travel with Buddhist monks only. Buddhist monks constantly praise Buddhism and belittle Jainism in front of him. Due to constant introduction of misconception, Jindas's right view started getting deviated. The love he had for Jainism started getting dimmed. His mind started feeling satisfaction and sympathy towards Buddhist monks.

A few days passed, and he became extremely tired as he carried the luggage while walking. The destination was far away. He would receive alms only after reaching his destination. He fell asleep on the way. Buddhist monks covered him with red robes and said, "Come and meet us when you are tired." The monks started walking.

Age and hunger were both at extreme levels. Jindas slept; as he slept, he never woke up. After death, he was reborn in the *Yaksha* life. Through *avadhigyan* (clairvoyance), he saw his previous life. His friendship with Buddhist monks began to call out to his heart. The foolish belief that he had not found a means to alleviate poverty in Jainism began to engulf his soul.

This same Yaksha now offers sweets to Buddhist monks daily. He doesn't fully reveal himself, only showing his hands, and is making the dull-witted Jains curious about Buddhist monks and then biased towards them.

"Bhagwant, if this continues, thousands of foolish Jains will lose their faith in the near future. Please restrain this Yaksha by any means necessary", said the Shravaks.

"There will be reflection, not restraint," Gurudev said. The disciples just watched.

Acharya Bhagwant empowered his faithful disciple with knowledge and sent him to the Buddhist monk's settlement during their meal. Following his guru's instructions, the disciple grabbed the Yaksha's hand and said loudly, "**Remember the nectar-like Namaskar mantra you received in your previous life and stop all your delusions.**" Hearing this, the Yaksha

was startled. He renounced his position as the Buddhist ruler and came to the Jain Acharya and embraced the right view with due process.

- Reference: Samyaktva Saptati-Commentary.

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## 5. Aaramshobha's previous birth

The previous birth of Aaramshobha strongly indicates that *Vaiyavachcha*, performed with unwavering dedication, fully blossoms the sixteen phases of the moon of your destiny. Perhaps, if it doesn't blossom in this life, it will blossom in a more developed form in the next life.

And secondly, it also indicates that the power of virtue is greater than the divine power of the gods. Virtue has the power to make divine power its servant.

Let's explore Aaramshobha's past life. Here we'll learn how a life constantly tossed from one side to another on the bags of joys and sorrows can **maintain a remarkable moral**.

A businessman named **Kuldhar** lived in Champanagari, in this Bharat region. His beloved's name was **Kulananda**. Like every other couple, this couple was obsessed with having a son. They had seven daughters in succession. (1) **Kamalavati** (2) **Kamalavati** (3) Kamala (4) Lakshmi (5) Shree (6) Yashdevi (7) Priyakarini. Now, like every other couple, this couple has become a daughter-hater. First, the desire for a child torments, and then, if they are blessed with daughters, filial hatred and favoritism toward sons torment the parents. Isn't this the magic of the Moharaja?

They brought up all seven daughters and got them married. Even after this, the couple was eager to have a son. They gave birth to their eighth child but they got a daughter. **Destiny is powerful. No one can change it.** They did not even name their eighth daughter. They were rich, yet they started bringing up this daughter with utmost disdain. The society was also aware of this reality. When this daughter grew up, people started calling her '**Nirbhaagi**'. Gradually, her name became '**Nirbhaagi**'.

This daughter has now grown up, developed physically, and her father, anxious about her, is making no effort to get her married.

Kuldhar Sheth was once sitting in his shop. His eyes fell on a young man coming down the street. Dirty clothes, eyes tired from many days, but he was fit and healthy. Kuldhar Sheth's heart fluttered as soon as he saw the young man. He invited him to his shop. He asked, "Who are you? What's your name? Where are you from? What's your purpose? What's your caste?"

The visitor began answering the Sheth's questions: Sheth! People call me '**Nandkumar**'. I am a resident of Koshalnagari in Koshal Desh. My father's name is **Nand Sheth** and my mother's name is **Somadevi**. I need not mention that I belong to the Vaishya caste. I went to Chaud Desh to earn money, but fate turned against me. I couldn't even save the money I had brought with me. Now I earn my living by doing petty jobs for people. I have self-respect, so I don't want to return home without earning. A Sheth named Vasant from Chaud Desh has written a letter of invitation and sent me to Champanagari. Shridutt Sheth is Vasant Sheth's father. Would you tell me where Shridutt Sheth's house is?

Kuldharsheth, listening to Nandkumar's words, fell into deep thought. He began to wonder if this man was suitable for his eighth daughter, who was unwelcome to him. There are three reasons for this: (1) Being a stranger, he wouldn't inquire at length; (2) Being a foreigner, he wouldn't visit my house often; and (3) Being poor, he would accept my daughter with little money and minimal hospitality.

Kuldhar called out, "Dear Nandakumar, I am your father's best friend. Even though you and I don't know each other, as your father's friend, you should come to my house first. Come to our house."

Hearing this, Nanda's dejected mind was filled with joy, and he said, " Sheth, everything is fine, but first I will complete the task I have come for. Then I will come to your house."

"Okay, do that", Kuldhar said.

Kuldhar sent one of his servants with Nand. He told him where Shridutt Sheth's house was located and told him to bring the visitor home after his work was completed. Nand arrived at Shridutt Sheth's house with the servant. He handed him the letter and promised to come back to get a reply letter after staying for a while at KuldharSheth's house.

Now, the servant brought Nand to Kuldhar Sheth's house. Kuldhar welcomed him lovingly. He bathed him, dressed him in expensive new clothes, and fed him a meal laced with sweets. Then, he sat him down beside him and said, "This is my eighth daughter. She is my beloved daughter. You should marry her."

Nand argued, "I have to go back to Chaud Desh. And anyway, I'm living a middle-class life, and you're a rich man. Will you be okay with all this?"

After marriage, a daughter no longer remains under her father's control; she becomes subordinate to the son-in-law. Why worry? I will bid adieu to my daughter immediately. I won't stop you here after the wedding.

Nand's face lit up with joy and Kuldhar got Nirbhagya married to Nandkumar in his own house on the same day.

Less than two or four days had passed when Shreedutt Sheth asked Nand, "Are you going to stay here? Then I'll choose another courier and send a reply."

"No, no, I have to deliver the reply. I'm just about to leave for Chaud Desh," Nanda replied. He asked father-in-law, Kuldhar, for permission to go.

You have a big job to do, so how can I even insist that you accept our hospitality? I'll send my daughter with you. Everything is ready. I'll give some dowry with you and some after you go.

The clever Kuldhar completed the work.

Nand loaded a small dowry into a bullock cart and set off for Chaud Desh with his wife. He came across the city of Ujjaini on the way. The food his father-in-law had provided him had now run out, and it was necessary to buy new food, so he stopped in Ujjaini for a day. Nand developed greed for the little money his father-in-law had given him. Becoming a sinner, he left his newly-wed bride sleeping alone that night. Taking the goods with him he moved on.

Nirbhagya woke up in the morning. Her husband was nowhere to be seen, nor were his belongings. She inquired around and learned that he had fled.

It felt as if the Himalaya had fallen on Nirbhagya's head. She began to cry profusely. Her eyes were swollen from crying, but then she regained some composure. She began to think that on the one hand, it was difficult for a single woman to maintain her chastity, so she couldn't live alone. On the other hand, it was also not right to return to her father's house, who had previously disapproved her, in such a sad state.

What should I do? One solution is to work as a maid in the home of a Jain businessman of high character in this city. I would consider him a father figure and do his household chores so that I could make a living and maintain my modesty also.

She came to the Jain settlement in Ujjaini. She went to Manibhadra Sheth's mansion and recounted her entire story to him. She wept so deeply as she recounted it that even the Sheth began to cry.

Finally, the Sheth consoled her, "Go, daughter. I will treat you like a daughter. Take care of my house. Stay in my mansion."

Forcing her own helpless cries to stop, Nirbhagya took refuge in the mansion. She began to consider Manibhadra Sheth a father figure and became a devotee of the entire family. She became convinced that Manibhadra Sheth was a pure *Samkiti*. His family was a staunch follower of Jainism. Although I am living the life of an orphan and abandoned woman, but they are blessed to be dedicated to the service of the greatest devotees of the world.

Meanwhile, Manibhadra began investigating Nirbhagya's story. He had his servants search everywhere for her husband, but found no news of him. He sent servants to Chaud Desh, but even there, news came back that Nand had gone after completing Vasantsheth's work. Even Vasantsheth was not aware of his whereabouts.

Manibhadra Sheth then sent messengers to Kuldhar Sheth's home in Champanagari to investigate the story described by Nirbhagya about herself. Everything Nirbhagya had said proved true, and the Sheth's love for her grew.

The businessman said, "Tell me, daughter, should I drop you off at your father's house? I've already contacted him. It's unlikely to find your husband, but your father is ultimately your father. He'll have to keep you even if you don't want to."

Hearing this, Nirbhagya burst into tears and, through her tears, began to plead with Manibhadra Sheth, "Sheth, I have seen my father's house and also with my husband. I have experienced the tragic fate of my fate in both places. Have mercy on me. Do not send me to

my father's house. The joy and happiness I experience as your servant is something I could not experience even with my daughter's status in my father's house."

The kind-hearted Manibhadra acceded to Nirbhagya's request. Kuldhar also spared no effort to bring back his daughter, abandoned by her husband.

Due to loving behaviour of Nirbhagya, all the members of Sheth's family started liking her.

It was a religious and cultured family. The Sheth's home's dignified atmosphere, cultured speech, and emphasis on religion left a deep impression on Nirbhagya's heart. Nirbhagya was already humble, but now she became even more modest and religious.

Manibhadra Sheth decided to make good use of his vast wealth and, in accordance with his guru's teachings, built a spire-topped Jain temple. The spire was so high it seemed to clap with the sky. He also had it consecrated under guidance of his Guru.

After that, the Sheth found this unfortunate girl from his huge family of servants suitable for the care of the Jain temple because she was humble and had an inclination towards religion. The Sheth entrusted the responsibility of cleaning the temple and plucking and bringing flowers with purity to this girl. She started dancing. She had a great affection for this temple, ever since the Sheth started building this temple, she looked after the temple with more dedication and in greater measure than the Sheth had expected. Not only this, she also started sometimes getting the Lord's *Aangi* done by spending money from her own salary.

Manibhadra was impressed by her devotion. He honoured her devotion by awarding her a thousand rupees. She also used the reward to have a precious umbrella made for the Lord and offered it.

Now this unfortunate woman got the information about giving donations to worthy people at home without any restrictions, due to which she became excited and started giving donations to worthy people and also started doing devotion towards the same religion.

Once, Manibhadra Sheth was sitting in a sad mood. Nirbhagya asked, "What, Bapuji? You are looking sad."

"It's nothing, my daughter. My temple's flower garden has been drying up for some time now, despite me watering it as much as needed every day. I can't understand why this is happening."

Nirbhagya said, "Father, don't worry about this at all, or even bother to spend any money. It must be some kind of mischief. If that's the case, I will restore this garden to its full glory through my chastity. Sati's influence is certainly that great."

The very next day, Nirbhagya sat down near the temple entrance. She renounced all four meals. She invoked Shasan Devi, "If my chastity is completely unblemished, please make this garden bloom."

Three days and nights passed. Nirbhagya, observing continuous *Chovihar* fasting and *Kaussagga*, still stood firm. On the third night, Shasan Devi appeared and said, "O great Sati, you do your *Parna* tomorrow. I have blossomed your Sheth's garden. This was merely a petty act of Vyantar towards the Jain temple. I have averted this trouble."

That's exactly what happened. In the morning, the garden burst into bloom. The servants informed the Sheth. His heart was filled with wonder. He rushed to the garden and witnessed the miracle of his maid's chastity.

This was an occasion to promote the authority of the Shasan and glorify chastity. The Sheth organized a large Chaitya procession with a large group of Shramanas. The Chaturvidh Sangh marched towards the temple, resounding with the sound of musical instruments. Word of the miracle performed by Nirbhagya became the talk of the town. Everyone flocked to the Jain temple. The Shrivaks hailed Nirbhagya. Afterward, they worshipped the Chaitya in the Jain temple and watched the garden blossom from dry to new. The liars kept putting their fingers in mouth.

Nirbhagya, at the Sheth's request, performed the Parna after giving worthy donation. Ultimately, this Nirbhagya died by fasting. First, she was born as a goddess in the heaven. After her divine life was completed, this Nirbhagya was born in the human form and became Aaramshobha, whose fame is inscribed on the pages of scriptures.

At first, Aaramshobha became the daughter of Agnisharma Brahmin and lived a normal life. Her name was **Vidyutprabha**. When she grew up, she became a queen, and a garden like the paradise forest always hovered over her head. Because of this the entire world bowed to her feet. Due to this miracle, Vidyutprabha became famous by the name **Aaramshobha**. In Sanskrit, the word Aaram means garden.

To indicate that this woman is like the one whose head is always adorned by a blooming garden, the people used to call her '**Aaramshobha**'.

The effect of the fast she had undertaken in her previous life to make the flower garden of the Jain temple blossom was that in the life of Aaramshobha, the garden created by God would continue to hover on her head.

In her previous life, Manibhadra Sheth, whom she had served more than her daughter, had become Riddhivan Dev after his death and due to the affection of the previous life, he always kept a garden like Nandanvan on the head of Aaramshobha.

What miracle happens when religion is practiced with utmost devotion?

- Reference Text: Samyaktvasaptati Commentary.

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## 6. The previous birth of Mayanavalirani

One evening, the pair of Parrot and Maina came to the king's garden and sat on a tree branch. They decided to spend the night there. The tree branch was very close to the royal palace. So close that Mayanavali, sitting in the palace gallery, could hear the entire debate between Parrot and Maina from the branch.

Firstly, it was a vast forest, so there was no possibility of noise or unrest here. Moreover, even in such a forest, there was a palace in the huge garden built by the king, hence there was such silence in the garden that even the movement of wild animals roaming at night could not be heard. What was incomplete was completed by the darkness of the night. Now imagine the kind of peace that would prevail. Such peace prevailed here. Pin Drop Silence!

Where even the fall of a needle from the sky is heard, the conversation on the trees near the palace will definitely be heard there.

Mayanavali's eyes fell on the parrot and maina descending from the tree branch. She concentrated there. Despite being a queen, Mayanavali had to endure separation from her husband due to the foul smell emanating from her own body and had to live alone in this forest grove.

Even if one gets an independent palace, a family of servants and all the facilities of food and drink, yet the separation from her living king is very painful for a young queen, one can understand this by looking at Mayanavali.

Mayanavali was now tormented by such separation. Her eyes seemed fixed on the pair of Parrot and Maina.

Maina said to her husband: "Tell me some miraculous story".

"I will definitely tell you; I will tell you whatever you like, but do you want to know the true incident or hear a fictitious story?" Parrot asked.

"Tell me the true story. I don't want to be fooled," Maina replied.

Mayanavali was listening to this conversation. She too became interested and began to listen to the story with rapt attention.

Parrot started the story, just like a great artist.

There was a Vidyadhar named **Jaysur**. He was the king of the city of Gajpur. This city was situated atop the Vaitadhya mountain in Jambudweep. His wife's name was **Shubhmati**.

As time passed, Shubhmati conceived. A god of right-vision (*samyagdrishti*) from the Vaimanik Devlok conceived, and as a mother, Shubhmati's cravings also began to be of the same high quality.

The queen desired to visit pilgrimage sites like Ashtapad, etc. **A mother's cravings are those that indicate a son's poor or good future, not just those that reflect the mother's psyche.**

The king immediately had an aircraft constructed, took Shubhmati with him, and set off for Ashtapad. Jaysur and Shubhmati worshipped the Lord atop Ashtapad with fragrant flowers.

After their prayers, they returned to the lower part of the mountain. The garden there was beautiful, but the wind was still carrying an unbearable stench.

"How is there such a foul smell here? The garden is beautiful," the queen asked. The king extended his hand and pointed to her finger, saying, "Look, a sage is doing *Kaussagg* in the distance. This stench is almost certainly from his filthy body."

Seeing the monk's filthy body and foul odour, the queen felt disgusted. She said that Jineshwar had beautifully described everything in Jainism, but he had denied the monk permission to bathe in the clean water.

The queen, hating the sage, said to the king, "O lord! You purify this saint's body with clean water. Make him up to date. Ensure there is no foul smell at all.

Moved by his beloved's words, the king also lost his senses. Pouring pitchers of the clean water from his vessel, he bathed the sage, who remained motionless in *Kaussagg*. He wiped his body dry and, without pausing there, applied a highly fragrant cream to the sage's entire body.

After that, the king and queen paid their respects and boarded their plane to visit other holy places. After a short time (hours), they returned to Ashtapad Mountain. The queen could not see the sage atop Ashtapad Mountain. Distressed, she asked why the sage was not visible.

The king was clever. His shrewd eyes immediately caught the truth. Exhaling deeply, the king said, "Oh Mugdha, the sage is standing right here. Just look! His entire body is covered in black, wild bees. See the terrible consequences the sage is facing for our foolishness."

We bathed him and then applied a fragrant cream. Thousands of bumblebees, attracted by the cream, have come and stung the sage's body, turning it into a sieve, stinging every pore.

The queen couldn't bear to see this scene. She screamed, wept, wailed loudly, and cursed herself.

Because of my objection and my detestation, my husband bathed and applied fragrant cream on the sage. In this way, I have thrown this sage into a suffering worse than death. Shame on me.

The king ran. Without wasting any time, he carefully shooed the bumblebees away from the sage's body. Then, as he went to administer the medicine, *kevalgyan* (omniscience) appeared to the sage.

The deities' drums blared. They rushed down to earth from the sky, celebrating the sage's attainment of *kevalgyan*. Jaysur and Shubhmati wept before the sage, begging forgiveness for their transgressions. Afterward, the Kevali Bhagwant began his discourse. He declared that **those who, upon seeing the body or form of a renunciate, harbour detestation for the renunciate and the Jain faith, receive in their next life a body and form resembling the centre of such detestation.**

Hearing this, the king and queen felt immense remorse for their sins and accepted initiation from the Kevali Bhagwant.

Over time, after death they both became gods in the first Devlok. "Swami, where is Queen Shubhmati now?" Maina asked.

Look, look, the queen Mayanavali who is sitting in the window of the palace right in front of us and looking at us, is Shubhmati of her previous birth.

Parrot revealed the mystery.

Mayanavali fell unconscious upon hearing this. When she awoke, she had got the knowledge of her previous birth—everything Parrot had said seemed true to her. Is it impossible to cure this disease of foul-smell? Maina asked.

Queen Shubhmati has completed her life in Devlok and has now become Queen Mayanavali. She is the daughter of King Sinhraj. She lived in the city of Surpur. Her father married her to the Bhumichar King. She is also loved by her husband. However, the karma of her hatred for the renunciant in her previous life has come to the fore, which is why she has contracted the disease of foul smell.

Yes, if Mayanavali worships the idol of Lord with fragrant substances and flowers for seven days, then his serious disease of foul smell will definitely be cured.

Mayanavali regained her senses. From the very next day, enthusiastically she began worshipping the Arihant with fragrant flowers and precious materials... Less than seven days later, her disease of foul smell was truly cured.

When Mayanawali was struck by the disease of foul smell, the king himself had built a palace in the forest and sent her there. He had provided all the amenities there, yet would the queen's humiliation stop? He now tried to appease the queen to get her humiliation removed.

- Reference Text: Samyaktvasaptati-tika.

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## 7. The previous birth of Sage Bhuvantilak

Sage Bhuvantilak was originally a prince named **Bhuvan**, a resident of the city of **Kusumpur** and the son of King **Dhanad**. Bhuvankumar was renowned less for his princely status than for his inherent humility. It was this humility that ultimately led him to attain *kevalgyan* (omniscience) and *moksha* (liberation).

Bhuvankumar's humility was widely discussed among all the people. Once, King Amarchandra's messenger arrived at King Dhanad's court. He humbly offered his proposal: "I have come from **Ratnapur**. Our King Amarchandra has a daughter named Yashomati. Yashomati is now a young woman. She was playing with her friends in the royal garden. At that time, a Vidyadhar woman arrived and, after praising the beauty of your crown prince

Bhuvankumar, they all left. The Vidyadharis left, but they made our Princess Yashomati fall in love with your Prince Bhuvankumar."

Yashomati is filled with love for Bhuvankumar, hence our king is requesting you to send Bhuvankumar to our courtyard and give him permission to marry Yashomati Kumari.

King Dhanad was also delighted to hear this. It was as if his concerns about his prince's marriage had been answered. The king accepted Amarchandra's request and immediately departed Bhuvankumar, accompanied by his ministers and nobles, for wedding.

Bhuvankumar's wedding procession had barely reached the halfway point when a sudden, "unfortunate" incident struck Bhuvankumar like a thunder. Bhuvankumar fell unconscious while seated in the chariot. Despite applying numerous remedies and incantations, he would not regain consciousness, so the ministers halted the journey. For several days, the prince underwent medical treatment, but his unconsciousness failed to subside. The ministers, disheartened, began to weep.

At that time, a wise sage named **Sharadbhanu** arrived in a nearby grove. Upon receiving news of him from soldiers, the disheartened ministers headed towards him, hoping to find some solution. After paying obeisance to the sage, everyone sat down to listen to the discourse. The leading ministers asked the sage, "Bhagwant! What disease has afflicted Bhuvankumar that it defies any treatment? Can this ailment be cured? What is the cause of such an illness?"

Sharadbhanu said, "O virtuous ones, Bhuvankumar's past misdeeds have resurfaced, leaving him in such a pitiable state. A look at his previous births will reveal that he had taken Jain initiation a few lifetimes ago.

In the Bharatkshetra of the **eastern Dhataki Khand**, he became a disciple of an Acharya named **Gunsagarsuri**. There, his name was **Vasavmuni**. Vasavmuni could not overcome his arrogance. After taking self-restraint, one should give up arrogance, but instead of giving it up, he became increasingly ill-mannered. He kept finding faults, both big and small, in his own guru brothers and criticizing them with whatever he could find. He even behaved inappropriately with the learned, ascetic, and elderly monks of the *Gachchha*. He had disrespect for the orders of his gurudev and if he had to obey them, he would harbour resentment for the guru as well.

This arrogance first made Vasava Muni disrespectful towards elders, then one who quarrelled with his guru brothers, and their quarrels over trivial matters made him an object of dislike in the *Gachchha*, and now he has even become lax in his conduct.

**Truly, arrogance is dangerous in a life of restraint, worse than alcohol! It robs the restrained person of his honour and righteousness.**

Once Gurudev gave strict advice to Vasava Muni to learn humility. Moral teaching did not improve Vasava Muni, on the contrary, he became hateful and envious towards the whole *Gachchha*. He wrongly assumed that here everyone is looking for my faults, no one has sympathy for me.

Vasavamuni's hatred reached the highest level of depravity. He made a diabolical resolution to secretly obtain poison and feed it to all the sages. He carried it out. He procured poison from somewhere and mixed it into the large vessel containing the *Gachchha*'s drinking water.

Having did this, the wicked soul fled. At this moment, the presiding deity of *Samiti Gupti* came running. She stopped the monks from using the poisonous water. She narrated the entire incident to the *Gachchha* and had the water poured out.

The *Gachchha* was saved, but alas! that wretched soul ran to drown itself. Vasavamuni fled into the forest. He wandered there, seething with fear, anger, and vengeance. A wild animal tore him apart, causing him to die a dog-like death. He then went to the seventh hell.

Even after that, he continued to wander in the world for many births. Now that his misdeeds had subsided somewhat, the soul of sage Vasavamuni was born as **Bhuvan**, the son of King Dhanad.

The karma he had bound by attempting to kill the entire *Gachchha* was only partially left and it rose, therefore, Bhuvankumar has fallen into a terminal unconsciousness.”

Silence fell over the assembly. The ministers were bewildered. The relatives looked at each other and began to cry. After pausing for a while, Sharadbhanu Muni resumed the flow of his speech...

“Don't worry. Consider that the deed is now complete. By the time you return after listening to my discourse, the prince will have awakened there. After that, the period of rise in his life will begin.”

Partly surprised and partly mad, the ministers returned to the camp. The ministers told the whole truth to the prince as told by Gurudev. The prince was enraged after hearing about his previous life. Living in the world started seeming painful and troublesome to him. He ran straight to Sharadbhanu Muni and asked the Guru, "What is the solution to overcome sin?" "Son! Jain initiation is the only solution to overcome sin." The Guru said. Now Bhuvankumar's mind reached the peak of renunciation. Kumar did not listen to anything the ministers said and took initiation immediately.

**The one whose wedding *sitar* had already been played, before it had even finished tuning, the sound of the *shehnai* of restraint resounded. What bravery! Exuberant virtue and exuberant detachment!**

When Bhuvankumar's beloved Yashomati got this news, she was broken from inside, her tears did not stop.

“Don't worry, daughter. It's good that we got Bhuvankumar' introduction before the wedding. Where have you been handed over to the groom? We'll find a better one for you”, the parents assured.

Yashomati put her fingers in her ears and refused to even listen to such a thing, saying, "A chaste woman cannot even mentally accept another husband in her life. Once I have chosen a husband in my heart, how can I now go into the arms of another man?"

That great women also went to Sharadbhanumuni and took initiation. In the course of time, Bhuvantilakmuni attained *Kevalgyan* by destroying the deadly karma and became the enjoyers of the bliss of salvation.

**- Reference Samyaktvasaptati-tika**

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## 8. Vidyutprabh and Vidyutsundar Dev's previous birth

A Jain Acharya named **Gundharsuri** arrived in a forest called **Drupadika**. He had acquired some special knowledge, therefore, deities who loved Jainism rushed there to spread his glory.

Suriji sat on the divinely designed throne, and the powerful sounds of the divine instruments began to resonate, spreading their echoes to the surrounding villages and towns. This brought many noble men from the nearby villages and towns rushing there.

Suriji began his discourse. In the audience of humans sat a merchant named Madandutt, and in the audience of deities sat Vidyutsundar Dev, the deity of the first Devlok, with his beloved.

Vidyutsundar Dev was looking at Madandutt again and again and as he was looking at him, he was developing an unnatural love for this man.

How far was Delhi? Vidyutsundardev asked Gundharsuriji, "Lord! Madandutt is just a human being. Why does the ocean of love surge in my heart just by looking at him?"

Great soul, there is a bond of love from your previous life, that is why you are getting attracted to Madan after seeing him and Madan is getting attracted to you after seeing you.

Lord, tell me about our previous life.

In the city of Kaushambi, there lived a king named **Vijay**. He had two sons, the elder named **Vijit** and the younger named **Vaijayant**. Brave, handsome, humble, virtuous, and learned, these two brothers were virtuous and brought joy to all who saw them.

Unfortunately, their mother died when they were still children. Their father, the king, married another princess. For a while, there was no significant difficulty, but when the brothers reached adulthood, the king expressed his desire to crown them both as crown princes.

That was it. A feeling of jealousy began to sprout in the newly-wed queen's heart. She was a stepmother, wasn't she? "The crown prince should be my son, not these two", she thought.

This stepmother hatched a conspiracy to send both the brothers to heaven.

When **Vijit** and **Vaijayant** went to play in the garden, their stepmother sent them sweet laddus mixed with poison. The poison was deadly.

Thinking they'd received a box of sweets from their mother, they were overjoyed. They were hungry, so they immediately ate the sweets. Within moments, both fell unconscious. The poison slowly began to spread through their bodies.

It should be considered a powerful blessing of their virtue that at this very moment, the ascetic Jain monk of *Masakhman* was sitting in this very garden. An Asurendra (Indra of demons) came there to pay his respects to the sage. Through his divine knowledge, he realized that the princes, lying unconscious nearby, had been poisoned and that the poison was so deadly that their death was just a step away. Due to the sage's worship, the compassion in Indra's heart remained strong. Therefore, Indra immediately went to the

princes and, with the divine power, removed the poison from their bodies. It was as if both the princes were reborn. They woke up and stood in front and bowed before Indra.

The princes were unaware of the entire story. Indra narrated their mother's treachery to them. He gave a heart-breaking description of their life's premature demise and said, "Son, consider this a favour, not mine, but the sage's. Had he not been here, I would not have come here by the sky, and without it, your life would not have been saved."

Both brothers were terrified. They returned and ran to the sage. After listening to his teachings, they became so detached that they immediately took initiation.

The two brothers, Vijit and Vaijayant, finally died and were reborn as deities in the first Devlok. One was named Vidyutprabh and the other Vidyutsundar. Even in the Devlok, they remained friends. Vidyutprabh Dev, having passed away after his lifespan, became Madandutt Sheth."

The audience gazed at this Dev and Madandutt with unblinking eyes, and both of them got astonished.

At this time, inspired by the love of his previous life, Vidyutsundar Dev took out the shining necklace from his neck and gave it as a gift to Madandutt Sheth.

At this time, Gundharsuri added, "O Vidyutsundar! This necklace of yours will enable you to attain Jainism in your next life. You will die shortly and become **Haridutt**, the prince of the same city where Madandutt is a merchant. When you will be twenty-five years old there, seeing this necklace around Madandutt's neck, you will gain knowledge of your past lives and, under its influence, will once again become a devotee of Jainism."

- Reference Text: Samyaktvasaptati - Commentary.

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## 9. The pitiable previous birth of Jayraja

The pleasant atmosphere of the morning spread all around, enhanced by the pleasant conversation between the scholars and Jayraja. At that moment, a small group of people, carrying fans and sandalwood in their hands, ran somewhere.

"Where are they all running so early in the morning?" The king asked. "They're running toward the Patmandir (picture gallery)," the servant replied. At the king's birth, his father had made a picture and ordered that it always be worshipped with a curtain drawn over it.

Today, three young men from the city, (1) Shatanand, (2) Govind, (3) Dharnidhar, suddenly approached near the picture and, out of curiosity, pulled back the curtain. While they were watching the picture, they fell unconscious. They are all going to seek medical attention.

The gatekeeper made a request to the king.

A surge of curiosity arose in the king's heart. The king also called his ministers and physicians and rushed to the Patmandir (picture gallery). The king gazed intently at the unveiled statues of the picture gallery and fell unconscious.

There was chaos everywhere. No one could understand what was happening. The chanters also joined the group gathered there. One of them said, "Blessed ones! This doesn't seem like a disturbance, but it's possible that someone or something is transmitting a message about a past life to one of the unconscious individuals. So be patient."

Everyone calmed down. The king was given a gentle treatment, which awakened him. Awakened and overjoyed, the king said, "My people, this is not a statue or a picture, but the story of my own past life. Shatananda, Dharanidhar, and Govind are also episodes of my past life's story. That is why, upon seeing this picture, all four of us have become aware of our past lives."

"Tell us, tell us, master, what was your previous life like?" Excited people made a request.

"I am immediately calling a royal court for this. I will recount my past lives in the assembly", the king said.

The assembly was packed. The king ascended his throne and began to recount the heart-breaking story of his previous life.

There was a city called **Vijayvardhan**. The city's ruler was named **Shardul**. His queen was Ananda, and his heir prince was **Chandan**. Prince Chandan had a close friendship with three friends: first **Vishnu**, the son of a priest, second Sudhi, the son of a minister, and the third Shankha, the son of the Shreshthi of the city.

Once, these four friends went to the forest to enjoy horseplay. They frolicked for a long time, and finally, exhausted, they sat down to rest under a tree. Just then, a *Kapalik* arrived. He asked the prince, "Prince! Can you become the husband of the celestial maidens of the Naglok?"

He was young and had enjoyed the pleasures of kingship, so upon hearing this, Chandankumar's mouth began to water. He expressed his curiosity and asked, "How can I enjoy the pleasures of a celestial maiden? The fortunate can have everything, but to achieve that, you must travel the earth. A fortunate prince doesn't sit at home like a coward." Kapalik threw the grains, like a hunter.

"So tell me what is the solution to become the groom of the divine girl?" asked the prince.

"Listen, there's a forest of betel nut trees in the Vindhya mountains. There's a Yaksha temple there. Girls from the Naglok regularly visit there. Come with me and I'll arrange a meeting between you and them.

The prince was lustful and agreed to go with the Kapalik.

The prince's three friends stopped him and said, "O friend, it is not right to go to a foreign country with an unknown man and that too to a forest, hence give up the greed for the snake girl and also give up the idea of going."

The prince refused to listen. He set off alone with the Kapalik. Inspired by friendship, his three friends, Vishnu, Shankh, and Sudhi, eventually followed the prince.

On the way, the Kapalik purchased four goats. As indicated, they arrived at the Yaksha temple. There, the Kapalik gave each of the four young men a goat and said, "I am beginning the practice of taming the Nagkanya. You are to become my successors, and as part of this, slaughter these goats one by one, sacrifice them to the Yaksha, and stand with your eyes closed near the Yaksha's idol."

The Kapalik began his tantric rituals. Prince Chandan, wrapped in the net he had laid, slaughtered the goat with a single stroke of his sword, offering the first sacrifice to the Yaksha. Sudhikumar and then Vishnukumar followed suit, slaughtering animals, offering sacrifices, and then standing before the Yaksha with their eyes closed.

Shankhkumar thought that killing a living being for the sake of a Nagkanya was in no way appropriate. "Oh, **offering animal sacrifice for any reason is not befitting of humanity.** I even sense a bit of the Kapalik's penetrating magic here. No, I will never sacrifice an animal."

Shankh, without killing the goat, simply held it and closed his eyes. Shortly after, the Kapalik snatched the prince's sword from his hands and struck it hard, severing his head from his body.

In the next moment Vishnukumar was sent to heaven and in the third moment Sudhikumar was sent to heaven in the same manner.

As the wretch approached Shankh to kill it, the Yaksha himself appeared. He warned the Kapalik, "Beware of touching Shankh."

The Kapalik became frightened and, seizing the moment, Shankhkumar fled. He was deeply distraught. Worried about how he would face his three friends' families back in the village, he left for another city. In this unfamiliar city, he befriended a Shrivak named Subuddhi. Subuddhi taught Shankh the Navkar mantra and told him to chant it in times of trouble. It would protect him.

Some time passed, and Shankh felt a desire to return to his homeland. He set off with a group of merchants. The forest was dense, and a powerful group of Bhils attacked Shankhkumar's convoy. They looted a considerable amount. The Bhils selected ten men having thirty-two characteristics from the convoy, tied them tightly, and brought them to their chief, along with the looted wealth.

The chief ordered that these ten men be tied up in the temple of Chandika Devi. When the eleventh man is found, I must sacrifice them to Chandika, because only then will the evil spirit possessing my son be removed.

All ten men trembled, but they were totally helpless. What could they do? Shankhkumar was among these ten men. He immediately began chanting the Navkar mantra. He continued chanting continuously for seven days. On the eighth day, the Bhil leader brought with him an eleventh man with thirty-two characteristics. He was ready to kill these eleven men when a messenger came running from his house. He said, "Sir, your son has suddenly fainted, treat him first."

Leaving the men to be sacrificed tied up in the temple, the chief returned to his home.

On this side, Shankh Kumar told the Bhils in the temple that if your master permits, then I will try to alleviate the suffering of his son.

The Bhils conveyed this message to their master. Following the principle that a drowning man might clutch at a straw, the chief ordered Shankh to be freed and brought back. Shankh arrived, **placed his hand on the head of the chief's son, and chanted the Navkar mantra. The demonic force that had entered his body fled.**

The chief was smitten. He held Shankh's feet and pleaded, "O giver of life, from today you are my master and I am your slave. Tell me, what can I do to please you?"

"Just release these ten captives and pledge never to commit violence again. I love this," Shankha said.

After staying at the chief's house for a few days at his request, Shankh returned to his village. He recounted the true story to the king, the minister, the priest, and everyone else, and persuaded them to pledge mercy.

After being kind throughout his life, Shankhkumar finally died and was born in the first Devlok.

**My dear subjects, that Shankhkumar is none other than your king Jay, I myself and my friends from my previous life named Sudhi, Vishnu and Chandan, that is, these Shatanand, Govind and Dharnidhar."**

Emotional tears flowed from the eyes of thousands of people.

"These friends of mine experienced the hell in between and I experienced the Devlok. These are the culmination of violence and non-violence! And, here also I became the king and these three became ordinary citizens.

When the last days of my divine life were going on, I came to know from a wise man that after this I would become the son of the Survar king in Hastinapur.

It was I who, by directing Survar king, had a plot of my previous life created in this picture gallery, so that by viewing the picture I might gain knowledge of my previous life and become enlightened again.

Today, upon seeing this picture, I and my friends have been awakened to the memory of our past lives, and that is why we have fainted. Now, I am once again becoming a devotee of Jainism. I become a worshipper of mercy."

Victory to King Jayraja of Hastinapur! Victory! Upon hearing such a heart-breaking tale of their master's past life, the people fell head over heels in love with him. Their cheers resounded.

**- Reference Text: Samyaktvasaptati - Commentary.**

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## 10. The previous birth and rebirth of six Gopdevata

It is not that the '**Nalinigulm**' aircraft exists only in the fifth Devlok; all twelve Devloks may have a divine aircraft of this name. It is acceptable that the '**Nalinigulm**' of the fifth Devlok has become more popular with the illustration of Avantishukumal, but otherwise, the divine aircraft with lotus-like petals is called '**Nalinigulm**', and such aircraft can exist in every Devlok.

Here, we are talking about the "**Nalinigulm**" plane of the first Devlok. The six friendly deities experienced boundless bliss in this plane. They are identified as "**Gopdevata**" in the Ishukariya chapter of the **Uttaradhyayana Sutra** because they were all cowherds in their previous lives. They received the grace of a Gitartha guru, and from there, their souls' ascension began.

The seed of *Bodhi* was implanted in their consciousness. *Gurubahuman* also appeared. And finally, they all accepted initiation and, upon death, became *Mitradev* (friendly deities) in the first Devlok.

After completing the life of gods, all six friends were born in human life at different places. The power behind the rituals of worshipping *Ratnatrayi* in the previous life started helping them, due to which all of them took initiation in this life as well. After death, they were born again in the Devlok. All six friends who were scattered after being born in different places in human life, gathered here again because they were all born at one place in Nalinigulm plane.

Thus, the company of a guru enjoyed in their cowherd life brought them to the Vaimanik Devlok in a short time, making them known as the Gopdevata. Their lifespans were as long as four *palyopams*. After immersing themselves in waves of bliss for countless periods, they all reached *Chyavan*.

Four of the six gods attained enlightenment when their lives were complete. The remaining two were still a few years away from attaining enlightenment.

Of the four gods who got *Chyavan*, one was born as a prince in the royal palace of Kurudesh. He was named **Ishukar**. The second god was born in another country as a princess. She was named **Kamalavati**. A love contract from a previous life brought them closer together. Upon entering adulthood, Kamalavati married Ishukar.

Over time, Ishukarkumar became the king of Ishukar City. The third deity was born in the same city as a priest's son, and the fourth deity was born as the daughter of a Brahmin. Over time, they were also married. They were named **Bhrigu** and **Yashadevi**, respectively. King Ishukar elevated Bhrigu, the priest, to the position of his own royal priest.

Bhrigu Purohit was happy in every way due to the royal favour, but the lack of a son eclipsed that happiness so much that it became unenjoyable. Bhrigu was constantly saddened by the lack of a son.

Bhrigu and his wife began to practice various spells, incantations, magic and sorcery to conceive a son. Yet their lives remained as empty as a forest devoid of greenery.

At this time, the fifth and sixth Gopdevs, preparing to attain Chyavan from the **Nalinigulm** plane of the first Devlok, used their knowledge to determine whose children they would become after attaining Chyavan. Are those parents devoted to the dharma or are they averse to it? If, in their next life, they become children of dharma-averse parents, then this life will be spent like a barren life.

To avoid such a situation, try to make our potential parents adopt the religion right from now so that when we become their sons, they too can give us the religious values.

Using the knowledge, they learned that they would be born as the son of Bhrigupurohit and his wife Yashadevi. Both of them are averse to Jainism and have become blind due to excessive desire of a son.

Both gods were shaken. In this state, how will we acquire character in our next life? Without character, human life is meaningless.

The two gods had to acquire good character in their next human life, so they began preparing for it. They decided that in any circumstances, they would immediately enlighten the priest Bhrigu and his wife and make them passionate about initiation. Only then would their initiation become possible.

Both gods came to earth. Disguised as Jain monks, they arrived at the home of the priest Bhrigu. The priest couple honoured the two monks. They bowed down to them. They listened to the discourse. At the end of the discourse, they accepted the Shravak Dharma. At this point, Yashadevi asked, "Gurudev! Are we destined to have a son or not? Will I not have a son?"

"Lucky woman! You will have two sons, both of whom will be very intelligent, but they will accept initiation in their childhood. Now, you must not stop them from accepting Jain initiation, because doing so will hinder both their fame and well-being. If they are initiated in their childhood, they will bring glory to your family and also benefit their own souls", Muniraj said.

Every hair of the priest couple stood on end. **Finally, after making them to take resolve not to stop the sons from taking initiation, the sage disappeared again.** Within a short time, these two gods were born as sons of Bhrigu priest after getting Chyavan. Yashadevi gave birth to two sons as time passed, just look at the Bhadrakumar of the Devlok. The sons slowly started growing up. Seeing the faces of their sons, the love of Bhrigu and Yasha increased immeasurably.

Bhrigu was now worried that if his sons saw a Jain monk, they might become inclined to take initiation.

We have promised not to stop them for taking initiation, what will happen now?

Well, we will go for living in a place where they might never see a saint. If they couldn't even see a monk, how could they possibly have the desire to become one? The bamboo wouldn't remain, and the flute wouldn't play. Bhrigu Purohit left the city and went to live in an inner village.

The mother or father doesn't even mention the words "initiation" or "monk" in front of their sons. There's only one fear: their sons might take initiation.

His sons were now old enough to play outside the house and even at the village boundary. Bhrigu thought, "What if a Jain monk wanders through the village boundary and my sons see him? All the precautions I've taken over the years will be in vain. What if that happens! I'll poison their ears such that even if they see a Jain monk, they won't even approach his shadow."

What kind of foolishness?

The priest's soul, which had immaculately worshipped the character twice in its previous life, has now become blinded by love for his son. It is preparing to poison the sons' ears against the monk. This is called the terror of attachment!

The priest whispered to his two sons, "Son, Jain monks are like demons. Wearing white clothes and carrying black stick, they may appear kind and compassionate, but in reality, they are flesh-eating ravages. You should run away at the mere sight of these monks, who capture children like you, cut them up, and eat the flesh from their bodies. You shouldn't let even their shadow fall on you."

The children were terrified. They took their father's words literally. They had never even seen a Jain monk, yet their hatred for him had ignited the heart of children.

Once these boys actually saw Jain monks. The boys suspected that they looked like the Jain monk their father had described. The boys ran away in fear... The boys kept running ahead, and the Jain monks, completely unaware of the cruelty of their thoughts, were following them. The boys thought that the monk was coming on the road only to catch them, but the reality was not so. The monks were actually on their way to their destination. Seeing them, the fooled children kept running ahead instead of running towards the village.

They had come a certain distance from the village. They no longer had the courage to go any further. The boys were in a dilemma. What would they do next? They climbed a tree and hid in its branches.

It was as if the fate of these children was inspiring the Jain monks. They found the shade of this tree suitable for them to consume the alms they had received in their bags, so they stopped there.

After performing the rituals like *Iriyavahiyam*, they sat down to consume food. Their vessel contained ordinary food like bread and rice. There were no sweets or dishes, so how could there be the smell of meat?

Hidden in the branches of the tree, the two boys, fearful and trembling, peered down, wondering what the Jain monks ate. But when they saw the monks' food in their dishes, they were deeply surprised. They thought, "My father had said that Jain monks eat the flesh of children. Nothing like that is visible here. Hey! Even the faces of these Jain monks don't look scary."

Thinking about it, both boys recalled their previous life. Previous births became apparent to their inner sight like a crystal. A strong affection for the character holder and character dharma was awakened.

They understood how their vision, blinded by attachment to their parents, had thrown itself into such an upstream flow. Both boys descended from the tree, paid obeisance to the sage,

and with tears welling up in their eyes, apologized. They humbly told the sage about their past lives and their current one.

After that, they returned home and, after convincing the parents, asked for their permission, saying, "We no longer want to live in this world. We don't like worldly life. We prefer character (restraint). Please give us permission to adopt character. First, father Bhrigu gave strong arguments to both the sons to divert them from the character but when these children were not moved even a little by that, then under the influence of love for their sons, he too became eager to adopt self-control.

In turn, these two sons preached to Mother Yashadevi, King Ishukar, and Queen Kamalavati. It took a lot of effort to preach to all of them, but in the end, their efforts paid off. All received the preaching, turned away from worldly life, and these six virtuous men, friends of their previous lives, adopted the path of character (restraint).

They nurtured such character that all six sages attained Kevalgyan in the same life and attained salvation.

- Reference book: Shri Uttaradhyayana Sutra 14th chapter.

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## 11. The previous birth of Pratyekbuddha Nagagati Rajarshi

During the lifetime of Lord Mahavir, there were four Pratyekbuddhas who were all contemporaries and their four main events took place simultaneously despite the difference in the places.

Then, from the divine plane named **Pushpottar**, these four beings who were to become Pratyekbuddhas attained *Chyavan* together, became kings ruling contemporary power in different countries, all four virtuous people accepted initiation at the same time and all four Rajarshis attained salvation at the same time.

Their names, respectively, are (1) **Karkandu Rajarshi** (2) **Dwimukh Rajarshi** (3) **Namirajarshi** (4) **Devagati Rajarshi**. The Shri Uttaradhyayana Sutra and commentaries on it provide an inspiring account of the lives of these four Pratyekbuddhas. Here, we will journey through the past lives of Pratyekbuddha, named Nagagati.

In his previous life, Nagagati Rajarshi was a king named **Jitshatru**. He ruled the Kshitipratishthit city of Bharatkshetra. He once built a new royal court. This building was enormous, and as beautiful as it was grand.

The king now felt the desire to have this royal court decorated with art by getting wonderful paintings done.

The king invited painters from the city and the entire country. Gathering them all together, he ordered them to divide the new hall into as many sections as there were painter families in his country. Divide the work equally and adorn the entire hall with incomparable paintings.

The king didn't even use his common sense to consider how all families could have the same number of members. Some families might have four men who could paint, while others might have only one or two. Now, if he divided the work equally among all families, how would the work be fair? Either the work would be treated unfairly, or the artisans would be exhausted. But how could the king even consider this? He gave his order.

The group of painters followed the royal decree. They divided the work equally among each household. Driven by the lure of money, all the painters worked diligently. They started painting their own art on the walls of the new hall of the palace.

Now it so happened that among this group of painters was an elderly painter named **Chitrangada**. He had two surviving members in his family: One himself and the other his 16-year-old daughter, **Kanakmanjari**. There was no other surviving member of his family.

This Chitrangada had to do his share of the work alone. He would be exhausted and exhausted, but he would still keep working. All other families had three, four, or five men working, so they would work faster and with more dedication. This was natural. To keep up with them, Chitrangada, despite being physically exhausted, would work beyond his capacity, and would return home every day exhausted.

His daughter, Kanakmanjari, would prepare fresh food for her father every day and bring it to the royal court at noon. The old man would only go to the forest to relieve himself when his daughter brought fresh food. By the time he returned, the lunchbox would be lying there. This had two disadvantages: first, it would waste his daughter's time, and second, the food would go cold.

Eating fresh food in old age can energize the body. Instead, this old man was foolishly freezing fresh food every day. The daughter didn't like this, but how could she speak to her father?

Once, Kanakmanjari was coming to the royal court with a tiffin. The highway was narrow and crowded with traffic, when suddenly, the King Jitshatru, riding his horse at an uncontrolled speed, arrived. Terrified, Kanakmanjari came running to the court, trying to avoid the horse's attack. Unaware that the horseman following her was the King himself. She assumed him to be a royal soldier and didn't even look at him carefully.

As soon as she arrived with her lunch, her father, as usual, emerged to relieve himself. His brush and paint were lying nearby, so Kanakmanjari, sitting idle, drew a peacock feather on the ground with her brush. She filled it with paint to make it look exactly like a peacock feather.

By then, King Jitshatru had arrived in the royal court. Observing the painters' work, he began to inspect it. He saw this peacock feather. He was so impressed that he couldn't even comprehend that it was a painting, not real. He reached out to pick up the peacock feather from the ground. When he couldn't find a feather, he began digging with his nails, hoping to find one buried in the soil.

Be careful! The peacock feather didn't come into his hand, but the king's nails were broken. Kanakmanjari, who had been watching this scene intently, burst out laughing. Little did she know that the man in front of her was the king. She couldn't joke with him. It could prove costly.

Laughingly she said, till now Chaurang had three legs, now after finding the fourth fool all four legs have become complete.

How? The king asked: Which three legs have you completed and how am I the fourth leg?

At that moment, this enchanted girl said, "Look! I am the daughter of an old painter named Chitrangada. I bring lunch for my father every afternoon. Today, as I was returning to the royal court, a royal man rode his horse recklessly along the highway. He didn't understand that horses are not allowed to run on a narrow highway filled with women and children, so I count him as the first foot of Chaurang.

The other leg is the king of this city, who divided the work equally among all the painters without considering their age, supporting family, etc. My father is sonless, old, and alone, and he has so much work to do.

The third leg is my father, who has already squandered all his previously earned money; that's why eating sweets and dishes is out of the question for us. He doesn't eat even the fresh food I cook and bring here. He goes to the forest every day at lunch time. He doesn't change his habits. I consider him a fool, too.

And you are the fourth fool. Where the arrival of peacocks is impossible here, where would their feathers come from? Even if someone brought a peacock feather from outside, would not it move in a gust of wind? Without testing it, you broke your nails. Therefore, you are the fourth leg of the foolish Chaurang.

The king replied, "Gentlewoman, what you say is absolutely true." With that, the king moved on, but the girl had captured his heart.

The king's mind pondered whether this girl possessed intelligence. She possessed beauty, grace, and a flawless tongue. Even if she was born into a lowly family, she is like a gem due to her excellent qualities. My queens are equal to dust before her. If I were to include her in my inner chambers, my body and life would be blessed. She is the daughter of my own citizen, so what great deal is it to make her my queen? What poor father wouldn't dance with joy at the sight of his own daughter being taken away as a royal wife?

The king, constantly considering such options and pondering Kanakmanjari's talents, went to his council room and summoned his minister, Shrigupt.

With the demand for Kanakmanjari, the minister was immediately sent to the old painter Chitrangada.

Meanwhile, Kanakmanjari fed her father, took his lunchbox and returned home. Just as she returned, minister Shrigupt stood beside Chitrangada. Seeing the minister's imposing face, Chitrangada began to tremble. He stood before the minister with folded hands and said, "Tell me, sir. What mistake did this servant commit?"

But there the minister, showering him with loving words, said, "Your fortune is now turning young, even though your body has grown old. The king wants to make your daughter his beloved. Tell me, has anyone in your seventy-one generations heard better news than this?"

No, no, master! Where could such good news come from in a lowly family like mine? My old age will dance with joy if my beautiful daughter can become a royal wife! Are you making a real proposal or are you just joking?

If one jokes, he is not a minister.

Then this is a great thing! But I don't even have enough money to arrange my daughter's wedding. If I have to take the king to my house tomorrow, I'll have to serve him date and almond pudding. We anyhow make rice porridge at home. How can I become cracked heels of the king?

Why are you worrying? I'll put an end to your worries before this evening. The minister told the king the truth. Upon receiving the king's order, he had the grain store emptied at Chitrangada's house before evening. Not only that, he also gave him a gift worth thousands of gold coins.

Chitrangada started dancing.

Father, for whom did he give all this? Kanakmanjari asked. The king is going to make you his beloved, so he has filled my house with it. Kanakmanjari was so embarrassed that it felt like a vine frozen in the cold.

At an auspicious moment, the king married Kanakmanjari. He gave her a beautiful palace, equipped with all the amenities and a family. Until yesterday, this innocent girl, who had spent her nights under creaking sheets and in a filthy bed, was now sleeping on creamy-soft quilts in a palace adorned with stone pillars.

This was a miracle of royal grace. It was the play of an awakened auspicious *prarabdh*. The king had many queens. He would invite each one to his bedroom in turn and spend the night with her, engrossed in sensual pleasures. Kanakmanjari had just gotten married today, so the king invited her to spend the night with him.

Adorned with sixteen adornments, she came to the king. The king enjoyed her with great passion for a long time. Afterward, a maidservant trained by Kanakmanjari came to the king's bed and said, "O mistress! I am not able to sleep, please tell me some current story! "

"Shut up. I'll tell you a story after the king falls asleep. The king thought: This young woman's words are sweeter than sugar, I might as well listen to her story. The king fell asleep in a false sleep.

Seeing the king fast asleep, the maidservant requested, "O mistress! Now begin the story."

The queen began the story. "In a village, a householder had a camel. Its owner took it to the forest to graze. On the way, the camel saw a thorny tree. The tree was bent under the weight of its fruits and flowers. The camel repeatedly stretched its neck to eat the tree's fruits and flowers, but not a single leaf could fit into its mouth. Frustrated, the camel urinated and defecated on the tree and continued walking.

The maidservant then asked, "Madam! How did the camel urinate and defecate on a tree that it couldn't even touch with its mouth? How is this possible?"

"I'm feeling very sleepy right now, so I'll answer your question tomorrow." With that, Kanakmanjari fell asleep next to the king. The maid left.

The king, who was in a false sleep, had also heard the story. He too was interested in the answer.

The king thought, "If I get up right now and ask how a camel can urinate or defecate on a tree if its mouth doesn't touch it, my wife will think I'm a fool. I can't let that happen. So, I won't ask anything for now. If I give this queen another turn tomorrow, I'll hear the answer she will give to her maid."

The king gave Kanakmanjari the same opportunity the next day. He indulged in sensual pleasures with her until midnight. Then, as soon as the king fell asleep, the maidservant entered and demanded an explanation for the previous night's story.

The clever Kanakmanjari replied, "Fool, the thorn tree was in the well, so it was possible the camel's mouth couldn't reach the tree's fruits and flowers, but what was the problem in defecating or urinating on it?" The maid laughed heartily.

The king also smiled in his heart.

Then, at the maid's request, Kanakmanjari told another story. It was a current-like story, just like the one from yesterday. At the end of the second story, she posed a riddle that would leave the listener with no answer. When the maid asked for an answer, she said, "I'm tired now. I'll give you the answer tomorrow night."

The king was also fond of such stories; hence he gave the opportunity to Kanakmanjari on the third day also to listen to the incomplete story.

This tradition continued for six months. The queen would tell a new story every day. At the end of each story, she would pose a question that the maid couldn't answer. The queen would decide on the answer for the next night. The king would summon her to his side the next day to hear her answer. Thus, for six months, Kanakmanjari separated all her other co-wives from their husband, while she herself held her husband in her arms.

All of Kanakmanjari's co-wives were seething with jealousy. Their discontent erupted like a volcano. They gathered together and agreed that despite we all are princesses of noble descent the king had abandoned us and enjoys Kanakmanjari alone. She is of a low caste yet king was so attached to her.

Surely she has tamed her master through magic. How is such blind love possible without it? We must now find her flaws. If we find such a solid flaw, we will openly tell our master and have her eliminated forever. All the queens set to work searching for Kanakmanjari's flaws.

When this Kanakmanjari was alone in her house in the afternoon, after removing the queen's attire and ornaments, she would wear wooden ornaments and trivial clothes like those of a labourer in her parental home and then standing in front of the mirror, she would tell her soul, "O soul! Do not forget your previous state of poverty. These wooden ornaments and trivial clothes are your true existence. Apart from this, whatever wealth you have got is all due to the king's grace, so do not be proud of it. If you do not feel proud of the wealth you have got,

it will remain with you for a long time, but if you behave arrogantly anywhere, the king will treat you worse than a bitch and throw you out."

This thing came to the notice of many queens. They went mad with joy and gathered all the co-wives and went to the king and all the queens pleaded in one voice that O lord, even though you are loveless towards us, still you are our only Ishtadev, therefore, considering it our duty to protect you from troubles, we plead to you that your beloved is the daughter of a painter, being of a low caste, how can she hesitate in doing low deeds? She always practices witchcraft on you.

If you want to verify, disguise yourself and go to her house at noon. You'll find her wearing low-caste clothing and chanting some mantras.

The king was shocked. Yet he remained composed. "You too are my beloveds. I will make the right decision after examining your words," the king replied.

All the queens dispersed with joy, thinking that Kanakmanjari's game would be over.

The next day, the king disguised himself and tested Kanakmanjari. He hid in a secret place in her palace. The king was particularly curious about what the other queens called the muttering of a magical spell. He observed Kanakmanjari's every move. Finally, he watched her apply makeup step by step and listened to what she said as she looked in the mirror. Hearing this, the king fell in love with her.

The king thought: If the other queens get even a little more wealth or love, they become proud, whereas this Kanakmanjari teaches her own soul not to be proud. Truly, she is worthy of being called the jewel of my palace. This wife is truly wise and humble. Thus, becoming even more affectionate than before, the king installed Kanakmanjari as his chief queen.

Once, Vimalchandrasuri visited the city garden. Enlightened by his discourse, the king and Kanakmanjari accepted twelve vows, including right conduct. After death, both the king and queen were reborn as deities in the Devlok. After completing her divine life, Kanakmanjari's soul was reborn as the daughter of a Vidyadhar king named Dridhshakti. She was named **Kanakmala**.

The soul of King Jitshatru was born as the son of King Dridhshakti, ruler of the Ganadhar region. He was named **Sinhrath**. The city of **Panduardhan** was his capital.

Over time, Kanakmala and Sinhrath were reunited by marriage. A bond of love from their previous lives brought them closer together. Otherwise, where would the Vaitadhya mountains and Kandhar (Afghanistan) be?

This same King **Sinhrath** became famous as King **Nagagati**. He is even more recognized by the name Nagagati than by the name Sinhrath in the lives of people and in the scriptures. His married life and the rest of his life are filled with amazing adventures.

Finally, this Nagagati king, through a small occasion, attained enlightenment. Then the gods appeared and presented him with the guise of a sage. He was a virtuous man destined to become a 'Pratyekbuddha,' and therefore, he accepted initiation and practiced such restraint that he attained Kevalgyan in this very life.

- Reference: Shri Uttaradhyayana Sutra: 9 – Commentary ※※※

## 12. Prince Subahumuni's previous birth

Among Lord Mahavir's fourteen thousand disciples, few names have become very popular in the heart of people. Among these, one name is Subahumuni. His past story will only bring shivers to those with hard hearts and those who are not lovers of self-control and liberation.

How much did you gain? How did you give it up? And even after giving it up, at what height of renunciation did you attained the seat?

He was the beloved son of King Adinshatru and Queen Dharini. He was the sole heir to the throne of Hastishirsha. As his father's successor as a prince, he was highly respected. His father had arranged his marriages to 500 princesses, and he could freely indulge in pleasures among them, more so than the gods. Tell me, what was Subahukumar lacking?

His world was no less than Devlok. He was proficient in 72 arts, and when his 500 wives arrived from their parental home, they brought 500 carts full of goods with them. Among them were 500 items that could be considered antiques.

When this Subahukumar was conceived in the womb of Queen Dharini, the queen dreamt that a ferocious lion entered her mouth. It is believed that this dream was fulfilled and she received a world of great prosperity. Subahu then performed a supreme sacrifice, fulfilling the spiritual meaning of this dream.

Once, Lord Mahavir visited the garden of Hastishirsha city. King Adinshatru gave a grand welcome to the Lord, similar to the one performed by King Dasharnbhadra.

At this occasion, Subahukumar, escorted by elephants, mounted his chariot and came to the *samvasaran*. Upon hearing just one of the Lord's sermons, his heart was surrendered. At the end of the discourse, he prayed to the Lord, "O Lord! Your feet have been worshipped by all the kings of India. What a count can I have there? But since I have heard you for the first time, my mind has been drawn to you."

Satva does not manifest immediately after taking initiation, please bless me with *Samyaktva* (righteousness ) and the 12 vows.

The Lord bestowed upon him the 12 vows with righteousness. He established him in his own Sangh of Shravaks. Subahukumar's 500 queens, along with their husband, accepted the 12 vows of right conduct, and by accepting the Shravika dharma, they were included in the fourth tier of the Lord's Sangh.

Many years passed. Once, Subahukumar was sitting with his *paushadh* on a festival day. His memory flashed with excitement: his first sight of the Lord, his first hearing of a discourse, and his first acceptance of twelve vows. Three and a half crore hairs danced on his face.

He folded his hands and said, "Blessed be the land where my valiant Lord roams. Blessed be the celestials, crowned kings, and royalty who have taken initiation from the Lord. Oh, blessed be all the men and women who have got the vision of this great Lord."

**Where was there any blessings in my life? It came when Veerprabhu entered my heart. If Mahavir were to return to my city tomorrow, I would take initiation from him. I would uproot the entire world and throw it away, just as a farmer uproots a clump of grass.**

The Lord, who knew the past, present, and future, knew the mind of Subahukumar completely. The Lord arrived in Hastishirshnagar the very next day. A *Samvasaran* (congregation) was arranged for the Lord in the **Pushpakarandak** garden. King Adinshatru, along with his family, planned a *Samaiya* and came to listen to the discourse.

As soon as Subahukumar heard that the Lord has arrived in the garden of the city, his heart spoke, "The Lord has come to me to help me cross the ocean of existence. Now I must take initiation."

He explained this to his father, King Adinshatru, and Dharani with great difficulty. He didn't even look at his 500 wives. Finally, he, along with his 500 wives, renounced the world, royal power, and abundant pleasures and accepted renunciation from Lord Mahavir. He became a disciple of the Lord.

On this occasion, the first Ganadhar, Shri Gautam Swami, asked the Lord, "Bhagwant! What good deeds must Subahukumar have done in his previous life that enabled him to gain such wealth that he could rival the sons of the gods in this life. He not only gained wealth, but also the wisdom to renounce it."

The Lord began to describe the previous life of Subahukumar.

A few years ago, a landowner named **Sumukh** lived in Hastinapur. He was a master of vast wealth. He was as wealthy as he was generous. Once, an Acharya named **Dharmaghoshsuri** visited Hastinapur. Accompanied by a family of 500 monks, he preached the Dharma extensively in the city. He stayed in the Sahastramravan garden. Among his disciples was a highly ascetic monk named **Sudutt**. He was a rare ascetic, observing *Masakshaman* upon the Parna of the Masakshaman.

Once, the day of the Masakshaman Parna arrived. On this day, after studying for a long time, Sudattamuni, obeying his Guru's orders, set out for the pasture. First, he went to the house of the landlord Sumukh.

Seeing the Mahatma arrive in his courtyard, Sumukh was overjoyed. He went seven - eight steps to greet him. He then enthusiastically offered him a bountiful offering of dry fruits, sweets, and delicious food. Before offering, he expressed his devotion to giving to a worthy person. Even while offering, he enhanced that devotion and later enhanced it further.

The surge of emotions at that moment was extremely auspicious. The gods manifested five *divya* (divines) in his home. They showered *Vasudhara*. Its radiance spread throughout Hastinapur.

The same Sumukh, after death, has become Subahukumar here. The effect of his charity in his previous life is that he himself is becoming a worthy person today.

Subahukumar was listening intently to the Lord. After accepting initiation, he studied the eleven *Angas* under the guidance of a Sthavir, became a Gitarth, and on the other hand, continuously practiced the Chhath and Attham austerities. Living a life of great sacrifice and

renunciation, he finally fasted for a month and died. From there, he was reborn as a god in the Devlok.

This most fortunate Maharshi will become the enjoyer of the bliss of salvation in the fifteenth life, creating the tradition of a deity life and human life for 15 continuous births.

**- Reference: Vivahpragnapti Sutra 36-37.**

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### 13. Umberdutt's previous life

Anyone who saw Umberdutt could not help but sigh deeply. Women were terrified and even sneered at the mere sight of him. Such was his strange, sorrow-inducing, sickly, and stench-filled body.

His hands, feet, and face were swollen. His fingers were completely rotten, and drops of blood were dripping from them. His ears were so damaged that they didn't even look like ears, only a lump of cord and flesh. Deep scars appeared on his nose. His stomach was so distended from dropsy that even lifting it and walking was difficult. Leprous lesions were all over his body, and water was dripping from them. He was also excruciatingly itchy. He was experiencing unbearable pain from fistulas and warts in his kidneys.

Large abscesses had formed inside and outside the intestines, causing excruciating pain. Countless insects could be seen writhing in the cavity.

He suffered from fever almost daily. As if that were not enough, poverty had taken hold of his body, mind, and life in its serpentine grip.

He wore a torn dhoti, not a single upper garment. He had no home, no relatives. How could someone without a home or relatives find friends? This man was completely helpless, destitute, orphan, sick, sad, hungry, powerless and exploited.

He possessed only two possessions: a begging bowl and a water pot. The bottom of a cracked pot served as his alms bowl, and a shard of a broken vessel served as his water pot. He wandered the streets of Patalikhand all day, crying and pleading. He would fill his stomach with whatever he could find.

Once, the twenty-fourth Tirthankar, Lord Mahavir, visited the gardens of the city of Patalikhand. It was time for collecting alms, and since it was the day of Chhath's Parana, Shri Gautam Swamiji set out for collecting alms. Entering the city through the eastern gate, he saw this Umberdutt in the street opposite. His compassionate heart trembled, but what could he do?

Then after three days, once again for the Parana of Chhath, Shri Gautam Swamiji was entering the city through the southern gate, he encountered Umberdutt. Today, he was vomiting blood. When Shri Gautamprabhu entered the city for the third time through the western gate for

collecting alms, he saw Umberdutt lying on the road, groaning in pain, screaming like a man from hell. His heart melted.

After collecting alms, he asked Lord Mahavir Prabhu, "Lord! In the last nine days, I went to collect alms three times. Who is this poor man I saw all three times? What is his name? Does he have no parents or relatives? Doesn't the master of the city also take care of this poor man?"

The ears of the twelve *parshadas* raised up. Everyone was eager to see what the Lord would say. Immediately, the Lord began answering Gautam Swami's questions.

Gautam, the unfortunate man you saw is no stranger to these townspeople. Everyone recognizes him, but because of his extremely bad (low-class) misconduct, no one offers him medical treatment or support.

In this Patalikhand city lived a merchant named **Sagardutt**. His wife's name was **Gangdutt**. This businessman was very wealthy and respected. The one you saw is named **Umberdutt** – the child of such a worthy father..

From the moment he reached adulthood, he embarked on a path of depravity. Drinking alcohol daily and stealing were his forte. Through wanton looting, abusing women, and frequent violence, he spread terror among the people. He was caught and imprisoned numerous times.

The royal soldiers beat him mercilessly many times. Despite repeated abuse and beatings, he refused to give up his crime. Due to his father Sagardutt's request, the city's king, Siddhartha, finally spared him from the gallows and sent him back to his father. Ultimately, his parents died. Even after that, he continued his sinful ways, recklessly squandering the immense wealth his father had given him.

Finally, enraged with Umberdutt, the king confiscated his house, fields, land, and all his wealth. He was thrown out of the house. Since then, Umberdutt has been living as a wanderer. Over time, he has contracted sixteen diseases, and the pain of the beatings he received earlier by the soldiers continues to torment him. He has no home, money, or relatives. Now, he is unable to commit any crime. He wanders from house to house seeking medical treatment and help, but the people, distraught by the experiences of his terrible past, are ready to let him die, not save him.

The king of the city, Siddhartha, is also aware of his current state of illness, but shows no mercy because of his sinful past. The Lord paused.

Many screamed. Tears welled up in the eyes of many. O Lord, what sin did this Umberdutt commit in his previous life that he is suffering such immense pain? How did he end up in such an uncultured state despite being born to cultured parents?

The reason for this was his past sins. The Lord began to lift the veil on Umberdutt's past life. In this Bharat region, there was the city of **Vijaypur**. **King Kanakrath** ruled there. The city had a physician named **Dhanvantari**.

He was an expert and a researcher of medicines himself.

Knowledge, experience, and fame all helped him. The king and his entire entourage took only the medicines of this Dhanvantari Vaidya. This spread his fame widely. Almost all the wealthy and secular religious leaders in the city began taking Dhanvantari's medicines.

This doctor would give everyone medicine that would have to be mixed with meat. Furthermore, depending on the individual patient's condition, he would recommend eating chicken, pig, goat, horse, buffalo, deer, crow, and cow meat.

He would prepare different kinds of liquors, mix chemicals in them, and then give them to drink. This practice would bring great success to the vaidya's treatment, but those who consumed meat and alcohol for medical purposes would eventually become meat-eaters and drinkers. What a terrible disservice!

**Killing living beings while they are standing is a lesser harm but teaching them such sins is a bigger harm done to them.**

The vaidya (Dhanvantari) himself was a glutton, eating meat and drinking alcohol. For medicinal purposes, he would slaughter various aquatic creatures, animals, and birds, mixing their meat with medicines.

By this he accumulated so much bad karmas that after death he was born in the sixth hell.

After enduring miserable pains for 22 *Sagaropams*, he was born in the womb of Gangdutt.

Sagardutt and Gangdutt did not have any children, so once Gangdutt went to the temple of Umberdutt Yaksha located outside this city and made a vow that if you give me a child, I will offer you certain materials and will also give you certain royal feasts.

Coincidentally, the soul of this Dhanvantari came into the womb of Gangdutt, she believed that this was the effect of the vow made to the Yaksha.

Due to the ill effects of pregnancy, Gangdutt craved to go to Umberdutt Yaksha with her friends and perform his anointment with wine. She craved to offer a royal feast of various meat items and then drink wine with her friends.

This was the ill effect of the child conceived in the womb. The mother satisfied her craving and eventually delivered the child. He was named Umberdutt. This Umberdutt brought with him the violent *sanskars* of Dhanvantari's birth, and hence, he blindly pursued violence and cruelty.

The sins he has committed through violence have now surfaced, and he is being tormented in a furnace of suffering worse than hell. His 72-year lifespan will be completed in a few years. Once his lifespan is complete, he will be returned to hell after receiving his last breath.

The Lord stopped. Silence fell over the gathering.

**- Reference: Thanangasutra.**

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## 14. The previous birth of Queen Devdatta

Actually, Devdattadevi was the queen of Pushpnandiraja, hence her happiness and peace were so unmatched that it would make the celestial nymphs of Devlok jealous, but suddenly her fate turned so bad that today the king snatched away all her jewellery and clothes, got her ears and nose cut off, beat her severely with an instrument like an iron rod and after that gave orders to hang her.

Soldiers like messengers of death are parading this queen Devdatta, head down on a donkey, throughout Rohitak city, then they will hang her. Devdatta is crying with tears and begging for forgiveness. Her remorse and grief are limitless, but all in vain! No one is willing to listen to her.

At this time, Lord's first Ganadhar, **Shri Gautam Swamiji**, arrived in Rohitaknagar for alms. He saw the procession on the highway for hanging Devdatta to death. The sight of that distressed woman's plea, so powerful that even a stone could cry, and the cruel mockery she was being subjected to at the hands of her cruel subjects, shook Gautam Swami.

He exclaimed, "What difference is there between hell and this woman's present state? Perhaps she is experiencing more pain now."

After completing the alms collection, he asked the Lord in his evening discourse, "Lord! Who is that woman who is being paraded around the city on a donkey with her head upside down? Why is she having to endure such unbearable pain?"

The Lord said, "Gautam, she is no ordinary woman, but the queen of the city. As queen, the entire subjects honoured her with unbroken rice grains, and today, those same people are pelting her with stones. She is now paying the price for the terrible deeds she committed in her previous life."

Lord, please tell me about his previous life and also tell me what crime he has committed.

Gautam, once there was a highly respected city **Supratishthit** in the Bharat region. King Mahasen ruled there. He had 1,000 queens, including **Dharini**. The king's successor was named Sinhsen. When Sinhsen grew up, his father married him to 500 princesses including Shyama. He gave his 500 daughters-in-law separate palaces. They enjoyed themselves there. Like Dogundakdev, Sinhsen was immersed in the company of his beloveds.

His father died. His last rites were completed. The cabinet of ministers then installed Sinhsen on the throne. He was duly crowned. He was a very strict ruler. He inflicted such cruel torture on anyone who confronted him that the entire population trembled in fear.

Of his 500 queens, Sinhsen loved his chief queen, Shyama, the most. His love for her had now reached the point of partiality. The king now only allowed Shyamadevi to enjoy his bed; he had 499 other queens, but he refused to give any of them pleasure of his bed. He didn't even speak to them. He provided all the queens with equal food, drink, and wealth. But for a woman, what greater sorrow could there be than the separation from her husband? Which woman could endure a husband who gave her everything but remained indifferent to her?

The 499 queens were heartbroken. Their mothers heard the news, and they all came running. They held a meeting and decided that Shyama had enslaved the king. The king was so enamoured with her that he wouldn't even look at a single woman until she was alive. Therefore, they would use incantations, magic, or even poison, if necessary, to send Shyama to the afterlife (death). Only then would the sun rise in their lives.

The 499 queens and an equal number of their mothers made this decision. Word of their plot reached Shyama's ears through her spy maids. She snarled like a cat. She withered away completely. When King Sinhsen approached her, she didn't stand up to plead, didn't speak, didn't even move. She lay there with her legs folded, looking sad. The king asked, "Dear, Why are you sad? Has someone done you any displeasure?" She said, " My lord! What care do you take of me? Those 499-499 my co-wives, along with their mothers, are eager to kill me. I don't know when I will be killed by a cruel death?"

Shyama sighed. "I can't say much." "Don't worry. Before they can destroy you, I'll turn the tables on them all. What can women do to your husband?" the king assured her.

After this, spies conducted an investigation. It turned out that 499 queens and their mothers are ready to eliminate Shyama.

The king ordered his servants to build a *kootmandap* in the forest outside the city. A *kootmandap* that means a tent from which one can't escape quickly was built. Such a tent has only one door and a series of passages inside. The king's order was carried out the next day.

The king summoned his 499 queens and their mothers. They had received an invitation from the king after a long time, so they all came running. The king said, "Today we will enjoy the pleasures of forest play. All of you, get ready quickly and arrive at the forest pavilion with your servants."

The 499 queens and their mothers went crazy with joy. They quickly got ready. Wearing expensive clothes and ornaments, they reached the forest. There, six-flavoured food and wine were already ready. Music was in full swing. All the women, forgetting their burden, drank wine and got immersed in dancing and singing while waiting for the king. In the evening, the king came. He ordered that they would spend the night here. The army fortified all around outside the *kootmandap*. When night fell, the king came out of this pavilion. Those 499 queens and their mothers were watching the play in the pavilion. They were in a frenzy after drinking alcohol. The king sent a secret message to his faithful family and called them outside the pavilion and set the pavilion on fire from all sides. He had a bundle of burning silk cloth placed at the entrance so that no one could jump out. In no time the entire tent city was engulfed in a terrifying embrace of fire. Those 499 queens and their mothers cried out but who could save them when the king himself had become *Yamdoot*. They all burned to ashes in agony. The entire forest trembled with their dying screams.

The ruthless king added so much fuel to the raging fire that not even the skeletons of the women who had died were left charred. Only ashes remained. The 499 queens and their 499 mothers died in mournful cries. Thus, he brutally killed all the queens and their mothers. Leaving their ashes in the forest, the king returned to the city.

Sinhsen, a man of excessive pleasure and barbaric conduct, died after living for 3,400 years. He was born in the sixth hell. He endured unbearable tortures there for 22 *Sagaropams*.

Sinhsen was now reaping the fruits of the demonic violence he had committed due to his blind love for a woman.

His life in the sixth hell ended. After getting *chyavan* from there, he was born as a daughter in the womb of **Dutt** Sarthvah's beloved Krishnashree in this Rohitak city.

After the birth of their daughter, her parents, recognizing her exceptional beauty, named her Devdatta. As time passed, she entered adolescence and her beauty blossomed even further.

The city's king, **Vaishramandutt**, was once out on a royal procession. He saw the Sarthvah's daughter and was impressed. He asked his ministers whose daughter she was.

The ministers said that she is Dutt Sarthvah's daughter. The king was delighted to hear Dutt's name. He thought, "Dutt Sarthvah is my subject. He will surely obey my orders. If the hand of his daughter, a living embodiment of beauty, comes to the hands of my prince Pushpnandi then this will be a thrilling event for him also."

The king sent a proposal to Dutt Sarthvah demanding Devdatta. Dutt was thrilled with the mere thought of his daughter becoming a queen. He arranged a grand wedding for his daughter, Devdatta, with Prince Pushpnandi. Pushpnandi, too, became enamoured with Devdatta's beauty and began spending time with her, enjoying her with utmost affection.

Devdatta, too, became extremely lustful due to the intense rise of her past lustful actions and indulged in sensual pleasures. As time passed, her father, Vaishramandutt, died. Pushpnandi became the king. Now his sphere of responsibility expanded, so he could no longer show the same interest in sensual pleasures as before. Devdatta was still just as hungry for pleasures. This fact continued to torment her.

Even though his scope of responsibility had expanded, Pushpnandi cared deeply for his mother, Shridevi. He thought, "Firstly, there was his father's absence, and secondly, his mother was getting older, so he should take care of her so that she doesn't feel lonely or deprived. It is only now that my mother needs my sympathy more." Thus, inspired by such noble thoughts, Pushpnandi spent most of the day with his mother, Shridevi.

Devdatta could not tolerate this. Her own mother-in-law, Shridevi, started scratching her like a grain stuck in her teeth. She thought, "This Shridevi is the one who attracts my husband and keeps him with her for most of the time, that is why I am not able to get enough pleasure from my husband. Earlier he had less love for Shridevi, now he has more devotion for her, hence this Shridevi is definitely the obstacle in my path. If I make Shridevi's lifeless, then my path will become free from obstacles."

Terrible sinful desires! Murderous evil mind!

The sinful habits that had been instilled in Sinhsen's life began to corrupt her mind here as well. She failed to understand that such a thought would turn her peaceful and happy life into a wildfire in a matter of moments.

Why should one succumb to such animalistic thoughts in order to obtain petty pleasures in large quantities?

Repeatedly consumed by this evil thought, she finally resolved to kill Shridevi. "I will kill her in such a way that no one will know how I injured and killed Shridevi, or who her killer is." Devdatta intensified his sinful thoughts.

Devdatta selected an iron rod. She heated it extremely. Holding it with pincers, she approached Shridevi. It was afternoon. Shridevi, her mother-in-law, was asleep on the bed. Like a dark horse her daughter-in-law Devdatta came and thrust the hot iron rod into Shridevi's anus. Shridevi screamed, but before she could understand anything, the burning iron rod was thrust deep into her intestines. Keeping the rod pressed in, Devdatta pressed her hand over Shridevi's mouth so that no one could hear her screams.

Shridevi, screaming and writhing in unbearable pain, died instantly. Devdatta pulled out the rod. She ran away with the rod, but while Devdatta was leaving, Shridevi's trusted maidservant saw this. The maidservant had heard Shridevi's scream in a faint voice, which aroused some suspicion. The maidservant ran inside the palace. She saw Shridevi lifeless and a stream of blood flowing from her anus. She understood everything. She started crying with tears profusely. She ran to the king and pleaded that master, Devdatta has inserted a burning rod into your mother.

The king came running to the mother. Upon seeing the picture, he fainted. After regaining consciousness after 48 minutes, he first performed the mother's last rites and then ordered his wife, Devdatta, to be hanged after stripping her of everything.

Gautam! The evil deeds she committed during her life as Sinhsen still haunt her. She will die by hanging. She will also return to hell.

The Lord stopped. The audience became detached.

- Reference: Commentary on the Thagang Sutra.

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## 15. Harikeshimuni's previous birth

Salutations to the lotus feet of Harikeshi Muniraj; The beauty of his character and his *gitartha* (learnedness or deep knowledge of scriptures) have been praised by Lord Mahavir Prabhu.

I remember those lines from Shri Uttaradhyayan Sutra, "**It is not just the greatness of the lineage, but the qualities are even greater. Even after attaining a noble lineage, the heinous souls do not attain noble qualities, whereas 'Harikeshi', born in a Chandal lineage, became the recipient of the most noble qualities.**"

Harikeshimuni, whom scriptures praise and Tirthankaras identify as virtuous men, was the son of a Chandal named **Balkot** in his worldly life. His mother's name was **Gauri**. His own name was **Bal**. To understand why such a great sage had to be born in a Chandal clan, it's necessary to explore his previous lives. We will do just that.

There was a king named **Shankh** in the city of Mathura. On one occasion, listening to the discourse of his guru, he attained renunciation and took initiation. Shankh Rajarshi became *gitarth* and received permission to wander on the earth wearing the Ekal Vihari image.

Once, this sage came to the garden of the city of Vajrapur. When the time for alms came, he went out for alms.

It was summer. The sun was scorching the earth, not with its rays, but with fire. It was midday. The heat had reached its peak. Sage Shankhrajarsi, bareheaded and barefoot, set out for collecting the alms.

In this city of Vajrapur, there was a street called "**Hutratha**." It was notorious both domestically and internationally. The king had installed a metal covering in this street, which would become so hot during the summer that any human or animal who accidentally stepped barefoot into the street during the afternoon would immediately jump to their death.

Shankhrajarsi came near to this street. He was unaware that this was the infamous street. To find out, the sage entered the house of Somdev Brahmin, who lived outside the street, and asked, "**Lucky one, is this street not Huthartha? Should I enter it?**"

Somdev was already a Jain hater and an opponent of the monks. Jealousy welled up in his heart, thinking, "If only I could push the monk into this street, he would die instantly." Under the influence of such evil thoughts, Somdev said, "Come, come happily, nothing bad will happen."

Shankha Rajarshi trusted this enemy of wellness. He entered the '**Hutratha**' lane. It was as if he was walking on the path of death. Beware! The deity of the area, impressed by his extreme penance, made the entire infamous lane as cool as water. The sage started moving ahead in the lane with unstoppable speed. That Somdev was staring at the sage with the hope that '**now the sage will jump and will die thumping and jumping.**' It was a great surprise! The sage would not jump even if he did not wear anything on his feet. He did not jump on the first two steps, and even when he reached half way, he did not jump.

Somdev was astonished. He placed his finger on the ground and saw that the earth, which always turns fiery in the afternoon, felt as cool as cool water. He thought, "The sage is miraculous. His ascetic powers have cooled this street. How could a barefoot monk survive on this street where even the soldiers travelling in the chariot would die when the chariot's horses were thrown off course?"

Somdev's heart was filled with devotion for Shankh Rajarshi. He ran to him, fell at his feet, and apologized. After receiving awakening, he was initiated by him and became his disciple. Throughout his life, he pursued initiation, but the pride of his Brahmin caste and the arrogance of his beauty haunted him. The result was that after death, he was first born in Devlok, but then, after taking Chyavan from there, he was born into a lower caste as the son of a Balkot Chandal. Even there, he was born with a very ugly body. His name was '**Bal**'. He always abused everyone, so much so that children of his age excluded him from games. Such humiliation wounded his heart. At that very moment, Bal realized his previous birth. He saw his past life. Now his heart admits that even after receiving initiation, his pride in his beauty and caste was a mistake.

He returned to receive initiation from a wise guru. He became famous as '**Harikeshi**'. He nurtured this initiation and, becoming *Gitarth*, began taking up Ekalvihari image.

He maintained such a beautiful character and learnedness that Tinduk Yaksha, who did not even pay obeisance to the Gachchhavasi sages who were in majority but were skilled in Vikatha, would come running to pay obeisance three times a day to Harikeshi muni who was alone but a learned sage.

- Reference: Shri Uttaradhyayana Sutra: 2nd chapter.

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## 16. Angarmardaksuri's previous birth

There was a city called Vasantpur in Bharatkshetra, and King Jitshatru ruled there. The king had 500 sons. The 500 princes were children of different mothers, yet what divine influence was there, they all looked alike. For example, just look at the appearance of Devkumar. The 500 princes had such beautiful features. Even before entering youth, they became skilled in arts. It seemed as if all the treasures of the human world – beauty, art, wealth, family and youth – were gathered in these princes.

500 brothers were so similar in appearance that even the greatest of the experts couldn't determine who was the elder and who was the younger.

Once, the *swayamvar* of Kanakdhvaj, the princess of Hastinapur, was arranged. King Kanakadhvaj of Hastinapur sent out invitations. Out of curiosity, 500 princes arrived in Hastinapur for the *swayamvar*.

There they saw a camel. It was overly tall, overly large, and constantly suffering from itching all over its body. It was old, yet its master had burdened it beyond measure. The camel was unable to bear the load, and tears were flowing from its eyes.

As if it was not enough, the owner cracked the whip repeatedly to get the camel to run. The whip made the camel scream in agony.

Seeing this scene, the 500 princes who had come from Vasantpur were enraged. They were awakened by the memory of their past lives. They saw visions of their past lives and conversed with each other, saying that this camel was the soul of their guru from their previous lives. In their previous lives, he was their guru, and the 500 of them were his disciples. His name was **Angaramardak Suri**.

This Guru of ours became a scholar, became Dravyagitarth and attained the position of Acharya. He initiated us (500 people) and made his disciples but he himself was *abhavya* (worthless) and hence did not attain even a little bit of spirituality.

Once, this guru Angarmardaksuri arrived at **Garjanaknagar** with we 500 disciples,. An Acharya named **Vijaysensuri** was already there. Just before our arrival he had a dream that a big pig was coming to his shelter with 500 baby elephants.

In the morning he told his disciples that a group of 500 sadhus would come to our courtyard today. All the disciples among them are as good as elephants, but I have seen that the acharya was like a pig, so he would definitely be an acharya of no worth. Still, I have to test them. After that, I will decide who is of no worth. By evening, you should place coal flakes at intervals on the way to *parvathna*, and at night, stay awake one by one and mark what each of the sadhus going to *parvathna* says and tell me.

The Guru gave orders. The disciples accepted it by saying '*Tahtti*'.

At night, when all the other sadhus went to perform *parathna*, they said, "What if some living being was crushed? Now, mark the place where the sound was made and in the morning, we will see if any living being was harmed, right? We will determine." Everyone did the same, but when Guru Angaramardak Suri went on the way to perform *parathna* and the coal flakes crunched as he walked, he said, "Look, look, even such a tiny creature has been called a living being by the Arihant."

Vijaysensuriji's disciples heard his improper comment clearly. In the morning, they even told their guru literally the same thing. Vijaysensuriji called the 500 sadhus and explained that their guru was unworthy, so they should abandon him.

We 500 first became ignorant. Then, through logic and examples, he enlightened us, and we abandoned our guru, Angarmardaksuri, and accepted Vijaysensuri's command. Under his guidance, we lived the rest of our ascetic live.

We 500 disciples, after death, were reborn in the Devlok. Even as deities, we constantly searched for the soul of our former guru, but we could not find it because he had completed the life of Angarmardaksuri and was wandering in the world of the occluded and deformed (*viklendriy*). Now he lives the miserable life of a camel.

The 500 princes became emotional after this conversation. Out of their past affection for their Guru, they paid a large sum to the camel's owner and secured its release. They repaid, at least partially, the debt of their Guru's kindness.

Having become ascetics after seeing their past lives, these 500 princes did not attend the *swayamvar*. They instead went to a Jain Acharya named Aryasamudrasuri, who resided nearby, and accepted initiation.

**- Reference: Mahanishith Sutra-Thananga Sutra.**

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## 17. The previous birth of Sarvangsundari Sadhvi

In the commentary on the *Agama* called "Aavashyakniryukti" and in *Churni*, one can read the illustration of Sarvangsundari Sadhviji. One reads it and one's heart forgets beating. The story of Sarvangsundari Sadhviji will be useful in understanding the havoc that a displeased karmic power can wreak even on those living an innocent life. Here, one experiences the terrible torment that even ordinary deceit and fraud committed in a previous life can inflict upon the soul.

In her worldly life, the Sarvangsundari Sadhvi was the daughter of a Shrivak named Shankh. Looking at her, one could feel that her every limb has blossomed with a storehouse of beauty, therefore, her father named her "Sarvangsundari."

When she grew up, her father married her to Samudradutt, the son of a Shrivak named Ashokdutt. Once, Sarvangsundari visited her parental home then her husband Samudradutt came to pick her up. The night stay was there, so he went to his wife's room to sleep. He saw something near his wife that looked like the shadow of a divine being. Due to this mere incident, Samudradutt disgraced his wife. There was no investigation, no questioning. He left the room without uttering a single word. He went straight home to his village.

He became so estranged from his wife that he married another Jain woman named **Shrimati**. Samudradutt's brother, Sagardutt, also married Shrimati's younger sister, Kantimati.

This news reached Sarvangsundari shortly after. It was as if a thunderbolt had struck her head. Yet, she maintained her composure. She did not condemn her husband and, turning away from the world, took initiation.

Once, accompanied by her own mentor, Sarvangsundari Sadhvi came to **Saket city**. Saketpur was the village of her worldly father-in-law. Filled with immense affection, Sarvangsundari Sadhviji felt that even though her husband had betrayed her, she should now go to his home as a Sadhvi and offer him enlightenment. At least I could help my co-wife attain dharma.

After receiving the permission of the Guru, Sadhvi Sarvangsundari went to her worldly husband's house for collecting alms. Her co-wife, who knew her name and past life, saw her. The lady was a gentlewoman. She immediately stood up and ran towards her to offer alms. The lady was then opening the box and preparing to wear a big gold necklace. She did not even wear the necklace. She kept the box open, threw the necklace on it and went to offer alms.

Meanwhile, an unprecedented event occurred. A picture of a peacock was in Shrimati's jewelry box. Suddenly, the peacock appeared from the jewelry box, took the necklace she had left unworn, and then disappeared.

Meanwhile, the Sadhvi returned after collecting the alms, and Shrimati returned to her room. The necklace was missing. So, a commotion broke out. Her husband, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law all gathered around Shrimati. Together, they accused Sarvangsundari Sadhvi of stealing the necklace.

Everyone followed her. They threatened her on the way. They searched, but the necklace was not found as it was not with the Sadhvi. Everyone returned.

Sarvangsundari Sadhvi was so deeply saddened by this incident that it's beyond description. She went to her guruni and told her the entire story from the beginning. She became impatient and began crying. The guruni reassured her and explained that this was the result of her past life's karma. Work to reduce your karma, but don't cry.

Soaring high in the current of auspicious sentiments inspired by her Guru's teachings, Sarvangsundari Sadhvi achieved such magnanimous results that by the end of the night, she attained *kevalgyan*. The deities began her grand celebration.

On the other hand, when Shrimati opened her jewellery box early the next morning she found the lost necklace in its place. She felt profound remorse. She told this matter to her husband, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and others. They all felt profound remorse for having committed a grave mistake. They had committed the immeasurable sin of tarnishing the innocent saint.

Samudradutt was shaken to his core. He thought, "When Sarvangsundari was my wife, I had disgraced her and abandoned her. It's possible that my own misunderstanding was the cause, and Sarvangsundari was innocent. If that's the case, then what a tragedy I've committed."

Samudradutt brought his entire family with him to Sarvangsundari Sadhvi. He had come to apologize. There, he saw Sarvangsundari Sadhvi in the state of a kevali, and his remorse knew no bounds.

He and his family listened to the discourse of Sarvangsundari Kevali. During the discourse, he stood and bowed down, begging forgiveness, and pleaded, "Lord, I have twice cast a grave blame on you. Please atone me for that."

"Virtuous one, you are merely an instrument. In my previous life, I indulged in the passion of illusion and in doing so, led you two brothers and Shrimati and Kantimati astray, for which I have suffered the consequences here.

Sarvangsundari Kevali replied.

Lord, please tell us about your and my past lives! Samudradutt prayed. Sarvangsundari Kevali Bhagvant poured forth her discourse on past lives.

Blessed ones, in your previous life, Samudradutt and Sagardatt, you two were brothers. There, your names were Dhanapati and Dhanavah. I was your sister. We lived in Vasantpur. My name was **Dhanshree**. Due to sin, I became a child widow, so I stayed at your house.

I felt like taking initiation, but you both loved me so much that you didn't allow me to take initiation. I constantly gained knowledge of the Dharma by introduction with Sadhviji. You too, moved by my love, accepted the Shrivak Dharma.

Over time, you two married. You became the husbands of virtuous women. Under the influence of a woman's natural ego and illusion, I once reflected that my brothers loved me very much before. Now, sisters-in-law have arrived. I should investigate who my brothers are now subservient to: me or my sisters-in-law.

One night I started telling a religious story to my elder sister-in-law. When my brother came over that night, I finished the conversation, saying, "Sister-in-law! What more can I say? In short, you should keep your saree pure."

With that, I left. My elder brother overheard me. He assumed that my wife was definitely a prostitute, which is why my devout sister was telling her to keep her saree pure.

He became so angry that he threw my sister-in-law out of the house. Poor sister-in-law, where would she go in night? She slept outside the house. In the morning, I woke up, and streaming down crocodile tears I reached to sister-in-law. I asked, "What happened?" She told me the whole truth while crying.

I said, "Don't worry, I'll explain it to my brother." I hold her hand and went to my elder brother and said, "Hey, I was just paraphrasing God's words: a woman should keep her saree clean. That doesn't mean your wife is a prostitute."

My elder brother accepted my plea and accepted my sister-in-law back. Then, I tested my younger brother in the same way. He also believed me and threw out his wife. I reunited them there too.

After passing away, I have become Sarvangsundari. My two brothers have become Samudradutt and Sagardutt here. The two sisters-in-law I had dishonoured in my previous life have become Shrimati and Kantimati here, in the order of your wives.

The karma I had tied by making my brother disgrace my sister-in-law with my deceitful words came to rise in this life, and I became disgraced twice. The Kevali Sadhviji stopped. The gathering continued to weep with tears.

- Reference: Commentary and Churni on Aavashyak niryukti.

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## 18. The previous birth of Purnabhadra Dev

In the first Devlok, there are 3.2 million divine planes. One of these beautiful planes is called Purnabhadra. The entire world of the gods resides within the Purnabhadra plane. The owner of this plane holds the same empire like a smaller version of the kingdom of Saudharmendra, and the lord of the Purnabhadra plane is also named **Purnabhadra**.

A new Purnabhadradev was born here and, with his family of thousands of deities, he raced to the city of Rajgrihi. There, in the expanse of Gunsheel, the *samvasaran* of Mahavir Prabhu had been established. Arriving at the *samvasaran*, he gazed at the Lord with joy, as if a child had met his mother after years.

After worshipping the Lord, Purnabhadra Deva, along with his family of thousands of deities, began dancing and singing before the Lord, praising the Lord, and having done so, he departed.

At this time, Shri Gautam Swami Maharaj asked the Lord, "Lord! How does that deity who just arrived look so majestic and radiant?"

How great was his wealth. How did he attain such wealth and radiance?

Gautam! He is Indra Purnabhadra, the plane-master of the first Devlok. Firstly, he is newly born, and secondly, the power of his previous life's austerities is now yielding auspicious results, making his complexion quite remarkable.

Within this Bharatakshetra lies the city of **Manipadika**. Despite its small size, this city of wealthy landowners and nobles is full of happiness and contentment. Its king's name is **Chandra**. The name of the city's landowner, belonging to a high caste, is **Purnabhadra**.

Once, a learned Sthavir Acharya arrived at the **Tarakirna** garden in the city. Purnabhadra Sheth was overjoyed when he learned of this and went to the Sthavir with his family.

Hearing his discourse, he developed detachment. Despite his advanced age, his Guru's grace enabled him to embrace the *charitradharma*. Even at an advanced age, he studied the eleven Angas and continuously performed Chhatth-Attham upon the Paranas of Chhatth-Attham. Even in his old age, he worshipped restraint and penance like the youth.

Finally, he performed *ansan* (fast unto death) for a month. After his death, he was reborn in the Devlok as Purnabhadra Dev. He is the Vimanapati Indra. The auspicious effect of the renunciation he had worshipped for a few years in his previous life is the reason he has attained such beautiful radiance and immense prosperity.

This Purnabhadra Dev is inspired by the love for Tirthankara, hence even though he is a new born, he has stopped the drama that lasts for two and a half thousand years in Devlok and has come here to have my darshan. **"If I watch the drama first and then go to Tirthankar, Veer Prabhu will attain nirvaan by then. After that I will be not able to have his darshan, therefore, I should postpone the drama being presented as a celebration of my birth; I want to have the darshan of Jin first."** This deity has adopted such auspicious meditation.

Lord, how long will Purnabhadra live and what state will he attain after the completion of this life?

Gautam! His lifespan is of two *Sagaropams*. Upon completing his lifespan, he will be born as a human being in the Mahavideha region. In that very life, he will attain Kevalgyan and attain salvation.

- Reference: Siri Puffia Sutam

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## 19. Indushen and Bindushen Kumar's previous birth

When the soul of the sixteenth Tirthankar, Shri Shantinath Prabhu, was King **Shrishen** in his previous life, he had two queens and two successor princes born to them. The queens were named **Abhinandita** and **Shikhinandita**, respectively. The successor princes were named **Idushen** and **Bindushen**.

Here, we will discuss Idushen and Bindushen. We will not delve into the Lord's journey through the ages, as he is already well known. The previous lives of these two sons of the Lord's first life are visible in the commentaries of the Agamas and are inspiring, yet are not as well known. We will try to introduce them.

King Shrishen accepted 12 vows, including samyaktva (righteousness), from a wise sage named Dharmabodh. His queens also followed their husband's path and maintained shravika dharma. This is why Indushen and Bindushen also received religious values. Yet, an unfortunate incident occurred in their palace. In Ratnapur, there was a prostitute named **Anantmati**. The two brothers began to introduce her. This introduction now seemed poised to break the shackles of decorum.

Idushen and Bindushen became so infatuated with the prostitute that they were no longer willing to tolerate anyone else's authority over her, not even their own brothers. They harboured hatred and animosity toward each other, determined to keep her in their possession. They stooped so low that the two brothers were now unwilling to let each other live. If a brother lived, would he have control over the prostitute? Idushen and Bindushen engaged in a fierce war. The kingdom and army were divided. The father, Shrishen, tried to reason with his sons, but they were no longer in the state to be convinced. The father could not tolerate such low character in his sons. He no longer felt worthy of showing his face to the nobles, so Shrishen committed suicide by inhaling a lotus mixed with poison.

After the husband's death, queens Abhinandita and Shikhinandita also died after smelling the same lotus. After them, the shravika named **Satyamama**, whom they had given shelter to, also committed suicide.

Even after knowing that their parents, distraught by their own misdeeds, have committed suicide, Idushen and Bindushen refuse to give up their evil ways. The two brothers, each with his own army, are engaged in a fierce battle when suddenly, a plane descends from the sky. A Vidyadhar was seated in the plane. He stopped the plane between the two sides and began to rebuke the two brothers in a loud, serious voice, "Princes! Due to your ignorance, you are ready to enjoy your own sister. This prostitute is not a prostitute, but your sister. I am your well-wisher, so I am telling you to stop this war and abandon the idea of enjoying your sister."

There was silence all around. The weapons of thousands of soldiers stopped. Idushen and Bindushen were stunned. Everyone's eyes turned to the Vidyadhar who had arrived. Idushen asked, "You call this prostitute our sister, but she wasn't born in our clan. How can she be our sister? She's the daughter of a prostitute."

Kumars! Listen! Even though in this life you and this prostitute are the children of different fathers, but in your previous life all three of you were the children of the same father and the

mother of both of you was myself, how can you forget? Such silence spread as could be heard even if a pin fell. As if the atmosphere of war had dissipated and some clouds of mystery spread over the atmosphere. Indushen and Bindushen became nervous. No one had the courage to argue. The armies of both were listening to the visitor with questioning eyes.

The Vidyadhar continued, "In **Vit Koshanagari** of the Mahavideh region, there was a *Chakravarti* named *Ratnadhvaj*. Two of his many queens were named **Hemamalini** and **Kanakshri**. Hemamalini gave birth to a daughter named **Padma**. Kanakshri gave birth to two daughters named **Kanaklata** and **Padmalata**."

The elder sister, Padma, took initiation while still a young girl. The two younger sisters were immersed in the world. Sadhvi Padma once saw a prostitute being seduced by two princes and vowed to become such a fortunate woman in the next life with the effect of the restraint she had cultivated in this life.

Finally, Sadhviji attained the path of *Kaldharma*. She became the prostitute **Anantmati** here, while her two younger sisters, Kanaklata and Padmalata, after their deaths, were reborn here as Indushen and Bindushen, son of King Shrishen of Ratnapur. Your mother from your previous life, Kanakshree, is myself. I have become a Vidyadhar named **Mani Kundalini** somewhere. I live on Mount Vaitadhya.

I have just heard about my past life from a Tirthankar named **Amityash** in the city of Pundarikini, and driven by affection for you, I have come here to explain it to you. Sons! Now stop your incorrect actions!

A stupefying silence descended upon the entire army. Tears welled up in the eyes of Indushen and Bindushen. Feeling ashamed of their actions, the two brothers touched the feet of Manikundalini Vidyadhar. They bowed, expressed their gratitude, and said, "You are both mother and father to us. You have done us an infinite favor by preventing us from harm. How can we repay you?"

"**If you wish to repay my kindness, I desire that you accept the Charitra (good character) now,**" Vidyadhar said. Idushen and Bindushen agreed to accept the Charitra. Following them, 4,000 royal soldiers pledged to take initiation. Together with a total of 14,000 royal men, these two brothers accepted initiation from Dharmaruchisuri. After accepting initiation, Idushen and Bindushen were transformed into such beings that in that very life, Idushen and Bindushen attained salvation, having slain all eight karmas.

- Reference: **Vriti of Shri Uttaradhyayana Sutra.**

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## 20. The previous birth of Ashnighosh Vidyadhar

This story is of the time of eleventh Tirthankar, Shri Shreyansnath Prabhu's reign. At that time, the soul of the sixteenth Tirthankar, Shri Shantinath Prabhu, became a Vidyadhar named **Amittej**. This was Prabhu's fourth incarnation. Amittej was the ruler of Rathanupur Chakraval, the capital of Mount Vaitadhya. Amittej's aunt was married to **Triprishtvasudev**, and Amittej's younger sister, **Sutara**, was married to Triprishtvasudev's son, **Shri Vijaykumar**.

Triprisht became the first Vasudev of this *avsarpini* in Bharatkshetra. The sun of his power was then scorching like noon in six sections.

As time passed, Triprishtvasudev died. His elder brother, Achal Baldev, took initiation six months after Vasudev's death. Shrivijay now ascended the throne of Potanpur.

Once, Shri Vijayraja, accompanied by his wife Sutara, reached a forest called Jyotirvan. He began to enjoy in the forest.

At this time a Vidyadhar named Ashanighosh passed by. His gaze fell upon Queen Sutara. As soon as he saw her, a fire of affection, as if struck by lightning, arose in Ashnighosh's body. He lost all sense of conscience. **It has never happened in the past, or even in the present, that someone who forgets conscience remembers decorum.**

Ashnighosh used a Vidya called "Pratarini." He ordered Vidya to destroy Vijayraja by corrupting him with Sutara Rani. Vidya Devi transformed into a golden deer and began roaming around Vijayraja. Sutara Rani prayed to her husband, "O Lord! Get me this golden deer!" The king ran to catch the deer. At the same time, Ashnighosh struck Sutara like lightning from the sky. He abducted her and fled.

Meanwhile, Pratarini Vidya, disguised as Sutara Devi, killed her by having her bitten by a snake. Hearing Sutara's dying screams, Shri Vijayraja abandoned the golden deer and ran to Sutara Devi. Alas, she had surrendered to death.

The king was so distraught by his wife's untimely death that he ordered his servants to build a pyre, grabbed wife's body, and jumped onto the pyre himself. Suddenly, two servants rushed in and sprinkled *mantrajal* (consecrated water) on the burning pyre. The pyre went quiet. Sutara's body vanished. The golden deer was nowhere to be seen.

Shri Vijay was astonished. At that moment, the visiting servants said, "O Master! Your beloved Sutara is not dead. She is alive. She was abducted by Ashanighosh Vidyadhar. That Vidyadhar left the Pratarini Vidya after you. It was this Vidyadhar who showed you the golden deer and Sutara's corpse. But now we have sprinkled the consecrated water, and this evil Vidya has vanished."

Swami! Sutaradevi, held captive by Ashanighosh, cried out in anguish, "Brother Amittej, my beloved Shrivijay, save me, save me!" We, both servants of Amittej Vidyadhar, heard the Sutaradevi's cry, so we ran to rescue her. But Sutaradevi then told us to rescue her husband first, he is in Jyotirvan. He had been trapped by the deception of Pratarini Vidya.

We have come here at Devi's command and have protected you. Our master, Ashnighosh Vidyadhar is powerful. So, first go to your brother-in-law and our master, Amittej Vidyadhar. Then we can make arrangements to rescue Devi.

Everyone went to Amittej Vidyadhar. They narrated the entire incident. Then King Amittej immediately sent his 500 sons and a large army to help King Shrivijay, telling him to march out to fight Ashnighosh.

He has become very arrogant due to the power of vidya; hence I have come to you after mastering the vidya called '**Mahajwala**', which can defeat all his vidyas.

Shri Vijayraja, with a large army, surrounded the city of Amarchancha. He attacked Ashnighosh. A month had passed, but victory or defeat was still uncertain. For this one month, Amittej Vidyadhar performed *Maskhman* and practiced the **Mahajwala** Vidya. At the end of the month, having mastered the Vidya, he performed the Parna. He ran to the battlefield of Amarchancha.

Seeing Amittej attacking his army, Ashanighosh Vidyadhar abandoned his own army and fled. Amittej Vidyadhar unleashed the "**Mahajwala**" on him. It was now impossible for Ashanighosh to survive. Ashanighosh ran ahead with his fists clenched, and Mahajwala was chasing him behind.

Only if Ashanighosh took refuge in a Tirthankar or a Kevali could he escape, otherwise he would surely become a prey to Yama! Running and fearing, he came to the mountain called **Simmag**. There, the **Baldev Rajarshi** had just attained Kevalgyan. Ashanighosh accepted his refuge.

Mahajwala Devi also arrived by then. Ashnighosh had taken refuge in a Kevali, so she couldn't defeat Ashnighosh, but she did snatch away all his powers of vidya. Having done so, she returned and informed Amittej of the unfolding events.

Both the deities Amittej and Shrivijay came to Kevali Baldev and through their servant Vidyadhar they called Sutaradevi, who was staying in the palace of Ashnighosh, to the presence of Kevali Bhagwan on Simmag mountain, and that is what happened.

During the Kevali's discourse, Ashnighosh stood up and stated, " Bhagawant, I never harboured any such feelings toward Sutara. After abducting her, I placed her with my mother, and I never uttered any words inspired by passion. Yet, how did the desire to abduct her, like an electric current, arise upon seeing her when she was in the Jyotirvan?"

The great one! The reason for this is your past life relationship with Sutaradevi. Enmity and affection often transcend. Many lifetimes ago, you were a Brahmin named **Kapil**. You lived in **Achalpur** in Magadhesh, but your reputation within your family and village was tarnished. Therefore, intelligent and learned, you decided that staying here would not give wealth and fame. Only if I went abroad would my wisdom bear fruit.

Kapil emigrated. He reached the city of **Ratnapur**. There, he went to the home of a teacher named Satyaki. Many students studied the Vedas and Vedangas with Satyaki. Kapil readily answered their questions, which even Satyaki could not answer. Satyaki was impressed with Kapil. He arranged the marriage of his daughter, Satyabhama, with Kapil.

Thus, Kapil first received a home like that of a goddess of wealth, and then, through his scholarship, he earned wealth. He settled down in his home.

Once, he was returning home after watching a play at night. Suddenly, it started raining. The road was pitch dark. There was solitude too. Kapil stripped naked to avoid getting his clothes wet. He hid them beside him. He reached home in the same manner. He wore his clothes near the door and entered the house. His devoted wife brought new clothes saying, '**Swami's clothes must be wet, so I should dress him in new clothes.**' Then Kapil said: "Dear! Due to the power of knowledge, my clothes didn't get wet even in the torrential rain. I don't need new ones." A lamp was burning in the house. In its light, Satyabhama saw that Kapil's clothes weren't wet, but his body was completely drenched. She wondered, "If my master protects his clothes with the power of knowledge, why doesn't he protect his body? It seems he's walked naked on the open road."

Satyabhama was utterly distraught. She thought, "A pure Brahmin could never do such a thing. Such an act befits only a lowly person. It seems my husband is not a true Brahmin. There is something wrong with the lineage." She remained silent at the time, but the doubt that had arisen in her mind persisted.

Once, Kapil's father, Dharnidhar Brahmin, came to Kapil's house. Unfortunately, he had become impoverished. Hearing news of his son's prosperity, he came seeking help. Satyabhama served her father-in-law well. After several days, finding some privacy, she asked, "I ask you to take swear of brahminicide. Tell me the truth: are both the father and mother of this son of yours and my husband's parents pure, or is there something wrong with one of them?"

The elderly father-in-law said, "Look, my dear daughter-in-law, don't dwell on the past. If you find happiness in the present, enjoy it. It's true that Kapil is my son, but his mother is Kapila, and she is my maidservant. That's why even today I don't share food with him."

Hearing this, Satyabhama became renounced. She agreed to take initiation. She prayed to her husband, but he proved to be like water on a stone. Kapil was not ready to leave Satyabhama.

Satyabhama approached King Shrishen and asked for help in her initiation. She revealed the truth about her husband's low caste. The king tried hard to persuade Kapil, but he refused to leave Satyabhama. Satyabhama, too, now refused to go to Kapil's house.

Finally, King Shreesen ruled, "Kapil, let her commit suicide. Instead, let her live in my house. She will follow the Shrivika Dharma, and you too will be able to meet her." Kapil obeyed the king's order.

In this way, both of them completed the rest of their lives. After wandering through the world for countless lifetimes, Kapil has now become Ashnighosh Vidyadhar. Kapil's wife, Satyabhama, after completing two lifetimes of celestial and human being, has become Sutara, the wife of Shrivijayaraja.

The attraction towards Satyabhama of your previous life, when you saw Sutara here, awakened in your mind like an electric current and losing your discretion, you kidnapped her.

Kevali Baldev Muni stopped.

The gathering was stunned. Tears welled up in Ashnighosh Vidyadhar's eyes. Filled with remorse, he immediately took initiation from Baldev Muni. He cultivated a remarkable self-control and ultimately achieved self-realization.

- Reference: Shri Shantinath Charitra and Tri.Sh.Pu. Charitra.

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## 21. The previous birth of Dhandutt snake

Dharmadas Shravak was a religious man. He performed *pratikraman* twice a day, performed jin puja properly, and also performed self-study after *samayik-paushadh*.

Every night, after doing *Pratikraman*, he performed *samayik* and then studied the *sutras* he had memorized. Today, he was also studying at night. It was pitch dark, and his mind was focused on the *sutras*, so how could he have imagined the circles being created around him?

Suddenly, a poisonous snake came running. Baring its teeth and howling, it seemed to be issuing an open invitation to war to Dharmadas. The snake was resolved to kill Dharmadas. Unaware of such a dangerous event, Dharmadas was immersed in his studies. At that moment, this story came out of his mouth.

*"Tivvam pi puvvakodikayanpi, sukayam muhuttamitten /*

*Kohaggahio hanium, ha! Havai bhavaduge vi duhi //*

Meaning: "Even the good deeds done over millions of years are burnt away by 48 minutes of anger. The angry person ruins both his present and future lives."

The words of this saga, spoken in a sweet and clear voice, reached the snake's ears. Great surprise! He fell unconscious. By the time he regained consciousness, he had already attained the knowledge of his past lives. His emotions were completely transformed.

The hostility vanished from his eyes. A sense of affection took its place. The mindset of aggression and hostility was replaced. Love and respect appeared there.

Now this snake became completely calm, came near Dharmadas, sat in a circle and started staring at him.

The snake didn't move from its spot until Dharmadas finished his *samayik* and went to sleep. Not only that night, but even after morning, the snake remained there. It looked at Dharmadas with a smile. Again and again, tears of remorse welled up in his eyes. He helps Dharmadas as much as he can.

This routine continued for a long time. Dharmadas also accepted the snake. The snake did not harm anyone in his family, but rather helped them.

Once, while doing self-study at night, Dharmadas attained *kevalgyan*. The gods celebrated it. As Dharmadas began to give discourse, the snake sat beside him among audience.

At this time, the worldly relatives of Dharmadas Kevali asked, "Lord, why does this snake have so much affection for you?"

The reason for this is the debt of a previous life. This soul was born as a snake simply because of its angry nature. What other virtues did it lack? The Kevali Bhagwant said. The gathering was stunned.

Taking the matter forward, Kevali Bhagwant said: "This snake was my father in the previous birth, your father-in-law, grandfather and ancestor, the owner of this house and garden, and a renowned businessman of the city."

Hearing this, tears welled up in the eyes of the family members. Everyone knows that my father was very moral, religious, and gentle. His only flaw was his extremely short temper. He had developed a habit of repeatedly lashing out at anyone at any time.

Once I preached to him about controlling his anger. This enraged him so much that he took a big stick and ran to hit me. I, who was just reaching youth, ran out of the house and he collided violently with a pillar. His skull immediately cracked, blood started gushing out, and he died in an instant. After death, he was born in the form of a snake. And now, that snake is here. Hearing the saga of self-study from my mouth, he has gained the knowledge of remembering his previous birth, and because of this, he has become completely calm and is serving me.

Kevali Bhagwant stopped.

Tears welled up in the eyes of everyone present, and the tears in snake's eyes seemed to be unstoppable.

- **Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.**

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## 22. The previous birth of Dhansen and his camel

If you want to experience how miserable the consequences of consuming divine substance are, then listen to the story of Dhansen's camel and think about it patiently.

**After hearing this parable, a worthy soul will no longer feel the urge to disturb the divine substance. Using sophistry to defend the consumption of divine substance will be blatantly stopped.**

Inrapur was a famous city. A wealthy merchant named **Devsen** lived there. His servant's name was Dhansen. A camel was born in Dhansen's house. Gradually, it grew. Taking this child camel with him, Dhansen arrived at Devsen's mansion. Seeing the mansion and the merchant, the camel was deeply attracted.

The camel refused to return from the mansion. Dhansen beat it with a stick and a whip and took it to his stable. Beware! As soon as the stable doors opened in the morning, the camel somehow managed to escape and stood near the mansion.

Sheth warned Dhansen, "Take care of your animal, why are you sending it to my mansion?"

Dhansen beat the camel a lot, yet it was not ready to leave the Sheth's house. Finally, after much beating, he took the camel to his own house. He started keeping it tied constantly. Yet, after a day or two, as soon as the chain was released from its leg, it would not listen to the shouts of its owner, and would not return even after the whip's blow, the camel would reach the Sheth's house. Even after being beaten so much, the camel would become happy wherever Devsen Sheth was seen. Finally, the kind Devsen bought the camel from Dhansen by paying a fair price.

The camel was overjoyed. Seeing the Sheth's face, she was always happy.

Once, a wise Gurudev visited. The Sheth asked the Gurudev the reason for the camel's one-sided love.

Gurudev said: "Great one! This is your cousin of the same birth. Your mother died and was born as a camel but because of the filial affection of the previous life she cannot leave you.

Devsen Sheth was stunned.

"Lord, my mother was very religious. She was devoted to Jin and the guru. So how did she die and become an animal?" the merchant asked in a serious tone.

The reason for this is your mother's foolish consumption of divine wealth. She didn't intend to steal any divine wealth. Or even though her mind wasn't tainted by the divine wealth, out of feminine instinct, she often performed household chores in the light of the lamp placed in front of the Arihant in the home temple. While cleaning the temple's incense burner, she sometimes lit the home's stove using its burning embers, thus, as she used the divine wealth without directly owning it, she created such a karma that after her death she was born as a camel.

**Even after considering the divine substance as divine, its unauthorized use throws the soul into the animal state. Then those who do not consider the divine wealth as divine,**

misinterpret the scriptures and spend the divine wealth even in ordinary accounts, even when own wealth is easily available, due to the desire to establish prestige, they become ready to build a temple with the divine wealth and with the help of sophistry, they also get the Guru's temple built with the divine wealth... such corrupt people become partners in how many such grave sins? May enlightened Bhagwant save them.

- Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.

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## 23. Ratnasar Kumar's previous birth

Ratnasar Kumar was the son of Vasundhara Mata and the beloved son of Vasusar Sheth. This beloved subject of King Samarsinh possessed such wealth that the entire Ratnavishala city seemed to be defeated by him. He would inherit from his father enough wealth to sustain the king and his subjects. Even richer than his wealth was his fortune: the one that could defeat Vidyadharas, turn gods and demons into servants, and captivate princesses.

Ratnasar was not yet married, just he had set foot on the threshold of youth, when, after listening to the teachings of a wise Jain monk, he accepted the vow of *Parigraha Pariman*. In the *Parigraha Pariman* vow, he first established two rules so strict that, upon learning them, one would feel like bowing at his feet.

The first vow he made was to never become king, and the second vow he accepted was to never engage in business with the state. Making such vows when the sun of fortune is shining brightly is no small feat.

After this, he vowed in his vow of *Parigraha Sankshep* that he would not own more than 400 vehicles, not more than 1,000 elephants, not more than 60,000 cows, and not more than 500 houses and shops.

The extent of his wealth can be estimated from the figures written above.

Having thus accepted the *Parigraha Sankshep*, he began to practice the Shrivak Dharma with perfection. Thereafter, in his youth, a tradition of unexpected and precarious events, and miraculously escaping from them and reaching the pinnacle of success ensued, making one's hair stand on end.

He got lost in the forest while riding on the divine horse, yet he was protected.

He had a miraculous meeting with the princesses named Ashokmanjari and Tilakmanjari who were sitting there with the resolve to marry him, but before this meeting could take place, Ashokmanjari was kidnapped by some Vidyadhar. Using the power of mantra, he made her a swan and imprisoned in a cage. Somehow she escaped from the cage and fell in the lap of Ratnasar who was living in the forest.

Before Ratnasar could think of anything, thousands of Vidyadhar soldiers and kings attacked him. Even saving his life was now difficult. Princesses were far away.

However, the Yaksha Chandrachud Devta, a servant of Chakkeshwari Devi, then appeared in aid of Ratnasar and defeated the ocean-like army of Vidyadhar.

Chakkeshwari Devi transformed Ashokmanjari, who was sitting as a swan, back into a princess and at that very moment Ratnasar married Ashokmanjari and her younger sister Tilakmanjari, in the dense forest.

The demons put the prince to terrible pain, yet Ratnasar did not accept the kingdom because he had taken a vow not to become a king.

During all these hardships, he was greatly helped by a parrot who spoke human language and was extremely intelligent. This parrot was also kidnapped by a deity, and after a struggle, Ratnasar finally got that parrot again.

Finally, trapped in the storms of exile and the tempests of the wind, the deities presented Ratnasar, his wife who had chosen him and his parrot, before his father-in-law, the king, and his sufferings ended there. He refused to accept the kingdom offered by his father-in-law. He returned to his hometown. The king and his father gave him a grand welcome. The people there went crazy at the sight of the radiant sun of his fortune.

Once, a wise Jain monk named **Vidyanand** arrived in the city of Ratnavishala. Everyone went to listen to his lecture. The king asked in the middle of the lecture: "Lord, what good deed could this Ratnasar Kumar have done in his previous life that kings, Vidyadharas, gods, and demons all were defeated by him and he got the highest wealth of fortune?"

This is the effect of donating to a worthy person!

The wise man said this and then the flow of his lecture started towards Ratnasar's previous life.

Rajshen was the king of the city of Rajpur. His son was named Shrisar. Shrisar was close to three boys: one was the son of a minister, the second was the son of a city chief, and the third was a Kshatriya. All three had great love and respect for the prince. They tolerated every word the prince said. Gradually, a close friendship developed between the four.

The Kshatriya son was the dullest of the four. Yet, upon seeing the prince's cleverness and skill, he praised him highly and criticized himself. He also respected the minister's son and the nobleman's son for their wisdom.

Once, a thief entered the room of Shrisar Kumar's mother and the king's queen and fearlessly committed theft. Not only did he steal, he also did not leave the city. He remained hidden in the city.

The king was enraged when he heard the news of the theft in the queen's room. He ordered a thorough investigation. He had his entire city searched. Finally, the thief was caught with the original amount.

The soldiers brought him before the king. The king, blinded by rage, gave the strictest order to crucify the thief.

The soldiers led the thief to the place of execution, beating him with whips. Seeing this scene, Shrisar's heart melted. He went to the soldiers, took the thief from them, and sent the soldiers back, explaining that "the thief had stolen my mother's ornaments, so I must kill him."

Obedying the prince's words, the soldiers returned to their respective positions. Meanwhile, taking the thief into the forest, the prince made him confess that he would never steal again. After obtaining his consent, he released him.

After a few days, the king got the news that the prince had given safe passage to the thief, then the king publicly insulted the prince to such an extent that there was no limit to it. For noble men, a life of humiliation is worse than death. The prince was a man of self-respect. Leaving the palace, he left for the forest. As soon as his three friends got the news, they too left their homes and ran after the prince. This is called true friendship. In times of trouble, the one who does not have to be asked for help, the one who comes running to help from the front, is a true friend.

**\* One who turns his back during war is not a true soldier.**

**\* One who walks away in times of sorrow is not a true friend.**

**\* A woman who goes to her parents' house after losing money is not a true wife.**

The three friends met Shrisar in the forest and promised that they would be happy with his happiness and sad with his sorrow.

The four friends set out with a merchant's group to travel abroad, but due to the unfortunate turn of karma, they got separated from the group in the bushes of the forest. Wandering hungry and thirsty for three days and three nights, they reached a village. They bought delicious food and prepared to eat, at that very time a Jin Kalpi Muniraj came to them for taking alms. This was such a Muniraj whose worldly travels were very limited, he did small deeds, and was engrossed in the self-consciousness. On the other hand, the prince was also very humble and generous, so he offered all the food to the Muniraj with great joy. As if he had filled the inexhaustible store of virtues.

At this moment, the minister's son and the nobleman's son were certainly delighted to see the sage. Initially, they were delighted to see offering alms to him, but when he began to offer all the food, their hearts began to hesitate. Yet, they concealed their hesitation by deceit. They deceitfully said, "All friends should receive the same merit, so offer it all; don't reserve any portion."

Be careful! The Kshatriya's son was not only inert by nature but also a mean. He then said, "Kumar, I am very hungry, so please keep some left for me."

The prince, heedless of anyone's request, gave away all the food. The sage left. The four friends also bought other food and were satisfied.

King Rajshen had his son examined and called him back. His three friends also returned home with the prince. These four friends died in due course.

Shrisar Kumar amassed an inexhaustible fortune through charitable donations to worthy people, and hence, he has become Ratnasar here. Among his three friends, the minister's son and the nobleman's son, who approved of the donation but were hesitant in their hearts, have attained the female form here and become Ratnasar's wives Ashokmanjari and Tilakmanjari.

The Kshatriya son who had forbidden charity was born here as a parrot and became a well-wisher of the prince. Because he had obstructed the charity, he has come to the animal world.

And, the thief to whom Shrisar Kumar had given a safe passage has, after his death, become Chandrachud Devta, a servant of Chakkeshwari Devi. Remembering his previous life's favor, he defeated Ratnasar in front of the Vidyadhars, saved Kumar's life, and arranged his marriage to the princess.

The audience was stunned. Vidyanand Muni paused.

- Reference: Shradh Vidhi Prakaran.

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## 24. Sumitra Sheth's previous birth

In a certain town lived a wealthy man named **Sumitra**. He possessed abundant wealth, a coffer full of gold and silver, and a wife who was gentle and humble. Yet, he was constantly unhappy because none of his children survived. They all died at birth, suffering from various ailments, major or minor.

Eight children died one after another in this manner. Even after his wife's eight deliveries, not a single child survived, then Sumitra's grief knew no bounds. He repeatedly erupted in rage.

Once, he was holding a necklace worth one crore rupees. He went into a room of his house with the necklace. Worried and anxious, he forgot the necklace in the room and returned to the mansion.

Coincidentally a businessman named Dhanmitra arrived at his house at that moment,. For some reason, he had come alone. They were discussing business matters when Sumitra's wife shouted, "That necklace is worth crores! You have left it outside. Bring it first! "

Sumitra ran. Surprised, the necklace was nowhere to be seen in the room. Sumitra, becoming restless, immediately accused Dhanmitra of stealing the necklace. "Hand it over immediately, or I'll take it to the king." Dhanmitra was as if the sky had fallen on him. He was innocent. He hadn't taken the necklace. He pleaded with Sumitra, saying he has not taken it, and pleaded with him not to tarnish his image. Sumitra replied, "No one else came except you, so who stole it?" Sumitra was impudent. He forcibly took him to the royal court. Dhanmitra began a *kausagg* on the way, vowing to continue *kayotsarga* until he was freed from this stigma.

Everyone arrived at the royal court, and the game of pretended justice began. A little time passed before the watchman from Sumitra's house came running into the court with a necklace. Handing it to Sumitra, he said, "This necklace was lying in your room. The Shethani has sent it."

The king and all the citizens were astonished. A Jain monk with clairvoyance resided in the city. Everyone approached him and asked him the mystery of Sumitra's necklace. The Guru then revealed the secret, saying, "Virtuous ones, there is no doubt that the necklace was stolen, but it was not Dhanmitra who stole it. Sumitra's enemy, a Vyantar, had stolen it."

"So how did we get the necklace?" Sumitra asked.

Dhanmitra performed *kausagg* by invoking the protector deity of Jainism, due to which the presiding deity came rushing to his aid. To protect the innocent Dhanmitra, he defeated the Vyantar, retrieved the necklace, and returned it to Sumitra's home.

The king and his subjects listened to the Guru with wide open eyes.

Everyone bowed down to the influence of religion and the knowledge of the Guru.

"Lord, what is the reason for that Vyantar's enmity with this Sumitra?" Dhandutt asked.

The answer to this question lies hidden in their past lives. The entire gathering started listening to Guruvani intently. Sumitra Sheth was a householder named Gangdutt in his previous birth. His wife's name was Magadha. Once Gangdutt's mind went astray. Magadha was repeatedly asking for gold ornaments. To satisfy her, Gangdutt once stole a gem from his own Shethani. This gem was worth one lakh. Shethani tried to convince him a lot but still Gangdutt was not ready to return the gem. Shethani gave him a safe passage and also tempted him with a reward, still Gangdutt did not return the gem and said that it was not he but someone else who had stolen it.

The Shethani was very sad, but what could she do? After death, she had become a Vyantardev. That Gangdutt's wife Magadha was born as Sumitra Sheth, and Gangdutt's soul has born here as Dhanmitra. Even after becoming a Vyantar, the Shethani of her previous life is seething with hatred. She is burning with enmity. She is the one who killed all eight of Sumitra Sheth's children and, to fulfil her grudge against Gangdutt, she stole the necklace and declared Dhanmitra a thief.

**- Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.**

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## 25. Dhanmitra's previous birth

Sheth Vasubhadra's son was named Dhanmitra. This family, with its immense goodwill in the town of Vinaypur, had no shortage of money. What else remained? Achieving wealth, prestige, and family—all three—transforms a person into something else. Something similar happened here. Yet, Vasubhadra harbours no arrogance. He lives as humble and righteous a life as he ever did.

Over time, Vasubhadra and his wife passed away. Dhanmitra, being the only child, inherited a vast inheritance easily, but his luck turned out to be utterly ruinous. He couldn't expand his inheritance, nor could he preserve it. He lost it all within a year or two. He died buried under a mountain of debt. He even had to sell his house.

Now, who would even give him a daughter? He was still unmarried. It seemed his day had come to wander as a beggar. Finally, he left the village and went abroad. There, he tried many jobs: a service, *tantra-mantra*, and a business, but found no success.

Then he came to the city of Hastinapur. At that time, a Kevalgyani (enlightened being) arrived there. Upon reaching him, Dhanmitra wept profusely.

The Kevali Bhagwant assured Dhanmitra, "Son, the sins of your past life do not allow you to find peace here. Cry over those sins, not your sorrows."

"Bhagwant, what sins have I committed?", asked Dhanmitra.

"In your previous life, you were a householder named Gangdutt. Because of your wicked nature, you burned with jealousy day and night. Seeing wealthy people, you envied them. Seeing people with beautiful wives, you envied them also. Seeing intelligent people, you hated them, and even hated those in power.

Then your nature became increasingly monstrous. You began to interfere even when a person or organization received a substantial donation or in their development. You even interfered with donations to worthy individuals on several occasions.

Just because of the sins of jealousy and interference, you have become poor here."

"Then how was I born as the son of a rich man?"

"The reason for this is that in the later stages of Gangdutt's life, you became friend with a shravak named Sundar. At his insistence, you took the vow of daily offering *chaityavandan* (prayers) to your Guru, and you followed it. Thus, through the influence of the *chaityavandan* you demonstrated through offering prayers to Jin, you became the son of a very wealthy businessman.

You certainly attained human life, but in your previous birth you were so jealous that you became poor and lost your wealth. Despite your best efforts, you couldn't find wealth.

- Reference: Shradh Vidhi Prakaran.

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## 26. Dharmadutt Kumar's previous birth

Prince Dharmadutt has so far been a breast-feeding child, and he only drinks milk, yet this morning he has stopped drinking milk. His mother coaxes him and tries repeatedly to feed him, yet the child remains unresponsive. A doctor is called. He examines the child and offers appropriate treatment, but to no avail. Women who ward off evil eyes rush in, but they too are unsuccessful.

Like a yogi who has become a steady-minded person, this child looks at everyone with steady eyes, does not laugh, does not cry, does not move and does not give up his stubbornness of not drinking milk.

King Rajdhar rushed over. His grief knew no bounds. Queen Pritimati burst into tears. It was afternoon, and the child still refused to drink milk. Who knows what might have happened to the prince? Rajdhar and Pritimati were filled with worry. Which parent wouldn't be troubled by such circumstances? The king and queen are parents, after all. The prince has no ailments, the doctors say. The healers are also denying that there's any Yaksha is an obstacle. What to do? All were at a loss. Just then, a Charan Muni arrived through the sky and came straight to the palace. The anxious atmosphere of the palace suddenly changed. Everyone, including the king and queen, stood up. They made the sage sit at an appropriate place and paid their respects to him. Oh! Even the child started laughing after seeing the sage and started bowing his head. Seeing this, everyone was very surprised.

The king asked the sage, "Hey Bhagwant, our child has been behaving strangely since this morning. He is not drinking milk and is not laughing or talking. Why is he doing this? No one can understand how he started laughing after seeing you."

"King, the prince has not suffered from any disease or affliction from the Yaksha. He has taken a vow not to eat or drink anything without visiting Jineshwar every day. He has been hungry for a long time, but he is faithful to this rule.

First, let him see the Jin. Then, let's talk about anything else! Make him see the Jin every morning, only then will this child Dharmadutt drink milk. The king immediately took the prince to the Jin temple and made him see the Jin. Coming out, Pritimati did not even have to make an effort, the child started drinking milk on his own. Everyone was surprised that this was a miracle, this was the only thing on everyone's lips. The Charan Muni was still sitting in the garden of the royal palace. Everyone reached there. After paying obeisance, the king asked: "Bhagwant, how is such a miracle possible? My son Dhandutt, he does not even know how to say, "Mother", and you say that without seeing the Jin, he has taken a vow not to put even a drop of water in his mouth."

"King, what I have said is true. The reason the prince has made such a vow at such an innocent age is that he has acquired the knowledge of his past lives, and through the influence of this knowledge, he has been enlightened by remembering the righteous deeds he performed in his previous birth. Tell me the truth, yesterday when queen Pritimati went to the temple with her son, did the boy faint while praying to the Lord? Seeing the boy unconscious, the queen also fainted, right?"

The king stared at Gurudev with wide eyes. Queen Pritimati nodded her head, agreeing that what he said was true: that it wasn't me who fainted first, but the prince. Seeing him, I too fainted. These kings and others may think that the queen fainted and that her son also fainted because of her, but that's not true.

As soon as Kumar awoke from his trance yesterday, he gained the knowledge of his previous life. Aware of this, Kumar immediately vowed to abstain from food and water until he had seen a Jin.

O Lord, please tell us about our son's previous life. It would bring us great joy and enlightenment, the king requested. Charan Muni described the child's previous birth.

In the city of Purika, lived a gentleman named Dhanya. Though poor, he was respected for his noble lineage and family. Once, he entered a lake to bathe. He bathed and also played in the water. While playing in the water, Dhanya, by the grace of his heart, found a magnificent lotus. This thousand-petaled lotus was extremely beautiful, fragrant, and precious. Dhanya took the lotus and, emerging from the lake, began walking home. On the way, he met the gardener's four daughters.

They were all familiar to her. They also knew the merits and demerits of the flower. Those four beautiful girls said to him: "Just as the flower from Nandanvan is difficult to find here, the flower with 1,000 petals is equally difficult to find. Therefore, use this lotus very wisely. Do not give it to just anyone. Do not sell it out of greed for money, nor do you keep it safely. Give it to a worthy person."

Hearing this from her friends, Dhanya was astonished and thought, "The greatest man in this world is Sumitra Sheth, where I work. Therefore, I must give this lotus to him." **A person finds the place where he earns his livelihood to be the most virtuous. That's not surprising.**

The dim-witted Dhanya took this lotus to Sheth Sumitra and offered it to him. After listening to the story, Sumitra thought, "My elder brother, Vasumitra, is even better than me, so this lotus should be given to him."

Sumitra urged to give the lotus to Vasumitra. Dhanya approached him. Vasumitra considered Minister Chitramati to be a wonderful person. So he advised to give the lotus to the minister. Now Dhanya took the lotus to Minister Chitramati. The minister, refusing to accept the lotus, persuaded to offer it to the king. The innocent Dhanya went to the king. King Krip, a devotee of his guru, said, "Offer this world-best lotus not to a worldly person, but to the feet of Vidyamati Suri, a great devotee of the great vows, and you will receive great virtue." Suri Dev was present in the royal court. Dhanya prepared to place the lotus at his feet, but Suri Dev stopped him, saying, "The greatest being in the world is an Arihant, so adorn his statue with this lotus." Dhanya, considering his life blessed, reached the Jain temple with excellent results and placed the lotus on the head of the Lord. Thus, he began to consider himself truly accomplished, as if he had earned the credit for his life.

By chance, the gardener's four daughters, who had instructed Dhanya not to give away lotuses, had come to this very Jain temple with baskets of flowers. They saw Dhanya worshipping with the lotus. They were overjoyed. They wholeheartedly approved of Dhanya.

This same Dhanya, after passing away, first became a god in the Devlok and then, having completed his divine life, became your successor, Dharmadutt.

Before completing his divine life, he was worried about how he would attain the Dharma if his parents in his next life were not religious. Therefore, he took the form of a swan and visited Queen Pritimati, and then appeared to the king in his dream, imparting knowledge of Jainism.

After that, the deity died and came into the queen's womb. Because of the excellent pregnancy, the queen desired to build a temple of gems. She fulfilled this wish, albeit partially.

Yesterday, in the Jain temple, when the queen said that the swan had given her two gems: the gem of the Jain religion and the gem of a son, the prince's heart was stirred by hearing these words spoken to his friend. The knowledge of remembering his past life was revealed; the boy had now become fully immersed in the Dharma.

The four gardener's daughters, who were well-wishers of Dhanya's life, have also passed away and attained the heavenly abode. They will now be reborn as princesses in different places and, in their youth, will become Dharmadutt's wives.

Rajdhara, that soul of King Kripa, had become Chitragati Vidyadhar in this life, with the passage of time he took initiation and he became Chitragati Rajarshi i.e. Charan Muni who is preaching to you. That minister Chitramati has become my son here who is now managing my kingdom as Vichitragati Vidyadhar. That NagarSheth named Vasumitra has become the king named Rajdhara here, Vasumitra's follower who was Sumitra has been born as your queen Pritimati.

Tears welled up in the eyes of the king and queen. Many beings became ascetics and turned to the religion.

- Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.

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## 27. Lakshmivati's previous birth

If you want to understand what kind of sinful deeds are bound and what kind of sad situation you have to face in the next life if you fill the box with half the amount and take the credit of being the donor of the entire ritual, then you will have to study the example of Lakshmivati Shethani.

Lakshmivati was the wife of a wealthy husband and a devoted shravika. When husband is wealthy and showers her with blessings, it's surprising that such a wife doesn't develop pride.

Lakshmivati was deeply religious, yet pride began to grow in her. What was incomplete was completed by the vice of miserliness. She always paid a small *nakara* (fee) to receive the benefits of *Aangi*, *Ujamana*, and *Swamivatsalya*. She was wealthy, and therefore a leader in

the Sangh's work, but due to misersness, she always paid a small fee. Despite having the means, she never paid the full cost of the ritual.

Even then, she feel proud that the influence of religion is due to me.

She also maintained the same dignity in Sangh.

As time passed, she died and was born in Devlok. She attained Devlok, but there she was born as a lowly goddess. This was the result of her paying small amounts and receiving full fame. For countless years, she worked as a lowly deity sweeping in the Devlok. Yet, her karma did not grant her salvation. After completing her divine life, she was born as a woman in the human world.

Here, a Sheth (rich man) had no sons or daughters. She was born as the child who had been granted after much prayer. The child came after much effort, so the rich man decided to celebrate the mother's baby shower while she was pregnant. At that very moment, the kingdom was attacked by an enemy, so the celebration couldn't be organized.

At the time the girl was born, a death occurred in the king's household, forcing the merchant to cancel the grand celebration he had begun. Now the girl had grown up, and the time had come for her marriage.

The Sheth thought: I have only one daughter. Unfortunately, her baby shower, birth, and naming ceremonies couldn't be held. Now, I have to celebrate the wedding with great pomp and show, so that my daughter also understands that her father is something else.

The Sheth began elaborate preparations for the wedding. The entire town was abuzz with the news. Beware! Just a few days before the wedding, the Shethani suddenly died. A pall of grief fell upon the Sheth, his daughter, and the entire community.

In the end, the Sheth arranged his daughter's wedding, but it was a simple and sober affair. His dominance had vanished.

This young woman married and moved into a cultured in-laws' home. Even there, misfortune continued to play havoc with her. Whether it was the *parana* of her penance, the birth of a son, or any other festive occasion, her in-laws would prepare to celebrate lavishly, but then something unexpected would happen that would prevent the celebration from taking place. This woman's heart would sink into despair, she would miss the opportunity to receive greatness, and she would not even receive it.

Once, this woman approached the Kevalgyani Bhagwant. She inquired about the reason for her misfortune. The Kevalgyani Bhagwant then told her, " In the life of Lakshmi, you used to take full advantage of the rituals by paying a small amount. The result is that whenever you had an opportunity in life to be important, some obstacle would arise, leaving you with disappointment, not importance."

Tears began to flow from both her eyes. Obeying her husband's orders, she took initiation from the Kevali Bhagwant and practiced such restraint that she absolved all her karmas in that very life and attained salvation.

**Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.**

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## 28. Vijaysheel Kumar and his previous birth

King Vijaysen had a son named Vijaysheel. The king had many sons and treated them all with equal paternal affection. However, not everyone can have the capability of handling the responsibilities of the kingdom. **Giving a position to someone unqualified could cause more harm than leaving it vacant.** Therefore, the king was always preoccupied with the question of who should be given the responsibility of the kingdom.

As time passed, all the sons grew up. They became well-educated and skilled in the art of warfare. Their abilities, intelligence, and qualities also became apparent. The king's eyes fell on Vijaysheel, the son of Queen Vijayshree. He decided to hand over his kingdom to him and nominated him. If the other princes came to know that their father would make Vijaysheel king, they would all burn with jealousy. There was also a fear that Vijaysheel might be killed through conspiracy and treachery. Therefore, the king stopped respecting his designated successor Vijaysheel.

Earlier, father used to love Vijaysheel, now he does not. He was deeply hurt, so badly that one night he left the house alone, carrying only a sword.

He travels around the country and abroad, watching various sports. He learns new languages and spends his days eating at various places. He is somewhat bewildered.

Once, during the summer season, he was wandering through a dense forest. By midday, he was overcome with hunger and intense thirst, but he couldn't find even a trace of food or water. He was deeply distressed, searching for shelter and support, when a divine being with immense brilliance appeared before him. As soon as he arrived, he placed his hand on the prince's head and said, "Prince, I am giving you two gems. Take them. Your time of sorrow will end. The first gem is the **Upadrav Har Mani**. Whenever any disturbance or fear arises, pray to this gem and the disturbance will subside. The second gem is the **Chintamani ratna**. It will fulfil all your desires. "

The prince accepted the gems. His surprise knew no bounds. He was stunned with joy. As he accepted the gems, he asked, "*Yajman*, who are you? Where have you come from? What is your name, and why are you gifting me such supernatural gems?" Such divine gems should be kept safe by a person, not even disclosed to others. Giving them away was out of the question.

**"Prince, the answer to your questionnaire will be given by the wise sage when you return to your hometown and listen to his teachings."** Saying this, the man continued on his way to the forest.

Now, with the power of gems, the prince found happiness even in the forest. The gems instantly quenched his hunger and thirst, and he enjoyed luxuries day and night, living a royal life even in the forest. He felt no sorrow.

While traveling the country and abroad, he once reached the town of Kusumpur. At the city's outskirts, he heard an announcement: "My lord King Devsharma is suffering from unbearable eye pain. All the remedies of Vaidya Dhanvantari and the tantra-mantras have been

ineffective. Now, whoever can alleviate the king's pain will be given in marriage to his own daughter, a virgin like Devangana, and will also be given half the kingdom."

"Come on, I'll relieve the king's pain in a snap of my fingers," the prince said to the royal servants. He didn't even look ahead and, with a majestic face, started walking toward the palace. The royal servants were astonished. Is this a divine being? How will he alleviate the king's eye pain? Will this unknown man succeed or will he be beaten and depart? Their minds were dizzy, yet they took the prince to the palace. Reaching the king, the prince gave him the anointing water of his own Upadrav Har (trouble-killing) gem. Within a minute, the king opened his eyes, sat up in bed, and was completely relieved of the unbearable pain of so many days.

King Devsharma saw his saviour prince. He was deeply moved. He asked the prince about his identity, and the prince recounted the tale of his life to the king. Upon hearing it, the king was deeply moved by a sense of detachment.

The king married **Punyashree** Kumari, who was so beautiful that she could defeat a nymph, with the prince and after crowning him on the throne the king set out on the path of restraint. He accepted initiation from a worthy guru.

The people began to praise the prince profusely. What a fortunate man! He had come to an unknown land and become the master of a princess and the king of a kingdom. This news reached his father, King Vijaysen, who lived in Vijaypur. He too became a recluse. He affectionately called the prince to himself and, after crowning him the throne of Vijaypur, King Vijaysen renounced the world and accepted *Charitra*.

Once, King Vijaysheel was visiting the city of Kusumpur. His father-in-law, Rajarshi Devsharma, was also present there. The king gave him a grand welcome. The Rajarshi had now attained threefold enlightenment. The entire public, including the king, rushed to listen to his discourse.

The king asked, "Bhagwant! How did such ups and downs of happiness and sorrow come into my life at the age of budding youth? When I was near death in the forest, some divine man gave me gems. Due to the influence of those gems, my life again reached the peak of progress. Who was that divine man? I never met him after that."

Prince, all this is the result of the virtues and vices of your previous life.

In your previous life, you lived as a labourer in the town of **Kshempur**. You accepted **SurajSheth's** service and settled down there. You served him life-long. The Sheth was also a very religious person.

Once when Gurudev came for Chaturmas, the Sheth accepted many rules. Seeing this, you too got enlightened. You developed respect for religion.

You too gave up these five things: dinner, honey, butter, alcohol and meat for four months with Gurudev. You also took a vow with the rituals.

When your lifespan was complete, you died. After death, you were born here as prince Vijaysheel. Your master, after his death, has become Riddhiman diety in the Devlok.

When you were living in forest, the divine being who gave you divine gems was Suraj Sheth. Out of affection for you, diety Suraj Sheth took human form and gave you supernatural gems and then departed. Due to his influence, you regained your kingdom and family.

- Reference: Shradh Vidhi Prakaran.

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## 29. Arundev Vidyadhar and his previous birth

Arundev Vidyadhar was the son of **Manishekhar** Vidyadhar. **Manimala** was the name of the queen of **Manimandir** town's ruler Manishekhar. Arundev was Manimala's son, making him a natural heir to the throne. His exceptional virtuous deeds and artistic practice also steered him toward the throne of his ancestral king. These qualities made him a clear candidate in the competition for the throne.

Because of this virtuous deed, he grew up like the son of a Chakravarti. Though the son of an ordinary king, he was raised in a manner reminiscent of the son of a Chakravarti.

When he grew up, he became the husband of not just one but thousands of queens. The number of Vidyadhar girls who sought him was unbelievable. In his youth, he learned and perfected 1,000 Vidyas, including *Pragyapti*, and within a short time, his father even enthroned him.

He managed his father's kingdom! With a unique combination of virtue and valour, he became the emperor of both the southern and northern classes of Vidyadhars, respectively.

Once, a grand Rath Yatra festival began in the town of Manimandir. Many kings and sages attended. The chariot circled and approached the palace. King Arundev came out with his entire family to welcome the chariot.

The king's gaze fell upon the group of sages guiding the Rath Yatra (chariot procession). Shri **Prabhsuriji** was leading the group. An elderly sage was standing near him. Upon seeing the elderly sage, the king collapsed, falling into a deep unconsciousness. A few moments later, when he emerged from his unconsciousness, his joy had grown immense. He stood up and paid his respects first to the elderly sage, and then to his Gurudev Shri Prabhsuriji.

The king's behaviour astonished the disciples and followers present. The old sage asked the king, "You are a repository of wisdom. Why did you bow to the old sage before the Acharya?"

Today I have become a king, this is a favor of you, old sage. If you had not given me enlightenment in my previous life, I would still be in the cycle of misery.

The king answered briefly, and the chariot procession stopped. Everyone became curious to know about the king's previous life.

O King, you must have learned about your previous life through your memories of your past lives. Perhaps that is why you have fainted now. If so, please tell us what your past life relationship is with this old sage. We are curious to know.

Lord, what you said is true. I have just now received the knowledge of my past lives through your vision, and with its help, I can see my past lives. If you permit, I will present this information at your feet.

Counting from Arundev's life, three lives ago, I was a Dhanvantari Vaidya (physician). My name was Siddha. My knowledge and experience in medicine were unmatched, but my greed and violence were equally infamous. I wouldn't treat even close relatives without taking money. I wouldn't spare even my friends.

Ah! I would suck up to even those poor who lacked food. I would only begin treatment after collecting the full amount. My heart was very greedy. And because of this greed, I had become callous. I would see the pain of the patient later; **I would first see the money. A doctor's life is truly selfish. He is not interested in people's health, but in their illness.** I was like that.

Once a Jain Acharya visited my town, and I went to listen to his lecture. That day, in his lecture, Sahebji opened up the attitude of physicians and preached on it. A true Jain or a compassionate person should not become a doctor, because aspiring doctors always strive to earn as much money as possible. Hardly any doctor would prioritize the suffering of the patient over greed.

His discourse continued to influence my heart. My mind softened. For a while, I gave up greed and gave medicine to the sick. I gave only as much medicine as needed and charged according to the patient's condition. During this period, my mind remained kind, but as time passed, it returned to its cruelty. I became greedy for money and started exploiting the sick again.

At last, I died. The sins I had committed in the medical profession threw me into the animal life. I was born as a monkey in a forest. Gradually I became the leader of a group of monkeys and started playing with other monkeys. Even in the life of a monkey, I committed a lot of sins by committing violence, attacks, storms, jealousy and torturing others. Once our group of monkeys reached a forest. There, under a dense tree, a sage was sitting with his mat spread out and was engrossed in meditation. As if he had become serious and was immersed in the depth of meditation.

Upon seeing the sage, my group attacked him. Some threw stones at him, others tree branches, some threw thorn earrings, and some bricks. Yet the sage remained unmoved.

**No resistance and no confusion. Like a block of ice, evenness.**

I was also present there. Seeing the sage, I remembered my previous life. Scenes of the Jain sage's discourse, which I had heard and loved while serving as a physician, flashed before me. Devotion to the sage awakened in me. I immediately stopped my companions from attacking. I came to the front and sat next to the sage, and sent back my group.

Thanks to my medical knowledge from my previous life, I realized the sage was ill and unable to walk. I examined him. A poisonous thorn had penetrated the sage's foot, reaching deep into the flesh. He was in immense pain. His foot had swollen and become like a pillar.

Because the thorn was broken at the top and had spread deep inside, it was impossible for an ordinary person to remove it.

Due to my practice in my previous life, I pulled out even such a thorn with another stronger thorn. This caused the sage immense pain. He bled profusely, but now he was free from danger. Otherwise, his death was certain. After that, I went to the forest and brought the medicine Sanrohini. I applied it to the wound on the sage's foot, which soothed his pain. Gradually, the wound healed.

Now the sage became healthy and he advised me that if I remained cautious, even in the animal state, I could find salvation. The rat that had come to the *samvasaran* of Lord Dharmanath attained salvation before the Lord.

I accepted *Samyaktva* from him. I took a vow as per my capacity. Then I asked him by gesture that how come you are here alone. Munivar replied that I had left with a group of monks. Everyone was going for the pilgrimage to the Sammetshikhar together. Then I felt this thorn in the forest. Fellow monks worked very hard to remove the thorn. The entire group was starving and thirsty in this forest. Finally I prayed that you all go ahead. I will remain immersed in equanimity here with the grace of Guru. If I get any solution then I will treat my leg, otherwise I will complete my life in meditation.

All the weeping eyes parted. There was no other option.

That's it, Gurudev! The sage who was hurt by that thorn is the same old sage standing before you today. He was a benefactor of mine in my previous life. I healed him, and then he returned to the Gachchha and is here today. Over time, I died and became Arundev Vidyadhar.

The king stopped.

Tears started flowing from everyone's eyes along with Suriiji.

- Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.

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### **30. The previous birth of Dheerraj, Veerraj, Heerraj and their Mitra Dev**

In the city of Dhairyapuri, there was a king named Dheerraj. Although he was averse to religion, he was deeply interested in the discourses of religious people. Once, a surprising event occurred in his kingdom. The *NagarSheth* (merchant of the city) earned a lot of money in his business on Jain festivals, but on other days, he not only made no money but also suffered losses.

The Sheth's surprise knew no bounds. The traders also looked at this with surprise. The Sheth asked a learned Jain monk the reason for such a surprising and full of profit and loss situation in his business. The monk replied, "The great one! In your previous life, you must have done the best sadhana on festival dates due to which you are getting only profit on those days. On

the other hand, in your previous life, you must have neglected the religion on other days except festival days due to which you have to suffer losses here again and again on non-festival days.

Hearing the Guru's reply, the Sheth was enlightened and overwhelmed. He and his family now began to worship on Parvatithi (festival dates) with great enthusiasm.

During the six days of Parvatithi, there used to be a lot of enthusiasm for penance, chanting, paushadh, donation etc. in his house

The clever Sheth now committed to conducting all his business transactions, both large and small, only during festival days. Beyond that, he traded merely for the sake of name. The result of this cleverness was that losses ceased and income began to multiply. In no time, he became the owner of millions of gold coins.

Other businessmen could not tolerate Sheth's rise to such heights and were eager to harm him by any means necessary.

**Who can destroy a community of merchants? It's the merchants themselves, not others. Fuelled by jealousy, they are the ones who dig trenches for each other, thus bringing about the destruction of the entire community.**

This proverb proved true here. The merchants of the city informed King Dheerraj that the merchant had found a treasure worth crores of rupees. The king was said to have the right to the treasure, so he kept it a secret. The king summoned the Sheth and gave him a chance to give clarification. The Sheth replied firmly, "Your Majesty, I have pledged to my guru not to steal, so I cannot even dream of hiding the money that rightfully belongs to the king. Whatever I have is a fortune earned through my honest business practices."

At this point, greedy Dheerraj accused him of being a "**religious fraud**" who wasn't telling the truth. If the pot of wealth hadn't been found, how had he suddenly earned so much? The king was enraged. He confiscated all the Sheth's wealth and placed him and his entire family under **house arrest** in his own palace.

It was Shudi Panchami, so the Sheth thought, "Even though I've been robbed and put under house arrest, I'll definitely make a profit today because it's a festival date." The Sheth's courage remained unwavering. Well done, Sheth!

That's exactly what happened. On the morning of the Shudi Chhath, the Sheth's entire mansion was filled with gold coins, and Dheerraj, the Sheth's troublemaker, had his entire treasury emptied.

The king was terrified. He was drenched in sweat. Upon investigation, he discovered that all the ornaments from the king's treasury had reached the Sheth's storehouse. The Sheth was under house arrest in the palace, and his mansion was surrounded by fortified soldiers. Therefore, he had no choice but to believe that some divine power had caused such a miracle.

The king came running to the merchant. He bowed at his feet and apologized. "Sheth! Forgive me! Let me go, or I will have to seek refuge in death". "Sir! I know nothing," the Sheth replied. Just then, a deity with a radiant figure appeared. He said to the king: "Dheerraj, remember your master from your previous life, Dhaneshwar Sheth, whose soul is now a deity in the twelfth Devlok, and after getting enlightenment, renounce this world! I am the god of

that Achyut Devlok. Now I am going to preach to the kings Heerraj and Veerraj. All the ups and downs in your NagarSheth's business were all an illusion created by me.” Saying this, the diety disappeared.

Dheerraj, on the other hand, fell unconscious and rolled to the ground. The cooling treatment brought him back to his senses in a short time. Now, the knowledge of his past lives had dawned on him. This seemed to transform the very glow on his face.

The entire royal family and hundreds of citizens gathered around him. In front of them all, Dheerraj said, "Citizens and relatives! I have received the knowledge of the remembrance of the past lives, and I have learned in detail everything the diety has indicated through it."

“Swami, please tell us about your previous birth.”

“I will definitely tell you, but I will tell you in full court”, said the king.

The royal court began shortly after. The crowd surged like a river. The queens also sat behind the curtains.

The king respectfully seated the NagarSheth on a nearby seat.

“Friends, in the third life before my present life, I was a washerman. I was close friends with a farmer and an oilman. All three of us had embraced Jainism through the grace of Dhaneshwar, the NagarSheth of our town.

Dhaneshwar Sheth was a devout disciple, a prominent businessman, and had immense wealth. With a wife named Dhanshree and a son named Dhansar, he was the pride of the town of Dhanyapur.

This Sheth, would always perform the ritual of *Paushadh* on six days – two Ashtami, two Chaturdashi, Purnima and Amavasya – in a month.

The character of this Dhaneshwar Sheth was as if a repetition of the description of the Shravakas of Tungiyannagar, as given in the Bhagwati Sutra.

He would meditate at night in the cremation grounds and empty houses during the *Paushadh*. Once, on the eighth day of the month. During Paushadh at night, he was in the cremation grounds, immersed in *Kayotsarg*, then a diety from the Devlok arrived to test him.

In the Devlok, Saudharmendra had praised Dhaneshwar Sheth's steadfastness in religion, so this diety, driven by jealousy, wanted to lead Sheth astray. He took the form of Sheth's wife and began embracing him. He created dawn at midnight and, posing as Sheth's wife and son, tried to force him to perform the *Parna*. He also created an illusion that robbers were stealing jewelry from Sheth's house.

However, Sheth remained unperturbed in *Kaussagg*, even his mind didn't tremble.

When this drama of favourable circumstances failed, the diety began unleashing life-threatening troubles. Turning into a vampire (ghost), he began tearing the Sheth's skin off. He threw an iceberg at his head and beat him to death with a whip....

All in vain... By his own calculations, Sheth could estimate it was only half past midnight, so this was definitely some divine mischief. I have to defeat it.

When the Sheth did not transgress, the deity was pleased and showered flowers on his head. He also showered his house with one crore gems.

I (the washerman), the farmer, and the oilman had witnessed the rain of gems in Sheth's house, so we became more devoted to Sheth. We attained *Samyaktva* through Sheth's teachings. We took twelve vows and, like Sheth, all three of us began performing the *Paushadh* on *Parvatithi*. We used to perform *Paushadh* along with Sheth.

Then the king of the city tried to make all three of us corrupt our religion, but taking inspiration from the Sheth, all three of us remained steadfast.

Ultimately, all four of us died while practicing the Shrivak Dharma. Dhaneshwar Sheth's soul became a deity in the twelfth Devlok, and the three of us were born as deities in the sixth Devlok. There, too, we forged a bond of friendship. Throughout our lives, we practiced devotion to Jin and other divine activities together.

Now, the three of us had short lives, so we made a promise to the Sheth's soul to teach us the Dharma in our next lives. Bound by this promise, the Sheth's soul has taught me the Dharma here. Now, I will renounce this world and embrace restraint.

The people continued to weep, and king Dheerraj took initiation from a wise Acharya. He cultivated pure self-restraint, performed severe austerities, ascending on the *Kshapakshreni*, attained Kevalgyan in that very life, and finally attained salvation.

Dheerraj means the soul of a washerman from his previous life. Similarly, the soul of the oilman, who became Heerraj, and the soul of the farmer, who has now become Veerraj, both received initiation after being enlightened by Dhaneshwardev. Both of them also attained Kevalgyan in the same life and attained salvation.

- **Reference: Shraddh Vidhi Prakaran.**

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## Some Books Edited / translated / written by P. Panyas Shree Nirvaanbhooshan V. Gani M.

1.

### Enlightening Stories



No. of pgs.: 140

Published:2025

This book is a collection of small stories, narrated by world's best preacher. This book will enlighten your whole life, family, nation, continent & world. How? To get this answer, read 'Enlightening Stories'.

2.

### Children's Stories



No. of pgs.: 36

Published:2025

This book will inspire children for adopting honesty, generosity, modesty, human values, etc., in their lives. How? To get this answer, read 'Children's Stories'.

3.

### Shankheshwar Tirth From Past to Present & Lord Shri Parshwanath – 10 Bhavas



No. of pgs.: 72

Published:2025

How Krishna achieved magical idol of Lord Shri Parshwanath? Why the town was named 'Shankheshwar'? To get this answer and to know about past lives of Lord Shri Parshwanath, read this book.

4.

### Miracles of Navkar



No. of pgs.: 64

Published:2025

This book is a collection of 16 miraculous incidents. It will help readers to know the magical powers of 'Navkar', in their life also.

5.

### Lord Mahavir – A Life Sketch



No. of pgs.: 54

Published:2025

This book is a collection of the main events of 27 Bhavas of Lord Shri Mahavir swami. It will inspire new generation for adopting morality, honesty, human values and Jain religion in their lives.

6.

### Historical Stories



No. of pgs.: 64

Published:2025

23 historical events are depicted in a very simple and lucid style, which will inspire new generation for adopting moral values.

7.

### Shri Haribhadrasuriji



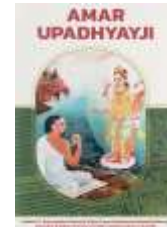
No. of pgs.: 54

Published:2025

How a brahmin scholar, who hated Jainism, not only became devoted but also the top-most leader of Jainism? To know this, read 'Shri Haribhadrasuriji Maharaj'.

8.

### Amar Upadhyayji



No. of pgs.: 72

Published:2025

Read this book to know how to become 'World's Best Teacher'.

# Books



## **Bhadrabahu**

### **(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)**

This book is a collection of pictorial stories on Acharya Bhadrabahu, to educate children on Jain values and practices for self-development and leading a better life.

**No. of Pages: 16**

**Published: 2023**

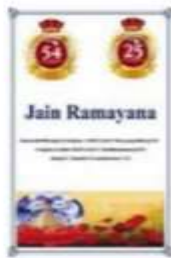


## **Golden Path Towards Nirvaan**

This booklet explains many key terms like 'Dharma', 'Atma', 'Sin', 'Samyak Darshani', 'god', 'guru' etc., and their significance from the point of view of Jain religion.

**No. of Pages: 56**

**Published: 2023**



## **Jain Ramayana**

### **(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)**

This book is a collection of small stories on different characters of the era of Lord Ram, from the perspective of Jainism. Reading this book will inculcate high moral and cultural values among the present generation.

**No. of Pages: 200**

**Published: 2023**



## **Maynasundari**

### **(Multicolor Pictorial Story Book)**

This story book gives knowledge of Jain values to children through interesting pictorial stories on a famous Jain character Maynasundari. Reading this book will cultivate and develop high moral values among kids and teenagers.

**No. of Pages: 25**

**Published: 2023**

# Books



## Chicago Prashnottar

This book includes Questions and Answers on Jainism for the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago 7 U.S.A. in 1893. It will help readers know the eternal truths of Jainism.

No. of Pages: 214

Published: 2018



## Our Great Persons

This book is a collection of small stories of great Jain persons in order to inspire new generation for adopting morality, human values, Jain religion and culture in their lives.

No. of Pages: 25

Published: 2023

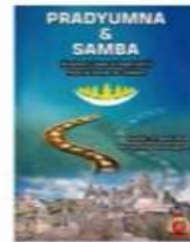


## Jain Mahabharat

This book is a collection of small stories on different characters Kaurava and Pandavas, from the perspective of Jainism. Reading this book will inculcate high moral and cultural Influencer for present generation.

No. of Pages: 165

Published : 2024



## Pradyumna & Shamba

This book is all about Krishna's clever sons - Pradyumna & Shamba. Read this book to know more.

No. of Pages: 20

Published : 2024



## Life Changer

This book will change your life, how? To get this answer, read this book "Life Changer".

No. of Pages: 40

Published : 2024



## Aatma

This book gives you knowledge in order to attain moksha (liberation), a human being must acquire self-knowledge (Atma Gyaan or Brahmajnana).

No. of Pages: 120

Coming Soon

## About the Compiler

The compiler Pujya **Panyas Shree Nirvaanbhooshanvijayji G. Maharaja**, before monkhood was studying in Jai-Hind college, (Mumbai), one of the top most college of India. Though staying in Walkeshwar, one of the richest areas of India, left all the comforts & luxuries, to achieve high level of spirituality. When he was a teen-ager boy, influenced by the western culture started hating, not only Indian cultures & traditions but Jain religion also. He often went to Jain upashray, just to listen & read Jain stories. This also, helped him to give up his dream of going to abroad. Stories became a turning point in his life. After becoming monk, once he was suggested by his preacher, Guru **H.H.P.A.D. Shrimadvijay Hembhushansuriswaraji Maharaja**, to make his English powerful.

He was too obedient to follow each & every order of his Guru. Hence, he was given responsibility of giving 'pravachans' to children & teen-agers, during sanskar-shreni in just one year after attaining monkhood. Due to the grace of Guru-Bhagawants, he achieved mastery in English also. He gave many 'pravachans' created several poems e.t.c. in English also. He became able of compiling books & translating pravachan in English. He also helped his Guru M. in translating case papers of sammet-shikharji, Antarikshji e.t.c. He has a mastery of converting hearts of children, teen agers & young stars too. We have also experienced in our life. He brought us, near to Jainism.

We hope this story which is written in simple & lucid language, would help children, teen agers etc. to study Jainism, who are facing language barriers.

Ketanbhai (C.A.), Hemang (C.A.)  
Sagar (C.A.), Jinal (C.A.)  
Arham. Aarya, Vinaybhai  
Devangbhai

