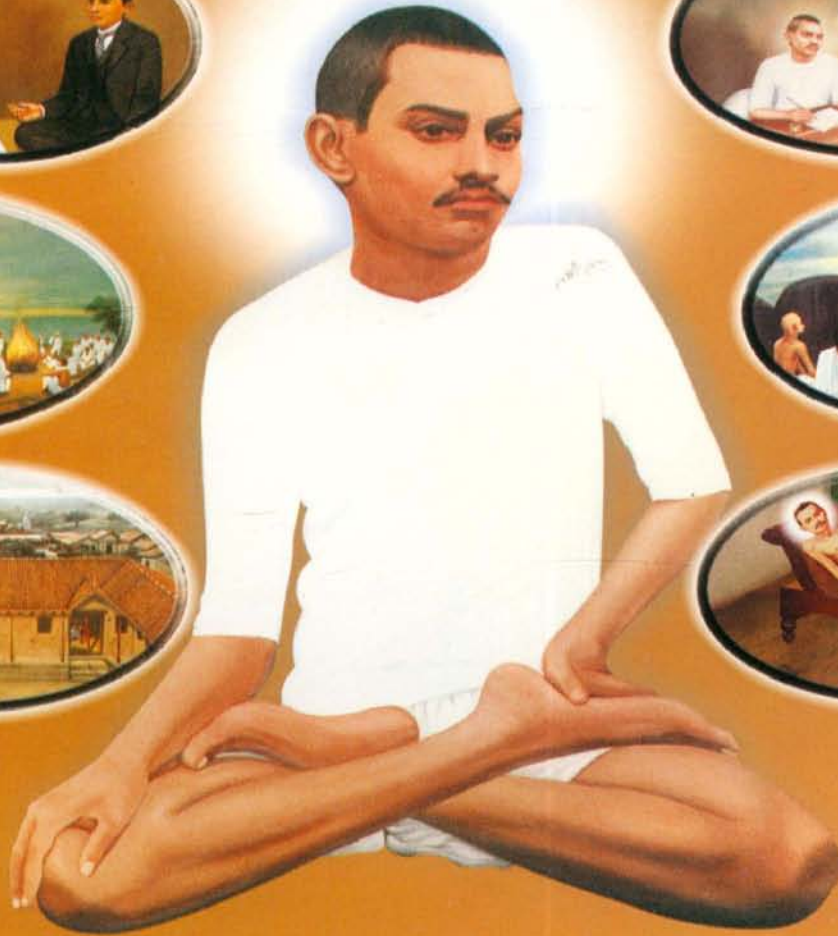


# **A Pinnacle Of Spirituality**

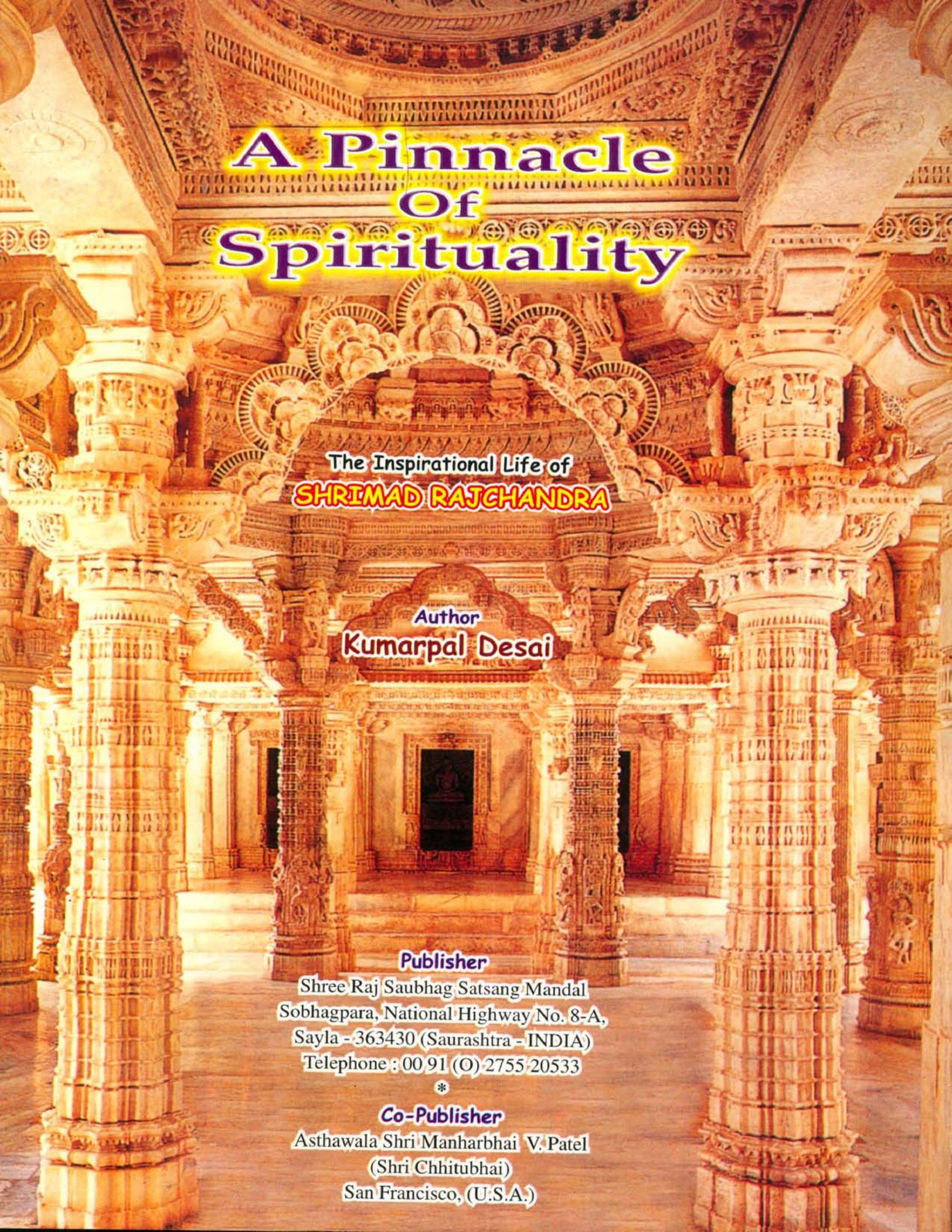
**The Inspirational Life of  
SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA**





કર વિચાર તો પામ.

*Self Realisation will surely be  
attained if the thinking is right.*



# A Pinnacle Of Spirituality

The Inspirational Life of  
**SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA**

Author  
**Kumarpal Desai**

**Publisher**

Shree Raj Saubhag Satsang Mandal  
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~ ~ ~

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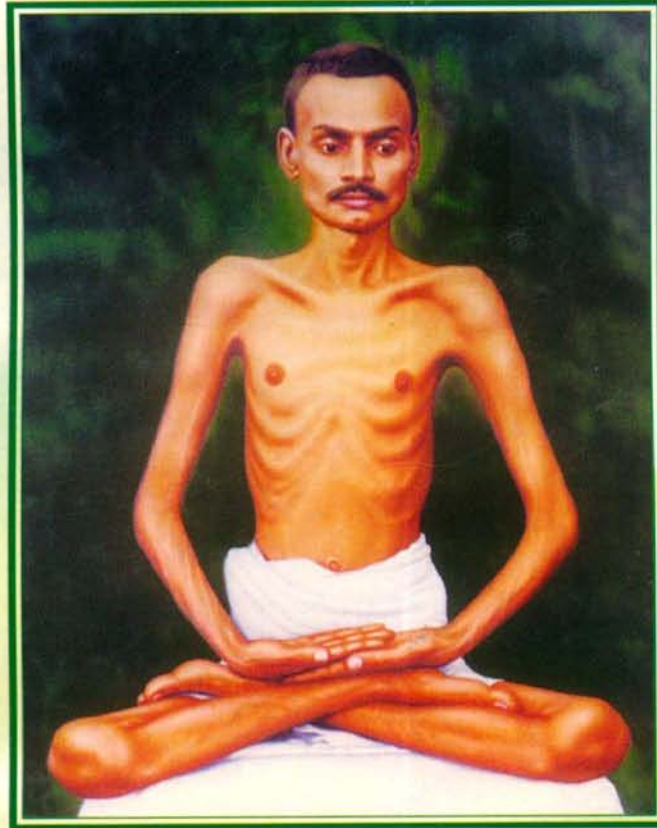
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**For their assistance in translation**

## Dedication



One who is selfless sea of compassion  
One who is dispenser of spiritual truths  
One who is the illuminator of the True path  
One who is the king of the ascetics  
One who is wisdom personified  
Such is  
Param Krupaludev

## **Shrimad Rajchandra**

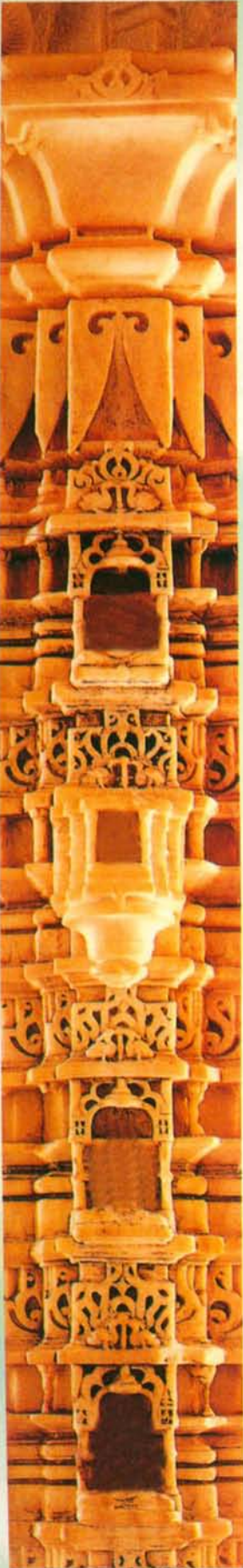
At whose feet we bow and offer  
our humble and devotional homage  
filled with faith  
in form of  
words of praise and gratitude



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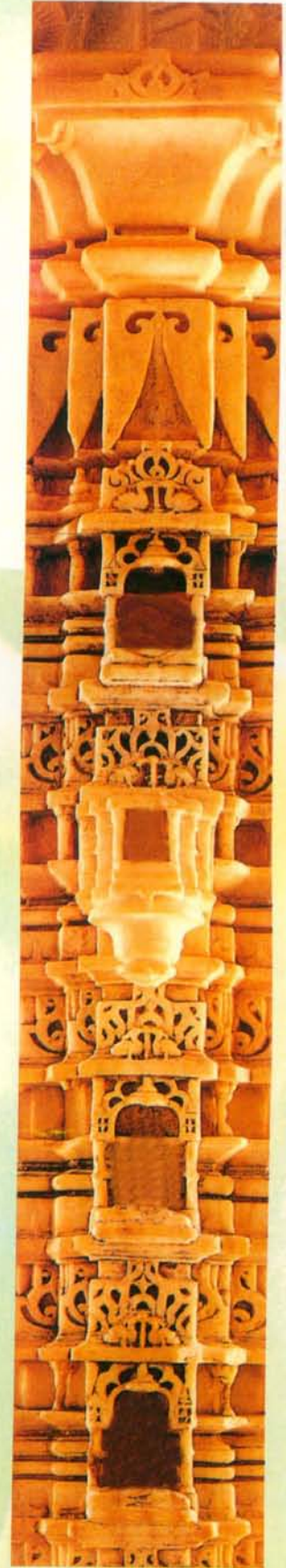


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## Preface

We take great pleasure in presenting to you this book, "A Pinnacle of Spirituality" on the life of legendary Shrimad Rajchandra. It is written with a view to cover all the aspects of his life in an interesting and objective way.

Shrimad is known to his followers as "*Param Krupaludev*," or Lord of the Highest Compassion, a name which aptly describes his attitude to all living beings. He was the personification of knowledge, wisdom and insight, a Self-Realised Soul.

Shrimad's spiritual life and his imparted wisdom, distilling Lord Mahavir's message, have benefitted all of humanity. He possessed an extraordinary memory and such mental purity that he knew his past lives. His public performances of a hundred different tasks simultaneously demonstrated the powers of his soul. He had mastered the complexities of astrology and had an innate poetic talent. His powers and talents brought Shrimad fame as a teenager, and yet he turned his back to all this. He considered this recognition an impediment to his spiritual growth and so, just as a snake casts off its old skin, he put an end to all public demonstrations of his supernatural abilities. Not only did he shun the fame he had achieved, but he also walked away from the opportunity to make a fortune from these public performances. Spiritual growth, both his own and that of others, was his main purpose in life. Born in *Vikram Samvat* 1924 (1867 AD), Shrimad Rajchandra had, at the age of 23, attained "*Samyag Darshan*," his experience of the bliss of the Soul. This was a momentous occasion in the life of Shrimad and was the beginning of its path to ultimate liberation. His experiences are expressed here in his own words:

In letter number 170, written to Sobhagbhai in the month of *Kartik* in *VS* 1947 he wrote: "There is no doubt that this soul has attained Right Vision. It is true that all material bonds have been destroyed forever. To attain the abeyance of mental activities to reach the ultimate state (*Nirvikalp Samadhi*)' remains to be attain and that is not difficult.

He continues, "I've entered into the realm of absolute 'self-union'. There is bliss and that is my yearning. The mind, body and speech are separated and are now only enduring the fruits of past deeds.

In letter number 187, a month later, he writes to Sobhagbhai: "There has not been even the smallest shortcoming in understanding or experiencing the ultimate state of the soul from all its aspects and as it really is. Apart from one minute part all else has been experienced."

We were enlightened about Shrimad Rajchandra's spiritual achievements by Pujya

Ladakchandbhai Manekchand Vora, whom we fondly call "Pujya Bapuji" and he inspired in our hearts true love and devotion for Shrimad. Studying Shrimad's letters has been invaluable in our progress on the spiritual path. Shrimad's thinking was non-sectarian and non-dogmatic, and his loyalty lay with any path which leads to the Soul. In his thoughts we find a perfect combination of the paths of devotion, wisdom and of ritual, and he covers them with both practical and philosophical perspectives. This philosophy will awaken many Seekers and bring them to the path of *Moksha*.

23<sup>rd</sup> April 2000 marks a century since Shrimad passed away. We wanted to pay our homage to this divine being and to bring more awareness of Shrimad to the Jain community as well as humanity at large. With this objective, all Shree Raj Saubhag Satsang Mandal has planned a series of events to bring to light the events in his life, his thoughts and his spiritual accomplishments. Our dream has now turned into reality.

The Herculean task of coordinating these centennial celebrations has received widespread support. The holy town of Vavania where Shrimad was born and spent his childhood is where the Shrimad Rajchandra Janma Bhuvan Trust was established. Shrimad Rajchandra's grand son and the President of this Trust, Shri Manubhai Modi has given his sincere and invaluable support and co-operation.

Our objective was to have to whole Jain Community, which is spread right across the glob to participate in these celebratations With this in mind, we approached Mr. Nemubhai Chandaria, the coordinator of the Institute of Jainology, who welcomed the idea wholeheartedly and has provided his full support. The Institute has, over the last seventeen years, coordinated many activities of the four Jain sects and represented their interests internationally.

Representatives of these three organisations, **Shrimad Rajchandra Janmabhuvan Trust (Vavania), the Institute of Jainology and the Shree Raj-Saubhag Satsang Mandal (Sayla)**, have established **an International Centennial Celebrations Committee to undertake this** great task. Additionally, an Advisory Committee consisting of representatives from all four Jain sects, eminent Jain scholars, and leaders and dignitaries from various Jain organisations around the world has also been formed. This Advisory committee has members from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Singapore, the U.K. and the U.S.A. The various *ashrams* established by the followers of Shrimad's teachings have also welcomed the celebrations and pledged their support.

This is one of the broadest platforms ever created in Jain history. To have so many different elements of the Jain community represented is an historically unprecedented

event. It is indeed an *Apurva Avsar* for the Jain community, with internal differences forgotten and such unity in celebrating the memory and teachings of one of Lord Mahavir's greatest disciples.

This book has been published in English to bring Shrimad's life and teachings to a wider audience and to share with readers an understanding of the True Path. Using more modern media, a video film of his life story, both in English and Gujarati have been prepared, as well as an additional Gujarati film depicting further episodes from his life is also under preparation. There are also over 90 computer-generated paintings depicting the events in Shrimad's life, to be exhibited at major Jain centers all over the world

Shrimad Rajchandra was a natural poet and a set of two audio cassettes and audio CDs with Shrimad's most popular poems and songs, deeply philosophical and spiritually inspiring compositions, have been produced. A translation of Shrimad's *Atma Siddhi Shastra* into modern English is also being undertaken under the auspices of the Institute of Jainology.

We are grateful to all the individuals, organisations and institutions who have extended their enthusiastic support to the various programs detailed above. We are also thankful to the members of the Shree Raj-Saubhag Satsang Mandal for their dedicated and unflinching effort. We would also like to thank the eminent Dr. Kumarpal Desai, a luminary of Gujarati literature who cooperated in the preparation of both English and Gujarati versions of this book, and the printer of the book Hi Scan Ltd. Our heartfelt gratitude are extended to all those who have given financial help and support.

Our humble attempt to describe Shrimad's life is like a tiny star in the vast firmament that is his life. Nevertheless, we hope to cast light on Shrimad Rajchandra's life, his thoughts, the method he espoused for spiritual progress, and the path he illuminated for the welfare of humanity. If there are any errors or deficiencies, we would like you to bring them to our notice, and we seek your forgiveness and indulgence for them.

May the inner strength of saints acquired by their spiritual endeavours benefit the world.

Shree Raj Saubhag Satsang Mandal  
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## Foreword

We begin the life story of a divine and superhuman being with reverence to his sacred memory. We can at best only get to know the events and the incidents in the lives of great spiritual beings. To fully appreciate the underlying significance behind such incidents we have to be on a higher spiritual plane.

When we stand at the confluence of the poetic creations and spiritual existence of Shrimad Rajchandra, the only thing we can lay our hands on is the combination of words flowing from his poems and his spirituality but we cannot feel the compassion in his heart or follow the deep thoughts that lay behind them. This is because of our own limitations in achieving such feelings or contemplating such profound thoughts.

We catch a glimpse of the depth of his renunciation, his aversion to worldly pleasures, the uniqueness of his all-comprehensive knowledge and teachings, and the purity of his character. But are we able to comprehend the depth and breadth of his spirituality, the glory and the grandeur of his super-human qualities? Do we have the ability to understand it fully? The ordinary men and women that we are, busy with day to day affairs cannot comprehend the unwavering peace, selfless compassion and the uniqueness of the sacred existence that lie behind their super-human lives.

How can a common man who is engrossed in mental and physical pains and worldly troubles experience the greatness and uniqueness of a being endowed with such spiritual qualities? The immensity of such a unique experience cannot be expressed here in a few words.

Hence the story of this formidable universal superhuman is being related by focusing on only a few rays that emanate from the sun of his spiritual existence and nothing beyond that. It is like trying to show the greatness of the Himalayas by showing a small foothill. Our aim is to show to those who are desirous for emancipation and who thirst for salvation, the life of Shrimad Rajchandra so that it may inspire them spiritually and help their progress towards liberation.

Shrimad in his short life has left such a large legacy for mankind that even those with much longer lives may not be able to absorb all his teachings in one lifetime.

We can get an idea of his immense mental prowess, through his extraordinary memory retention, recollection of the knowledge of his past lives, and his *Shatavdhan*

demonstrations. He was climbing very rapidly towards the pinnacle of his fame but he gave it all up without a moment's hesitation in favour of developing his Inner Self and to prepare for his final liberation

Through his poetic compositions, letters and prose, he gave humanity the direction in which it can seek salvation. Through his own life and work, he has influenced many ordinary people to change the course of their lives for the better.

With the strength of character, chastity and powers of renunciation, he treaded the same path that was once shown by Lord Mahavir. He could express thoughts and principles of religion in a simple manner , both in his discourses and in his writings.

It is in this way that Shrimad Rajchandra showed the spiritual path to the world after he himself attained the highest state of spirituality in his own life.

Our main objective in detailing his life story, his ideas and his thoughts is to convey to the readers, his disciples and to those who are eager to know something about him a few glimpses of the inspirational life story of Shrimad Rajchandra, so that they, in turn can find a path for their own salvation.

We have made sincere efforts to ensure the authenticity of this publication. Nevertheless, if still there remains any shortcomings or errors, please draw our attention to them. Our only prayer is that his life acts as a beacon, leading each one of us onto the path of *moksha*.

*Before we venture into the pages of this book, let us discard all our bias and prejudices.*

*When we swim into the ocean that is his life, we carry with us nothing else but humility, modesty and a pure heart, combined with a deep craving for knowledge.*

*Let us also carry in our hearts the yearning for the secrets of salvation.*

*Let us be eager to see the majesty of this great man through the various facets of his life.*

We pray that this life story of Shrimad Rajchandra will take each one of us higher and higher towards spirituality.

Date : 26-6-2000

**– Kumarpal Desai**

# A PINNACLE OF SPIRITUALITY



**One who has known the soul knows everything.**



**Infinite number of persons who accepted a true *Guru's* refuge, found the true path and were liberated.**





## 1. Shower of Nectar

After paying homage to Shrimad Rajchandra, let us reflect on the times into which he was born. After the depressing failure of the freedom struggle in the year 1857, the nation's spirit had begun to revive. There was on the horizon, a new dawn of learning, social reform and a new awakening.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and many other social reformers fought against social evils such as 'Sati' (the custom where a bride joins her husband's funeral pyre), and new religious thought emerged as a result of the efforts of organisations like *Brahmosamaj*, *Prarthanasamaj* and the Theosophical Society.

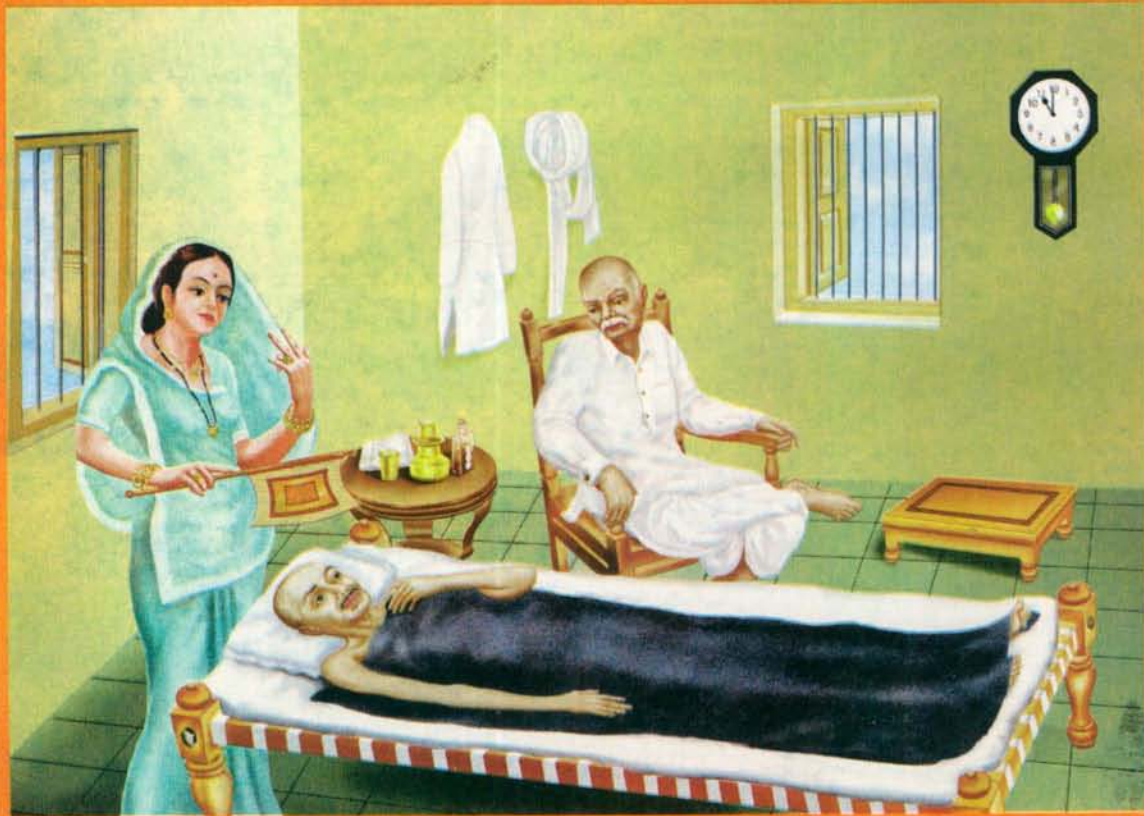
On the other hand, society was besieged by meaningless rituals, religious hypocrisy and blind faith. Religious festivities had become an excuse to display wealth. While religious customs were practiced, their true meaning and ultimate purpose had been lost. During such a period of decline in religious principles and understanding, two great figures were born – Shrimad Rajchandra, who scaled the heights of spirituality and who explained the fundamental path of Jainism, and Mahatma Gandhi who won Independence for India.

Shrimad Rajchandra was born two years before the birth of Gandhiji, in Vavania, a small port near Morvi in Saurashtra. Gandhiji was born in Porbandar, also in Saurashtra. Shrimad became Gandhiji's spiritual guide and it was from his life, above all others, that Gandhiji learnt the height of compassion for all living beings, even for an enemy. These two extraordinary souls enlightened the world by their faith and their deeds.

Shrimad was born on a Sunday, on the night of the full moon (Poonam) of the Indian month of *Kartik* in Vikram Samvat 1924 (Vikram Samvat, "VS" for short, is the Indian calendar) or November 9<sup>th</sup> 1867, into a bania family. His birthplace has become a place of pilgrimage.

Even the day is auspicious, as the full moon of *Kartik* also saw the births of such great Souls as Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, and the great Jain saint and scholar Acharya Hemchandra. Such souls are born to bring light in times of darkness and to uplift humanity, like a thirst-quenching shower of rainfall on arid soil.

Thus, Shrimad's parents Ravjibhai and Devbai, a devout couple who served the community with much love, were blessed with a son who later became Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual guide and confidant, and thus played a part in changing the world.



## 2. Heartfelt Blessings

In 18<sup>th</sup> century India, family values reflected the importance of sons in preserving the family lineage. Those unable to bear children were often ridiculed. Inheritances were often so divided that those with children ended up with a larger share, as they would face much larger expenses such as education, clothing and eventual marriage of their children.

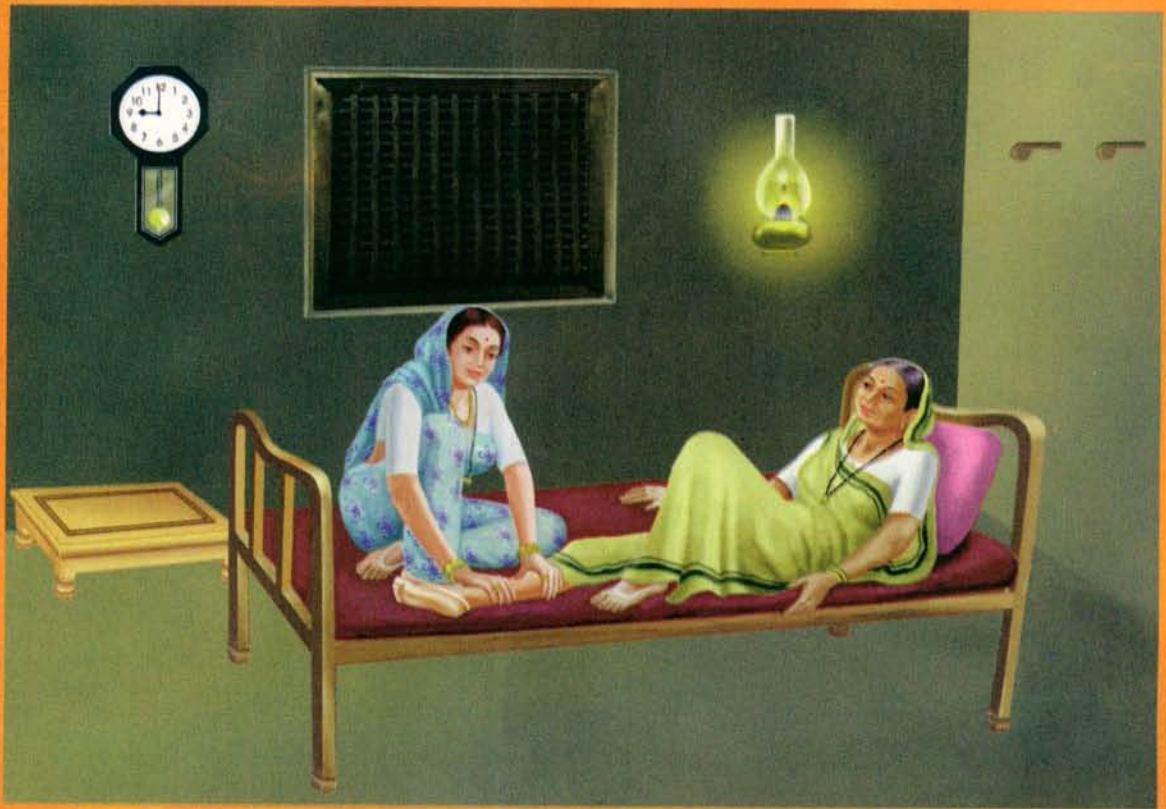
Shrimad's grandfather Panchanbhai, who originally lived in the village of Manekwada near Morvi, found himself in a predicament: while his wife Bhanbai gave birth to several children, none survived. When the time came for the family estate to be shared out, Panchanbhai's share was only a handful of coins, since he had no children and thus smaller future outgoings. Panchanbhai, deeply hurt by this, left his village - no small step in those days - to settle in Vavania. However his yearning for a male-child grew stronger and he felt more and more helpless. Panchanbhai sought the blessings of a village deity from near Vavania, Mother Ravichi, and made offerings to her. In 1902 VS (c. 1845 AD) Bhanbai gave birth to a son whom they named Ravjibhai after Mother Ravichi.

Shrimad's parents Ravjibhai and Devbai were both courteous and kind-hearted. They willingly served monks, holy men and all such pious souls, who, in turn, blessed them. Shrimad's mother Devbai came from a Jain family and had been brought up with Jain culture and values, particularly a strong sense of friendliness and compassion to all living beings.

An aged broker, who used to visit Ravjibhai for business, one day fell ill. Devbai nursed him back to health. The broker, treated as one of the family, was very much touched. When he recovered from his illness he parted with the words :

"Devbai! My blessings are with you. May God bless you with an extraordinary child."

One who dedicates his life to the service of humanity, always finds fulfillment in life. When service is rendered with no motive other than to help others, it is the highest type of service and will not go without reward. Devbai's selfless service was rewarded with the birth of a wonderful son.



### 3. A *Fakir's Prophecy*

Shrimad's mother Devbai looked after one and all with love, affection and generosity. Traditionally, an Indian bride comes to her new family with her own gold jewellery, often handed down from generation to generation, and of significant sentimental value.

Unfortunately, the family's financial position deteriorated, and Devbai willingly sold all the jewellery to provide for the family. But her nature had not changed and she continued to serve monks and saints as well as all visitors to her home with the same generosity and affection.

Devbai was a model of humility and of service. Her father- and mother-in-law were pleased to see their daughter-in-law's continued support to the family and its traditions in such difficult times.

They blessed her from the bottom of their hearts and had longed to see her bear a son who they knew, would bring light and joy to the family.

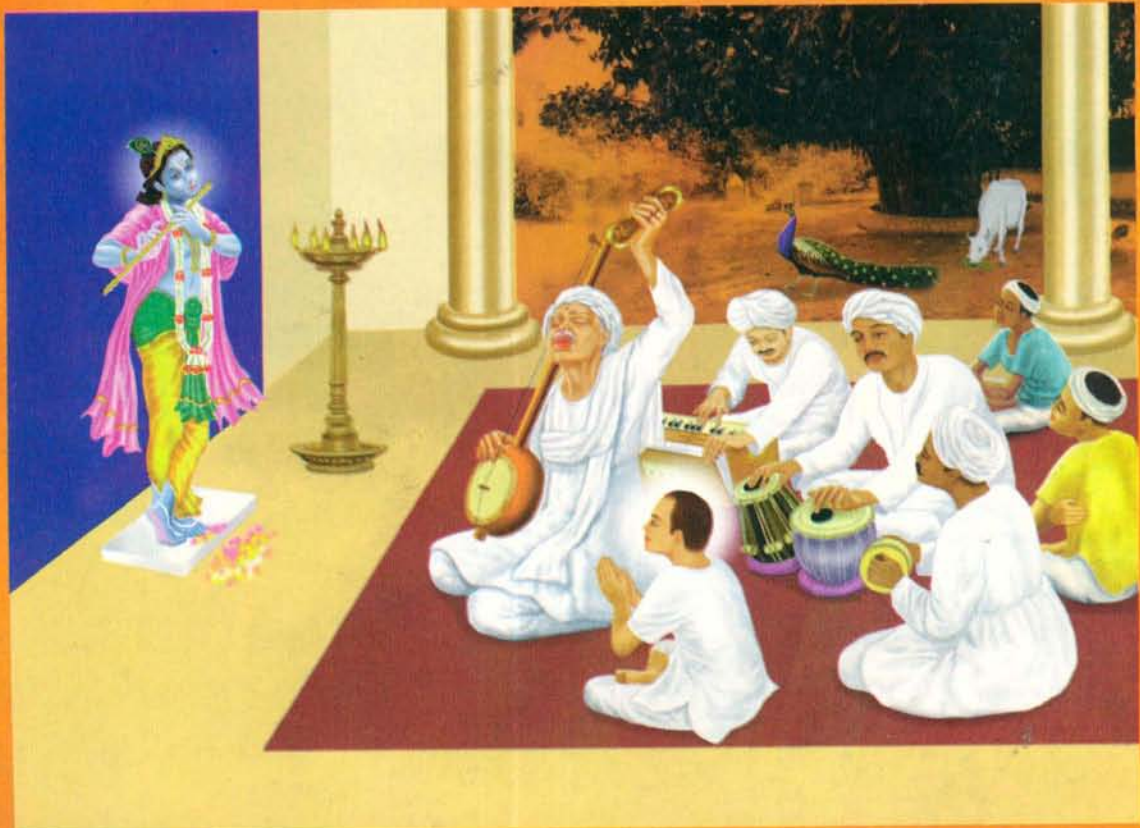
As if the gods had answered their prayers, Devbai was blessed with a son whom they named Laxminandan, and who later became known as Shrimad Rajchandra. Shrimad had one elder sister Shivkuvarbai, a younger brother Mansukh and three younger sisters, Zabakbai, Menabai and Jijibai.

Shrimad's father Ravjibhai also kept up the family's custom of the service to others, regardless of caste, creed or colour. He had long served a particular *fakir*, a Muslim mendicant, who once requested Ravjibhai to visit him early the next morning.

The next day, when Ravjibhai was about to leave, some guests called and he received them warmly, as was his custom with all guests.

When Ravjibhai finally arrived, the *fakir* addressed him :

"Ravji, you are very late. You will beget two sons – one will be very illustrious and the other will also be good. Both sons will bring glory to the family but the elder will command the respect of all. It is now time for me to leave this place. You too return home. May God bless you."



## 4. An Extraordinary Child

Devbai would often take her young son Laxminandan, as Shrimad was originally named, with her when visiting her friend and neighbour, the elderly Naku. He would sit as still as a statue for an hour or more at the old lady's house, neither crying nor indulging in pranks.

'What an unusual child!' mused his mother, observing her little boy, who conducted himself as if his mind, speech and body were all totally calm, and he were at peace with himself.

Shrimad resembled a "*balyogi*" – a child saint - in full control of his senses. While no ordinary child of three would be able to sit so still, the young Shrimad did, an early sign of the great spiritual development with which he had come into this world.

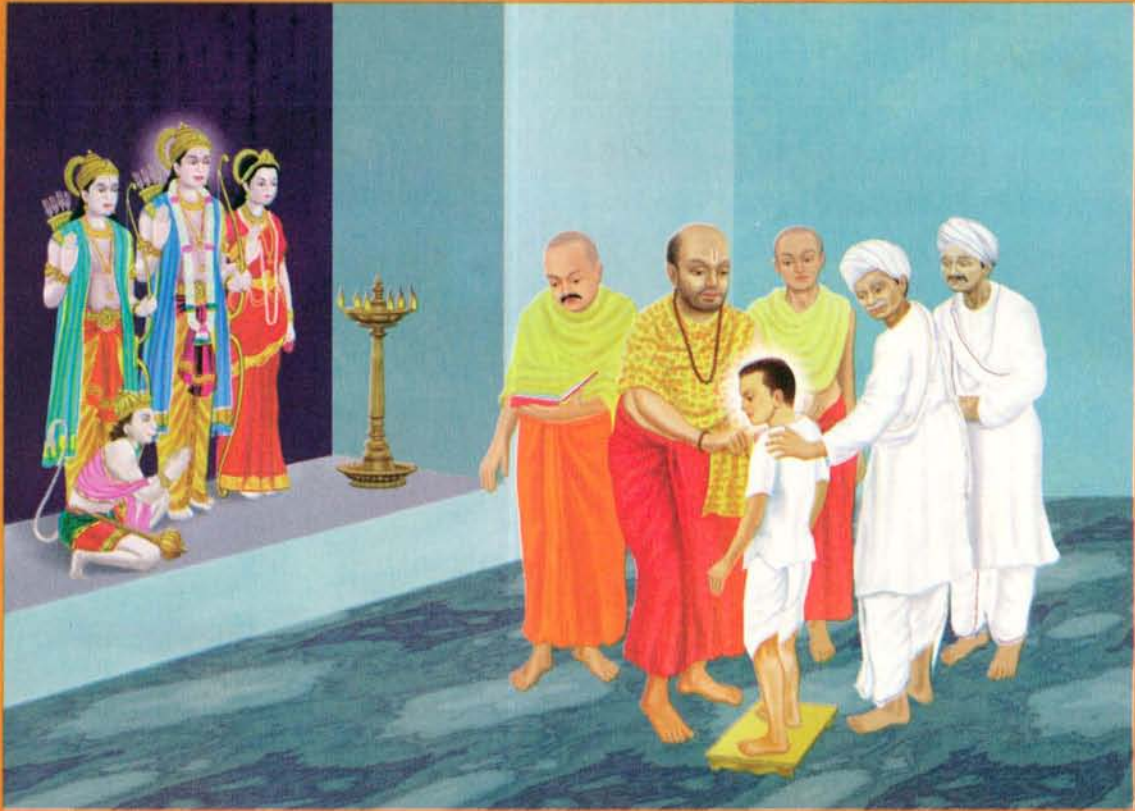
The Grandfather Panchanbhai's life was full of joy, finally blessed at an advanced age with a son and then, compounding his good fortune, he was blessed with a wonderful grandson. He showered the young Shrimad with love, and would often take him to the local temple, where they would sing hymns of Lord Krishna's glory.

Shrimad would hear episodes from the *Mahabharat*, a great Sanskrit epic, and he became familiar with the various accounts of Lord Vishnu's incarnations, of which Lord Krishna was one, and learnt about the great miracles attributed to him. Shrimad always looked forward to learning more about his beloved Lord.

Shrimad related his experiences and thoughts at this age in '*Samuchchay Vayacharya*,' a review of his life till the age of 13, which he wrote on his twenty-third birthday. He has written his thoughts on the Vaishnav religion (which worships Lord Vishnu). He would occasionally dream of being a *mahant* (spiritual leader) or a *tyagi*, one who has renounced all worldly possessions, while at other times he would think of more worldly fulfillment.

The young Shrimad had an inquisitive mind and would run to his grandfather with all his questions. Panchanbhai would answer his queries and dispel any doubts he might voice. The closer he grew to his grandfather, the more devoted he became to Lord Krishna.





## 5. A New Direction

Shrimad Rajchandra was originally named Laxminandan. At the age of four, his name was changed to Raichand. This was stylized into Shrimad Rajchandra later in life.

While his family was traditionally from the *Sthanakwasi* sect of Jainism, Shrimad's paternal grandfather was very drawn to Shri Krishna. His devotion of the vedic religion had a major impact on the young boy. Shrimad would often hear from various monks the many stories in the *Mahabharata*, a great *Hindu* classic text which delineates one of the epic tales of ancient India.

One specific part of this classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*, tells the tale of how Shri Krishna gives guidance to his cousin Arjuna, and is a profound spiritual discourse. One of the monks present at the time, Ramdas, tied a necklace of beads, known as a *Kanathi*, initiating him into the Vaishnav faith.

Shrimad's mother, who was a devout Jain, through her daily practice and firm faith, naturally influenced Shrimad and it is thus that his interest in Jain teachings and the Jain way of life gradually grew.

The young Shrimad began to study the Jain scriptures. His life took on a whole new direction, and many of the influences with which he had come into the world, now came into Shrimad's thoughts and actions.

His father also became more and more drawn towards Jainism. The young Shrimad's gentle heart was greatly touched by the compassion and friendliness towards all living beings, which is something that Jainism advocates. His love for Jainism grew.

Even though he was young in age, his thoughts were profound. In his past lives he had achieved so much spiritually and this made his thought process even more powerful. On one hand he was full of devotion, and on the other, his accumulated knowledge resulted in deep introspection.

When these two streams of religious tradition met, there was a tremendous inner turmoil. Just as when we churn butter milk to make cream or butter, Shrimad's inner turmoil resulted in a beautiful synthesis.



## 6. Innocent Nature

Shrimad would, with his childhood friends go to the local ponds and the nearby trees to play. In his early autobiography *Samuchchya Vayacharya*, he relates his childhood and what he experienced during that phase. He states :

“Until the age of seven, I spent my time playing childish games. I do remember that unusual thoughts would enter my mind (without my understanding the nature or meaning of these thoughts). I had a strong desire to win any game I played, as well as to become a mighty king of kings.

“In matters of dress, cleanliness, eating, sleeping and other such activities my mind was never focused on these physical activities.” He also recalled that his physique was weak.

“If I had, then, the discriminative understanding which I have now, I would not have such a thirst for *Moksha*. I very clearly remember my innocent nature.”

At the age of seven, Shrimad had a most wonderful experience. The events of the outer world often awaken the inner world so that the past and the present all come together in one single thread. Even the greatest of fires start with a single spark.

Shrimad knew a young man in Vavania called Amichandbhai. Well built, he was very loving and affectionate towards the young Shrimad, who was also fond of him. One day this Amichandbhai was bitten by a snake and he died on the spot.

Being a small town, the news spread fast. The whole town was talking about this unfortunate event. Some were surprised by the sudden death of such a young man in the prime of his life, while others were saddened by the loss of such a loving person. Soon, young Shrimad came to know what had happened. He was quite shocked that someone so warm towards him had passed away.

Always a thoughtful and reflective child, the idea of death gripped Shrimad. In those days, Shrimad would always turn to his beloved grandfather with any questions which troubled him. He would speak of his thoughts, doubts and desires with an open-heart. He ran to his grandfather with the question : “What is death ?”



ખલિ સ્મૃતિ - શાન પ્રાપ્તિ  
 શ્રીમદ્ રાજવંશજને વધાપૂજના સ્મરણાન ભુગિમાં શાનવર્ધની  
 બાળવયે બાળની વિના મેરને થયેલું ખલિ સ્મરણા શાન સંવત - ૧૯૨૧.

## 7. *Yearning for Detachment.*

Shrimad came to his grandfather with the question : "What is death ?"

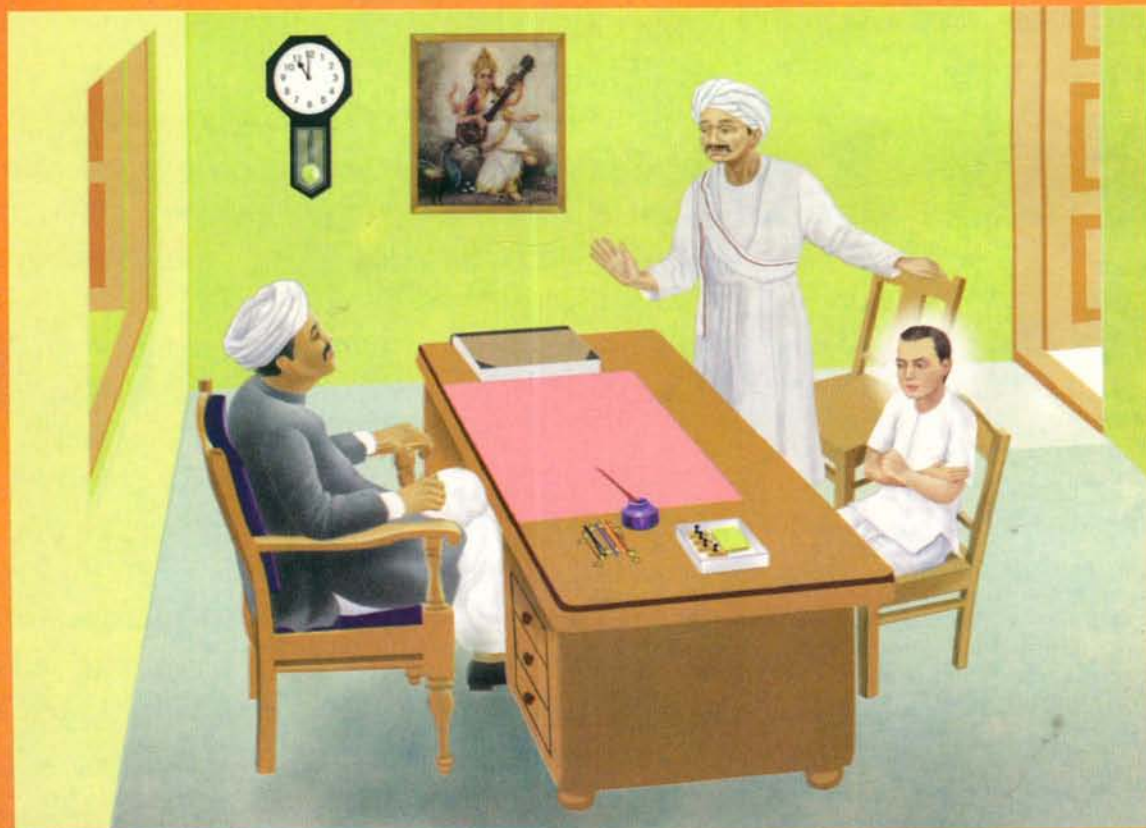
Panchanbhai was unsure how best to answer the question and did not want to frighten Shrimad. In an attempt to divert his attention, he told Shrimad that he would answer his questions after he had his lunch.

Shrimad however was not so easily diverted, and insisted that he should have his question answered first. His grandfather at last gave in, explaining: "Amichand's passing away means that he will neither speak nor walk, nor eat, nor drink. His soul has left the body. His body will be taken to the cremation grounds to be burnt."

In order to properly understand the nature of death, Shrimad quietly went to the crematorium and climbed up a tree from which he could see the cremation. The dead body was burning on a funeral pyre, while a few people stood or sat around it.

At this sight, his heart was filled with revulsion. How was it possible that a person who showed him so much love could be burnt like this ? How cruel can these people be to burn such a fine and good man ? He began to wonder: if the body was still there, what was the nature of the substance that had left ? As he thought along these lines, it was as though a veil had been removed, and he began to see some of his past lives. Later in his life, he saw the fort of Junagadh, and he remembered even more past lives. He had experienced *Jati Smaran Gnan*, the knowledge of previous lives, and as a result, Shrimad experienced a great sense of detachment towards material and transient objects.

"Looking back with my inner knowledge, I cannot see even one moment in which this Soul has not been wandering in the cycle of birth and death, or in which the mind has been calm, and so the Soul has forgotten inner peace. This memory is constantly with me and it is thus a cause for great detachment. What more can I say? Recalling the past lives in which I wandered in folly, how should I live now ? That is what I think about. That I do not want to be born again at all is now firmly established in my heart. When a thoughtful Soul thinks of moments of anxiety, illness or of problems, when it thinks of worldly life, then the Soul's false identification with transient objects naturally declines. Possessiveness and delusion become weaker, and the inclination arises to seek out the ageless, immortal and eternal substance which is the Soul. Whosoever has recalled the many lives of stress, illness and the pain of death and rebirth, and has in the past life heard the causes of the Soul's wandering directly from a Self-realised person, is keen to be free from all these traps and to follow only the right path which leads to *Moksha*." The young Shrimad thus possessed the sort of detachment which even monks find difficult to attain.



## **8. Shrimad at School**

*W*hen we wake up, we very vividly remember the previous night and we can recall the events of the previous day. It is the same with past lives. As the veil is removed, the events of past lives are relived as though they happened only yesterday.

When aged only seven, in VS 1931, Shrimad clearly saw his previous lives and also recollected some of the knowledge accumulated in the previous lives. He did not, however, reveal this to anyone.

His father Ravjibhai took him to the village school at seven, and the first part of his formal education began. As always, worldly processes continue according to their own rhyme and reason, without regard to the world of the Spirit.

While a child may not fear its parents, it would fear the schoolteacher. The motto of the day was : "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

Shrimad's father Ravjibhai came and met the headmaster of the school and explained : " Sir, I am very fond of my son. I love him very much. Please, teach him well."

The father was aware of the kind of discipline enforced in these schools. Tactfully he said : "Sir, do not beat or scold him." Having made his request, Ravjibhai returned home.

It is impossible for a diamond not to sparkle ! When the headmaster saw young Shrimad, he was pleasantly surprised. Most children would tremble before the headmaster or would be very shy, but not Shrimad. His face showed neither fear nor anxiety, but rather serenity.

Some personalities are such that their mere presence have a calming influence on the thoughts of those around. The headmaster felt a great sense of affection towards this young boy.

He summoned the class-teacher Lavjibhai and told him : "Take care of this boy and teach him with love. Neither beat him nor scold him." Lavjibhai, assuming that the boy must be a relative of the headmaster for otherwise he would not expect such a special treatment, took Shrimad to the classroom and so began his first class in the school.





## 9. *Extraordinary Memory*

Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them. Shrimad was born great. While it is often difficult to grasp the inner greatness of such beings, it becomes apparent in the routine events of their lives.

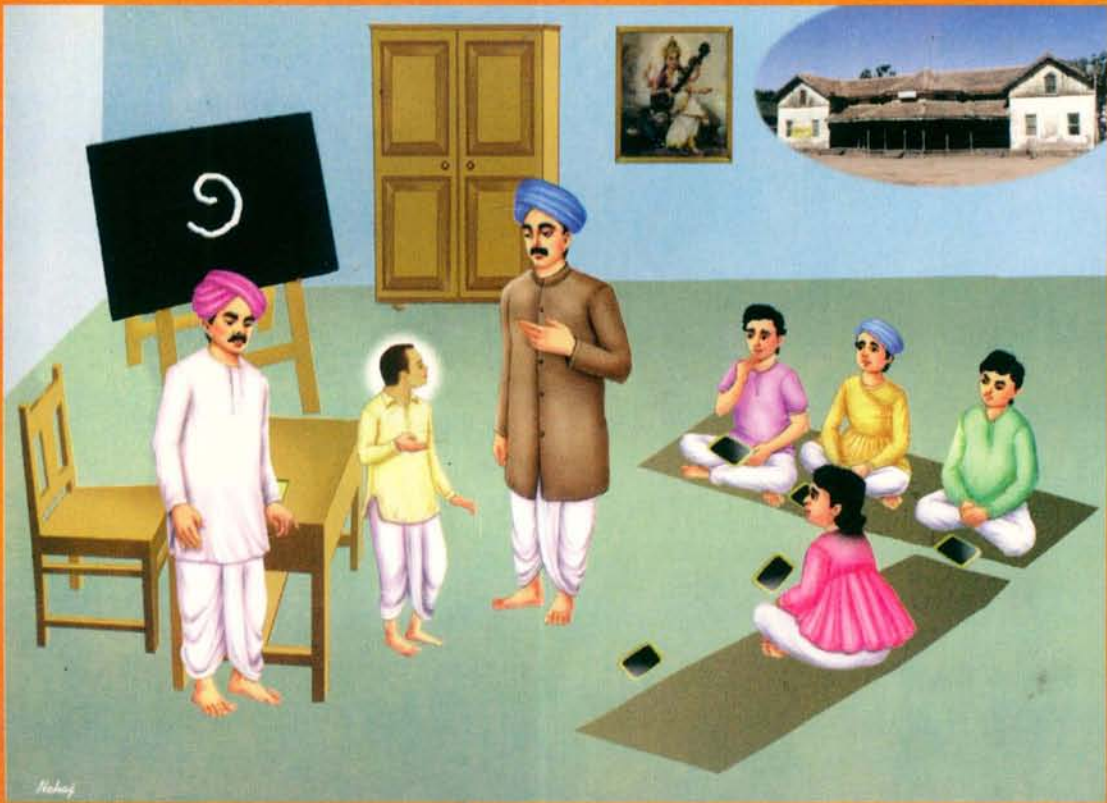
When Shrimad was admitted to school the form master Lavjibhai paid him special attention as instructed by the headmaster. He wrote the numerals 1 to 5 on a slate and asked Shrimad to copy them out. Shrimad sat with the other students, slate in hand. Instead of copying out the numbers, he stared at them for a while and then turned to his teacher and said : "Sir, I know all these things." Then he wrote out the numbers. Lavjibhai suspected that the boy may have received some coaching at home which is how he knew the first five numerals. The teacher wrote out the numbers 6 to 10, and carried on all the way to a hundred, while Shrimad immediately wrote them all out. How could a new student know all these things!

He went on to the multiplication tables from 1 to 10. Once again, as he wrote out the tables, Shrimad also wrote and read them out. The teacher went on to the 11 and 12 times tables, and the same thing happened. Turning to language, as his teacher wrote out the first lesson in Gujarati, Shrimad again repeated it immediately. The teacher was now amazed.

Lavjibhai went to the headmaster and asked "What am I to teach this boy? He seems to know everything from mathematics to poetry.

The headmaster sent for Shrimad's father and asked him if Shrimad had been taught anything at home. Ravjibhai told him honestly that he had only just bought the boy a slate and that he had not studied a thing before starting school. The teacher immediately realised that Shrimad was a child prodigy and from then on kept him at the head of the class. He would often have the boy sing deeply religious songs.

Within a year, Shrimad was able to complete what would take most students four years to study. In less than two years, he had finished seven years worth of schooling. As soon as the teacher taught a new subject, Shrimad understood it thoroughly.



## 10. A Genius

Shrimad was as good at games as he was at studies. He was a favourite amongst his classmates. Once, the teacher scolded Shrimad for no apparent reason. In protest at this injustice, Shrimad did not go to school the next day. When the other students saw that Shrimad was absent from school, they all went to meet him. He took them off to a nearby field.

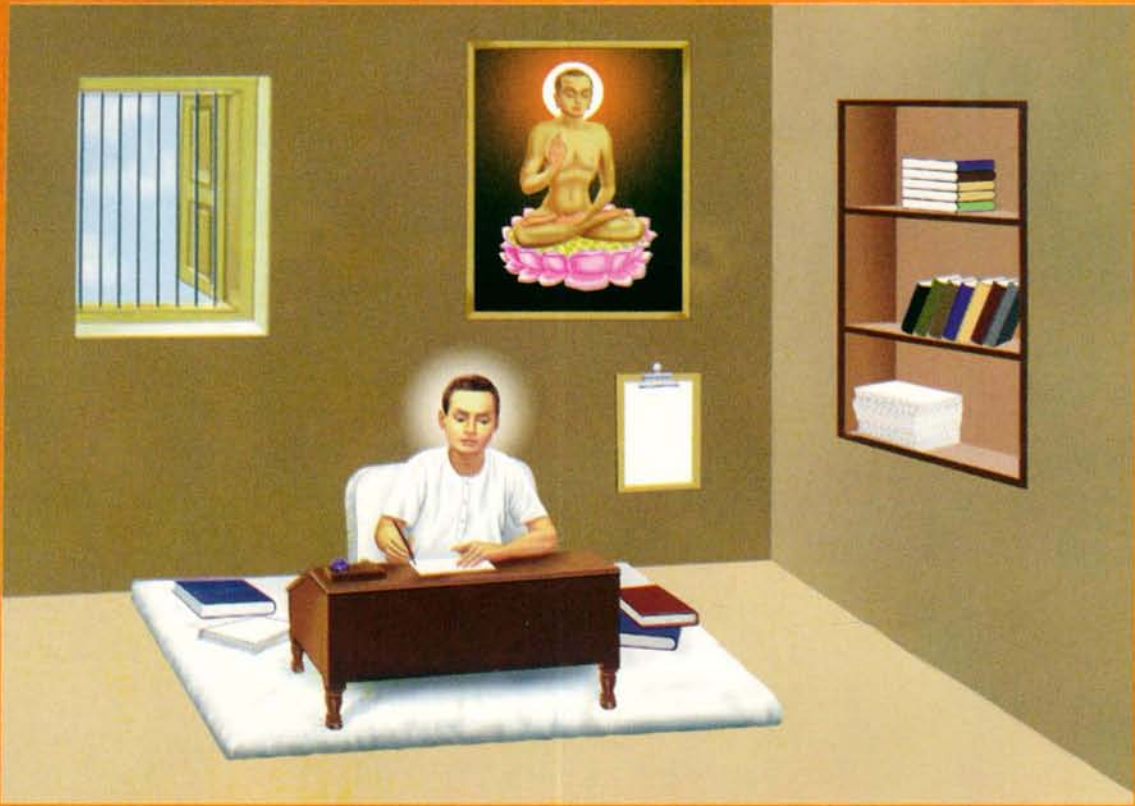
When the teacher went to school he found not a single student in his classroom. While one or two might be absent from school due to ill-health, it was very unusual for them all to be absent. The teacher realised that this probably had something to do with his unfair treatment of Shrimad. He set out to find his class and found them all in a nearby field. He saw that Shrimad was standing under a tree and teaching his classmates. Despite being in a field, and not within the confines of a classroom, his fellow students were extremely attentive.

The teacher approached Shrimad and apologised to him, and persuaded the children to return to school with him. Shrimad was vindicated. Throughout his life, he insisted on truth and justice, without compromise.

Teachers and students at the school looked upon Shrimad with an admiration verging on reverence. They all recognised his many talents, especially his phenomenal memory. Any lesson the teacher taught, Shrimad could, after one hearing, recite *verbatim*.

An examiner from the State of Morvi came to Vavania to examine fourth-year students. When interviewing young Shrimad, he was greatly impressed and asked the headmaster about him. The headmaster told him that Shrimad was an exceptional child with an extremely powerful memory, and was quick to learn. He shared with the examiner his feeling that the boy must have come to this world with much learning from previous lives.

The examiner Pranlalbhai spoke at length with Shrimad and the conversation turned to matters spiritual. The examiner was drawn to this young boy who could speak of such spiritual subjects and invited him to join him for a meal. Shrimad showed him some of the poems he had composed. With much respect for Shrimad, the examiner left Vavania and invited Shrimad to visit him whenever he was in Morvi.



## 11. Endless Compassion

Poets are born, not made. One needs a sensitive heart and the power of expression to write poetry. Shrimad, whose brilliance as a student we have seen, was equally talented in the composition of verses. In his heart flowed three separate streams : the poetic, the spiritual and one of wisdom.

His compassionate heart was moved by the state of society around him. In those days, women had no rights and there was much division in society. The pain he felt was naturally expressed in poetry. The plight of the country also made him unhappy, and at a time when patriotism was almost non-existent, he composed verses full of patriotism.

While he only began learning to write at the age of seven, he had already, by the age of eight, composed about 5,000 stanzas on various subjects. When, later in life, he reviewed a poem he had written at the age of eight, he found it well composed and well structured. The poetry he wrote at the age of ten displayed the maturity and profundity of an accomplished poet. At the age of eleven he began writing for local chronicles on different subjects, for which he won several prizes.

He summarized the great Indian epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharat* in verse, wrote an essay on the education of women and his poems on patriotism, social reforms, religion and other subjects appeared in periodicals such as *Dharmadarpan*, *Subodhprakash*, *Vigyan Vilas* and *Saurashtra Darshan*.

By the time he was thirteen, he had studied in depth a variety of religious texts. He then began reading philosophical works written in ancient languages of Sanskrit and *Ardhamagadhi*. His ability to learn and his skill in poetry were both extraordinary. He began to be known as the Kavi Raichand, "Raichand the Poet."

Shrimad's was a very compassionate and sympathetic heart. Through his mother's influence he was familiar with and fond of the detailed avoidance of injury to all living beings described in Jain scriptures such as *Pratikraman Sutra*. One day, when his mother asked him to help her in the kitchen by chopping vegetables, tears streamed down his cheeks, as he felt the pain of the Souls in the vegetables.



## 12. Detachment

Shrimad's childhood was very happy, with his grandfather showering him with affection. An important feature of India's culture, and that of many civilizations, is that a child's grandparents play a very significant role in its early life : providing warmth, love, and also inculcating values. It was entirely the result of his grandfather that Shrimad was devoted to Lord Krishna.

Panchanbhai, Shrimad's grandfather was born in Vikram Samvat ("VS") 1836. His father, Damji Pitambar, lived in Manekwada, a village about 10 miles from Morvi in Saurashtra. He was from the *Dasa Shrimali* business caste and his family was traditionally *Sthanakwasi* Jain.

Panchanbhai the third of five sons, received a very small portion of his father's estate and left to settle in Vavania in VS 1892 to start on his own business - shipping and money-lending. Panchanbhai, who lived a life of total devotion to Lord Krishna, passed away at the age of ninety-eight, in VS 1934, when his grandson Shrimad was ten-years old.

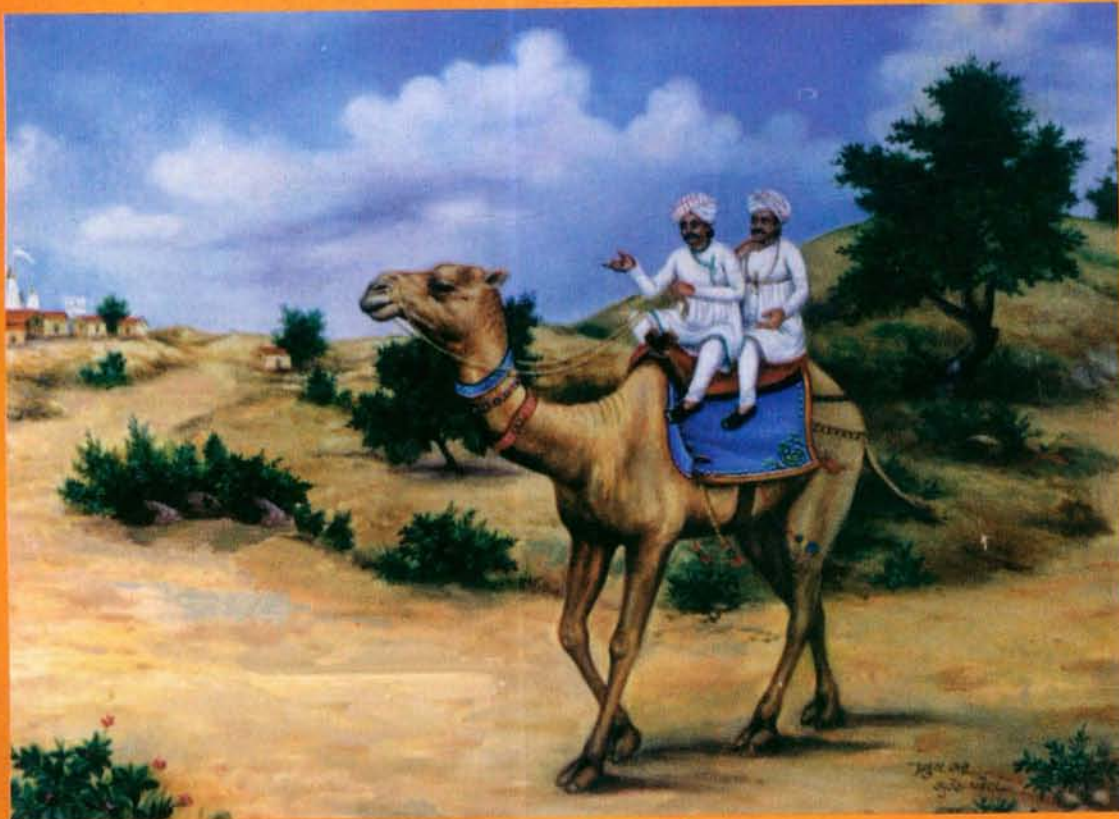
Shrimad led his grandfather's funeral procession, carrying the burning coals which would be used to light the funeral pyre. The loss of his dear grandfather provoked some fundamental questions.

Shrimad wondered about the nature of life, death, and the mysteries of the Soul. When the minds of great souls ponder the eternal verities of life, they become impervious to much of the world around, even to physical hardships.

As the cortege continued on its way to the cremation ground, Shrimad was engrossed in these fundamental questions. He stepped on a large thorn, which painfully pierced his foot. He paid little attention to it, and continued to walk as if nothing had happened. Neither complaining nor asking anyone to remove it, he patiently took part in the funeral ceremony.

It was only when Shrimad's mother saw him limping home, and asked, that anyone realised what had happened. She wondered why he had not asked anyone for assistance, as she removed the thorn. The child, lost in thought, and with such strong will-power, had not been distracted enough by the thorn to have it removed.





### ***13. What Love of Learning!***

Shrimad's fame had spread far and wide, and the *Deevan* (chief minister) of the nearby state of Kutch, Manibhai Jashbhai, had wanted for some time to invite him there.

A lecture by young Shrimad was arranged in Bhuj, the state capital. He was received with great respect and he gave a thought-provoking discourse on religion. The members of the audience were in awe of this young boy of ten with such wisdom, imagination and memory.

His philosophical speech, full of wisdom and detachment towards materialism moved them and they realised that, one day he would become a great personality.

News of this amazing boy soon spread around Kutch. Hemrajbhai of Koday village and Malshibhai of Naliya, thought of sending the young Shrimad to Kashi, a town of scholars and saints.

Their idea was that such a gifted and talented boy, with the right training and guidance, would become a great scholar, and thus benefit society at large by spreading true understanding. They were fully prepared to fund his training at Kashi.

With this aim in mind, they left for Vavania on camel back. Upon arrival in Vavania, they learnt that Shrimad was in Morvi, and so decided to go there to meet him.

Meanwhile, in Morvi, Shrimad decided that he would visit Rajkot where his maternal uncles lived.

Anxious that he reach Rajkot safely, his family arranged for him to travel with Dharshibhai, the eminent magistrate of Morvi..

When the two men of Kutch reached Morvi, they again learnt that Shrimad was not there and that he was in Rajkot. Without losing heart, they resolved to go to Rajkot to meet Shrimad.

Their resolve was so great that they would not turn back in frustration. Their dedication to their cause and Shrimad's fame and extraordinary talents motivated them to persevere.



## ***14. What Gratitude!***

*T*he ten year old Shrimad and the respected magistrate Dharshibhai set off by horse-drawn carriage for Rajkot. His conversation greatly impressed the magistrate. He was very drawn by Shrimad's profound thought, depth of knowledge and spiritual insight.

Such understanding would normally be achieved after years of study and reflection, and yet Dharshibhai saw it all in a child of ten. Moreover, Shrimad's tone was sweet and gentle and he spoke with much respect.

Dharshibhai was himself a learned man but found Shrimad an exceptional child. Very much attracted to this boy, he invited him to stay with him as his guest in Rajkot.

Shrimad responded that he would stay with his uncles. However, not wanting to disappoint Dharshibhai whose love and affection were very apparent, he promised to visit him often.

When Shrimad reached his uncles' home, they were surprised to see him arrive on his own and asked him how he had come to Rajkot. When Shrimad explained his journey and how he had come with a certain Dharshibhai, his uncles were a little taken aback.

His uncles began behaving quite suspiciously and were talking amongst themselves. They were involved in certain political intrigues and so wanted to have Dharshibhai killed.

"The opportunity has come to us. Now is our chance. Let's sort him out!" they said to each other.

Shrimad had sat down for a meal. As they spoke, Shrimad overheard them say: "Sort him out," and realised that they must have some ill-will toward Dharshibhai. His uncles must have thought that this ten year old would not understand what they were planning.

Having fully understood his uncles' evil plans, he decided that he ought to save Dharshibhai from his uncles and his uncles from committing a sin.



## ***15. Power of Clairvoyance***

As soon as he had finished his meal, Shrimad went to visit the magistrate Dharshibhai, who was glad to see this bright young boy again. He warmly welcomed him. Shrimad asked : "Do you have any connection with my uncles?"

Dharshibhai asked him for the reason behind the question.

"I am asking you with good reason."

Dharshibhai replied that, while he had no direct relation with them, he knew of some intrigue in which they were involved. With this reply, Shrimad warned Dharshibhai to be very careful and explained his uncles' evil intentions.

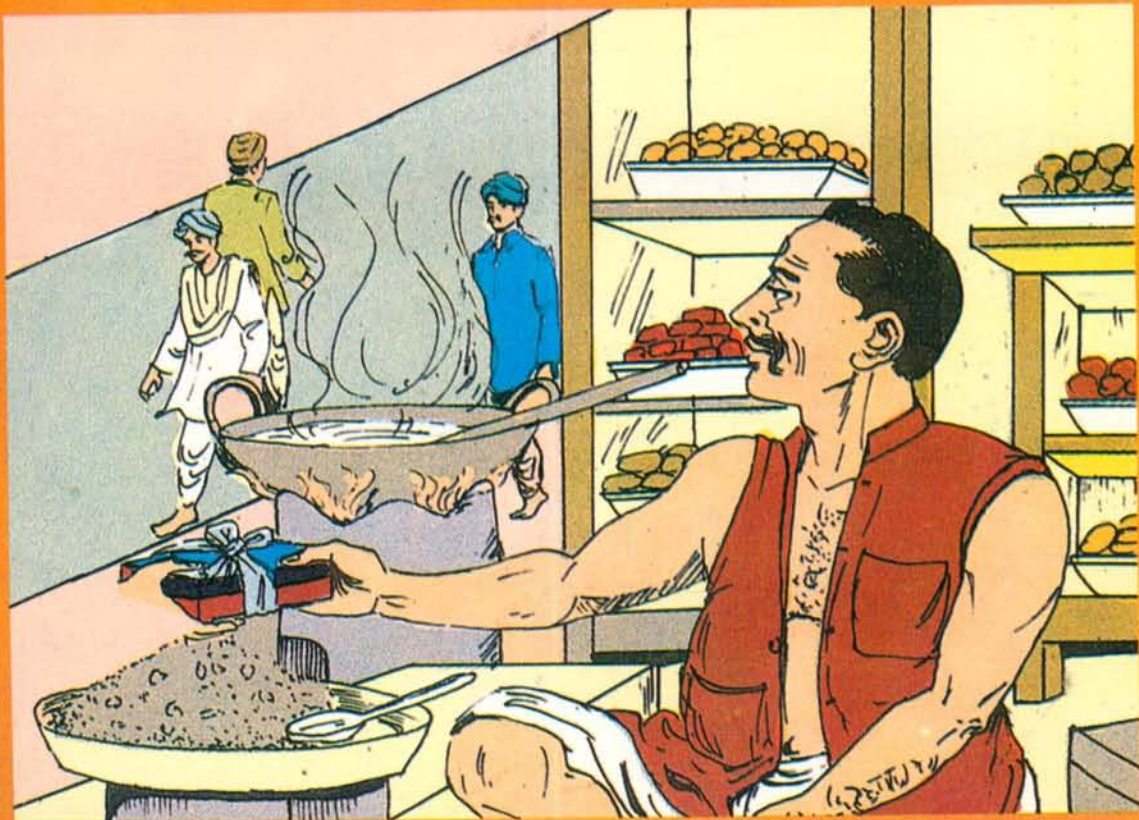
Dharshibhai immediately asked him to explain how he knew. Shrimad explained how his uncles had behaved so strangely on hearing of his arrival into Rajkot with Dharshibhai. He also explained how he knew that they were planning to "Sort him out!"

When Dharshibhai asked why they would say such things in front of him, Shrimad explained that they had presumed that a ten-year-old would understand nothing and that they could speak openly in front of him.

Hearing all this and seeing Shrimad's purity of purpose, Dharshibhai's respect for Shrimad grew even more. He felt very fortunate to have met such a wonderful boy, who had now saved his life.

The two men, Hemrajbhai and Malshibhai, who had set out so early from Kutch to meet him, were approaching Rajkot. Shrimad sensed them coming. He turned to Dharshibhai and asked : "Two men are on their way here from Kutch. Can they stay here with you ?" Dharshibhai was only too glad to do anything to help Shrimad.

Shrimad had a great sense of etiquette. These two men had come such a long way to meet him and so must be treated as his guests, which is why he made arrangements for them to spend the night in Rajkot. Shrimad knew the direction from which they were coming and so headed out to greet them. When they saw a boy walking towards them, Hemrajbhai and Malshibhai climbed down from their camel. Shrimad greeted them : "Welcome Hemrajbhai. Welcome Malshibhai."



## 16. Extra-Sensory Perception

Hemrajbhai and Malashibhai were surprised when Shrimad addressed them by their names. They asked : "How did you know that we were coming?"

Shrimad replied: "The Soul has infinite powers." Shrimad then took his guests to the magistrate Dharshibhai's house, where they were warmly welcomed. The two visitors wanted to talk to Shrimad privately and the magistrate led them to a room where they might speak without interruption.

The two men of Kutch had heard much about Shrimad's various abilities: his phenomenal memory, his eloquence, and his poetic skills, and had been eager to meet this child prodigy. In order to see for themselves Shrimad's talents, they had brought with them a little test. They had selected a verse from a book called *Sanghapattak*, and read out the letters making up that verse in random order. Shrimad listened, re-arranged the letters in his mind, and then recited the verse in proper order.

Experiencing Shrimad's mental faculties for the first time, they were truly amazed. They even wondered whether sending Shrimad to Kashi to study would actually benefit a boy of such skill and intelligence. Despite this, as they had come such a long distance, they offered to pay for his education in Kashi, and to cover his and his family's expenses. Shrimad very politely declined the offer.

The two visitors told Dharshibhai that their visit had been unsuccessful. They also explained how Shrimad had come to meet them at the outskirts of Rajkot and called them by their names, even though he had never met them before. Dharshibhai related his own experiences to them and told them how Shrimad had made arrangements for them to stay with him. After this discussion, the magistrate was very sure that such a boy had no need to go to Kashi : Shrimad was already wise and learned.

Shrimad decided to return to Vavania. As he took leave of Dharshibhai and his two uncles, he was given a box of sweets, as was the custom. Shrimad did not have enough to pay for his train fare to Vavania, and so sold the sweets to a local confectioner. While he did not hesitate to ask Dharshibhai to accommodate the travellers from Kutch, he did not ask a thing for himself, even though anyone would have gladly given him the train fare. This is a characteristic of many a great souls.





## 17. *Foreseeing the Future*

*We* have already seen the many types of talents and abilities Shrimad possessed. We have learnt the story of how he foresaw the arrival of the two men from Kutch. In school, the teachers found they had nothing to teach him.

The Morvi magistrate Dharshibhai, whose life Shrimad saved, had also recognized the young boy's extraordinary abilities. Shrimad cultivated the knowledge and insight with which he had come into this birth, and made them even more powerful.

Shrimad could see into the future. He foresaw many incidents. In his compassion, he would often forewarn others of any dangers or mishaps ahead. His heart felt so much compassion for the tiniest of creatures, and that for human beings it knew no bounds.

In Vavania lived a *bapu*, a wealthy Rajput landlord, who used to go riding every day. One day, as he set out, Shrimad called to him and suggested that he should not ride that day.

The *bapu* was surprised at the suggestion, as there was not a single day that he had not been riding. He did not heed Shrimad's gentle warning.

Shrimad again approached him, suggesting that he would be better off not riding that day.

The *bapu* asked him why he ought not to go riding, as he had been out, riding the same mare for years. What problem could there possibly be?

Shrimad, yet again, asked him not to go. The Rajput told him that he would not turn back. Turning back was for others. He had no fear.

As he reached the outskirts of the village, the mare began to misbehave. The landlord tried in vain to control her, but she threw him off quite violently, breaking several of his bones. He was lying on the ground, screaming in agony. As soon as his family heard of it they ran out to bring him back to the village, where he soon passed away.

Shrimad learnt of the death and was much saddened by the news : If only the Rajput had heeded his warning, things might have been different.



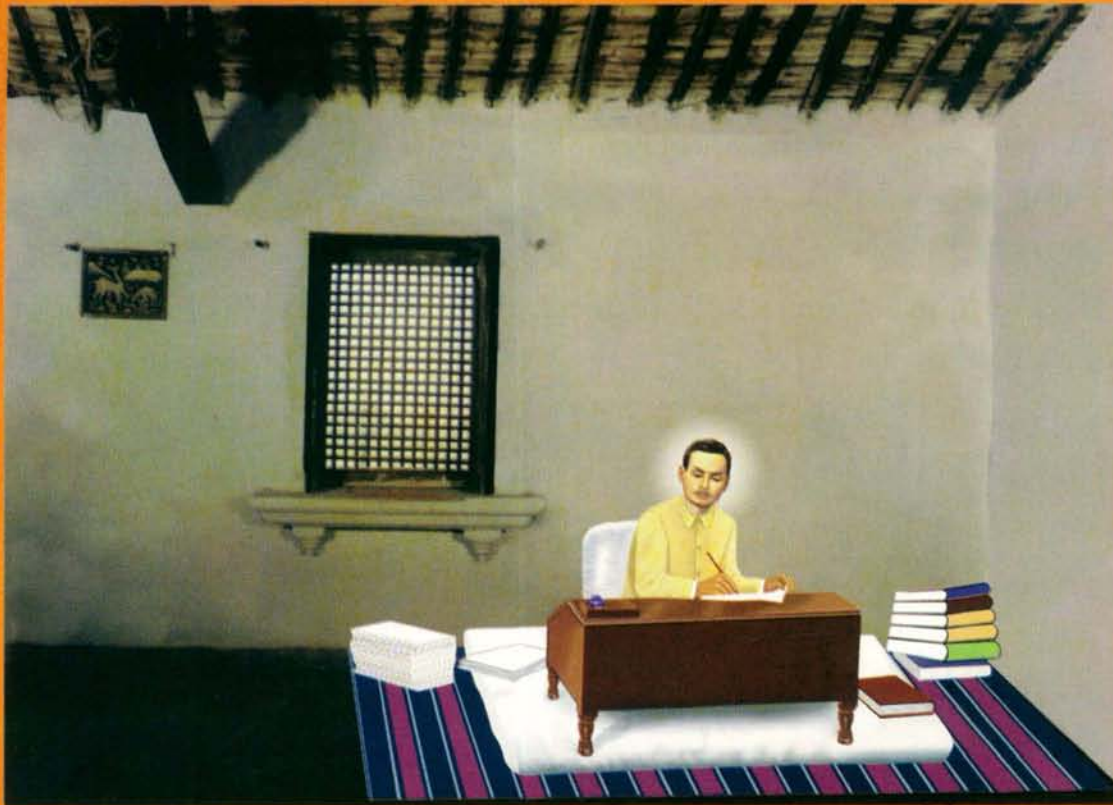
## 18. Multi-faceted Personality

The economic condition of Shrimad's family began to decline. His father Ravjibhai took over the business from his Grandfather. In a small town, with declining business, Shrimad's father had to support a very large family: - his parents, as well as two sons and four daughters. After a death in the family, it was then a custom to hold a feast in honour of the deceased. To help pay for the funeral of Shrimad's grandfather, his mother had to sell her jewellery.

With his family in such circumstances, Shrimad had to help his father at the shop. Thus, despite being such a bright student, Shrimad left school at the age of thirteen. He readily accepted his role in the shop and saw his responsibility to his parents as his duty. Thirteen year old Shrimad had beautiful handwriting and was often invited to act as a scribe at the court in Kutch. Shrimad could balance both his work in the shop and his inner spiritual development. He was always fair in business, neither overcharging nor underpaying. While he learnt the mysteries of business, he studied religious and spiritual writings, and composed many poems. As he studied and reflected, he deduced that Jain teachings impartially took truth from all sources. He adopted the principle of : "What is true is mine." He was very drawn to the principle of friendship and compassion for all living beings, as reflected in the *Pratikraman Sutra*. The *kanthi*, the necklace of beads, which the Vaishnav monk had tied, broke during this time. He did not tie it again.

Shrimad often visited Morvi on business and would stay at his aunt's home. Her neighbours, Papatbhai Daftary and his son Vinaychand, would often ask him to explain scriptures to them and would also purchase books for him from far and wide. Their home became his study and library.

With his love for Truth, his prejudices against Jainism disappeared and his love for it grew. He wanted to show the world the True Path, and thus put an end to ignorance, spiritual folly, and to pain. The ages of thirteen to sixteen were a time of deep religious contemplation and insight for Shrimad. He had great faith in the authors of the scriptures and would quote them extensively in his own works, casting light on their meaning.



## 19. Composition of Mokshamala

After he had gained a true understanding of Lord Mahavir's path, Shrimad composed *Mokshamala*, in which he explained in detail the importance of *vairagya* (detachment), *upsham* (calmness) and *vivek* (discrimination between right and wrong). He has explained the deeper meaning of the twelve *bhavanas* (reflections) by narrating various stories alongwith their true morals.

Shrimad was only 16 years and 5 months old when he composed this remarkable book. With no formal learning in Sanskrit or Prakrit, he was able, in a year and a quarter, to study all the *agams*. He composed *Mokshamala* in just three days, and managed to cover in it the essence of Jainism and the path to *Moksha*.

While writing the 67<sup>th</sup> chapter, ink spilled on it, and so he had to re-write it. As its replacement he wrote a thought provoking poem entitled "*Amulya Tattva Vichar*" (Invaluable thoughts on Reality), in which, Shrimad describes the rarity of a human incarnation. He explains that those who see the purpose of their lives as the increasing power, wealth and the importance of their family, seeking illusory happiness are actually losing the meaning and purpose of their lives.

Those with a thirst for truth should calmly and peacefully reflect : "Who am I ? Where do I come from ? What is my true nature ? To what am I attached ? Should I keep these or cast them off ?" With such thoughts, one will grow closer to the treasure, which is the Soul. With full faith in one who has experienced his own Soul, a true seeker can experience his Soul.

In *Mokshamala*, Shrimad recommends devotion to the *Jinas* (Liberated Souls) leading to freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Three Jain nuns visiting Vavania had heard of Shrimad's divinity. They requested him to give them a discourse and he agreed. He then met them at the local Jain Hall and read out two verses from a Jain scripture called "*Shree Suyagadang Sutra*" and explained those with full insight. The nuns paid him immense respect.

The nuns were unable to understand scriptures written in *Ardhamagadhi*, the ancient language of many Jain texts, and they asked Shrimad to help them gain a better understanding. In response, Shrimad wrote *Mokshamala* which even today helps many gain a deeper insight into the meaning of the message of the *Jinas*.



## 20. An Extraordinary Poet

A few months before he wrote *Mokshamala*, Shrimad was in Morvi. He attended a public demonstration of memory skills known as *Ashtavdhan* by the then-famous Shankarlal Maheshvar Shastri in a Jain hall. The demonstration was basically attending simultaneously to several (in this case eight) tasks of varying complexity.

Shrimad observed the whole process very carefully and tried to repeat it himself. The very next day, with some friends in Morvi's Vasantbag park, he succeeded in performing 8 tasks even more complex than those performed in the hall. His friends, in their excitement, told everyone about it, and the next day, in the very same Jain hall that the 8 tasks had been performed two days earlier, Shrimad simultaneously performed twelve tasks in front of a large audience.

Shrimad had until now been known for his poetry and his learning. His fame now spread further. In Jamnagar he performed sixteen different tasks before an audience of scholars, two of whom had not been able to perform this way despite ten years of practice. Shrimad was given the title of 'Diamond of India' (*Hind-na-Hira*). He then performed 16 tasks before an assembly of 2000 people in Wadhvan city in the presence of an English Colonel, H. L. Nutt and other dignitaries.

As a result of this performance in Wadhvan, his performances were described in various journals and newspapers in English and Gujarati. In Botad, he gave a performance of 52 such simultaneous tasks with no prior preparation whatsoever for a wealthy friend called Harilal Shivilal. On this occasion his tasks included mathematical calculations, exercises involving the completion of half-finished verses and the composition of verses on various subjects. He also was given four hundred words in random order in 16 languages including Greek, Arabic, Latin, English, Sanskrit, Urdu and had to put them back in order, by case.

It is said that he could memorise 500 *shlokas* (verses) in an hour.

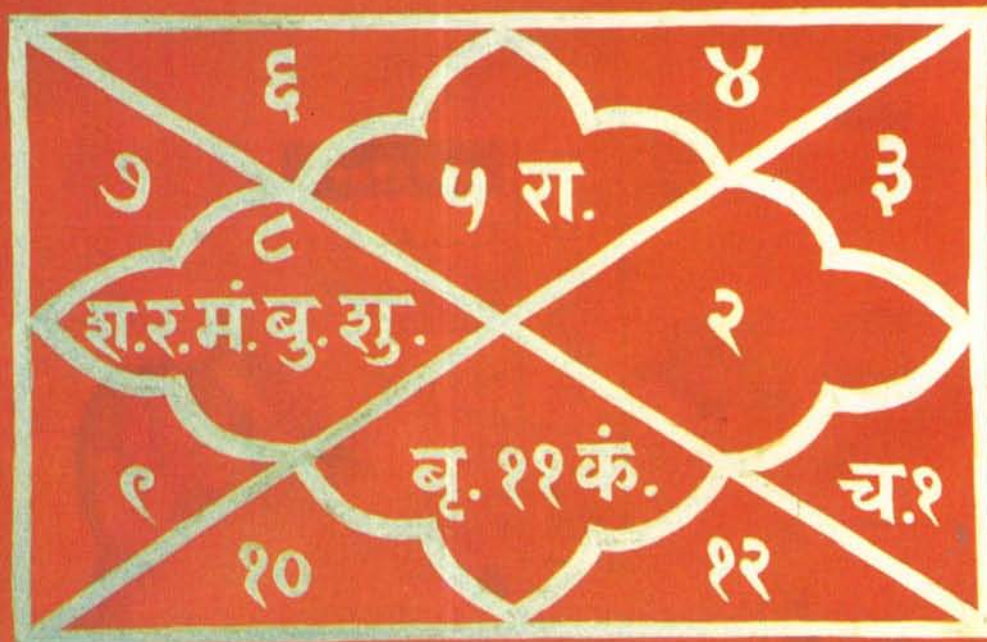
In Vikram Samvat (VS) 1943, he performed in Mumbai the extraordinary feat of *Shatavadhan*, simultaneously attending to a hundred diverse activities, at the Faramji Cawasji Institute. This demonstration astounded Dr. Peterson and the Judge of the Mumbai High Court Justice Sir Charles Sargent.

When asked what the secret behind this power was, Shrimad in his mystic style responded that it was impossible without purity of mind and that it could not be taught. Shrimad was now famous as a poet with extraordinary mental faculties.





परम कृपाळु देवनी जन्म कुंडली



## 21. In Quest of Soul-Absolute

Shrimad possessed a wide range of abilities. He was skilled in poetry, possessed a phenomenal memory and had the faculty to attend to a hundred activities simultaneously. In addition, he had a remarkable sense of perception by touch: Blindfolded, he could tell the names of books by merely touching them or he could tell which items of food had too little or too much salt, again without having to taste them at all.

From childhood, Shrimad had been full of devotion for matters spiritual and full of detachment with regard to worldly concerns. Despite the large audiences he attracted and the fame and glory he had achieved, he remained calm, solemn and detached, introspective at all times. Chief Justice Sir Charles Sargeant once suggested that he should perform in England where his talents would be truly appreciated.

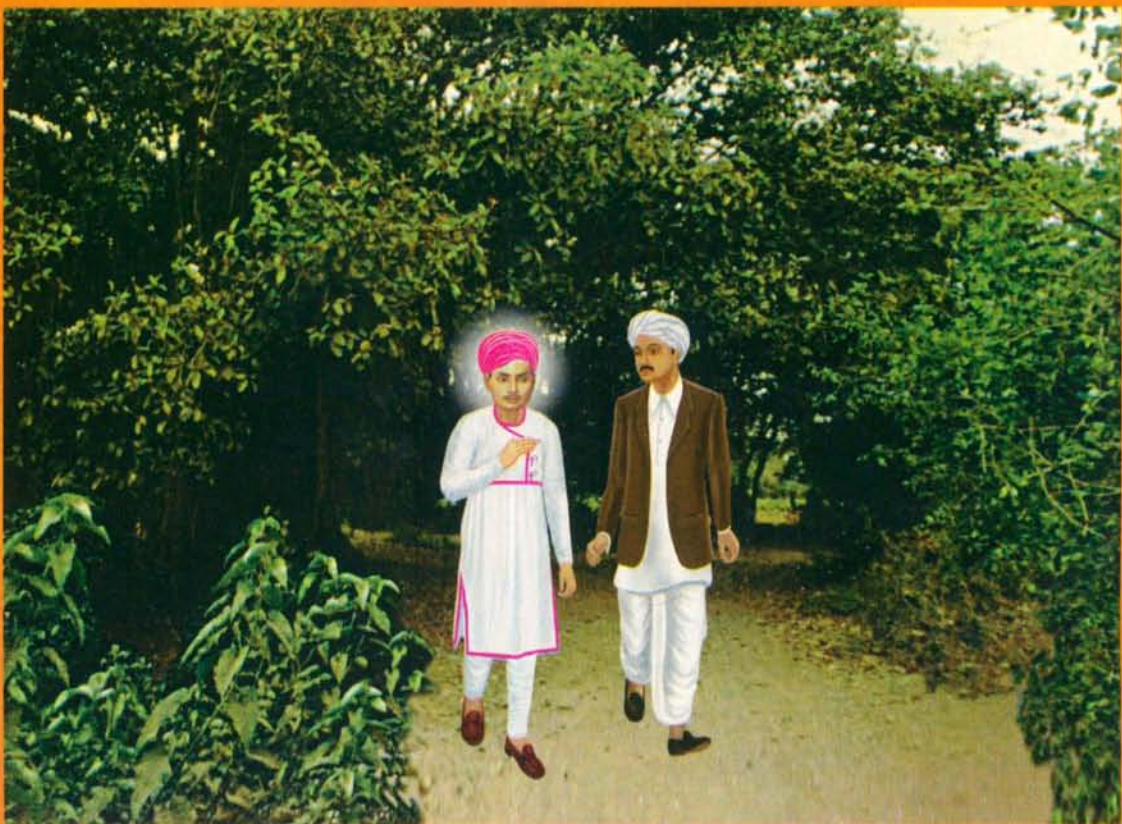
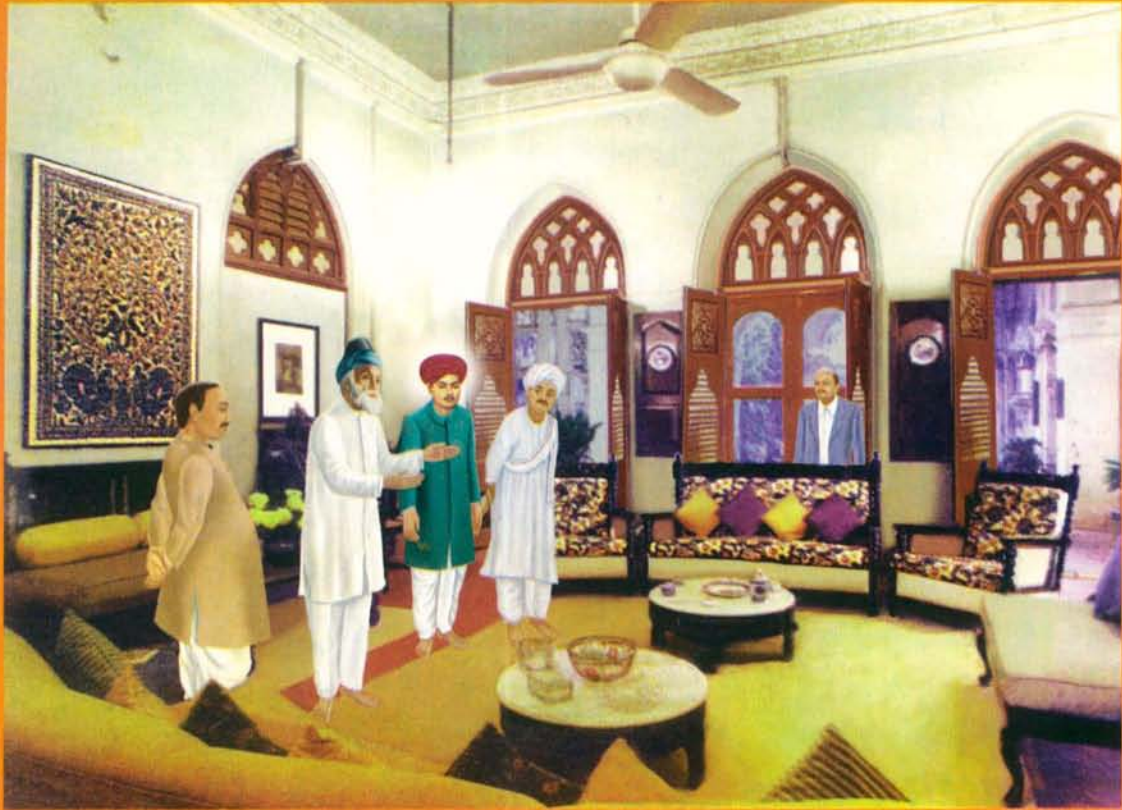
The suggestion of the Chief Justice made Shrimad think. He would certainly earn much fame and respect abroad, but is that what he truly wanted? After all, his main goal in life was a spiritual one and these performances would distract him from his primary purpose. He decided not to follow Sir Charles' suggestion, and also stopped all his public performances.

Amongst the audience at Shrimad's performance in Mumbai, were many astrologers. They were intrigued by his display of mental faculties and his extraordinary sense of perception. Ten learned astrologers examined his horoscope and concluded that its configuration was that of a truly divine being! Shrimad learnt the complex art of astrology from them in a very short time. While he had not studied languages like Sanskrit and Maghadhi before, he was able to understand works written in these languages, as he had known them in previous lives. He read *Bhadrabahusamhita* written by Bhadrabahuswami, a unique work on astrology.

His fame as an astrologer spread far and wide and he was approached by many people anxious to know what their stars foretold. Shrimad had noble and other-worldly intentions, but those who came to him were entirely materialistic.

Shrimad realised that the practice of predicting the future was an impediment to spiritual growth and so he gave it up. He began to advise those who approached him to bear the fruits of their *karma* with equanimity.

As a snake sheds its coil, Shrimad discarded all those activities, even if they brought him fame and glory, which stood in the way of his spiritual quest.



## 22. *The Way to Renunciation*

Shrimad had become a household name in Mumbai because his performances were often reported in newspapers and magazines. Many of the rich and the famous wanted to meet him. One of them was the *Parsi* (Zoroastrian) Tata, an eminent industrialist, who invited him to his luxurious mansion, filled with precious objects and artifacts. Many, who had seen his mansion, were overawed by what they saw, and Tata had expected the same response from Shrimad. Shrimad, however, was not at all interested in worldly objects.

After seeing the mansion, he asked of the childless Tata: "Who will enjoy all this?"

Very often, the words of great souls have the power to change the hearts of men and women. Their wisdom and the subtle insights often lead to profound transformations, which often have a large impact on the world at large. Shrimad's words had a profound impact on Tata, who until then was very proud of his possessions. He bequeathed all his wealth to a trust whose purpose was to care for the *Parsi* community.

Shrimad had been interested in astrology from an early age. Shankar Pancholi, a learned astrologer of Jetpur town in Saurashtra, had forecast that Shrimad would go to Mumbai and that within a particular period of time he would earn a substantial amount of money. Shrimad did go to Mumbai but he did not earn the money in the time predicted. This incident led him to the study of astrology. After a detailed study, he demonstrated to Shankar Pancholi a particular aspect of the subject, called *nashta vidya*, with which one can deduce from any horoscope, its year, date, month, day and so on. Shankar Pancholi, impressed by Shrimad's understanding of astrology, asked him to teach him this skill. Shrimad could also forecast the future by reading people's palms and faces.

Shrimad could often foresee the impending misfortunes of others, and he would warn them. On one occasion, he was out for a stroll with Virjibhai Desai of Vavania. Shrimad asked: "Uncle, if something happens to my aunt [Virjibhai's wife], will you remarry?"

Virjibhai did not answer but gave him a strange look. However, six months after this conversation, his wife passed away.



## 23. Triumph of Mother's Love

After the death of his wife, Virjibhai Desai considered a second marriage. When Shrimad heard this news, he advised Virjibhai to postpone his second marriage for a period of six months and Virjibhai acted on this advice. It so happened that exactly at the end of the sixth month, Virjibhai was returning home from the Jain Hall (*upashray*) and was bitten by a snake.

He was to be taken to a nearby village for treatment but Virjibhai refused to go saying : "I had been forewarned and I knew what was in store for me." He then passed away.

During the period in which he composed *Mokshmala* and *Bhavanabodh*, Shrimad's resolve to take to the path of renunciation, of monkhood, grew stronger. The path of devotion, meditation and detachment drew him.

In *Vikram Samvat* 1942 he and his mother Devba were sitting together. Shrimad turned to his mother and said, "Mother, I would like your permission to go to the forest and become an ascetic."

His mother did not wish to lose him and asked him to reconsider his decision.

Shrimad promised : "As long as this *yogi* (ascetic) is alive, you might see his face. He will come to your door and ask how you are."

Tears began to well up in her eyes and trickled down her cheeks. Shrimad saw his mother's affection for him and said: "Mother, I will respect your wishes." He did not wish to cause her any grief. Thus, his mother's love triumphed. While in his mother's womb, Bhagavan Mahavir had also resolved not to renounce the world while his parents were alive so as not to cause them any pain. Shrimad had followed Bhagwan Mahavir's example.

Shrimad had arranged for *Mokshamala's* publication to be funded by subscription. There was some delay in its printing, and so as a token of good-will, Shrimad had composed another book, *Bhavnabodh*. In it, Shrimad has written of twelve reflections that lead to the rise of detachment. It is full of poetry, stories and parables, all illustrating the various aspects of these reflections and of the path to Moksha.



## 24. "I Belong to the Atma"

Juthabhai was the first and one of Shrimad's closest disciples. He first met Shrimad in Ahmedabad in *Vikram Samvat* 1944. Shrimad had come to Ahmedabad to arrange for the publication of *Mokshamala*.

Shrimad's friend Vinaychand Daftari of Morvi had given him a letter of introduction to Jesangbhai, so that he would provide Shrimad with some assistance. Jesangbhai agreed to help but, since he had to travel frequently, he requested his brother Juthabhai to help Shrimad.

A demonstration of Shrimad's mental powers had been held in Ahmedabad and Juthabhai had been impressed by his extra-sensory powers and was very much drawn to him. Once, Juthabhai handed Shrimad a series of books. He picked them up, one by one, and, after a cursory glance, explained to him their essential meaning. Juthabhai immediately recognised Shrimad's greatness and was drawn even closer. It is said that the eyes of a true seeker easily recognise a great soul.

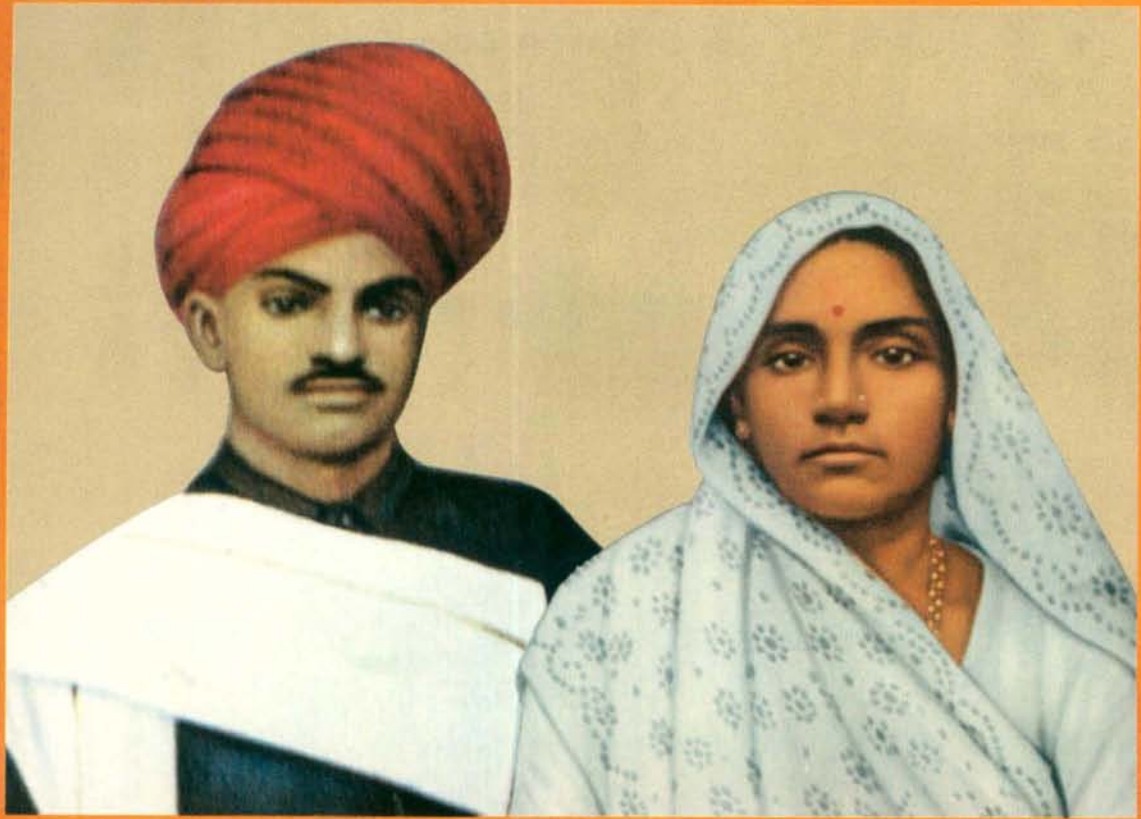
Juthabhai was born in *Vikram Samvat* 1923 to Ujamshibhai and Jamnabai. He was very pious and intelligent. A close spiritual bond developed between him and Shrimad. They were together for over a month and a half in Morvi, and then in Bharuch. When they could not meet, they exchanged letters. Since Shrimad had shown him the path of truth and true religion, Juthabhai called him *dharmapita* (religious father), and Shrimad called him *dharmaputra* (religious son).

Once Shrimad's father Ravjibhai was about to visit Chamanpur, a small village nearby. Shrimad advised him not to go there. Even though Ravjibhai knew that Shrimad possessed extra-sensory power, he did not heed his advise.

Shrimad's younger brother, Mansukhbhai, entered the kitchen and a spark from a lamp set his shirt on fire. Shrimad's sister, Zabakben, was able to put out the fire by throwing a whole pot of buttermilk on him. Though Mansukhbhai was saved, he suffered a few burns.

Their father was summoned back and he very much regretted not heeding to his son's warning.





## 25. Strange Are the Ways of Karma!

The great irony of Shrimad's life is that although he was keen to live a life of renunciation and so indifferent to worldly attachments, yet he was not able to follow that path. He gave up public demonstrations of his abilities, turned his back to fame and glory, and stopped practising astrology, all so that he could pursue spiritual development, and yet he was forced by his parents to marry, which he did in deference to their wishes. Mother Devba did not want him to be a monk and, touched by the mother's selfless love, he agreed to be a householder.

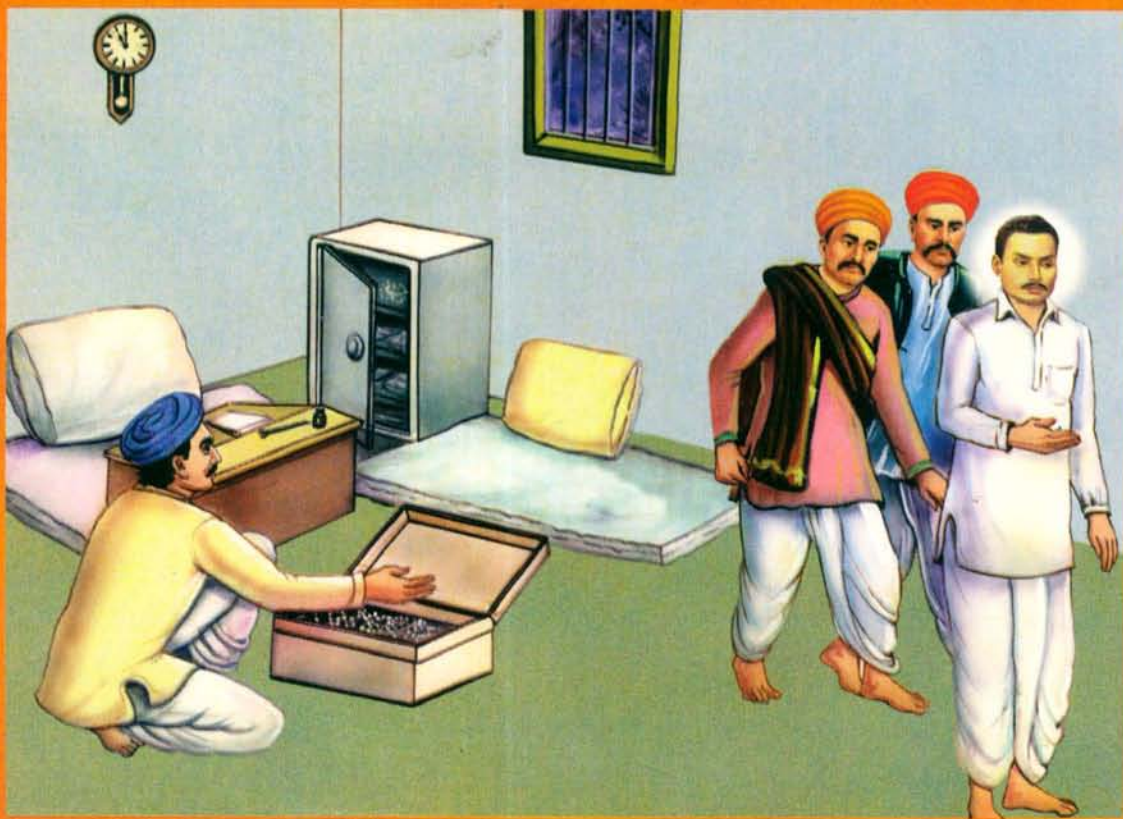
The letter that he wrote to his brother-in-law in *Vikram Samvat* 1944, reveals the fact that he was not very keen to marry but respected the wishes of relatives and well-wishers. He said, "They insist that I should marry. Then let it be so and I have consented."

At the age of twenty-one he possessed a fine sense of discrimination, and at the same time much detachment. Just as he had agreed to look after the family business, he also consented to marry to fulfill the wishes of his family. In *Vikram Samvat* 1944, he went to Vavania and married Zabakbai, the daughter of Popatbhai Zaveri, the elder brother of Revashankar Zaveri. Shrimad Rajchandra and Zabakbai had two sons – Chhaganlal (born in *Vikram Samvat* 1946) and Ratilal (born in *Vikram Samvat* 1952) and two daughters – Javalba (born in *Vikram Samvat* 1948) and Kashiba (born in *Vikram Samvat* 1950).

He knew that *Karma* accumulated in past lives were the reason for his marriage. For *Moksha*, all *Karmas* must be shed. They must be borne with equanimity. Though indifferent to worldly pleasures, he had to bear them: he could not avoid them.

He considered himself most unhappy but, unfortunately, there was no one in his family with whom he could share his feelings, so he kept them to himself. He wrote: "How strange is the bondage of *Karma* ! I now have to indulge in that which I never even dreamt of and which pains me. We must bear the consequences of our previous *karma* and take care to see that new ones are not formed. Therein lies our salvation." A reluctant householder, Shrimad was not drawn to worldly pursuits.

રેવાશંકર જગજીવનની કું.



## 26. Real Risks

One Maneklal Ghelabhai of Baroda had attended Shrimad's public performance in Mumbai. He was drawn to Shrimad. Impressed by Shrimad's intellect and talent, he offered to share his expertise in jewellery with him. Shrimad learnt how to assess and value diamonds from him in a short time. Vavania was a small port, so Shrimad decided to go to Mumbai and begin his career in Jewellery.

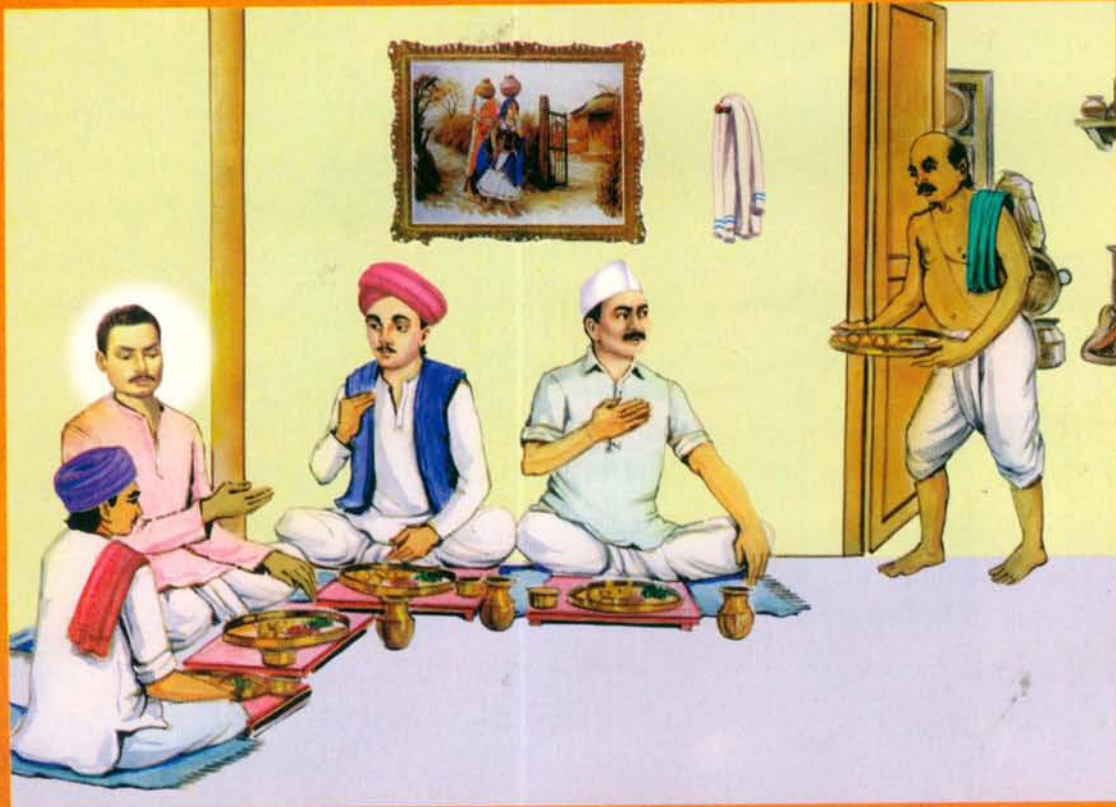
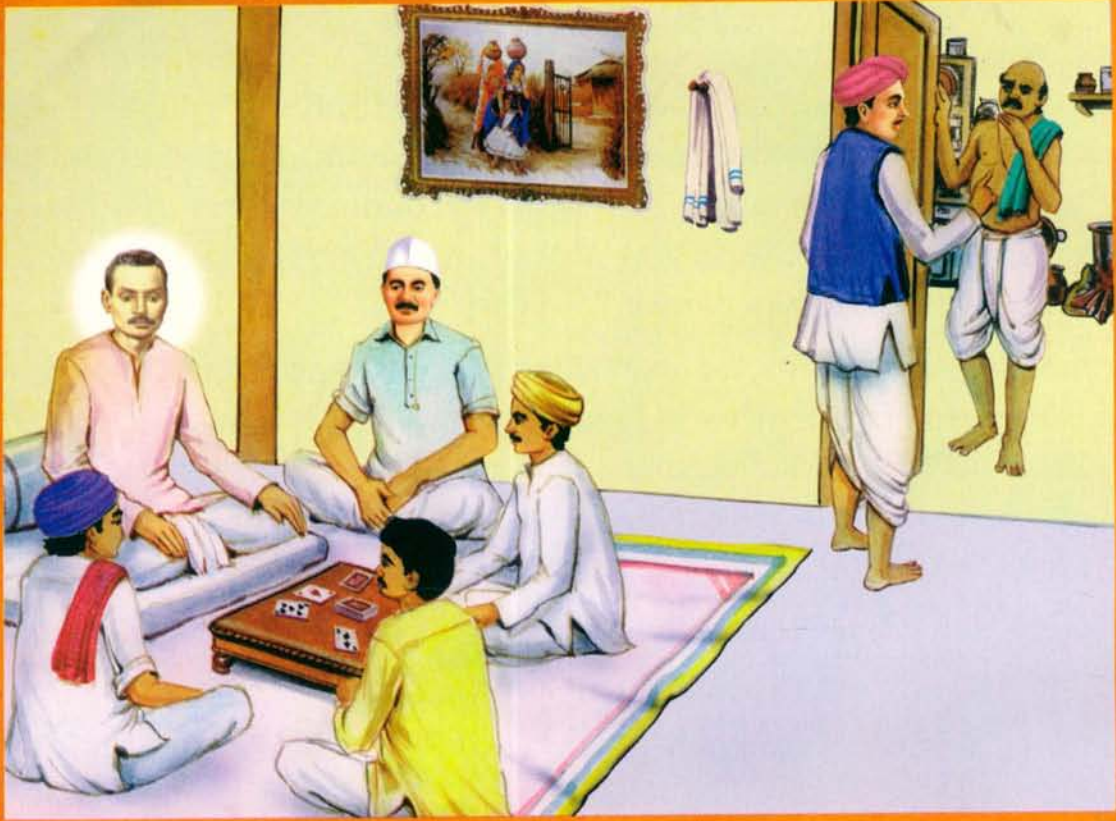
Within two years the firm, set up in Mumbai, earned an international reputation and conducted business with firms in England, Africa and Burma. Shrimad followed a strict code of conduct and ethical practices, profit making being of secondary importance. Thus one could notice the difference between Shrimad's business practices and those of other businessmen.

He writes: "The whole world is in business so as to take something, while we are in business to pay off debts from past lives."

The paradox in Shrimad's life is very clear. He was married and became a householder but the physical pleasures held no attraction for him. He writes: "I have no desire for physical pleasure or lust and yet why do the *karmas* of the past births lead me to these things which I like not?"

While in Mumbai, a glamorous city, Shrimad did not fall prey to temptations and remained completely detached. He was very much a part of the material world and yet not of it. The desire to lead a spiritual life was constantly growing in him. His thoughts turned more and more to renunciation and to a fuller absorption in spiritual life. In the midst of worldly activities, there was still an uninterrupted flow of thoughts on detachment, on renunciation, and on spirituality.

One evening there was a religious discussion at the firm of Revashanker Jagjivandas. When everyone got up to leave, Nanchandbhai of Pune saw a wooden case full of jewels open. Pointing to it he said that "this case is open and so there is great risk of theft." At this Shrimad asked him "What is risk?" Nanchandbhai replied that for him jewels are a risk of being stolen. Shrimad responded: "The wise also see risk as risk but in the sense that as long as jewels are there, there is risk." Comparing them to a disease, he explained that just like we do not like any disease, wise people feel that valuables are a disease on the earth and so they are not attracted to such things.



## 27. *Extraordinary Sense of Perception*

Shrimad was endowed with powers that truly confounded one and all, especially his extra-sensory perception. He could tell many things about objects, by merely touching them

Shrimad's sense of smell was also acute. He once went for dinner to the house of his wife's uncle. There one of the guests, Chhotalalbai of Morvi, a childhood friend of Shrimad's, gave the cook certain instructions about the quantity of salt to use, telling him that they were the host's instructions. The cook prepared the meal accordingly.

When dinner was served, Shrimad looked at his plate and turned to Chhotalalbai with a smile on his face: "Are you out to test me? One item has no salt in it and the other one has too much."

The host Revashankarbai tasted the items and found that what Shrimad said was right, and angrily summoned the cook. Chhotalalbai confessed that he himself had instructed the cook and that the cook was not at fault. Shrimad knew, without tasting the food, what had happened and had even known that his friend was behind all the confusion.

*Jame-Jamshed*, a well-known Parsi periodical, in its issue of January 24, 1887, reported that "Shrimad could identify, from a plate of various delicacies, those items that had too little salt. This he did at a glance at the items, without even tasting them." This is a well-documented proof of an extraordinarily developed sense of perception.

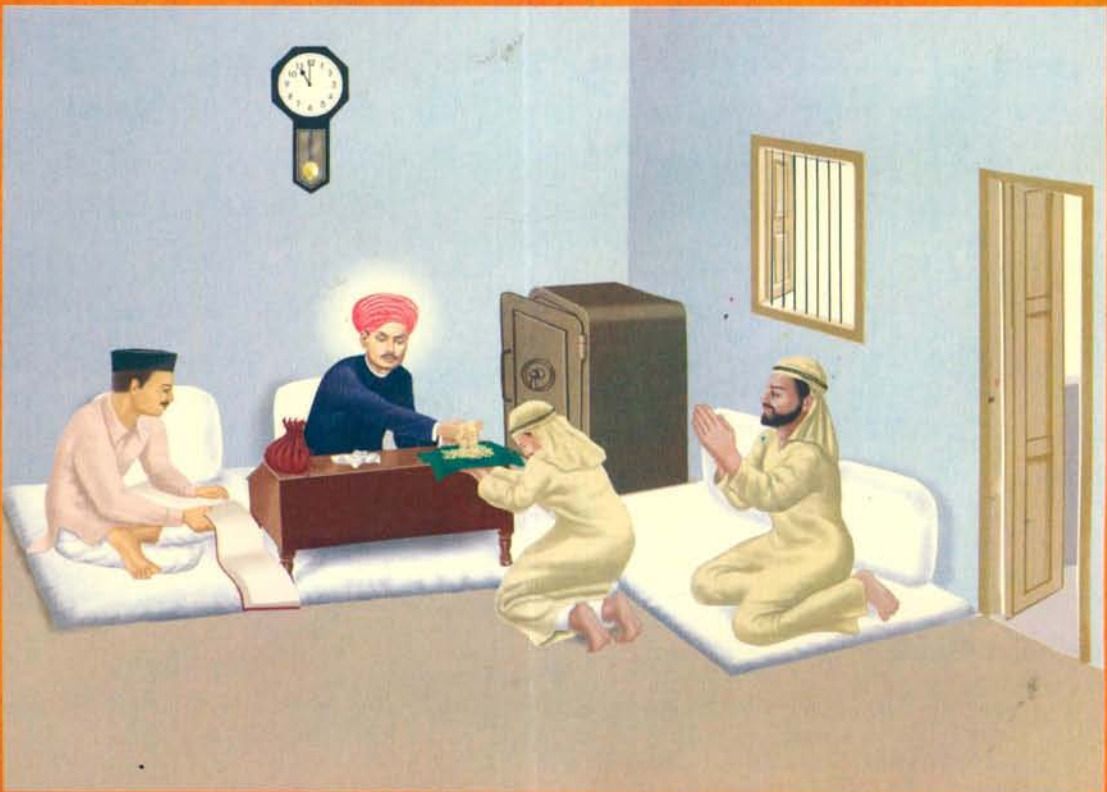
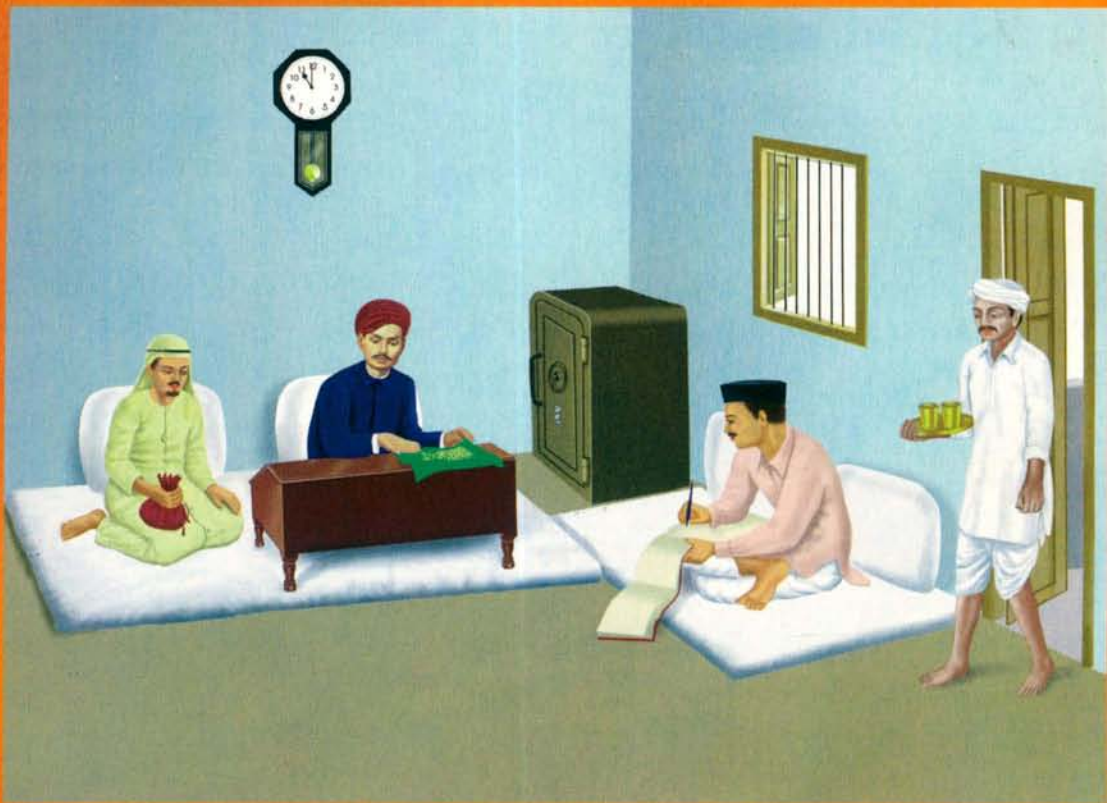
In those days, Pandit Lalan Jain, a great scholar of Jainism, inspired many with his speeches. Once Shrimad was invited to dinner by one Meghji Thobhan. Pandit Lalan Jain had also been invited. They were all sitting about 25 feet away from the kitchen.

Shrimad, through his sense of smell, could tell what was being prepared. He turned to the Pandit: "Lalan, I can eat with my nose."

"How is that possible?" he asked.

Shrimad replied: "See, I am sitting here, away from the kitchen and yet can tell you the various items being cooked."

Before the Pandit could say anything, Shrimad began to reel out the names of various items. Lalan was simply wonderstruck.



## **28. Epitome of Human Kindness**

Shrimad's business conduct was highly ethical. He was scrupulous and honest in his dealings. It is often said that those who are spiritual are not practical enough to succeed in business. Shrimad, on the other hand, ran a flourishing business, and yet adhered to his principles.

He entered into a forward contract with a diamond merchant. As part of the terms of the contract, the merchant signed a document promising to deliver a certain number of diamonds. Now, it so happened that soon after the document was signed, the prices of diamonds suddenly shot up. The merchant found himself in a tight spot. If he bought the diamonds at the current prices, he would incur heavy losses and probably go bankrupt.

Shrimad learnt about the steep increase in diamond prices and went to the merchant, armed with the contract. The merchant was disturbed at the sight of Shrimad and told him that he was at a loss as to what to do and that, while it would take some time, he would honour the contract in full.

Shrimad responded: "If the contract worries you, should it not worry me, too? The cause of worry for both of us is the contract, isn't it?"

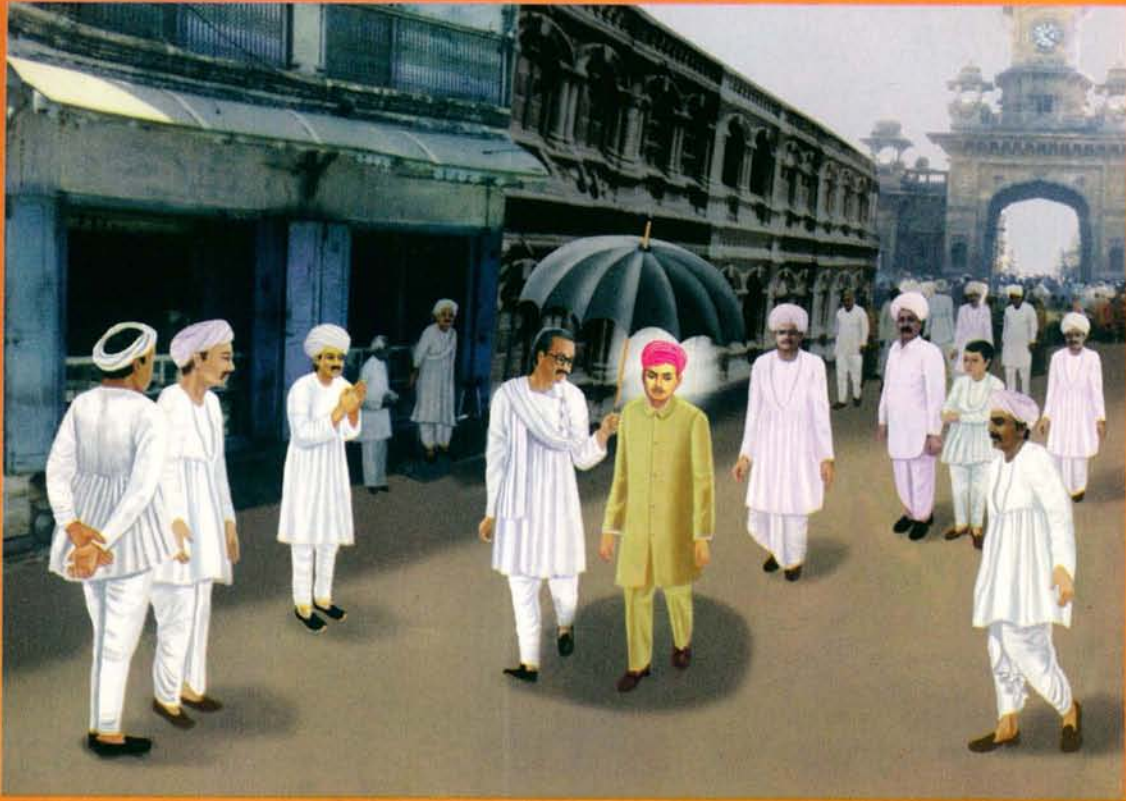
He tore up the contract, saying: "If I understand correctly, this contract will ruin you. I may drink milk, but I will not drink blood."

There was a wealthy Arab merchant, a dealer in pearls, whose younger brother also wanted to deal in pearls. He had received a consignment from a foreign country, and came to know, through a broker, that Shrimad was a very honest businessman and approached him. Shrimad negotiated a contract, bought and paid for the goods

The Arab went home and talked to his elder about the transaction. The elder brother showed him instructions from the original owner of the pearls that they were to be sold above a certain price. The price at which the goods were sold to Shrimad was much lower than stipulated.

The two brothers wondered what could be done and approached Shrimad the next day explaining their predicament. He cancelled the contract and returned the goods. The two brothers returned the money to Shrimad, heaving a sigh of relief. They were obliged to Shrimad for his act of generosity and struck by his greatness as a human being. They fell at his feet and thanked him profusely.





## 29. A Perfect Disciple

It was broad daylight and there was an unusual sight in the market place of Morvi. The sun was fierce and a fifty-year magistrate was holding an umbrella over the head of a twenty-year-old. Many laughed at this strange sight. It was very unusual behaviour for a magistrate.

The young man was Shrimad. The magistrate Dharshibhai was greatly impressed by him since last ten years. Shrimad used to instruct Dharshibhai in religious matters. The rules of the material world do not apply between a *Guru* and a disciple. The young can be wiser than the old, and thus command respect.

It was a hot summer afternoon. As Shrimad wished, Dharshibhai accompanied him for a stroll. Since it was very hot, he took an umbrella with him to provide shade. As they walked and discussed many issues, Shrimad asked Dharshibhai to open the umbrella. He did so, but covered Shrimad's head, not his, with it, causing much surprise in the marketplace.

At the outskirts of the town, Shrimad asked him to fold the umbrella. Dharshibhai responded that it was even hotter outside town.

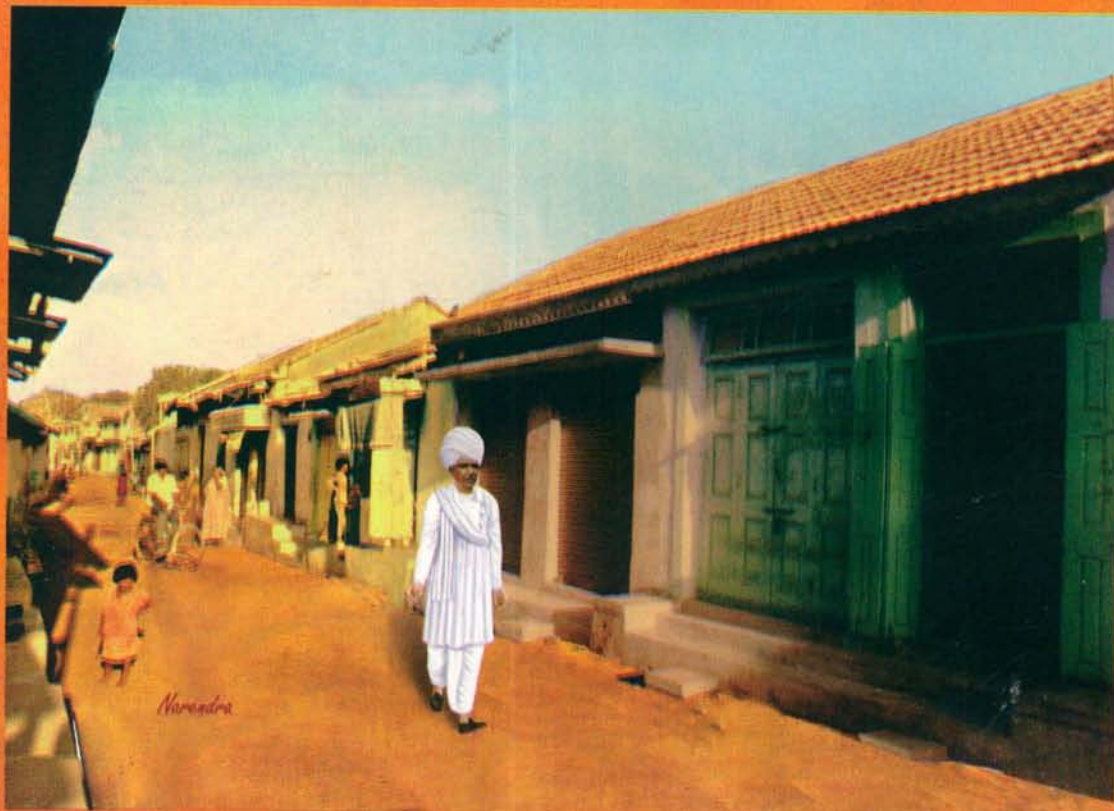
Shrimad replied that what was needed was to remove the heat of the passions from the Soul.

Shrimad thought long and hard at a very young age about how the soul can be freed from the cycle of re-incarnation. In *Vikram Samvat* 1945 in Vavania, twenty-one year old Shrimad met Shri Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, a scholar well-versed in the Vedanta philosophy. Shrimad became familiar with his religious views, which were direct, moderate and without hypocrisy. Shrimad said :

"While I am not wealthy, and am young in age, I seek to attain maturity of insight from the company of one such as yourself. I wish to serve at the feet of a truly self-realised person."

He wrote without prejudice: "If our goal is the well-being of the soul, why argue about the means or the systems? That knowledge which leads to self-realization is supreme knowledge. If the soul is detached, it is in a state of *Moksha*"

Shrimad wrote many of his innermost thoughts to this scholar, seeking guidance, which would lead him to enlightenment and *Moksha*. This is what Shrimad thirsted for all his life.



### 30. On the Verge of a Great Meeting

Shri Lallubhai was a secretary, at the court of the State of Limbdi in Gujarat. In those days, there was much political intrigue and deceit, because of which he had to leave his job. He went to settle in nearby Sayla, a town also known as "the Land of Saints."

Lallubhai's financial condition deteriorated over a period of time. In such times, people often look for answers in magic or some kind of miracle. Lallubhai had heard that a monk in Ratlam in Rajasthan possessed certain powers that could help him.

Lallubhai went to Ratlam and served the monk for a while. He then told of his situation and asked him for his assistance. The monk was Self-Realised and wisely advised him not to seek material gains. The words of the monk awakened Lallubhai and he soon realized how foolishly he had been caught up in materialism. He sought the monk's forgiveness and served him with true, self-less devotion.

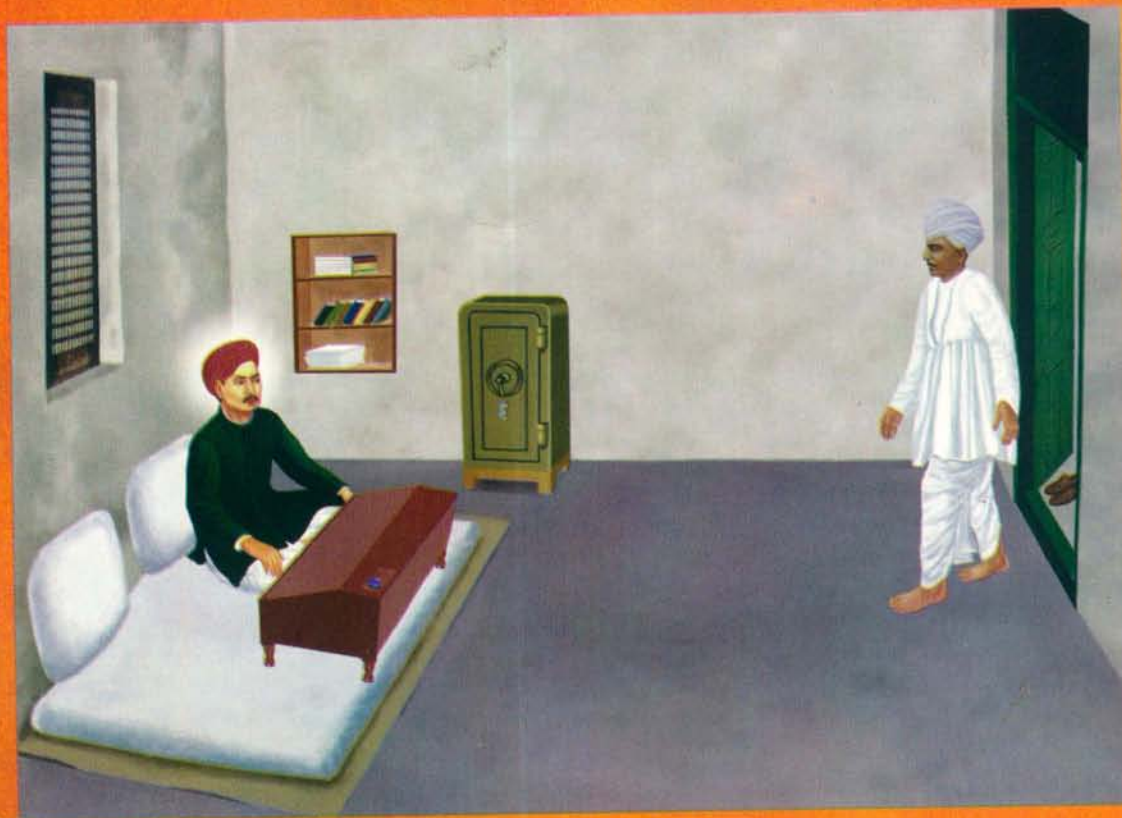
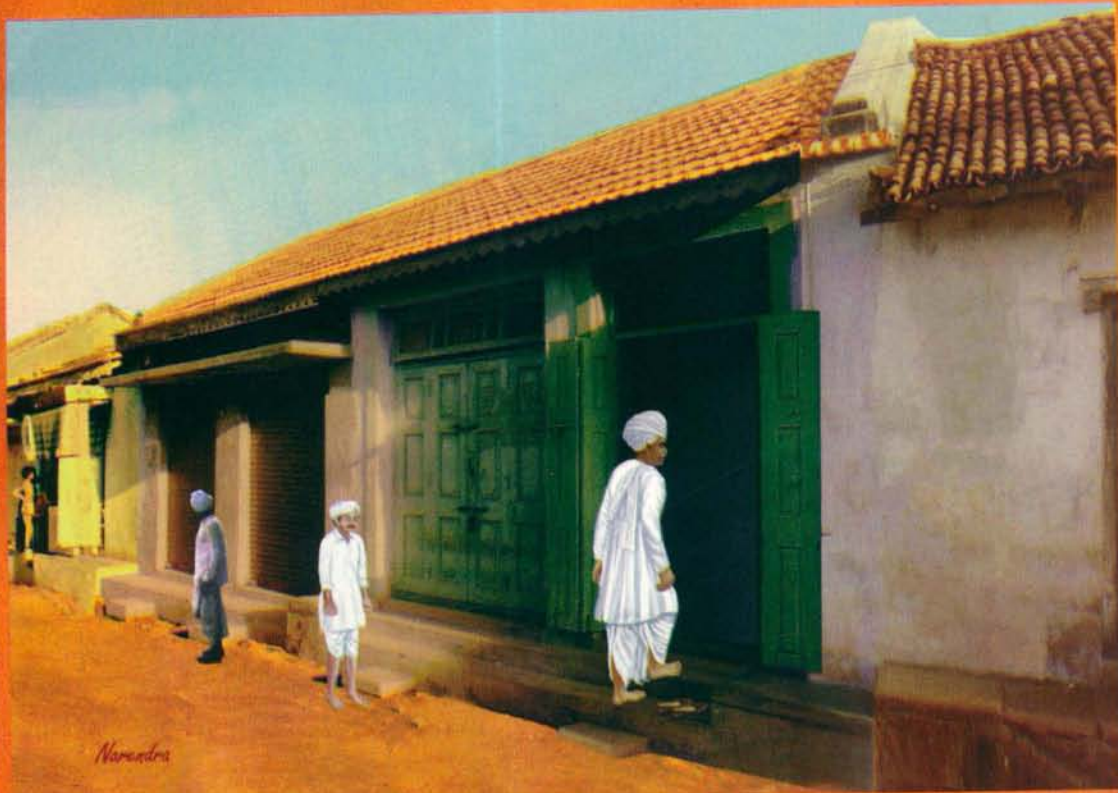
Lallubhai, once, respectfully asked the monk to guide him on the right path for spiritual growth. The monk, seeing that he was a true seeker, and that he now had no ulterior motive, was very pleased. He taught him the yogic technique of 'Sudharas', also known as the 'seed of wisdom' (*Beej gnan*) and explained to him the true path to Enlightenment.

Lallubhai returned to Sayla and became absorbed in his spiritual development and would meditate day and night. He taught his son Sobhagbhai this method of meditation and instructed him to keep it to himself till he came across a true seeker. Since this knowledge would help the latter in his spiritual development.

Sobhagbhai had heard much about Shrimad's poetry, mental faculties and memory. He thought that if he gave the 'seed of wisdom' or *beej gnan* to Shrimad, then many other souls would also benefit.

He asked his father : "The poet Raichand seems to be the most appropriate person in all of Kathiawad (the peninsular part of Gujarat, also known as Saurashtra). May I give *beej gnan* to him ?"

Sobhagbhai's father agreed and he set off for Jetpur. Sobhagbhai asked Shrimad's whereabouts and learned that he was at the shop of Chhatrabhuj Bechar, his brother-in-law. Sobhagbhai made his way to a meeting that was to prove to be the turning point in the lives of Sobhagbhai and Shrimad.



### 31. Power of Beej Gnan

It was the *Bhadrapad* month of *Vikram Samvat* 1946. The sixty-seven years old Shri Sobhagbhai was on his way to meet the twenty-three years old Shrimad. Shrimad foresaw that a certain Sobhagbhai of Sayla was on his way to show him '*Beej Gnan*' (seed of wisdom). Shrimad wrote that on a slip of paper and placed in a small drawer.

Sobhagbhai approached the shop of Shrimad's brother in law in Jetpur.

As he stood at the door, about to enter the shop, Shrimad welcomed him : "Welcome, Sobhagbhai, welcome."

Sobhagbhai was surprised. "How does he know my name ? We have never met and he did not know anything about my visit here."

As he stood there, Shrimad said to him, "There is a piece of paper in this drawer. Please take it and read it."

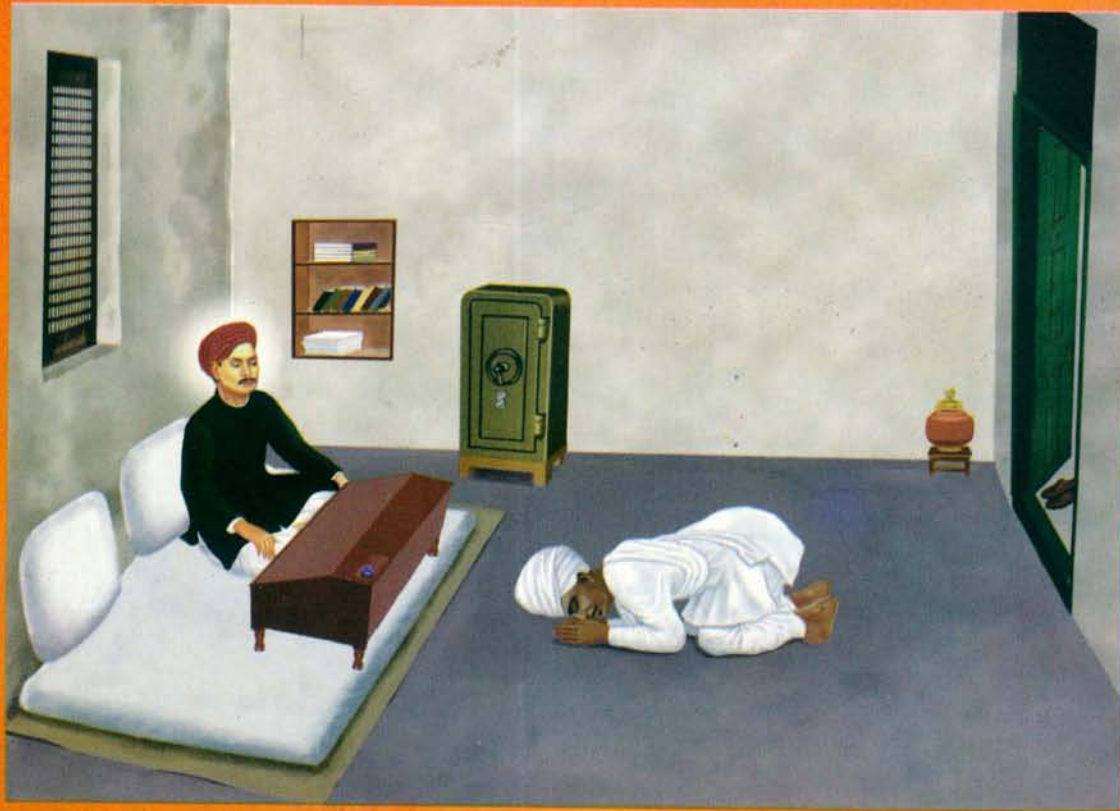
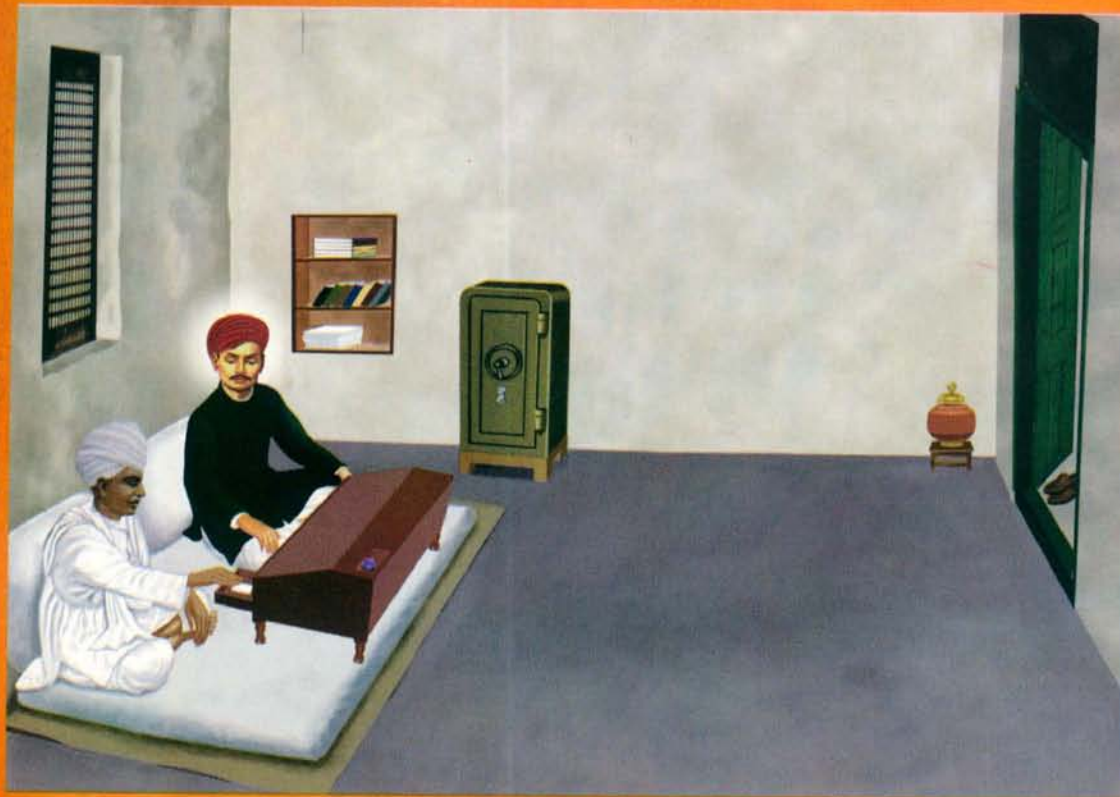
Sobhagbhai had come all the way from Sayla to teach Shrimad something and he already knew about it. He wondered what he can teach someone with as much insight and understanding as Shrimad. Just to test Shrimad's abilities a little further, he asked him the direction in which the door of his house in Sayla faced.

When Shrimad answered correctly, Shri Sobhagbhai was totally convinced that Shrimad was a person of remarkable powers, equipped with knowledge and ability to attain Enlightenment.

The process of *beej gnan* or *Sudharas* is a technique to still the mind. When practiced with true detachment and under the guidance of a Self-Realised true *Guru*, it leads to an experience of the Soul, the seat of all awareness and all happiness. This experience is called *Samyag Darshan* and after *Samyag Darshan* the soul can truly be said to be on the path of Moksha.

If *Keval Gnan* (when the soul attains pure consciousness) or Enlightenment is the tree, then *Samyag Darshan*, Right Vision, is the 'seed'. The yogic technique of *Sudharas* is instrumental in achieving '*Samyag Darshan*' Right Vision which eventually leads to '*Keval Gnan*' (when the soul attains pure consciousness).

Shortly after this meeting, Shrimad wrote in a letter : "If you search of *beej gnan*, you will attain *Kevalgnan*."



## 32. A Unique Bond

Sobhagbhai, realising Shrimad's spiritual greatness bowed down three times in front of him in reverence and devotion.

Shrimad found in Sobhagbhai an extraordinary companion, a saintly soul, one whose company he had long sought. It was as if two souls, long separated, had again been reunited. Sobhagbhai was inexplicably drawn to Shrimad as his *Guru* and Shrimad had an indescribable experience at the sight of Sobhagbhai. Shrimad immediately recalled the advanced state of spiritual development he had attained in previous lives, and he remembered the progress he had made in realising the self. He had now found the link that had been missing from his efforts. Thus, as a result of the meeting with Sobhagbhai, Shrimad's spiritual growth gained considerable momentum.

Shrimad and Sobhagbhai grew ever closer. Their relationship was not only one found between *Guru* and disciple, but also one of Soul-mates. At the top of Shrimad's first letter to Sobhagbhai, he quoted the famous verse of Shankaracharya (a great Hindu Saint)

“क्षणमपि सज्जनसंगतिरेका भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ।”

“Even a momentary meeting with a saintly (self-realised) soul could become a boat to cross the ocean of worldly existence.”

Shrimad compared Sobhagbhai to such a person and then writes : “You have expressed happiness in my presence and unhappiness at my absence, and I also feel the same way about your presence.” Despite the age gap of forty-four years there was a very strong bond between them.

Thereafter Shrimad wrote to Sobhagbhai about his inability to help others in their spiritual growth due to his worldly responsibilities, even though that was the primary goal of his life.

After his first meeting with Sobhagbhai, Shrimad's spiritual development increased dramatically. Shrimad opened his heart to his Soul-mate Shri Sobhagbhai of Sayla and his letters outline for us many of the trails and tribulations of living a spiritual life in the midst of worldly responsibilities.





### 33. An Ardent Devotee

In the summer of *Vikram Samvat* 1945, two acquaintances of Juthalalbai, whom Shrimad had recently befriended, had come to Ahmedabad to attend a wedding. As the wedding procession was leaving, these two men of Khambat, Ambalalbai and Chhotalalbai went to fetch Juthalalbai.

Juthabhai had become very close to Shrimad and was studying some letters Shrimad had sent him. His mind was thus focused on spiritual matters and detached from worldly activities. He wanted to tell them something about Shrimad, but did not think it appropriate at such an occasion. However, when they came to fetch him, he could not help himself and spoke a little of some profoundly spiritual matters. They all asked him from whom he had learned such valuable insights. Juthabhai told them about the embodiment of wisdom and detachment, which Shrimad was. He then gave them some of his letters, which they found a treasury of wisdom and insight.

Ambalalbai, in particular showed a keen interest and asked if it would be possible to meet such a wise and saintly person. He was given Shrimad's address and told to write to him and ask him directly. Ambalalbai's meeting with Juthalalbai marked a turning point in his life and he returned to Khambat with a strong desire to meet Shrimad. He had made copies of Shrimad's letters.

Shrimad's worldly duties meant that he was not able to spend much time on his primary goal of self-realisation, and helping others do the same. Until he had attained a certain spiritual stage, he was reluctant to draw attention to himself. It was only after five or six letters that Shrimad agreed to meet Ambalalbai. Ambalalbai went to Mumbai with his friend Tribhovanbai Manekchand. It is said that the eyes of the true aspirant easily recognize great souls, and as soon as they meet Shrimad, Ambalalbai and Tribhovanbai immediately felt great joy.

The twenty-year-old Ambalalbai became one of Shrimad's closest disciples and served him with great devotion. It was to him that Shrimad wrote the letter entitled : "Who is worthy of Mahavir's message ?" Which outlines the basic qualities that one should possess to tread on the path to Moksha. It was also Ambalalbai who dutifully stood by Shrimad's side, holding a lamp, at the time of the composition of Shri Atma Siddhi Shastra. Later Ambalalbai imparted his wisdom by explaining all the verses of Shri Atma Siddhi Shashtra for the benefit of the world at large.



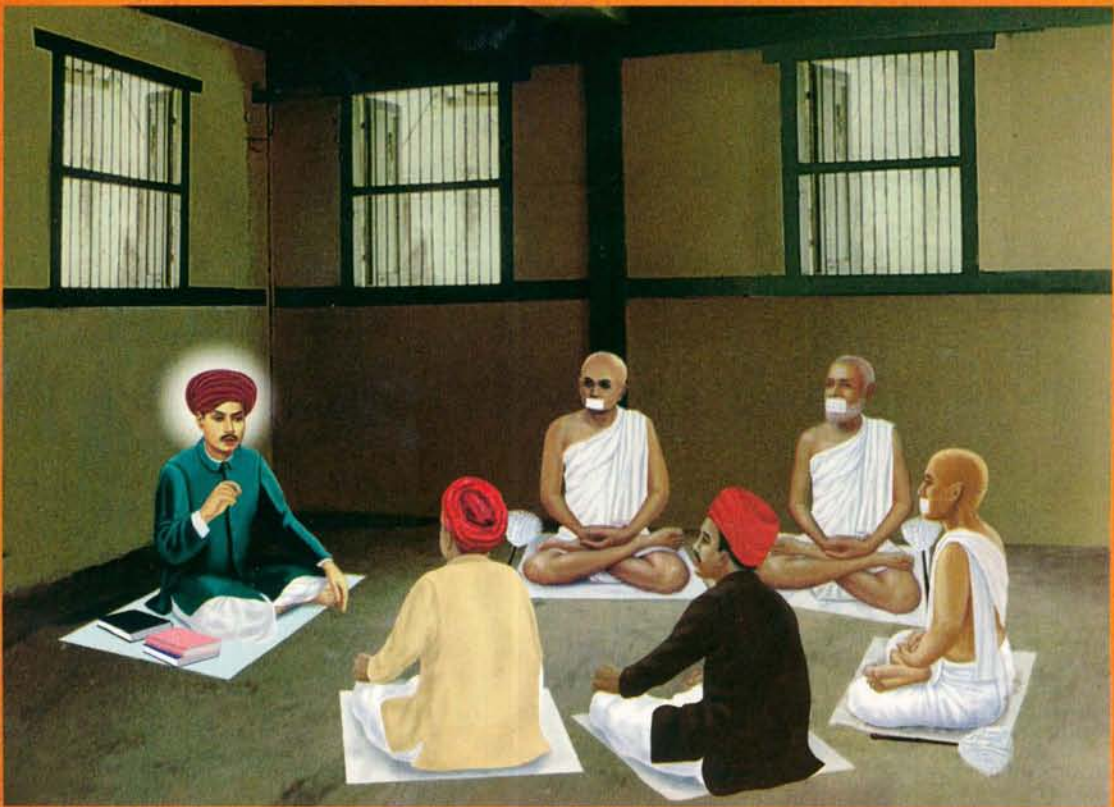
### 34. A Pious Soul

Juthabhai, very early in his life, scaled great spiritual height thanks to his relationship with Shrimad. The initial contact soon developed into an enduring bond. Shrimad first came to know Juthabhai in *Vikram Samvat* 1944, when Shrimad was in Ahmedabad for the publication of *Mokshamala*. As the relationship grew, Juthabhai found Shrimad to be extremely knowledgeable and an ardent spiritual soul. Whenever Shrimad happened to be in Ahmedabad, he stayed at Juthabhai's house. Even in Morvi and Bharuch they stayed together. The period of intimacy was marked by exchange of letters and Shrimad used the epithet '*satyaparayan*' (believer in truth) for him because he was so pure at heart and because he had in him some great qualities. Unfortunately, Juthabhai's family members did not approve of his association with Shrimad. This made Juthabhai unhappy. At that time Shrimad counselled him not to be sad, telling him to ignore what the others said and pursue his goal of Self Realisation.

An ardent devotee of Shrimad, Juthabhai had two years of time, from *Vikram Samvat* 1944 to *Vikram Samvat* 1946 to be spent for his spiritual upliftment. During this brief period, Shrimad reciprocated his feelings for him through personal meetings and thus blessed him. Born in *Vikram Samvat* 1923, Juthalalbai had studied upto Std IV, and his meeting with Shrimad turned him into a spiritual seeker. Shrimad had written, to his true follower, about 20 letters. He lived till the age of 23. The last two years of his short life were marked by ill-health. At that time, Shrimad, through letters led him to the path of strengthening the inner life. Juthabhai's chief quality was his equanimity and had hardly any *karma* to bind his soul. He was a truly pious soul .

Juthalalbai found separation from Shrimad unbearable and longed for his company. This affected his health. Shrimad often consoled him and asked him to be patient. Shrimad in a note two months prior to Juthabhai's death, which he knew by prescience, wrote : "If my power of prescience has not diminished, then Juthabhai will leave the mortal coil and attain *samadhi* on the night of Thursday, the ninth day of *sud Ashadh*."

Thus Shrimad forewarned him about his impending death but advised him not to swerve from the chosen path. As forefold, Juthabhai passed away, not on the night of the ninth day of *Ashadh sud* but during the day. Shrimad, paying a glorious tribute to him, said, "It is not surprising that such pious souls should have a short life. Juthabhai was one who had the inner life illuminated by equanimity which led him to the path of *moksha* !"



### 35. Thirsting for Answers

Shri Ambalalbai of Khambhat was to become one of Shrimad's closest disciples. As we saw, he first heard of Shrimad from Shri Juthabhai in Ahmedabad in VS 1945 and consequently he met Shrimad in Mumbai. He was so overwhelmed with Shrimad that he wanted to meet him again and again. He often wrote to him asking him to visit Khambhat. Fortunately, Shrimad wrote that he would visit Khambhat and the joy of Ambalalbai and his companions knew no bounds.

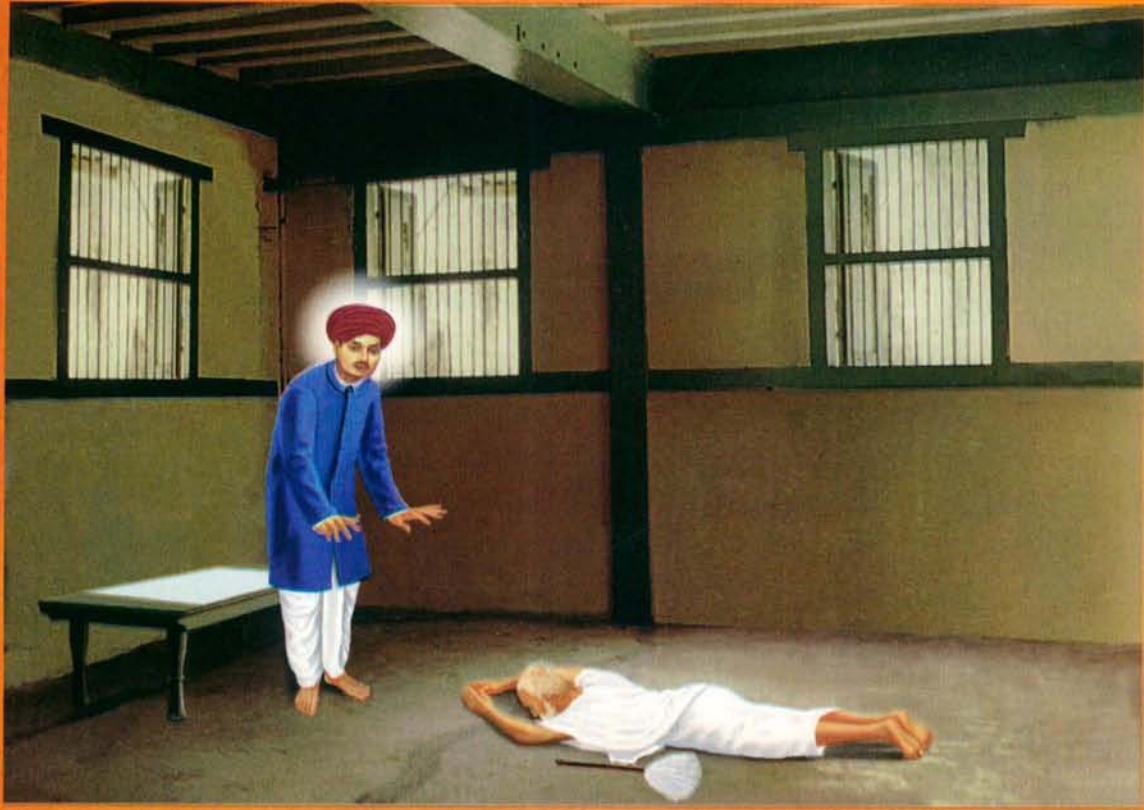
Ambalalbai and his companions regularly went to the Jain Hall (*upashray*), where monks would often stay. However, after hearing about Shrimad, instead of attending the monk's sermon, they would sit in a quiet corner to read and contemplate copies of Shrimad's letters. Once Acharya Shri Harakhchand Maharaj, the head monk, was giving a sermon on the first floor of the building while Ambalalbai and others were discussing Shrimad's letters. One of the monks, Munishri Lalluji, became curious when he saw them sitting in a corner. He asked Ambalalbai why they were not upstairs.

Ambalalbai spoke to him about Shrimad, mentioning his personality and his knowledge of the *Agamas*, Jain Scriptures. He also spoke of Shrimad's spiritual insight and his ability to resolve any doubts. Munishri Lalluji became very eager to meet Shrimad as he had some long-held doubts which no one as yet had been able to resolve for him. He thus asked Ambalalbai whether he could arrange for him to meet Shrimad. Ambalalbai agreed.

Munishri Lalluji practised both inner and outer penance and was revered for his piety. Born to Kaslibai in *Vikram Samvat* 1910, in the village of Vataman in Saurashtra, he studied in the village school but soon gave it up to look after the family shop.

Devkaran Bhavsar used to accompany Munishri Lalluji to the Jain Hall and perform *samayika* (48 minutes of equanimity and self study) everyday. He too later took vows of monkhood and became Munishri Lalluji's disciple. Munishri Lalluji was a man of simplicity and full of devotion.

In VS 1946, Shrimad visited Khambhat and stayed with Amabalalbai. Ambalalbai and his father Lalchandbhai took Shrimad to the Jain Hall where they met the spiritual head Acharya Shri Harakhchandji Maharaj and his disciple Munishri Lalluji. Shrimad resolved Munishri's long-held doubts to the latter's satisfaction. From their very first meeting Munishri Lalluji felt a great devotional attraction towards Shrimad realizing that he was for sure an exceptional person.



## 36. *Spiritual Guru*

After taking permission from his Guru, Acharya Harakhchandji, Munishri Lalluji took Shrimad upstairs and was so overwhelmed after their first meeting that he prostrated himself at Shrimad's feet, even though he was a monk and fourteen years senior. Despite Shrimad's insistence that he stop, he did so not only once but three times out of profound respect and deep humility.

It so happens that seemingly ordinary events turn out to be extraordinary. The meeting between Munishri Lalluji and Shrimad was one such event. It brought about the transformation of many lives, brought the light of truth to many and freed many souls from the bondage of prejudices.

Munishri Lalluji was a highly respected monk and held significant influence over his followers. He was the only child born to the wealthy businessman Krishnadas Gopalji. At a young age he abandoned all his wealth and took the vows of monkhood. When he was initiated, there were only four monks in the area but the number soon doubled. He attained the status of a chief monk within five years, and the number of monks kept increasing, many attributing the increase to Munishri Lalluji's auspicious arrival. Munishri was also famous for his poetry.

It was a matter of great surprise that such a great monk should so revere a householder. Shrimad asked him what he desired and Munishri responded that he wanted mental firmness with regard to total celibacy and Right vision.

Shrimad asked: "What makes you think that I can satisfy your needs and why do you have such feelings of devotion towards me?"

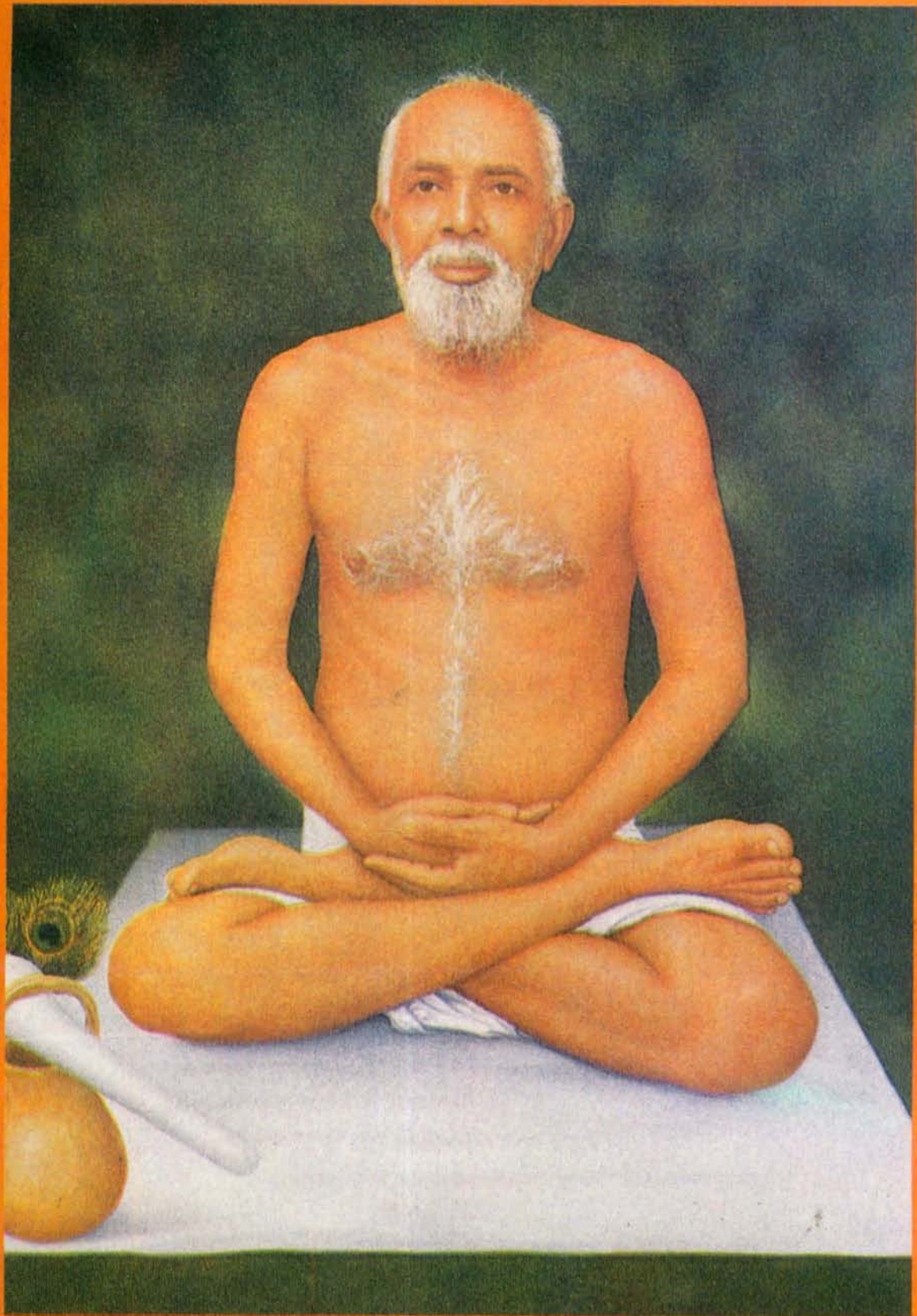
Munishri replied, "When I first saw you, I had a surge of devotional affection for you. I have a distinct feeling that you were my father in one of my previous lives. I felt a sense of fearlessness. This is why I show you so much reverence."

Shrimad then examined the monk's right big toe. Later he said that Munishri had a rare spiritual legacy from previous lives.

Shrimad then gave a discourse on '*Shree Suyagadang Sutra*', explaining the possibility of deep Self-Realisation in present times. He also explained parts of '*Thanang Sutra*' and resolved many doubts. Acharya Harakhchandji was also inspired by Shrimad's interpretation, and bowed to Shrimad in reverence.

The Monk's acceptance of a householder as a *Guru* is an almost unique occurrence in Jain history.





### 37. Rajchandra's True 'Laghuraj'

In the four months (*chaturmas*) of the monsoon season, monks or nuns reside in one place, and do not move about from one place to another as they do the rest of the year. This is to prevent injury to the new vegetation and life which spring up then. Munishri Lalluji had so much enjoyed the seven days he spent with Shrimad in Khambat, courtesy of Shri Ambalalbai, that he longed for Shrimad's spiritual guidance and wanted to spend the monsoon season where Shrimad was, in Mumbai. Shrimad invited him, if convenient, to visit his shop and spend an hour everyday with him. The monk would walk four miles everyday to see Shrimad, who would leave aside his business and discuss spiritual matters with Munishri.

Once Shrimad asked Munishri : "How did you recognise me ?"

"From what Ambalalbai said of you."

Munishri Lalluji once told Shrimad : "I took monkhood (*diksha*), renouncing my wealthy family, aged parents, two wives, a son and so many things."

Wanting to melt away the slight pride he had detected, Shrimad asked : "What sacrifice have you made? You have left your home and now how many homes of devotees are yours ? You left two wives but how many women do you now gaze upon ? You abandoned a son, but for how many children do you now have affection ?"

After hearing all this, the monk realised his failings. His pride at outer renunciation melted away and, with utter humility, he said, "I have renounced nothing."

Shrimad now exclaimed : "My dear monk, you have now renounced all." It is difficult to cease being possessive, but if one serves and has full faith in a Self-Realised person, then *Moksha* is not far away.

Shrimad read aloud the first seventeen verses from "*Samadhisatak*" and gave Munishri Lalluji the book to read for himself. As he was leaving, Shrimad called him back and wrote on the first page :

AATAM BHAVNA BHAVTA JIV LAHE KEWALGNAN RE

"One who longs for the Soul, attains Enlightenment."

Munishri Lalluji learnt from Shrimad the value of silence (*maun*) and took a three-year vow of silence, immediately after the monsoon season. He was allowed to speak to the monks he guided and to Shrimad. He earned the name Laghuraj Swami. "Laghu" means small and "Raj" is taken from "Rajchandra," indicating his humility and his devotion to Shrimad. Laghuraj Swami is thus an example to us all.



## 38. Self-Realisation

After Shrimad and Shri Sobhagbhai of Sayla met for the first time towards the end of *Vikram Samvat* 1946, Shrimad's spiritual progress gained considerable momentum. Shrimad poured out his heart in long letters written to Sobhagbhai, his soul-mate, addressing him with titles such as "Respected Sobhagbhai *"Atma Vivek Sampan"* one who can discriminate between the body and the soul. A month after their first meeting, Shrimad wrote from Vavana : "My thoughts dwell incessantly and undividedly on the ultimate meaning of Soul." Who else would have 'such constant meditation ?' - Only a soul who had an experience of inner joy.

Shrimad, at the beginning of 1947, wrote to Shri Sobhagbhai, on the auspicious day of *Gnan Panchmi*, a day in honour of wisdom and insight, addressing him: "Most worshipful, possessor of the seed of Enlightenment, most gracious, Shri Sobhagbhai." Sobhagbhai was instrumental in Shrimad recalling the advanced spiritual state he had attained in his previous lives, which enabled him to progress considerably faster. Shrimad always expressed tremendous gratitude to Sobhagbhai for this. Elsewhere Shrimad writes : "It is by your grace that I am experiencing joy, and is due to my karma that I suffer." He further writes : "All great Souls have sung the glory of the knowledge which you possess."

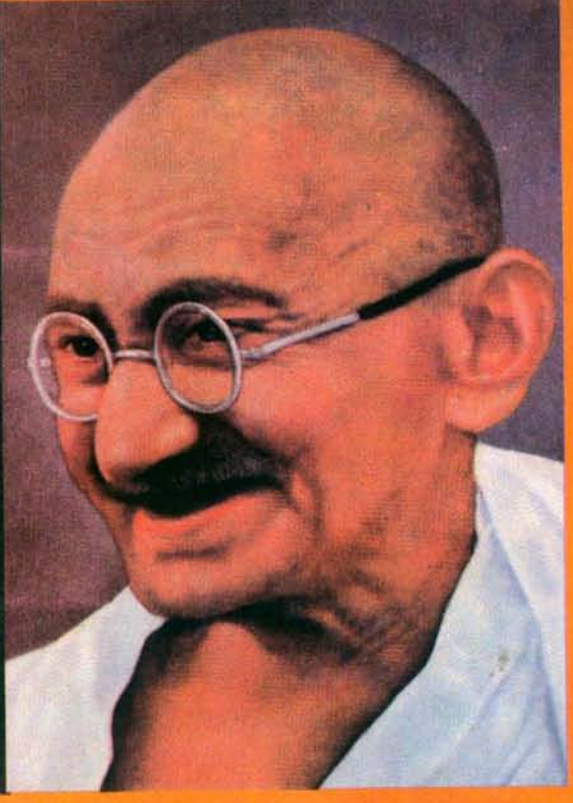
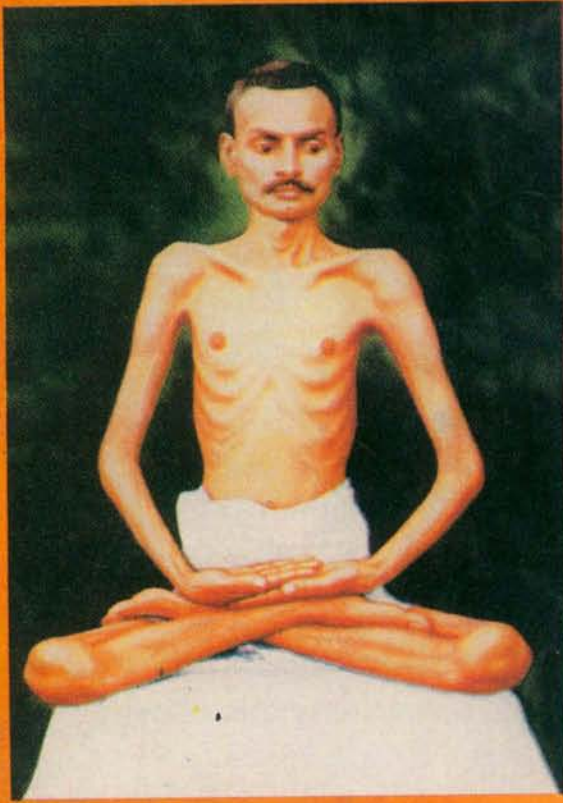
As Shrimad's *Darshanmoh*, the *Karma* which leads to delusion and misidentification with the physical, the root of all *Karma* and thus rebirth, gradually got eroded, he gained a direct experience of the Soul. In *Vikram Samvat* 1947, he attained pure *Samyag Darshan*, Self-Realisation, the turning point in spiritual terms.

*In nineteen forty seven I knew, that Self-Realisation had dawned.  
As my learning and experience grew, the light of my own true nature shone.*

*How blessed the day is today !*

In a letter to Sobhagbhai, he wrote : "That I have experienced my Soul is beyond doubt, and that I am free of the bonds [of delusion and passions] is an eternal truth." Again in *Vikram Samvat* 1947, he wrote to his Soul-mate Sobhagbhai : "Since dawn, God has shown me amazing grace and I am experiencing True *ParaBhakti* (devotional union)."

It is the legacy of Shrimad's letters which provides us with such wonderful insights into the joy of Self-Realisation and the practical aspects of the path to it. Seldom does a Self-Realised Soul so openly and intimately discuss such matters and it is by the grace of the relationship with Sobhagbhai of Sayla that we have access to these.



### **39. Gandhiji's Spiritual Inspiration**

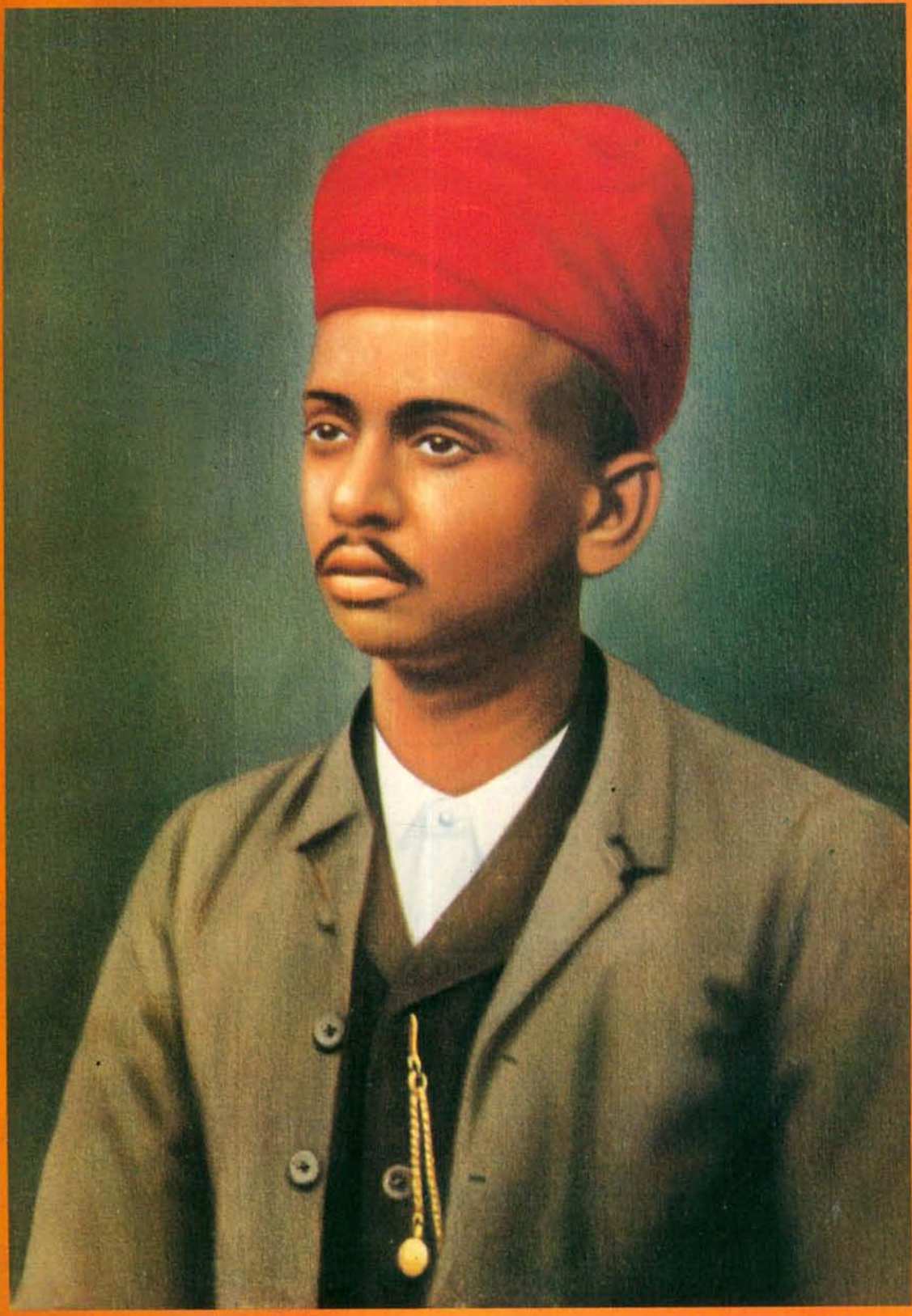
*I*t was a defining moment in history when Shrimad Rajchandra and Mahatma Gandhi first met. In Vikram Samvat 1947, in the month of *Jeth*, Mahatma Gandhi, then simply known as Barrister Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, had returned to India, following his admission to the Bar in England. In Mumbai, he stayed with a Dr. Pranjivan Mehta, whose brother, Revashankar Jagjivan was Shrimad Rajchandra's business partner. Shrimad too was there that day.

Gandhiji stayed in Mumbai to set up legal practice. He had spare time on his hands and often spent it with Shrimad at his shop. He had observed Shrimad closely and wrote about him : "Shrimad was always satisfied with the food offered to him. His attire was simple, and consisted of a shirt, a dhoti, a long coat, a scarf and a turban. He walked at a slow pace and it was obvious to passers-by that he was engrossed in deep thoughts. His eyes sparkled with magic and inner brilliance. There was a constant glow of peace and happiness on his face."

In their very first meeting, Gandhiji was greatly impressed with Shrimad's intellectual capabilities. During the time they spent together, Gandhiji was able to appreciate the subtle nuances of Shrimad's personality and conduct. His bright eyes, his contentment, the ease with which he dealt with others and his thoughtfulness, all played a significant part in moulding Gandhiji's noble character.

He said : "I can not aptly describe the lasting influence Shrimad Rajchandra made on my life. For years, I have been in search of a righteous person in India but I have not yet seen another righteous being who measures up to him. Amongst the European philosophers, I consider Tolstoy as of the top order and Ruskin as of the second order but my experience with Shrimad was superior to that of both of them."

There had been extensive correspondence between the two men. Unfortunately, only three of these letters exchanged between them have survived. Nonetheless, these three letters tell us vividly how Shrimad helped Gandhiji clear his misgivings about his own faith and prevented him from converting to another faith. Like a true barrister, Gandhiji posed a number of questions to Shrimad on issues of the existence of the soul, God, emancipation, religion, reincarnation and Christianity. Shrimad's responses were filled with logic, intellect and his spiritual experience.



## 40. Devotion of a Supreme Disciple

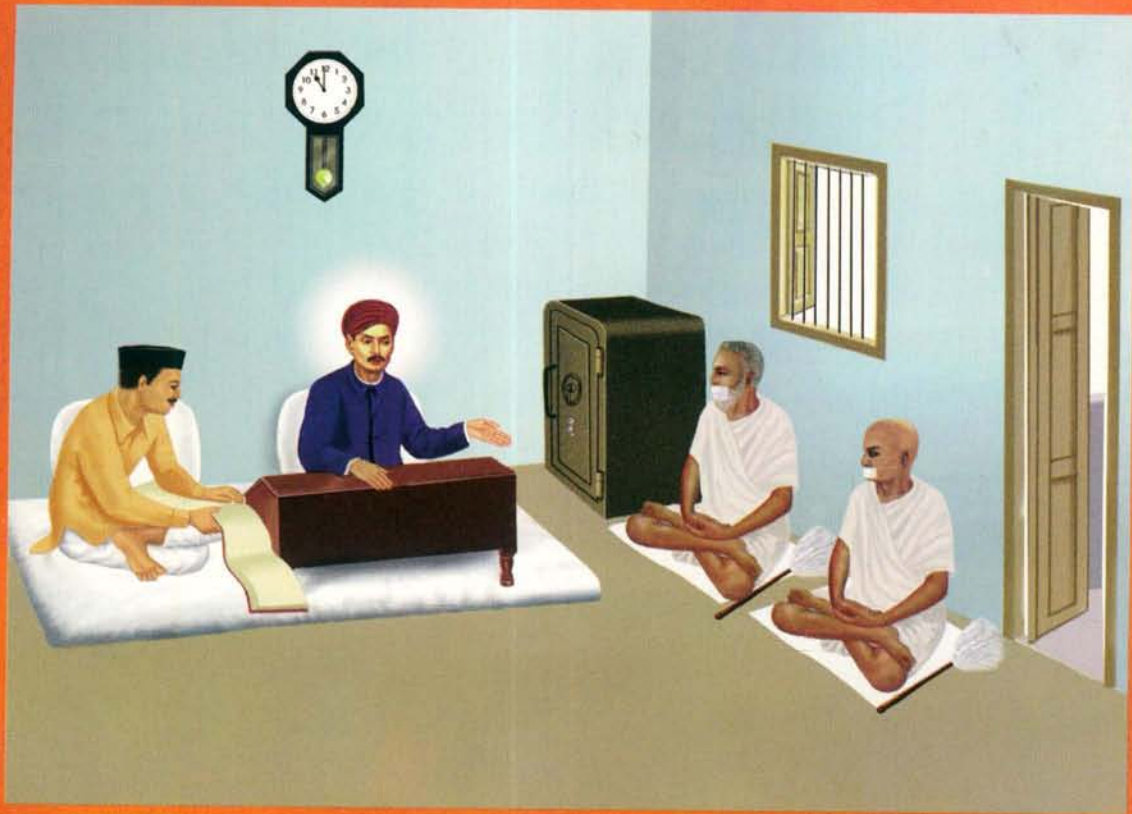
Shrimad Rajchandra had guided the True Seeker Ambalalbai in attaining a higher plane of spirituality, and thus brought him closer to liberation. At the same time, Ambalalbai assisted Shrimad in his own quest by copying out Shrimad's handwritten notes, making arrangements for Shrimad when he wanted to retreat into solitude. The depth of their *Guru-Shishya* (disciple) relationship is clearly discernible from their correspondence and from events when they were together.

Ambalalbai was an extremely talented and a totally devoted disciple who by *Vikram Samvat* 1946 had made Shrimad the focus of his life to the extent that it distracted him from his duties to his wife and parents. Shrimad gently advised him: "Give full attention and care to them, you should not hurt their feelings and one should only practice religion when they have been taken care of."

With his reverence for Shrimad, Ambalalbai took this instruction very seriously and never repeated that mistake again. Ambalalbai had a very sharp and retentive memory. He would recall religious discourses given 2 to 3 days before and repeat them *verbatim*. As his handwriting was neat, Shrimad would ask him to make notes of what he said, which Ambalalbai would send on to other aspirants. He would also make copies of scriptural books for Shrimad. In a short span of time Ambalalbai had recognised Shrimad's true divinity. Most people are not able to recognize Self-realised beings due to their various prejudices. He thus benefited significantly from their close association.

Later in *Vikram Samvat* 1947, Shrimad asked Ambalalbai to find a quiet place in the vicinity of Khambat where he could stay *incognito*. Accordingly, Ambalalbai chose Ralaj. Shrimad stayed there until after the festival of *Paryushan*. Shrimad's holy footsteps sanctified the soil and he was inspired to compose four immortal songs, namely: "*Vis Dohra*" or "Twenty Couplets" describing the faults which hinder spiritual progress and the importance of faith in a true *guru*; '*Yama-Niyam*' which talks about the practices one has adopted unsuccessfully to attain Enlightenment, and recommends the one thing not yet done, namely taking instruction on the "Seed of wisdom" from a True Guru; '*Jud ane Chaitanya*' highlighting the differences between consciousness and matter; and "*Jinvar kahe che Gnan*," defining what the Lord Jinas say is true knowledge.





## **41. Guru – Shishya (Disciple) Relationship**

Munishri Lalluji, was very eager to spend time in sacred association with Shrimad, and thus decided to spend the four months (*Chaturmas*) in Mumbai. Everyday the monks, Lalluji and Devkaranji, would walk about four miles to Shrimad's shop for guidance and understanding.

The monk would normally give their daily sermons before coming to see Shrimad.

One day Shrimad asked : "Who reads the daily sermon and how many people attend these sermons?"

Munishri Lalluji's disciple Muni Devkaranji, who was a great orator and whose sermons were very popular, replied that it was he who delivered the daily sermons, and that the daily attendance averaged a thousand people.

Shrimad then asked if any impure thoughts arose when looking at the women in the audience. Muni Devkaranji replied that no physical passions arose, however his mind did become unsettled with such thoughts.

Shrimad said a monk must have full control over his body, his words and his mind – all three must work in unison.

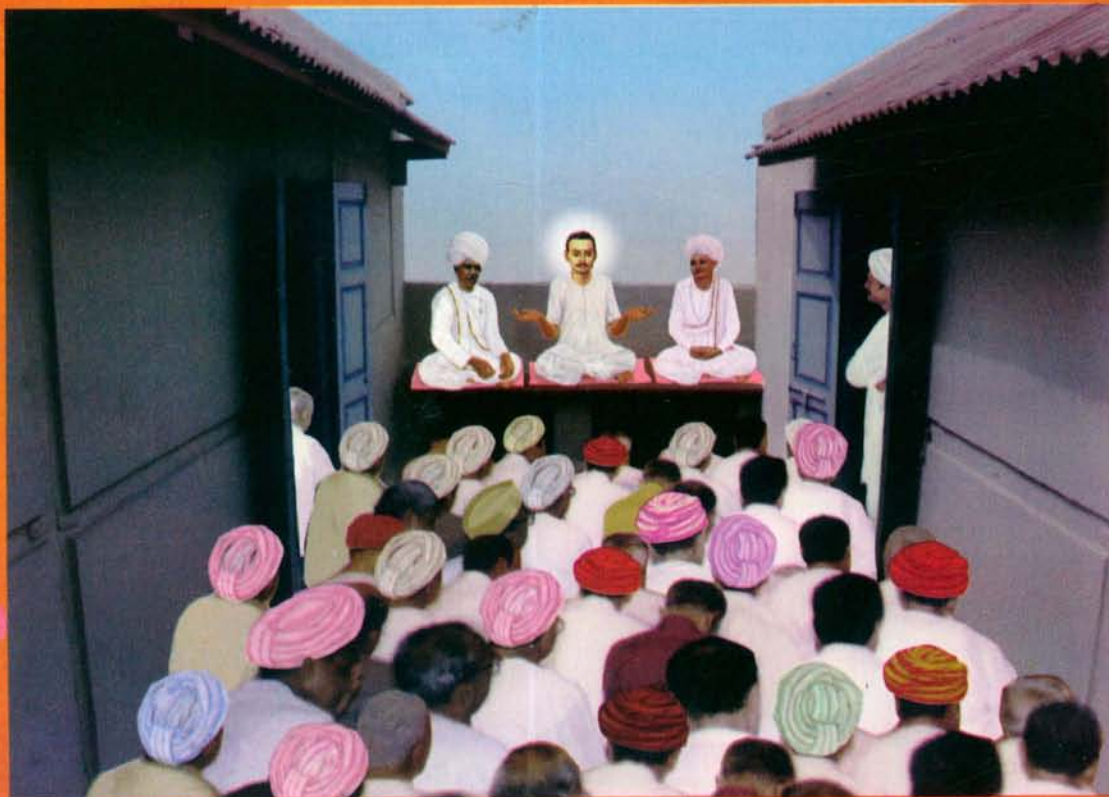
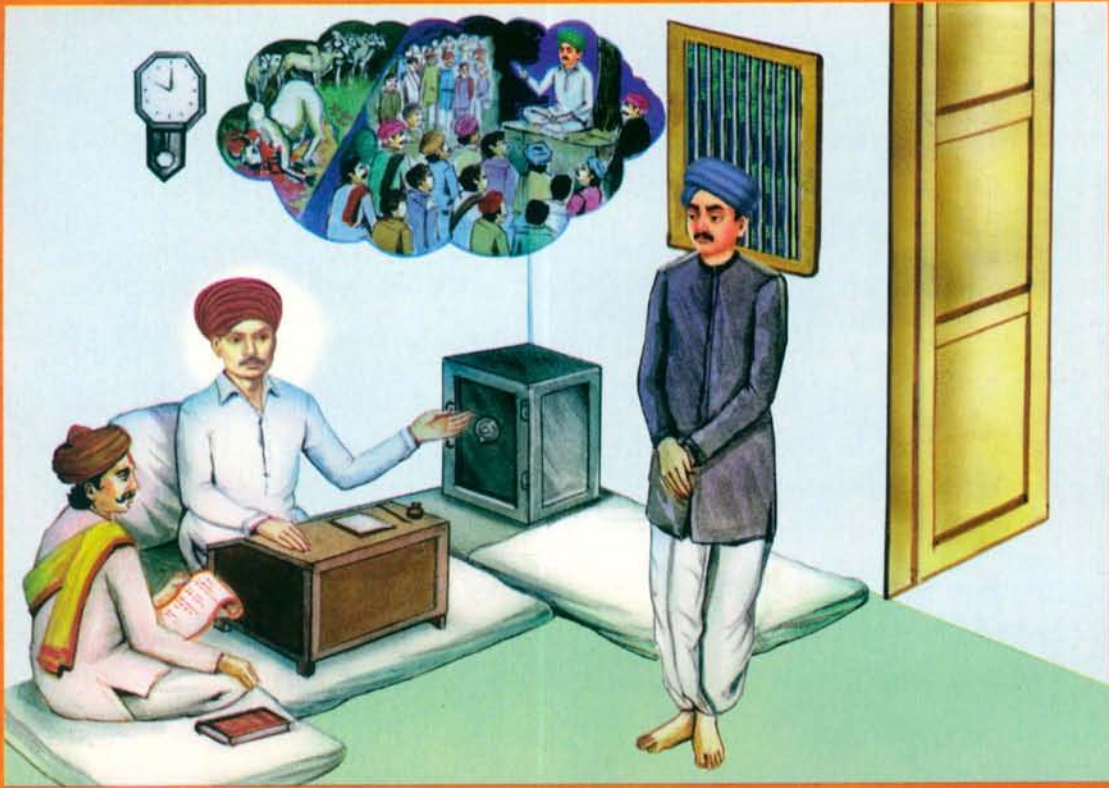
Muni Devkaranji asked : "When you are sitting at your desk, with diamonds and pearls all around you, is your mind not drawn to them ?"

Shrimad replied by saying : "We view them as deadly poison. Do you ever feel like that ?"

Muni Devkaranji was stunned with this reply and fell silent.

Shrimad said "As a coconut kernel remains separate from its shell, we remain separate from all that is around us." Hearing this, Muni Devkaranji lapsed into deep thought. Shrimad had provided an insight into his own detached way of life, whose subtlety, the monk had failed to grasp.

Once Tribhovanbhai Bhanjibhai asked Shrimad "How honest ought a Jain to be ?" Shrimad caught sight of the spire of Bombay High Court building, a little distance away and, pointing at it, he replied : "The honesty of a Jain has to be as good, if not better than that of the Judge who sits in that High Court. His or her honesty should be so transparent that it leaves no room for any doubt about it. The degree of honesty should be such that, should anyone accuse a Jain of dishonesty, he would not be believed."



## 42. Ahimsa : The Ultimate Religion

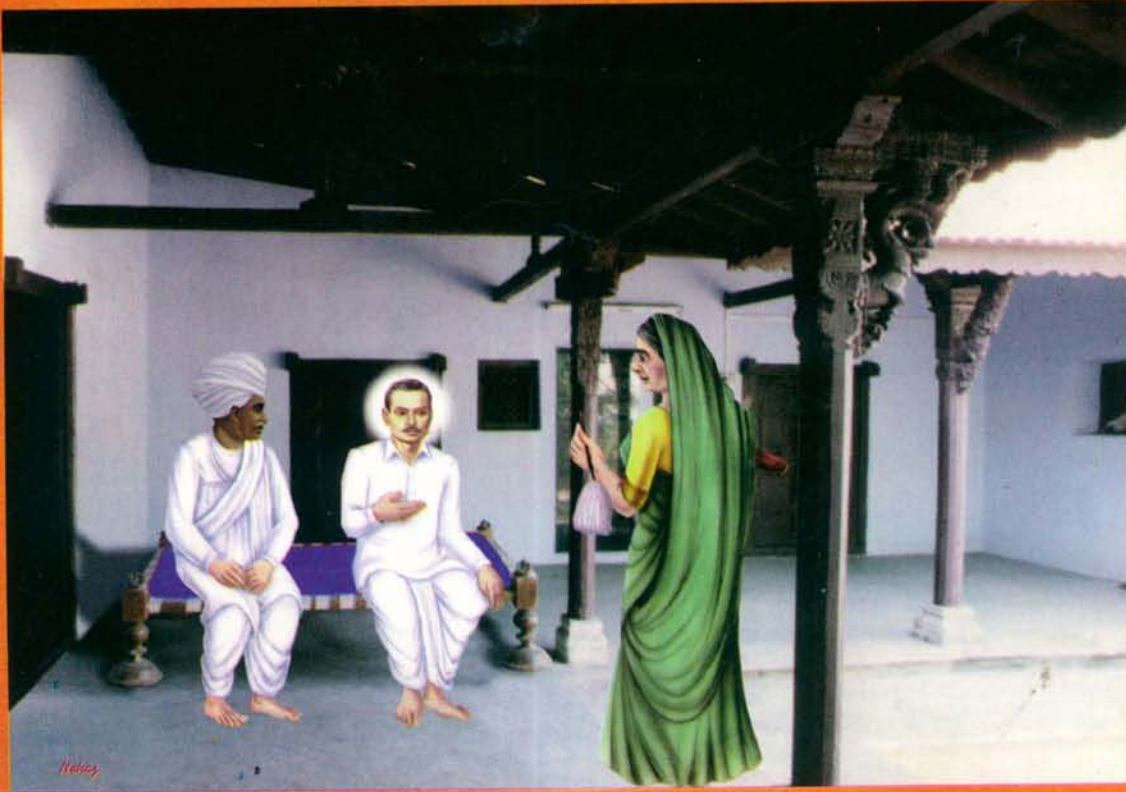
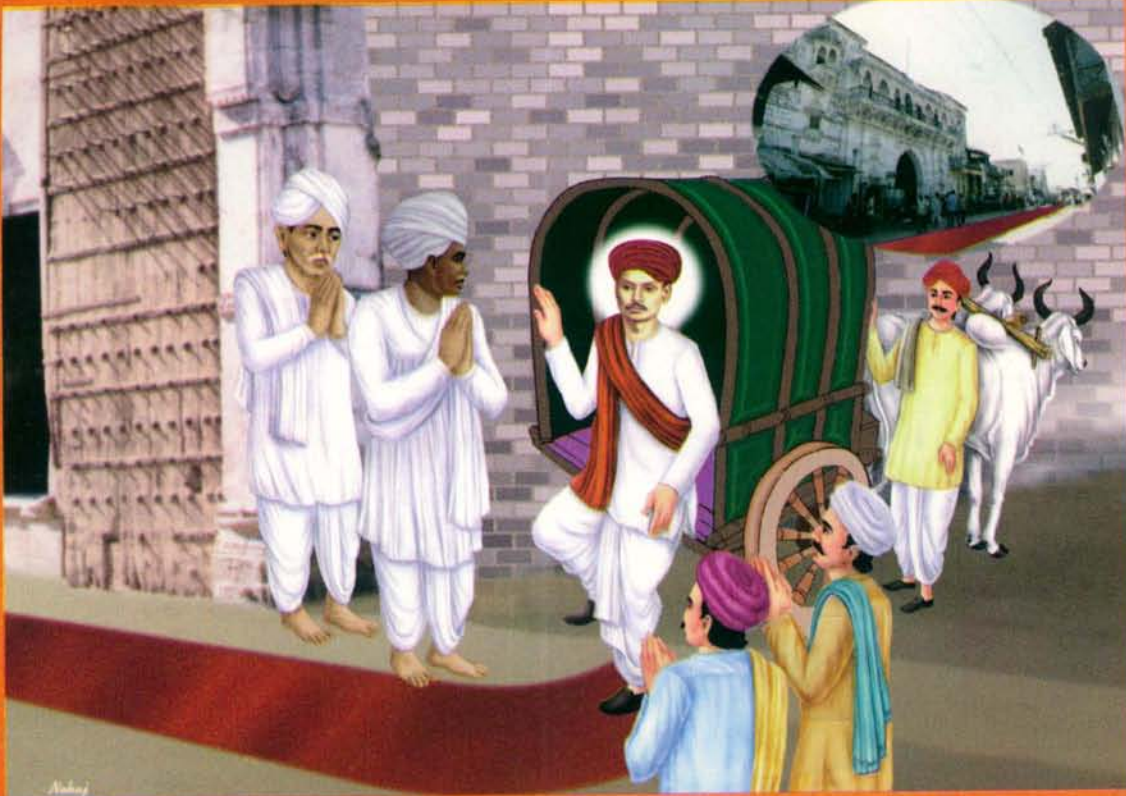
Once, when he was a young child, Shrimad's heart cried out with compassion while cutting some vegetables. This deep compassion grew stronger with age. When he was in Mumbai, he learnt about the plans in Dharampur to celebrate Dassera with a sacrificial offering of 108 buffaloes.

He became very disturbed and immediately started taking steps to prevent the carnage. How could a follower of Lord Mahavir sit idle at the time of such slaughter? He planned a public meeting in Dharampur to protest such cruelty to mute animals. He asked the scholars in Mumbai to look for references against such cruel practices in Hindu scriptures like the *Vedas*. He voiced objections against intentional misinterpretations of *Vedas* to carry out such unholy practices. It did not take long before there was widespread public opposition to the ghastly ritual.

Shrimad had to work tirelessly and for long hard hours to ensure that the protest succeeded. His campaign for non-violence paid dividends and they successfully avoided the mindless slaughter. People had also witnessed a new facet to Shrimad's personality that had not been obvious previously. They had experienced Shrimad's vision of compassion and equal respect for all forms of life.

In *Vikram Samvat* 1952, Shrimad was staying at 'Raj-Chhaya,' the residence of Chhotalal and Tribhovan Manekchand, in Khambhat. Shrimad would deliver his sermons from a bench on the terrace of the third floor of this 'Raj-Chhaya' building. The whole building would fill up with people, and a large number of people would stand in the street below to listen to him. The mystic quality of his sermons was such that every person in the audience, whether in the building or outside, could clearly hear every word Shrimad uttered. Those who had come with doubts had them cleared and their questions answered.

Once Shrimad was explaining to the audience the significance of the twelve vows. Shri Sobhagbhai and Shri Dungarsibhai were seated on his either side. Shrimad said : "These two noble persons, Sobhagbhai and Dungarshibhai, are like Sudharmaswami and Gautamswami." Only somebody with Lord Mahavir's experience can make such a statement.



### **43. Quelling Anger, Pride, Deceit and Greed**

Shrimad's soul mate, Sobhagbhai's forbearance and faith were being tested by the severe financial crisis he was experiencing. After his father's death, he became responsible for supporting the family, and his financial situation had deteriorated further. He turned to Shrimad to help him by using his knowledge of astrology, *mantras*, or any other such means.

Shrimad wrote to him : "If you and I conduct ourselves with a worldly perspective, then who will behave spiritually ?"

He then added' "A wise self-realised person would not wish to give material benefits to a seeker of truth. He would not use his spiritual wealth to do what is wrong."

In this way, Shrimad helped Sobhagbhai keep his thoughts pure in the midst of great difficulties. While he did possess certain powers, Shrimad was not interested in using them. They were nothing when compared to the wonder of the Soul.

Whenever they met, and in his letters, Shrimad imparted much knowledge to Sobhagbhai, which helped his spiritual progress. The more faith he had in Shrimad, the more he freed himself from delusion.

Shrimad's visits and letters also helped Sobhagbhai's friend Dungershibhai.

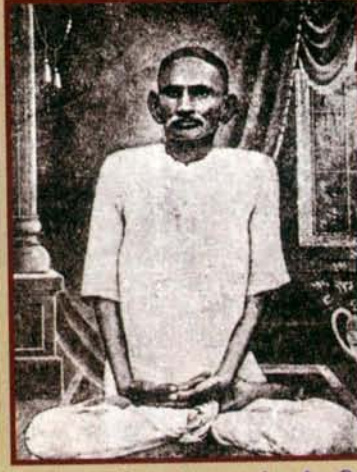
When Shrimad visited Sayla, it was a day of celebration for Sobhagbhai. He would go all the way to Muli station with a horse drawn carriage to receive Shrimad, and in Sayla, Sobhagbhai would roll out a red carpet welcoming Shrimad.

Sobhagbhai's wife Ratanba followed Jain traditions. Once when she was going out, he asked her where she was going. She told him that she was going to practice *Samayik* (48 minutes of equanimity and study). Shrimad suggested she go to a mosque and do it.

Shrimad wanted to show her that true religion lies far away from religious prejudice and obstinacy and is in quelling the passions of anger, pride, deceit and greed.



શ્રી મનસુખલાલ કિરતયંદ



શ્રી ધારસીભાઈ કુશાળયંદ સંઘવી



શ્રી પોપટલાલ મહોકમયંદ



શ્રી સુખલાલભાઈ વિરભગમવાળા



શ્રી ત્રિભોવનદાસ માણેકયંદ



શ્રી છોટાલાલ માણેકયંદ



શ્રી જવેરચંદશેઠ કાવીઠા



શ્રી જેશંભાઈ ઊજમશીભાઈ



શ્રી મનસુખભાઈ દેવસી

## 44. Our Obligations

Shrimad was like an ocean of divine nectar ! Many souls quenched their spiritual thirst with his wisdom and insight, and progressed on the path of spirituality.

The most eminent of the Seekers who benefitted by his grace were, Sobhagbhai, Munishri Lalluji, Juthalalbai and Ambalalbai. Additionally, some other Truth seekers whose lives were brightened by Shrimad's gracious presence and spiritual insight included Dungarshibhai, Ugriben, Maneklal Ghelabhai, Mansukhlal Kiratchand, Popatlal Mahokamchand, Dharshibhai, Mahatma Gandhi, Munishri Devkaranji, Khimji Devji, Tribhovanbhai Dosabhai, Sukhlal Chhaganlal, Mansukhlal Devsi, Motilal Bhavsar and Krishnadas.

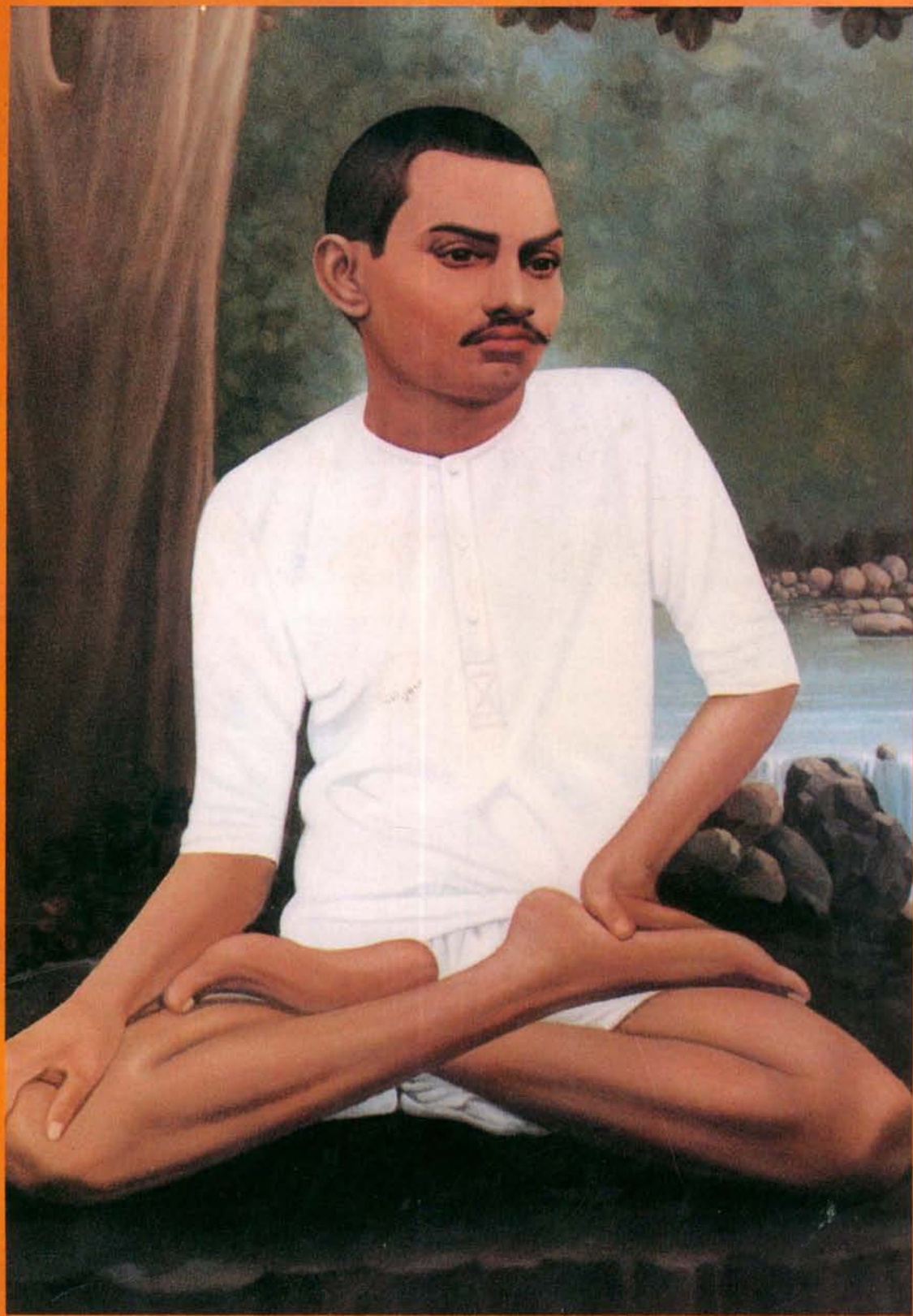
Meeting Shrimad was often the turning point in people's lives. A few minutes with him or a sentence from him would alter one's thinking and cause immense change of heart. He outwardly resembled any other householder, and this outward appearance disguised his inner world, which he preferred to keep concealed. '*Shri AtmaSiddhiShashtra*' and his other poetic compositions contained the profound insight of a truly self-realised being and displayed the highest literary skill but Shrimad preferred not to draw attention to them and thus the general public were not really aware of his divinity.

Only a fortunate few came into personal contact with him, and his complete detachment from worldly affairs greatly influenced them. His concern for the betterment of humanity and his compassionate feelings for all living things touched whoever came close to him. Even those wanting to debate with him would ultimately agree to his deep and inherent knowledge and be won over.

Some people came to him for spiritual guidance, some wished to spend time in his holy company, and others accepted him as their True *Guru* and acted according to his instructions. Many became Truth seekers through him and some even attained the *Samyag Darshan*, Right Vision.

Shrimad not only influenced their spiritual lives, but also encouraged them to fulfill all their worldly duties. We have inherited a most precious collection of letters containing the essence of Shrimad's message. For this, we owe an immense debt of gratitude to these truth seekers.





## 45. Adversity Maketh the Man

In Vikram Samvat 1947 Shrimad attained *Samyag Darshan*, his first glimpse of the immortal soul. In his inner world, he experienced the bliss associated with great stillness of the mind. However, in his outer life, instead of stillness, there was a storm. Shrimad says :

*Then arose the fruit of past Karmas, increasing my worldly ties.  
With every effort to push them away, they just continued to arise.  
How blessed the day is today!*

When he was 24, his *karmas* assumed a vicious form: His business activities became very demanding. There began an intense conflict between the spiritual needs of the soul and the practical needs of the world. It was an irony that one such as Shrimad, who was so indifferent to worldly matters, was compelled to devote most of his time to them. Despite these obstacles, Shrimad remained firm in his spiritual pursuits, with his inner peace intact. It is such outer difficulties which truly test the inner state.

He describes his mental state at that time:

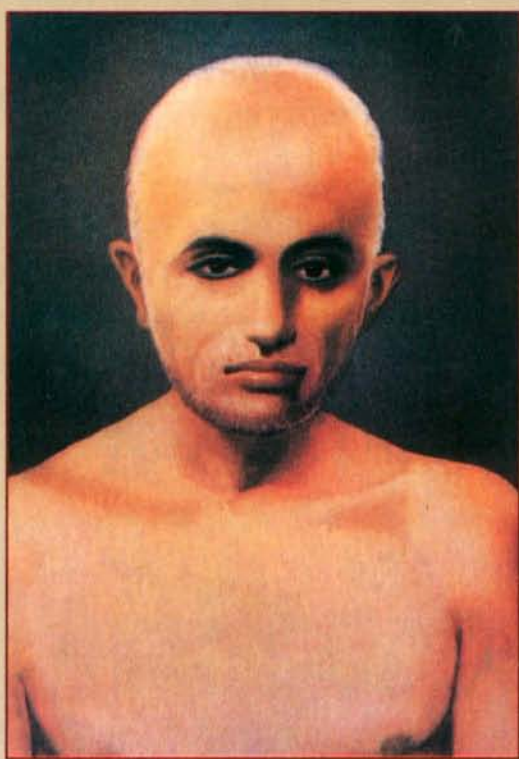
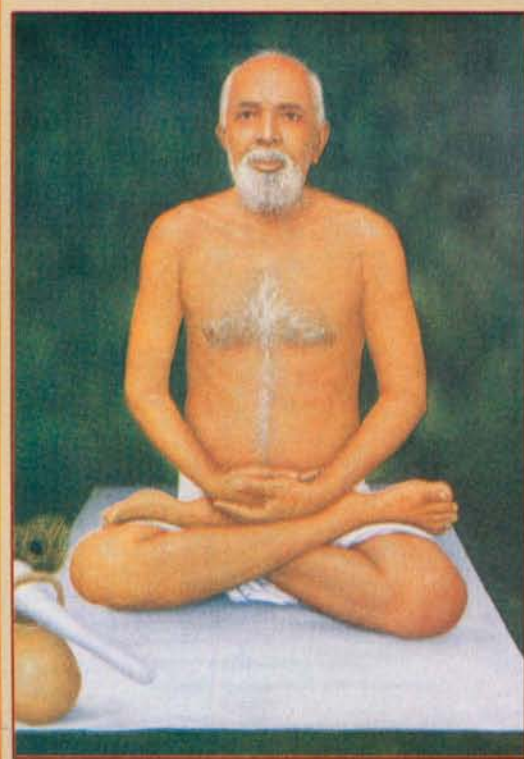
“Mental stillness with inner bliss are not disturbed even for a moment and yet for several years we have continued these distracting external activities unabated....it is almost impossible to maintain equanimity when encumbered by an unceasing flow of external activities arising from all directions ... only an Enlightened being can maintain such a state. Even we are surprised ! However, that state is maintained and that is our experience. The mental stillness that we are experiencing is from being absorbed in the soul. As we have no other worldly aspirations, the stillness required to realise the nature of the soul, is almost always with us.”

*Neither the wise nor the 'foolish' are without happiness and pain  
But the wise endure them calmly, while 'fools' cry again and again.*

In his state of *Samyag Darshan*, Shrimad remained calm and serene, experiencing his soul unencumbered. He had attained the perfectly blissful state 'One counts liberation and *sansar* (worldly existence) as the same,' as described by Yogi Anandghanji. In the ecstasy of experiencing the bliss of the Soul, he exclaims:

*"I have found the right path, all my doubts have been dispelled; Whatever was there has been burnt, I have separated from this body in which I dwell."*

Shrimad decided that he should not preach publicly until he, himself, had renounced the world. He said, "Only if one has fully withdrawn from worldly activities can one think of how to preach others. Then one ought to renounce the world totally, and only then encourage others to do so. This is the tradition of all the great souls."



## 46. Where to Find Samyag Darshan

Munishri Lalluji heard news of the death of Lallubhai, a jewel merchant from Surat, after a prolonged illness of about ten months. Munishri Lalluji had also been ill for a similar period. This coincidence troubled him, and he was worried that he might also die. While a true seeker does not fear death, he or she is more concerned about his or her spiritual progress and aspires to attain the highest spiritual state before death. Munishri requested Shrimad to grant him *Samyag Darshan*, 'right vision'. In response, Shrimad wrote 'the letter of six fundamental tenets' and also reminded him not to fear death.

The letter reflects the philosophy which lay at the heart of Shrimad's spiritual life. The six tenets are: 1) The soul exists; 2) The soul is eternal; 3) The soul is the author of its own *Karma*; 4) The soul bears the fruits of these *Karma*; 5) There is *Moksha*; and 6) There is a path to *Moksha*. The letter outlines the nature of the soul and its relationship with the material universe. Through an understanding of these relationships, and the guidance of a True Guru, the individual will progress.

The opening sentence is full of meaning: "Let us revere, with utmost devotion, the holy True Guru who provides us refuge like no other."

There is much pain and suffering in this world, and the soul does not know where to seek refuge. Happiness is within the soul, where we can seek refuge. The easiest path to the realisation of the Soul is the guidance of a True Guru. The letter directly relates the step-by-step process of attaining *Samyag Darshan*, the Right Vision. The letter concludes by offering four types of homage to a True *Guru*. It outlines the importance of devotion to a true self-less *Guru*. Through such devotion, we come to understand the subtleties of this process, of which they are a living example. Taking guidance with humility from a True *Guru* will help the soul overcome the arrogance or hubris that it knows better and which has led to countless rebirths.

Munishri Lalluji said of the letter: "If a person has cultivated certain qualities, and then reads this letter, it will lead him into a thought process which will finally result in *Samyag Darshan*, so wonderful is this letter."

While Shrimad was still in Surat, Muni Devkaranji told him that Munishri Lalluji accused him of arrogance delivering his sermons and that there was not stillness in his meditation. He asked Shrimad for an explanation.

Shrimad replied: "Whatever is practised with *Svachchhand* (hubris) is all arrogance. Whatever is done with the guidance of a True *Guru* is true religion and will benefit the soul."



## 47. Faith of the Supreme Master

*N*on-violence always overcomes violence. Even the cruelest of human beings will bow down before one whose heart is full of compassion.

Once Shrimad was walking from Dharmaj to Virsad with a few spiritual seekers. They were walking along a narrow footpath, when they saw two full-sized bulls angrily rushing towards them from the other side of the field.

All the villagers panicked and ran for cover and shelter from these raging bulls. Those walking with Shrimad were also afraid and ran away. Shrimad remained calm and composed, and said : "When the bulls come closer, they will calm down."

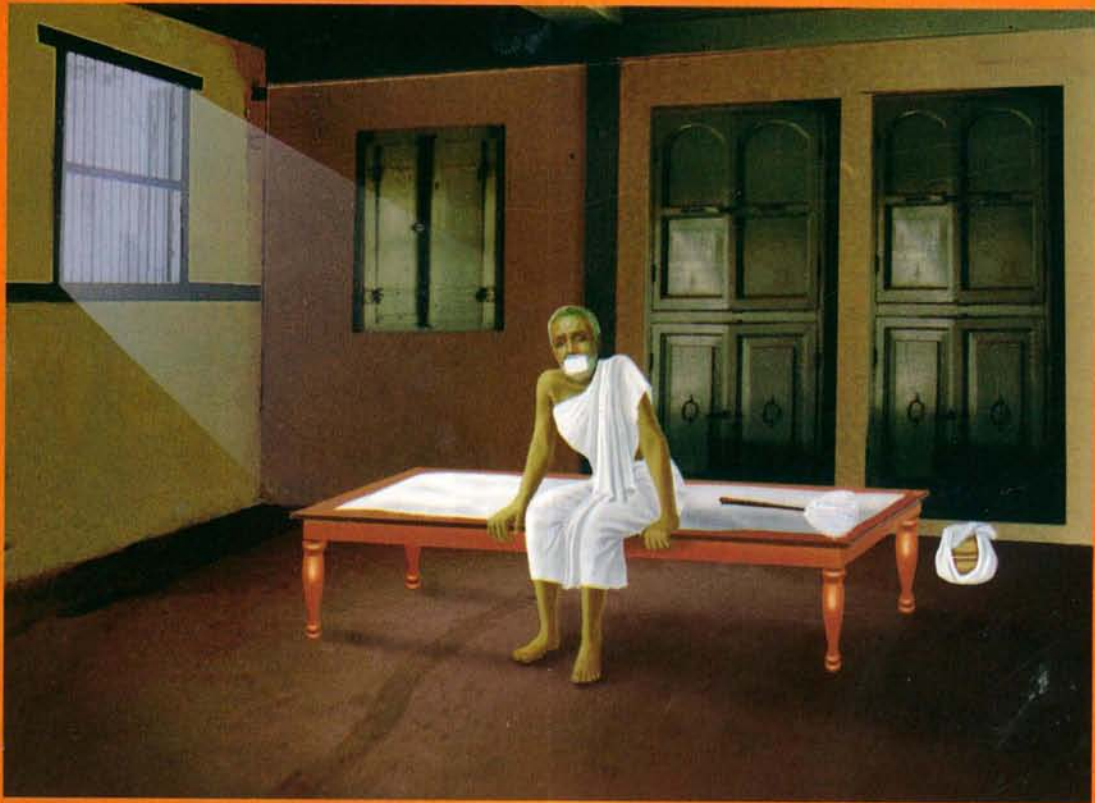
Although Shrimad's companions had faith in him, no one was prepared to risk his life on his words. Chhotalalbai and his companions ran and took shelter in the adjoining field. Shrimad continued to walk fearlessly and only Sobhagbhai and Dungershibhai remained with him. Chhotalalbai, hidden away was terrified that the bulls would trample Shrimad, Sobhagbhai and Dungershibhai and kill them.

However, when the two bulls neared Shrimad, they calmed down. After that Shrimad and his companions reached their destination safely. All had their faith tested and also witnessed the calming influence of Shrimad's presence. A True *Guru* shelters all from the dangers of worldly life.

Once when out strolling with Dungalshibhai and others, Shrimad asked Dungalshibhai if he knew the way back. Dungalshibhai did not really know the way but assured them that he did.

Shrimad realised that they were not heading in the right direction but still followed him. Soon it was obvious to all they were on the wrong path.

Shrimad explained that one who does not know the path, cannot show the way. The path to liberation has not been explained explicitly nor can it be deduced. It can however be found only with the guidance of a True *Guru*. Shrimad thus explained the significance of a True *Guru*. Only the direct presence of such a True *Guru* will guide the soul to its destination. He then went on to explain that the right path is within the Soul, not outside.



## 48. Adoration of a Disciple

Munishri Lalluji revered Shrimad. He felt that Shrimad had been his father in a previous life and wanted to be with Shrimad as much as possible. He wanted to spend every monsoon season (*chaturmas*) in the same place where Shrimad would be. In *Vikram Samvat* 1948 Munishri Lalluji spent four months in Mumbai where Shrimad was. However, in *Vikram Samvat* 1950 and 1951, he spent these four months in Surat.

Munishri's heart was filled with devotion for Shrimad. His letters to Shrimad were extremely courteous and expressed his deep adoration for Shrimad. He would sign his letters 'Your servant Lallu.' Shrimad was also equally courteous and once wrote to Munishri: "However much reverence you may have for us, we will, for all times be at the service of all living things, particularly those aspiring to be liberated"

While Munishri had a great regard for him, Shrimad insisted that the monk follow every detail of the code of conduct that is prescribed for monks. It was Shrimad's insistence that helped keep Munishri within these strict limits.

In *Vikram Samvat* 1952 Shrimad was staying at a retreat in Ralaj during the holy days of *Paryushan*. At that time Munishri Lalluji and Munishri Devkaranji were spending the *Chaturmas* season in nearby Khambhat. Shri Sobhagbhai and Shri Dungarshibhai had come specially to be with Shrimad, as had many other devotees from Khambhat. They had all come to benefit from Shrimad's holy presence, his guidance and to get his blessings.

During the monsoon season, monks are not allowed to move from one town to another. So, although Munishri Lalluji was just in the neighbourhood of Ralaj, he was unable to visit Shrimad. Thirsting for an audience with Shrimad, he walked to the outskirts of Ralaj and called for Ambalalbai. Ambalalbai asked Munishri why he had come without prior permission. Munishri offered to return, but Ambalalbai, worried that Shrimad might reprimand him for sending Munishri away, asked him to wait whilst he went to see Shrimad.

Shrimad heard what Ambalalbai had to say and then said, "If there is unhappiness in the mind of Munishri, I shall go and meet him there, otherwise he should return."

Munishri understood the message and returned weeping to his camp. He spent the whole night deeply pained at not having been able to see Shrimad.





## 49. True Guide to Right Path

Munishri Lalluji's keen desire to meet Shrimad had not been fulfilled and he was very disappointed. While pained at not seeing Shrimad, he also knew that the guidance of a True *Guru* can only be helpful. Shrimad was aware of Munishri Lalluji's longing to see him, and understood his pain at not being able to meet his *Guru*. The next morning Shrimad asked Sobhagbhai, Dungarshibhai and Ambalalbai to console Munishri and to tell him that Shrimad would visit him. Munishri Lalluji was overjoyed. Later on, Sobhagbhai, in the privacy of Ambalalbai's house gave him a *mantra* which Shrimad had sent for him and said: "He has asked you to chant the rosary five times."

There was considerable opposition from the Jain community to Munishri Lalluji's acceptance of Shrimad as his *Guru* since Shrimad was a mere householder while *Munishri* a monk. The members of the community showed less and less reverence towards *Munishri*. The truth seekers would spend the night and day of every full moon singing hymns in devotion of their *gurus*. Once, *Munishri* stayed away from the Jain Hall (*upashray*) for the whole night, so as to be with Shrimad. This made many of the laity very unhappy with him. Despite all this opposition, *Munishri's* faith in Shrimad was firm and he was totally devoted to him.

It is customary for a monk to give lectures and sermons but *Munishri* was now unsure as to what a monk such as him, still on a quest for the Soul, should do. He sought Shrimad's guidance which was: "If a sermon is expected from you, then give it, but with the attitude that you are not yet qualified to give it, but that you are bound to do it, and with total detachment. Try as much as possible to avoid giving sermons, but if you are not able to, then give them in a detached state.

*Munishri* further asked: "What is the responsibility of a preacher? Should he enthrall the congregation with his eloquence? Should he try to satisfy his own ego? Or is his responsibility to act as a lighthouse and always point out the right path to the Seekers of the Truth?"

Shrimad responded: "Those who have to preach prior to having achieved appropriate wisdom (*gnan*) should preach so as to encourage detachment (*vairagya*), calming of the passions (*upsham*) and devotion. The sermons should be such that bigotry in its various forms, biased opinions about the monks and their relationships with the laity should be softened. The objective should be that the sermons gradually direct the listeners towards following the true path."

The True *Guru* always imparts such wisdom to an earnest, honest disciple.



## 50. Devotion for a True Guru

A great stream of spirituality was flowing in Kavitha, Ralaj, Vadva and Khambhat, all the places Shrimad had visited during his retreats. He gave clear guidance and expounded on the three basic elements of spirituality - *bhakti* (devotion), *kriya* (rituals) and *gyan* (wisdom). When Shrimad visited Vadva, he invited Munishri and five other monks to meet him at a quiet spot. The six monks paid their homage and then sat at Shrimad's feet.

*Munishri* had been experiencing intense mental conflict. His devotion towards Shrimad was growing and his desire to stay with Shrimad at all times was intense, while his vows of monkhood restrained him from seeing Shrimad regularly. He languished in the pain of separation from his beloved *Guru*. When this pain became unbearable, *Munishri* felt that his monkhood was to be blamed for his suffering. Shrimad constantly reminded *Munishri* of his vows and ensured that he observed them strictly.

The anguish of separation from a loved one is heartbreaking! There is an intense anxiety in the longing to meet one's beloved. With such anxiety, *Munishri* lost his composure, and he took off his *muhapatti* (cloth covering his mouth) and said: "O Lord! Grant me your refuge forever. I do not want this *muhapatti* anymore. I can no longer bear the pain of separation from you."

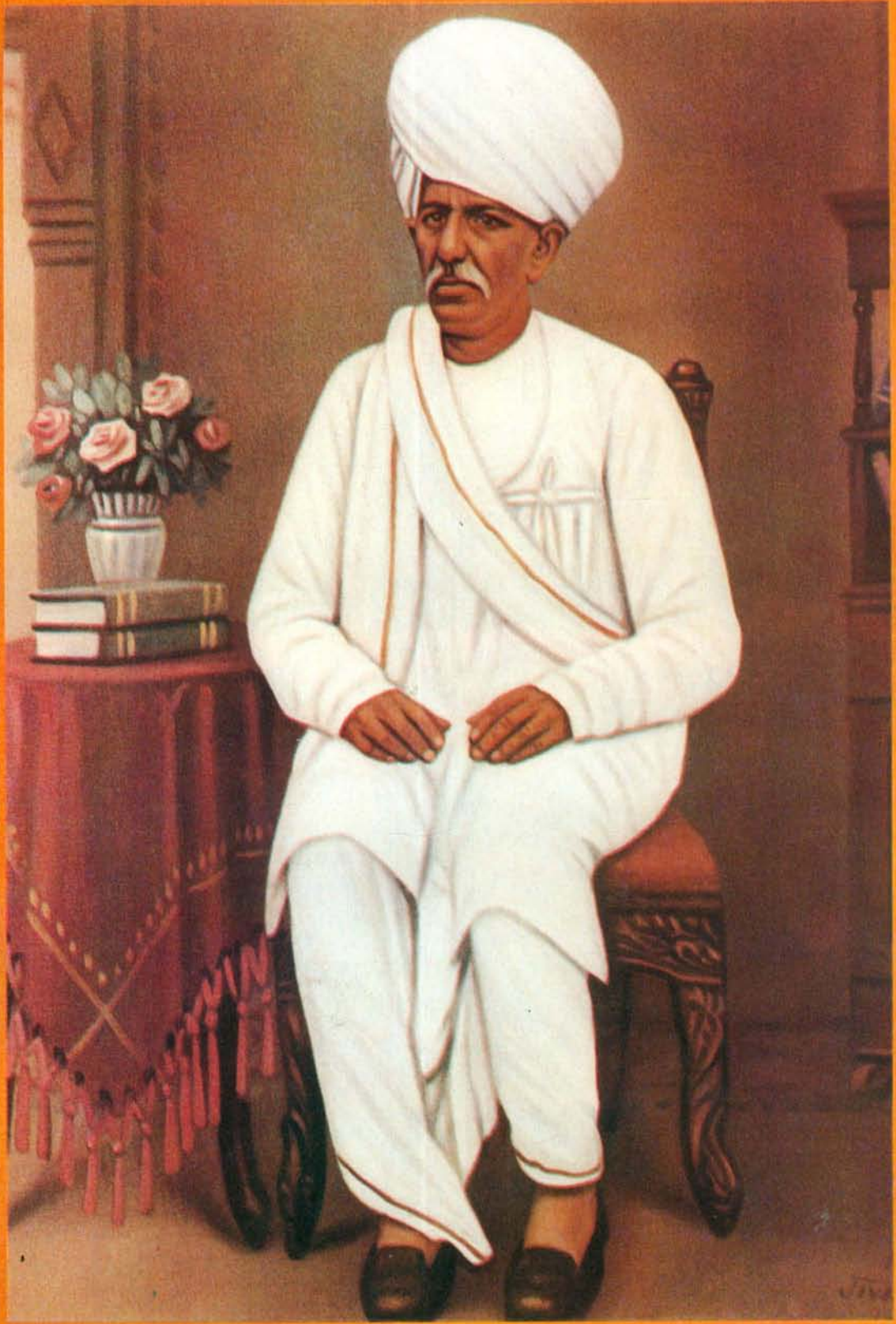
Tears welled up in *Munishri's* eyes as he was speaking. His words and feelings of pain touched Shrimad's gentle heart and tears started to stream down Shrimad's cheeks. His tears would not stop.

*Munishri* was stunned to see tears flowing from Shrimad's eyes and he felt guilty of having caused such pain to his Lord. "What have I done? It is because of me that my Lord is pained like this. What am I to do now?" he wondered. He was filled with deep remorse for his behaviour and fell silent, lost in thought. Others too, were speechless. A sense of gloom fell upon the group and everyone remained silent.

After an hour, Shrimad said to Muni Devkaranji, "Give this *muhapatti* back to *Munishri* and let him know that it is still necessary for him to wear it."

The pain of separation from his *guru*, which *Munishri* felt, can only be experienced by a fortunate few. The monks accompanying *Munishri* were fortunate enough to witness it for themselves, and they benefitted from Shrimad's wisdom and insight for a week.

*Munishri's* devotion to Shrimad, his *guru*, was exemplary. Only such faith and devotion will lead to a proper understanding of the path to *Moksha*.



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## 51. *Ātma Sidhi Shastra*

Shrimad had sent a copy of the letter on '*The Six spiritual Tenets*' to Shri Sobhagbhai with an instruction to learn it by heart and contemplate its contents regularly. Sobhagbhai due to old age found it difficult to memorise the prose form of the letter. He requested Shrimad to rewrite the letter in a rhythmic verse form so that he could easily memorise it and keep humming it and make it a part of himself.

There is an Indian belief that if a drop of rain falls into a seashell on the night of '*Sharad Purnima*' (the full moon of *Sharad*), then the raindrop will eventually become a beautiful pearl. Similarly, the request to convert the prose of the letter of six tenets was made at such a time and by such a person, that the request turned in Shrimad's heart into the priceless jewel we now call '*AtmaSiddhiShastra*'.

During *Bhadarva* and *Aso* months of *Vikram Samvat* 1952, Shrimad spent his time in the jungles of Gujarat contemplating in solitude. From there he came to Nadiad where a great event took place on the first day of the later half of *Aso* month. When Shrimad returned from his day's outing at dusk, he called his companion Ambalalbhai and told him: "Ambalal, light and hold a lantern."

Ambalalbhai, the great Truth seeker, humble as ever, did what he was asked and stood by Shrimad's side with a lit lantern. Shrimad sat down and started writing. A miraculous stream of inspiration, full of profound spiritual insight, began to flow. His sublime spiritual state became his pen and the essence of his profound thinking was his ink. He began to compose verses with the potency to awaken slumbering Souls. The 142 verses of '*AtmaSiddhiShastra*' had emerged in one sitting of less than two hours.

Shrimad had thus fitted the vast ocean of learning into a small vessel in the form of *Atma Siddhi*. '*Anekantvad*' or viewing any point from its many facets is a unique feature of Jain philosophy. By virtue of the logic of '*anekantvad*', the essence of all six Indian philosophies has been integrated into *Atma Siddhi*. The composition is in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and disciple. In response to the disciple's earnest expression of doubts, the Guru demonstrates the completeness of Jain philosophy and shows the path to *Moksha*. Without naming or condemning any philosophy, the views of each are expressed for an aspirant's consideration.





## 52. The Quest for the Soul

Shrimad was visiting the small town of Kavitha. On one occasion he was accompanied by a number of other men on his daily walk. Shrimad normally walked slowly and kept his eyes to the ground. After they had walked some distance, a woman passed by carrying a bundle of hay on her head. Since the woman often saw them, she started muttering to herself, that these *baniyas* are wandering all over the forests. She wondered what had they lost, that they kept looking for it.

Shrimad heard the woman's words and in his own inimitable way responded: "Sister, we are looking for ourselves !" This is a natural response from Shrimad, who was so ardent in his quest to realize his Soul.

The school children of Kavitha had gathered on the outskirts of the town to listen to Shrimad's sermon. Shrimad asked the children: "Would you answer a question for me ?"

The children readily agreed, shaking their little heads vigorously in the affirmative. Shrimad asked the children :

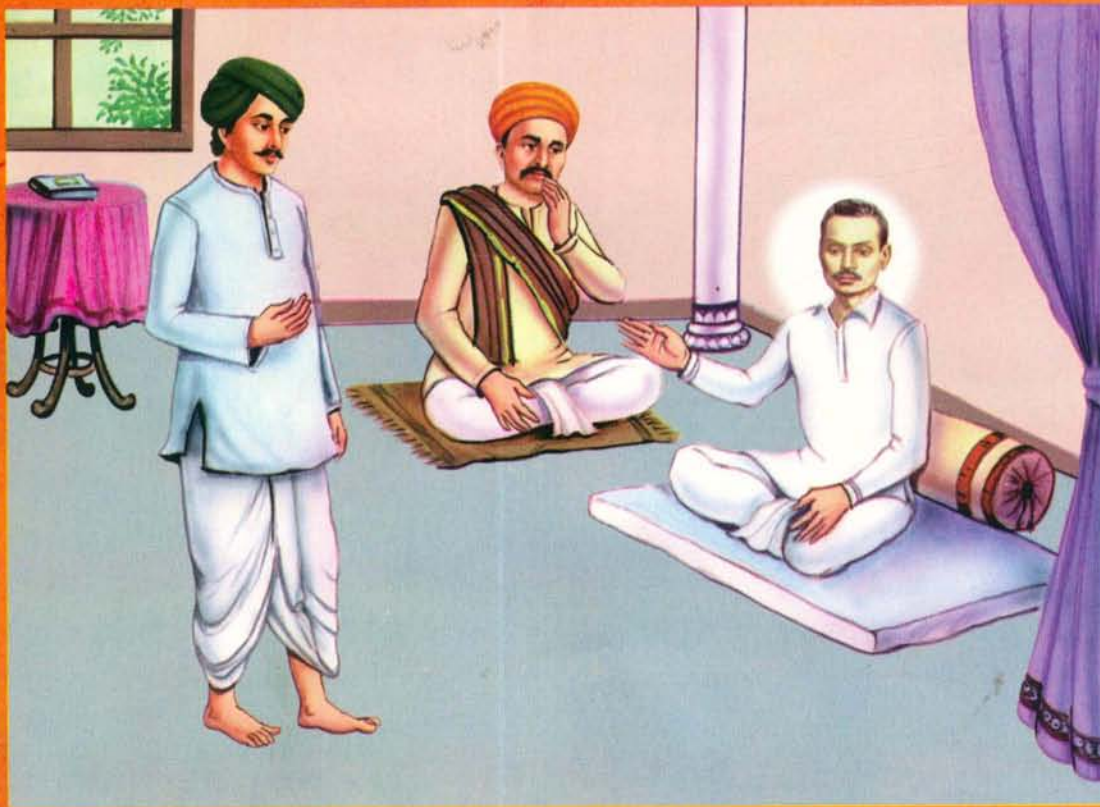
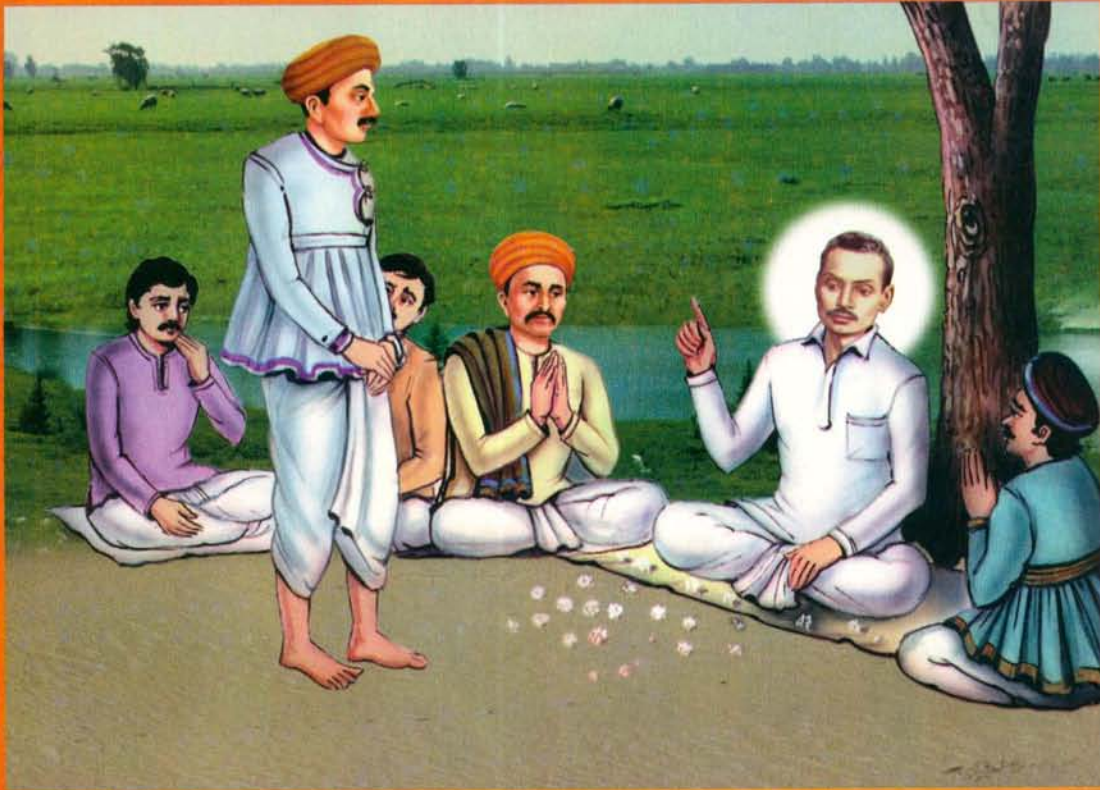
"Let us say, you are walking along the road, holding a pot full of butter-milk in one hand, and a pot full of *ghee* in the other. Now, suppose somebody pushes you accidentally. Which of the two pots would you try to save ?"

One of the school children, Girdhar, promptly replied: "Surely, one would save the pot with the *ghee* in it."

Shrimad asked him : "Why ? After all, whether butter-milk or *ghee*, they are both made from the same substance, aren't they ?"

Girdhar said, "If the butter-milk gets spilled, you'll always find people willing to refill the pot. But, well, no one would offer to refill your empty pot of *ghee*."

Of course Girdhar was right. Shrimad then explained the moral of this parable. He said, "People strive to preserve this body which is akin to buttermilk and they care little for the soul which is precious like the *ghee*. The one who knows the value of the soul, will safeguard it, like *ghee*. And in times of crisis such a person will let go off the body, like the buttermilk. It is to endure the *karmas* of the past that we have the body but it is the Soul that we need to take care of and preserve."



### **53. Stillness of the Mind**

Sometimes there are profound morals in even minor incidents from the lives of the truly great souls. Such an incident took place when Shrimad was staying in Kavitha. One day when Shrimad was delivering a spiritual discourse to a number of people, Shamaljibhai, a farmer from a nearby field, observed the concentration and devotion of these people. He was deeply touched. He picked a few flowers from the field and laid them at Shrimad's feet.

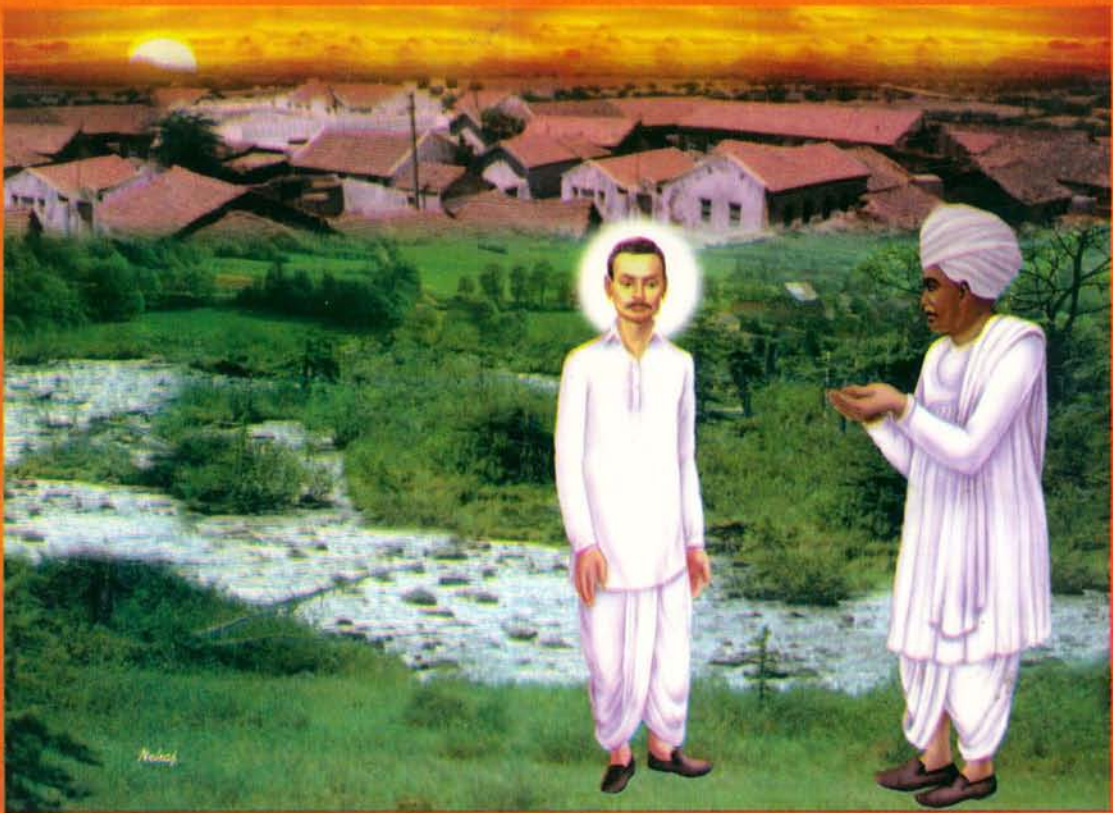
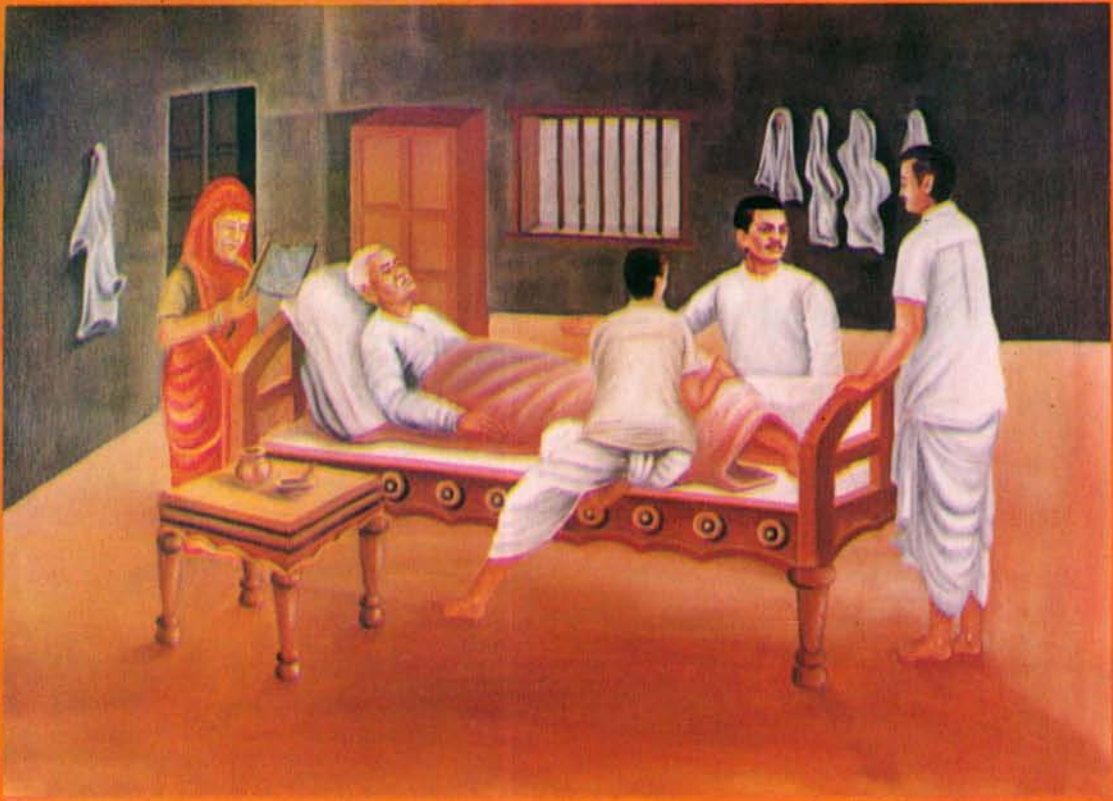
Shrimad, full of compassion, said, "Why pluck so many flowers over a minor matter?" He paused for a while, and then said, "Your daughter Hira will get better by tomorrow." Shamaljibhai's daughter, Hira, was married and living in a neighbouring village. She had been ill for some time. However, when Shamaljibhai visited her the next day she was much better. Shrimad did not know either of them, however, he had recognised a father's agony over his daughter's illness and used his innate spiritual power to put an end to his worry.

Whilst still in Kavitha, Munishri Mohanlalji asked Shrimad for guidance in stilling his mind. Shrimad suggested: "Do not waste even a moment and you should read and contemplate books which inspire detachment. If you cannot do this then chant with a rosary. If you leave your mind unoccupied, it needs only a moment to destroy everything. Just as a cow needs to keep chewing all the time the mind needs to be fed with fine thoughts all the time. One should not be ruled by the mind but decisions should be made independently of the mind."

On one occasion, after listening to Shrimad's discourse at Zaverchandbhai Sheth's place, Pragjibhai Jethabhai said, "Sir! I am very much inclined to follow a life of true devotion, but I also have to think about the stomach God has given me? What should I do?"

Shrimad said, "Let me provide you with a solution?" and then turned to Shri Zaverchandbhai and asked him to ensure that Pragjibhai was fed daily with a condition that the latter was not to involve himself in any kind of social activity.

Pragjibhai immediately objected saying, "That is not a lifestyle I could lead". Shrimad said "This soul has, since infinity, been finding excuses for not devoting itself to the cause of liberation. It only cheats itself this way."



## 54. A Truly Pious Bond

The relationship between Shrimad and Sobhagbhai was unique in nature. Their spiritual bond lasted seven years after their eventful first meeting in Jetpur. Sobhagbhai ran a small shop in a village called Anjar in Kutch and his deteriorating financial circumstances were a cause of serious concern to him. Shrimad would counsel him to face his hardships with fortitude instead of letting the situation bring him down.

Shrimad said : "The difficulties which you are facing are not your enemies..... do not be distressed by these worldly difficulties, for if you face them with equanimity, they can be a source of inner contemplation .....Try not to let the soul become unsettled. Whatever will be, will be. Even if you do lose your composure, what will be, will be, but the soul will become tainted."

With this kind of guidance, Shrimad was reinforcing his soulmate Sobhagbhai's spiritual resolve. It was from their very first meeting that Sobhagbhai experienced utmost reverence and devotion for Shrimad. He was elated at finding spiritual refuge in Shrimad's presence and guidance.

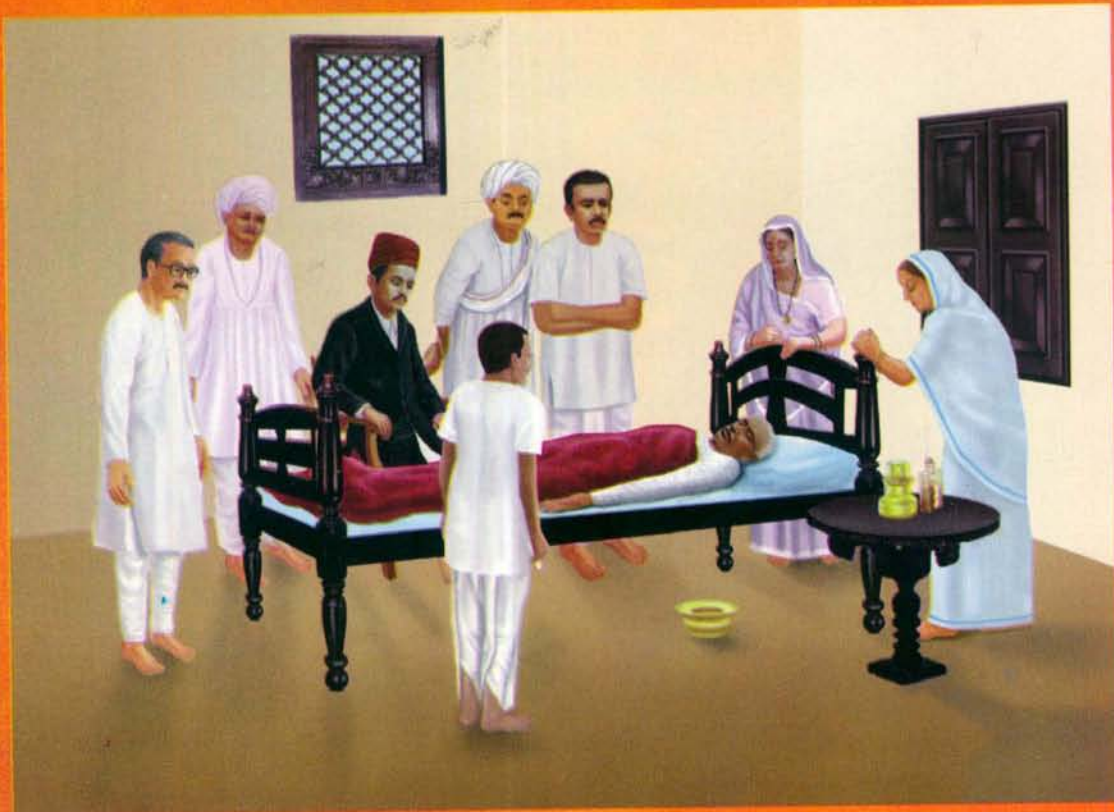
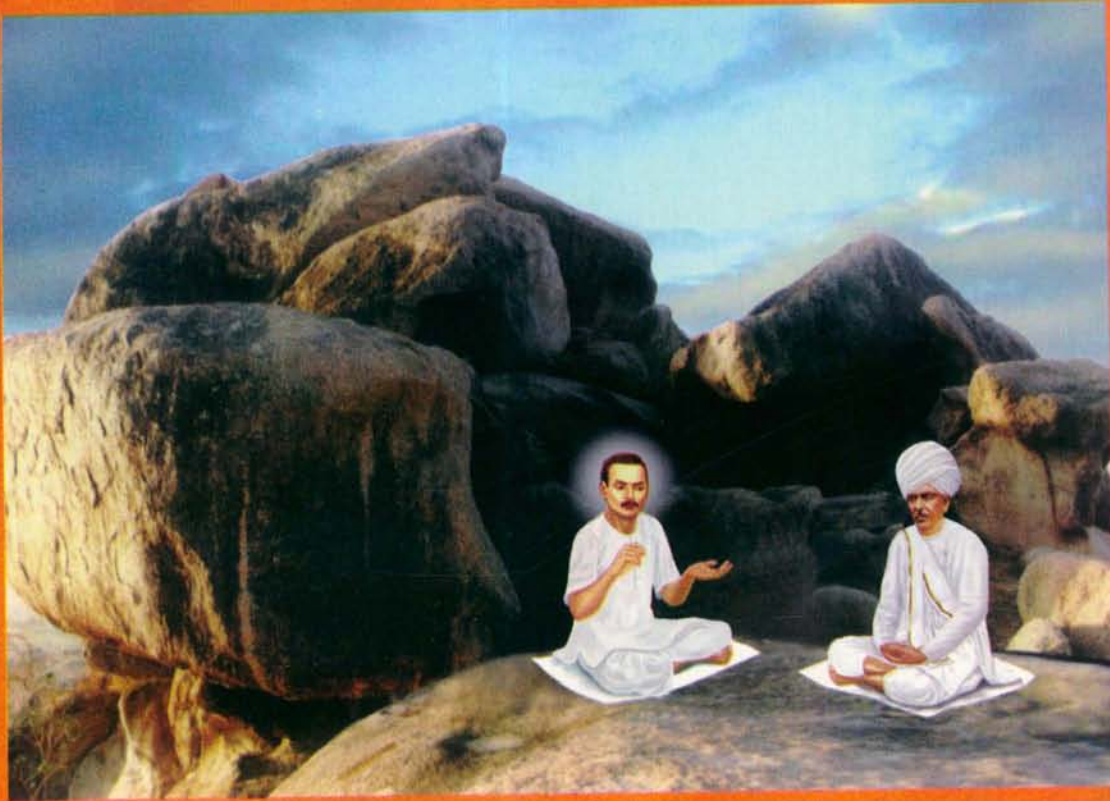
Sobhagbhai had been suffering from fever for over eight months and during the month of *Vaishakh* in VS 1953, Shrimad came to Sayla to visit his ailing friend. Shrimad gave him further spiritual guidance.

When Shrimad was leaving back, he set off early in the morning and Sobhagbhai went to see him off. They came to a river and the first rays of the morning Sun could be seen on the horizon. Sobhagbhai turned to Shrimad and declared his devotion : "With the rising sun and this river as my witness, and in presence of this saintly soul, may I, Sobhag vow that I want nothing except your grace !"

We should recognize and devote ourselves to one whose presence in our lives will bring an end to any longing we have had since time immemorial. When Sobhagbhai received the first copy of "*Atma Siddhi Shastra*," he felt that it was everything he had ever wanted. The extra verse in *Atma Siddhi* after verse number 127 verifies this:

For Sobhagbhai, Dungarshibhai and other aspirants

For their upliftment, the means to happiness has been explained.



## 55. Sobhagbhai's Final Hour

Sobhagbhai had invited Shrimad to Sayla so that he could take full advantage of the good fortune he had in encountering Truth personified, as it was in Shrimad. Shrimad agreed and stayed with him in Sayla for ten days.

Shrimad also intended to have Sobhagbhai accompany him to the remote and peaceful Idar where he would have the opportunity to continue with his guidance. Sobhagbhai's son Trambakbhai was very uncomfortable with Shrimad's plans to travel with his father who had by now become very frail. He said : "We are not happy to let Sobhagbhai go out in his present condition. God forbid, but should something happen to him in Idar, what will people say ?"

Shrimad sensed what was passing through his mind and reassured him: "Trambak, you have no cause to worry. You will have the opportunity to look after Sobhagbhai during his final days, and you will even be the one to perform his last rites."

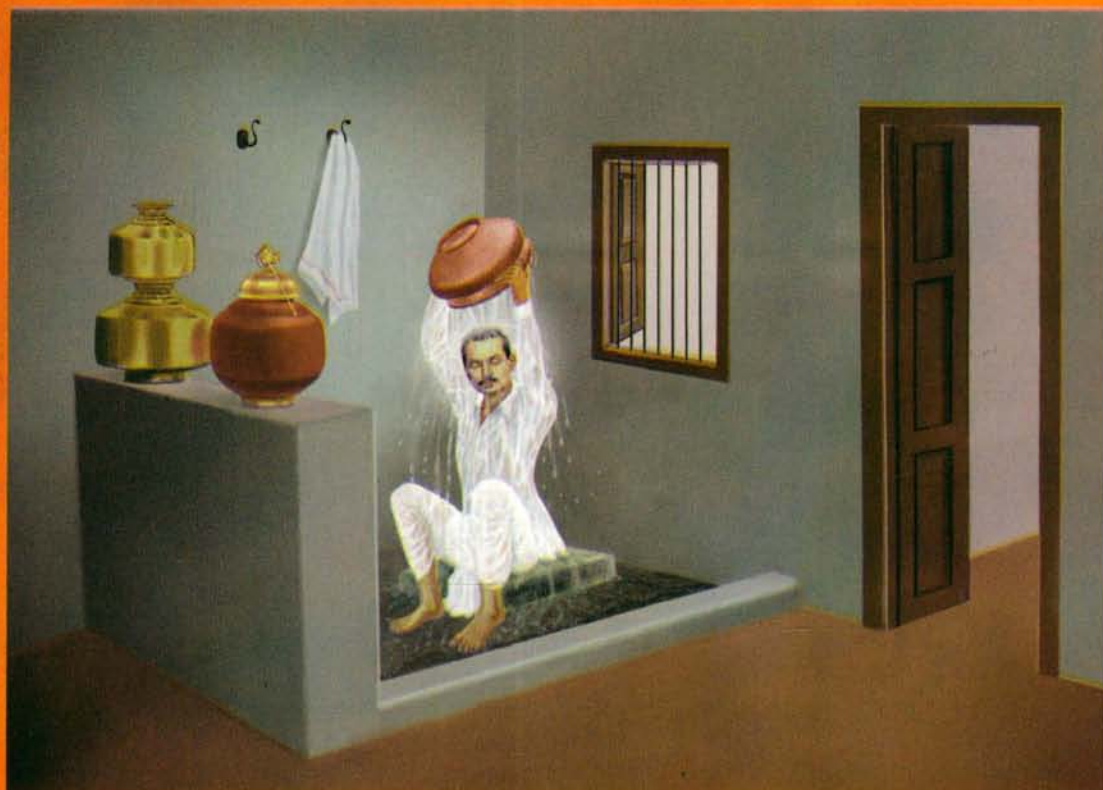
Trambakbhai reconciled to the idea of his father going with Shrimad. During the period of ten days at Idar, Shrimad showered the nectar of his spiritual wisdom on his soulmate Sobhagbhai. After that Sobhagbhai returned home.

Shrimad knew that these were Sobhagbhai's last days and wrote him three wonderful letters. Of all the many letters they exchanged, this trinity (Letters 779, 780 and 781 in the collection known as *Shri Vachnamrutji*) so inspired Sobhagbhai that it led him to a direct experience of his Soul. These letters are the crowning glory of the body of correspondence between the two Soul mates.

Sobhagbhai wrote his last letter to his *Guru*, knowing that he would pass away soon: "I pray that you continue showering your grace on this poor lowly soul. The body and the soul are distinct entities, the body is inert and the soul is sentient. I could not perceive distinctly the 'conscious' part earlier, however for the last eight days, with your grace I have experienced this distinction. I see and experience that distinction clearly and maintain awareness of it continuously."

On the tenth day of the dark half of the lunar month of *Jeth*, in VS 1953, the Soul left the body known as 'Shri Sobhagbhai'. At that moment, he was in total and uninterrupted bliss, by the grace of Shrimad Rajchandra.





## 56. An Eulogy to Shri Sobhagbhai

Sobhagbhai passed away at 10.50 in the morning. Shrimad had known when this moment would come. While he was in Mumbai, at the moment Sobhagbhai passed away in distant Sayla, Shrimad took a bath in cold water, whilst fully clothed as is the tradition, at the time of death. It was not until a few hours later that he received a telegram with the news. Ambalalbai was present at Sobhagbhai's death-bed and wrote Shrimad a detailed account of Shri Sobhagbhai's final hours. He wrote of Sobhagbhai's total composure and serenity. His was a *samādhi-maran*, a death in which the Soul is fully in tune with its innate bliss.

Shrimad's grief at the loss of his soulmate is evident from the very moving and magnificent tribute he paid to Sobhagbhai: "The more I think of his wonderful virtues, the greater is my grief at this grave loss. This is the nature of the relationship between the Soul and the body, and yet when the Soul leaves a body, it always feels sorrow, and because of this affection for it, it behaves as if one with the body: this is the seed of the cycle of death and rebirth. There is no doubt that, whilst parting from the body, Sobhagbhai maintained an absolute detached awareness of his Self, which is difficult to attain even for the greatest of monks, and thereby he did himself utmost good....Those Seekers of truth who encountered him, will simply remember him for a long time, and they should.....Again and again, I feel that, in this age and in this land, there will be another great Souls like Sobhagbhai. True 'Self seekers' ought not to forget him. His candour, his spiritual conviction, his generosity towards fellow Seekers and several other virtues are worthy of frequent reflection. *Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.*"

Out of the seven years of their friendship, they spent 580 days together. Shri *Vachnamrutji* contains more than 940 letters written by Shrimad over a period of thirteen years and out of which about 240, some of the finest, were addressed to Sobhagbhai. They have allowed us to recognize Shrimad for the Self-Realised soul he was. This legacy contains Shrimad's inner thoughts and a description of his spiritual progress, always compassionately guiding the reader, sometimes sternly, away from materialism. It is not so often that a truly realised soul talks so openly and so intimately about himself.

Shrimad wrote : "O ! Shri Sobhag ! By the grace of you company, I recalled the spiritual state of my soul. For that I salute you !"



## 57. Boundless Compassion

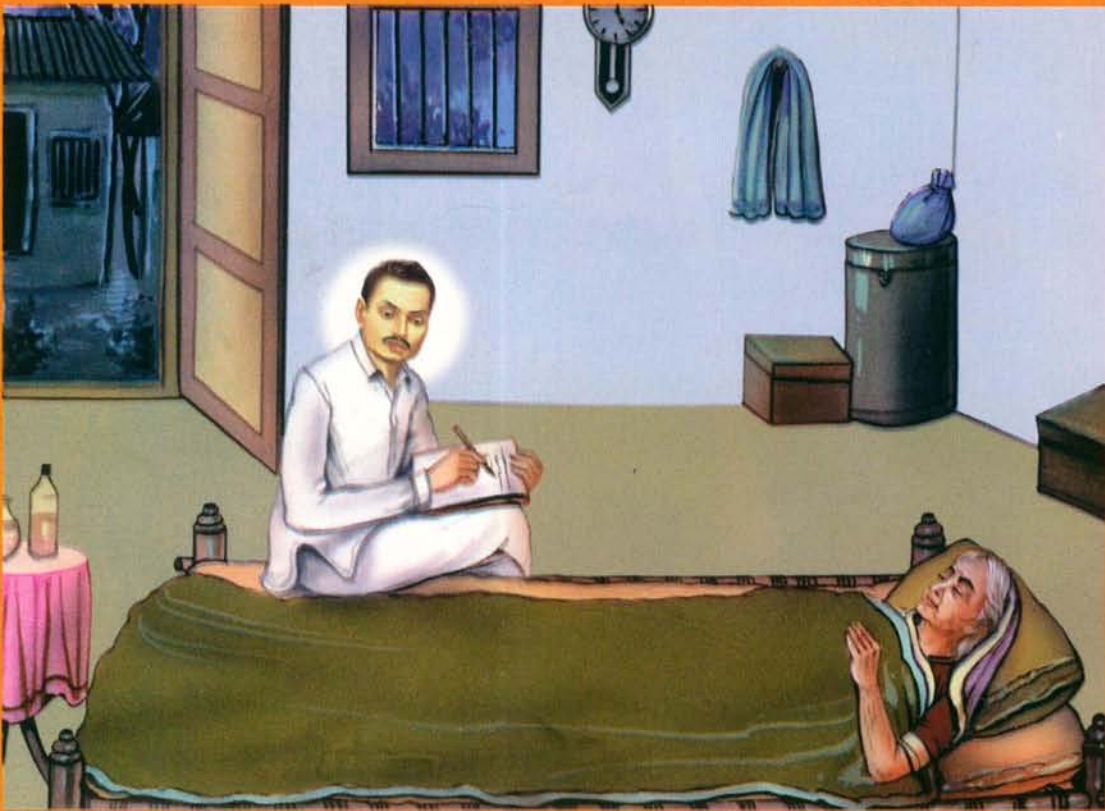
Tokershibhai Mehta, Shrimad's brother-in-law, had caught plague and had developed a tumour causing him unbearable pain. To complicate matters further, he had also become delirious. He constantly spoke nonsense and had to be restrained so that he would not sneak away from his bed. When Shrimad came to visit, he was advised to keep his distance. Instead of doing so, he sat down next to Tokershibhai, who became composed in a few minutes. Shrimad affectionately asked about his health and listened to his complaints about the excruciating pain caused by the tumour. Shrimad stayed there for half an hour and during that time Tokershibhai had calmed down completely. Later in the day Tokershibhai again became unrestrainable and someone ran to Shrimad's shop to fetch him. Shrimad sent him back with the words: "Whatever will be, will be."

Shrimad went there later in the evening. Tokershibhai again calmed down in Shrimad's presence. In response to Shrimad's enquiry he said he was feeling better and that the pain from the tumour had subsided. He then quoted a verse from a scripture. Shrimad asked him where had he heard it before and he replied "In the forest of Idar." They sat for a little while and then Shrimad asked him again how he felt and he replied: "I feel only bliss – I have never experienced such a feeling before." A few minutes later Shrimad informed those assembled that he had passed away.

Padmashibhai asked Shrimad what was the amazing change that took place in Tokershibhai's condition, he replied: "The soul is said to depart from the body when the breath stops. The destination for the soul is determined by the tendency of the *karmas* at the instant of its leaving the body. This tendency can be altered by psychic powers." Shrimad's presence had helped alter the destination of Tokershibhai's soul.

Shrimad's servant in Mumbai, Lallu, fell ill and was diagnosed with a tumour. Shrimad nursed him personally. His friends and relatives wondered why he personally bothered so much for a mere servant. Lallu, a soul like any other, had served Shrimad faithfully for many years. Shrimad, sensitive to the pain of even the smallest of living organisms, took Lallu's head in his lap and stayed with him until the end.

He passed away at peace with himself, and on his way to a better place, due to the wonderful, calming presence of a saint such as Shrimad.



## 58 An Unprecedented Moment

At the age of 28, on the first day of *Jeth sud VS 1952*, Shrimad formally retired from the business partnership. He handed over the management of the Company and transferred all his wealth to his younger brother Mansukhbhai. After retirement he had much more time for contemplation in solitude, although he would occasionally have to visit Mumbai to satisfy his brother, as well as his old partner Revashankarbhai.

Shrimad had already achieved inner detachment. He now began the process of becoming more outwardly detached. His lifestyle, which had always been very simple, became much more austere. He slept with neither a mattress nor a blanket and thus quietly bore mosquito bites and those of other insects. He had reduced his diet to very basic and plain food. He consumed very little and on certain days would eat only once. These austerities were a prelude to total renunciation. His goal was to attain the state of *nirgrantha*, when the soul is free of all granthi (knots), from the passions and delusion that cause worldly bondage. He wished to realise this state in both its inner and outer senses.

In VS 1953 whilst tending to his sick mother, he was inspired, at the age of twenty-nine, to compose a poem '*Apurva Avsar*,' "Unprecented Moment," an expression of his intense yearning to be totally detached.

*When will that Unprecedented Moment come?  
When will all the inner and outer knots be gone?  
When will we, having broken all such strong bonds,  
Be on the path which all Great Souls have walked upon?*

This poem is a true and moving reflection of Shrimad's inner life. Jain *agamas* list fourteen stages (*gunasthanak*) of spiritual development, ranging from delusion (*mithyatva*) to the final stage of the liberated Soul (*Siddha*). Shrimad has described the states of the Soul as it ascends this spiritual ladder from the fourth to the fourteenth rung. The fourth *gunasthanak* is *Samyag Darshan*, the first direct experience of the Soul, instilling faith in its existence, and marking the true beginning of spiritual growth, when the "knots" begin to be loosened.

Gandhiji was prompted to include this composition in his well-known anthology of devotional verses, *Āshram bhajanāwali* for the very reason that it is charged with rare spiritual insights into the path to Enlightenment and inspires a longing for that "Unprecedented Moment."



## 59 “Why this Complacency?”

Shrimad celebrated the holy festival of *Paryushan* in Kavitha in VS 1954. Several aspirants including Zaverchandbhai Sheth benefitted from Shrimad’s presence there, and participated in the annual festival in a way they had never done before. The atmosphere in Kavitha was filled with truly religious feelings. It was almost as if the *Tirthankars*, the Enlightened propagators of the Jain faith, had returned to this earth. Shrimad also met for the first time, Shri Popatlal Mahokamchand, an eminent aspirant, whom he would later affectionately address as ‘Shukdevji’. He recognized Shrimad as a self-realised being, a *Gnani*, in Kavitha. While Shri Popatlalbai came into contact so late in Shrimad’s life, his strong desire for liberation, his devotion, and his readiness to assimilate Shrimad’s imparted wisdom, all meant that he was able to learn much from him in a very short while.

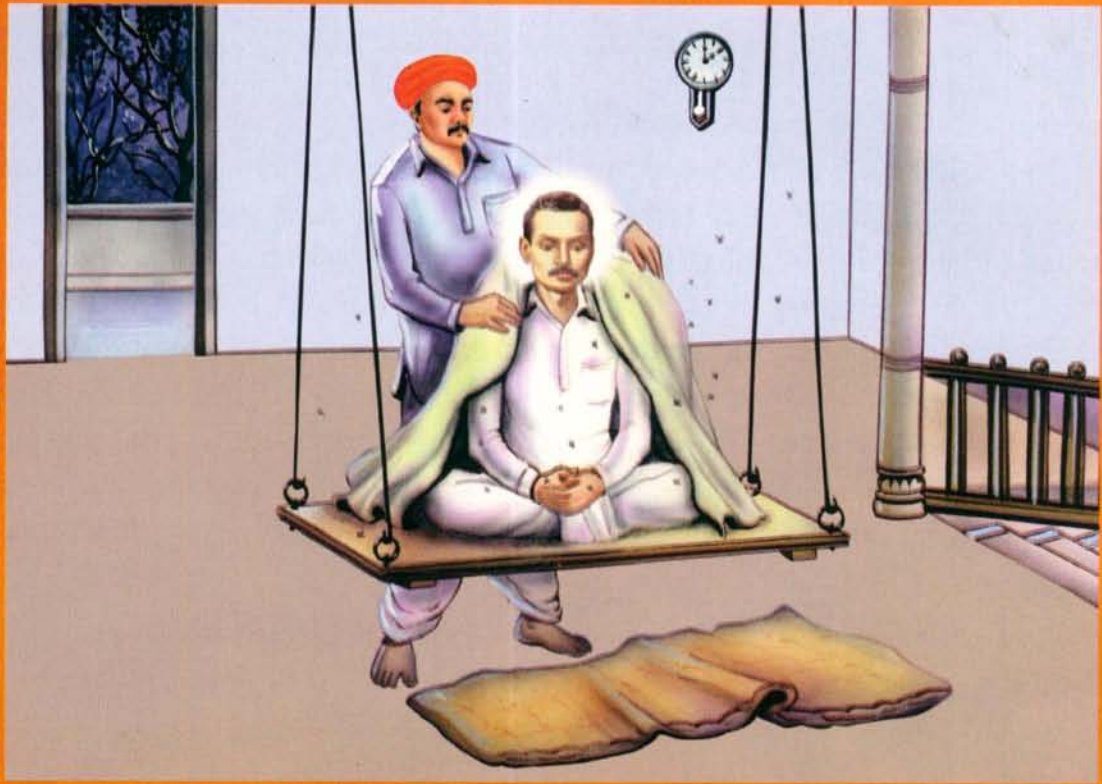
Ambalalbai would prepare Shrimad’s meals whilst he was sharing his wisdom and insight in a nearby house. He would listen very attentively while cooking and the next day would write out the whole discourse word for word.

Shrimad spent about a month around Vaso, and would go into the forests totally absorbed in the ecstasy of the Soul. He spent some time with Munishri Lalluji and other monks, as well as Shri Motilalbai Bhavsar, giving them spiritual guidance. In Uttarsanda, Shrimad stayed in a small house in secluded area with Shri Motilalbai, who was very fortunate in sharing several memorable moments with Shrimad. Shrimad’s wise words would bring the aspirants so much joy that they would lose track of time and sit until late in the night.

Occasionally, Shrimad would ask Motilalbai to accompany him for a walk in the woods. Once Shrimad asked : “Why this complacency ? In these times, the path is strewn with such obstacles that only Our soul is aware of the effort We had to make to remove them. Had We found a Self-Realised person, We would have followed his footsteps. You are fortunate to be in the presence of such a person, yet you refuse to wake up. Cast aside your complacency and awaken! When We were Lord Mahavir’s last disciple, a very small degree of complacency has resulted in so many births! But it is very difficult for people to recognise a living Self-realised person.”

Shrimad pointed out the dangers of complacency (*pramad*), as well as the importance of first recognising and then being devoted to a true *Guru*, whose living presence on one’s life will, if one has full faith, lead to Self-realisation.





## 60. Truth Personified

Shrimad had been in a remote place in Uttarsanda woods for a while. Ambalalbai had been attending to his needs for a fortnight, Shrimad now wanted complete solitude and therefore asked Ambalalbai to leave and take back all the household things he had brought with him. Shrimad allowed Motilalbai to stay with him. As Ambalalbai was packing, Motilalbai requested that a mattress and a water jug be left behind.

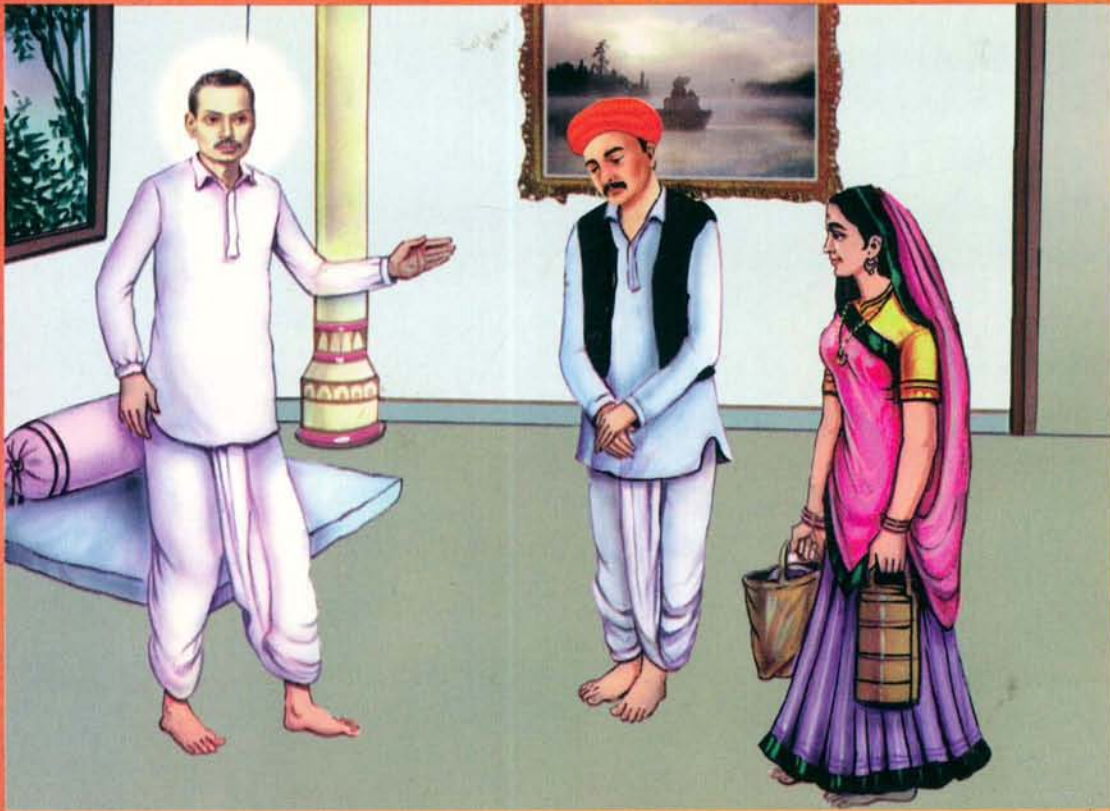
Later that evening, when Shrimad returned from the woods, he noticed that there was a mattress on the swing where he slept. He asked Motilalbai why it had been left behind to which he replied that he had kept it for himself but wanted Shrimad to use it. At his insistence, Shrimad allowed him to leave the mattress where it was. At night when Motilalbai checked, the mattress was on the floor and Shrimad was covered with mosquitoes. Motilalbai covered Shrimad with a *dhoti* to protect him but a while later saw that that too was on the floor. Shrimad was so absorbed in contemplation that he no longer had any physical awareness. As the observer is distinct from the object, the soul that witnesses all is also distinct from the body.

One day Shrimad and Motilalbai were taking a walk, when they passed a banyan tree and saw a monkey happily perched on its branch. Shrimad casually addressing the monkey said :

"O *Mahatma*, you have no possessions and yours is an attachment-free habitation. But, remember, *Moksha* can not be attained like this."

Superficially these remarks are very humorous, but they contain a deep spiritual message, conveying a vital principle in the path to liberation. What Shrimad was really saying is that by renouncing all worldly possessions, living in solitude in a deep forest and contemplating liberation, the Soul will not secure the desired result. For an infinite amount of time, the Soul has conducted itself as it sees fit, and yet not attained enlightenment. Instead, taking refuge in the guidance of a Self-Realised True *Guru* and following that Guidance with full faith, the Soul can even attain Enlightenment within 48 minutes!

Just as alchemy turns lead into gold, the living presence of a True *Guru*, a Personification of Truth, turns ordinary bound Souls into great, liberated Souls.



## 61. Small Events : Great Lessons

Shrimad wanted to be in complete solitude and had asked Ambalalbai to go back with all the household things they had brought with them to Uttarsanda. All the cooking utensils and foodstuffs had also been taken back. Motilalbai Bhavsar, who had stayed with him asked Shrimad what alternative cooking arrangements he should make as, after all, they would need to eat something everyday.

Shrimad was a light eater and was very particular about what he ate. He instructed Motilalbai to go to Nadiad and ask his wife to cook for them. She was to bathe before cooking. He wanted her to prepare *chapattis* and a vegetable curry, but to use no oil or water. Nor was she to cook in a steel pot.

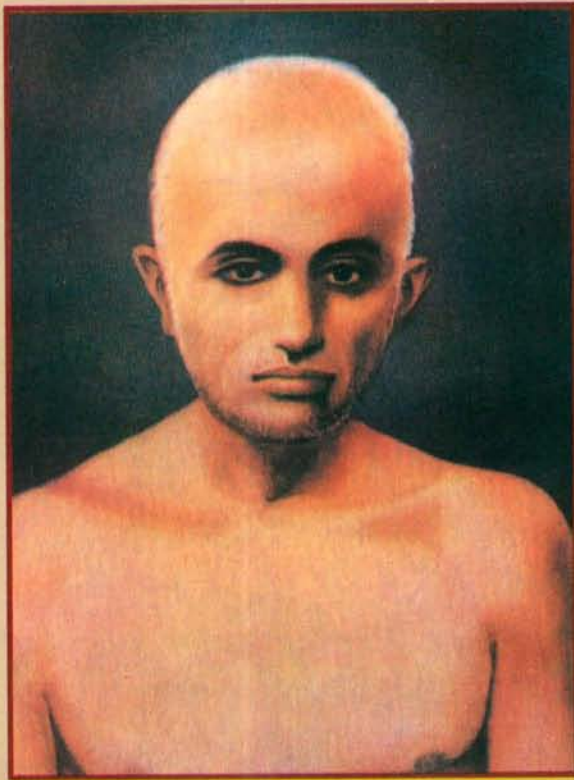
Motilalbai went to Nadiad and made the arrangements as instructed. It all worked well. One day Motilalbai asked his wife to bring the food after the fast train had left. She was to take the food and wait the distance of four fields away from where they were staying. Motilalbai would meet her there and collect the food container from her. Somehow the plan did not run smoothly that day and they failed to meet. Motilalbai's wife arrived at the bungalow and met Shrimad. She innocently explained the arrangements.

When Motilalbai realised what had happened, he lost his temper. Not only had his arrangement failed, but Shrimad had found out.

Motilalbai scolded his wife for her indiscretion. Shrimad asked Motilalbai : "What made you lose your temper? You are exerting your authority as a husband. This is not right. You should, on the contrary, be grateful. She will attain *moksha* in her eighth birth. Ask her to come and see us."

Shrimad met Motilalbai's wife. At the same time he gave her some guidance: "Why are you being so complacent ? Why are you making such little effort ? This type of opportunity is rare. It is because you have earned great merit in past lives that you have this opportunity, so why are you wasting it ?"

It is the ordinary events in the lives of great souls that highlight their greatness and their humanity. Shrimad would pick out things from the normal course of life, and use them to awaken and lead others in a spiritual direction.



## 62. The Path Towards Keval-Gnan

When Shrimad was staying at Zaverchand Sheth's residence in Kavitha, he would often go off into the surrounding woods in the middle of the night without informing anyone. Zaverchandbhai had employed a man named Lallubhai to look after Shrimad at night. Lallubhai would sleep at the foot of the staircase and would often wake up at midnight only to find that Shrimad had left his bed and gone off into the forest. On one such occasion Sheth Zaverchand, Ratanchand, Venichand and some others went searching for Shrimad in the woods with their lanterns and found him meditating near Mithuji's well.

In the year VS 1954, Shrimad visited Kheda. On this occasion, he stayed as a guest at Rao Bahadur Narsinharam's bungalow. One day, Pandit Punjabhai Someshwar Bhatt, came to see Shrimad, who was studying one of the scriptures at the time. He repeatedly drew Punjabhai's attention to a particular verse in the book, which he has paraphrased in letter number 850 in the compendium *Shri Vachanmrutji*: "Let all the propensities of my mind be so still that if an old deer felt an itch in its head, he would scratch it against this bodily frame, thinking it to be an inert object!"

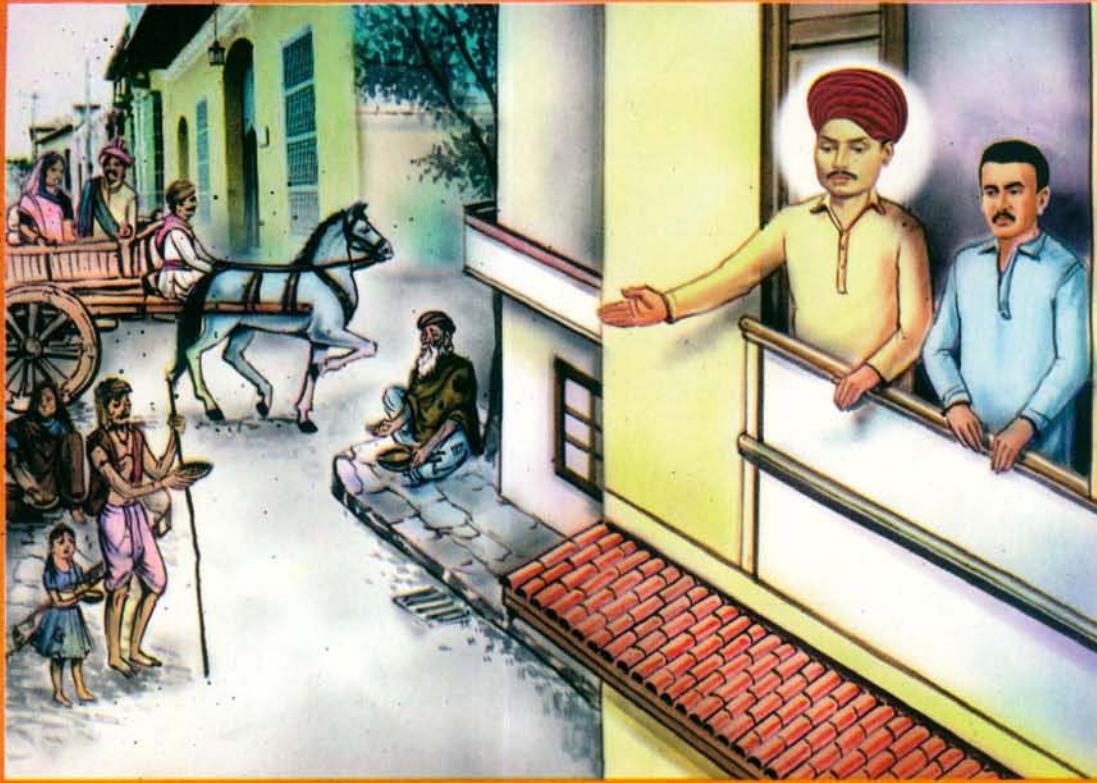
Shrimad took great pleasure in explaining this verse. This shows how much Shrimad was immersed in such stillness himself. While explaining the profound meaning of this example, Shrimad would say, "Once you have attained complete peace of mind, your physique would be so still that even birds and animals would look on you as being but an inert object and would not be afraid of you."

At Kheda, Muni Devkaranji joyously expressed his heartfelt feelings: "It is as if we can directly experience *Moksha* in the presence of a Self-realised one."

Shri Gautamswami had asked Bhagwan Mahavir: "All *Munis* who adopt monkhood under my tutelage gain Enlightenment, but why not me?"

Bhagwan replied: "You will definitely gain Enlightenment, but if you let go of your affection for me."

Gautamswami replied " If I have to give up that love to gain Enlightenment, then I don't want it." He expressed his gratitude for all the guidance he had received from Bhagwan Mahavir, who had saved him from folly. Such is the devotion to a True Guru !



### 63. Study the Self

One day, Manilalbhai, Sobhagbhai's son, asked Shrimad to accompany him to watch a play. Shrimad took Manilalbhai to a window and pointed to the world outside. "Look", he said, "some people are travelling in a horse-drawn carriage; there is an old man begging for his livelihood; there is some one who is sitting helplessly, and then you see someone who is ill."

As Manilal looked at the scene below, Shrimad explained to him that all these people were reaping the consequences of their past *karmas*. All of this is but a part of the drama of worldly existence. Feelings, inclinations and sentiments lead to *karmas*. A person may outwardly appear happy but within himself he might be unhappy: he may appear to be wealthy but he might have large debts; there may be family problems, health and business worries.

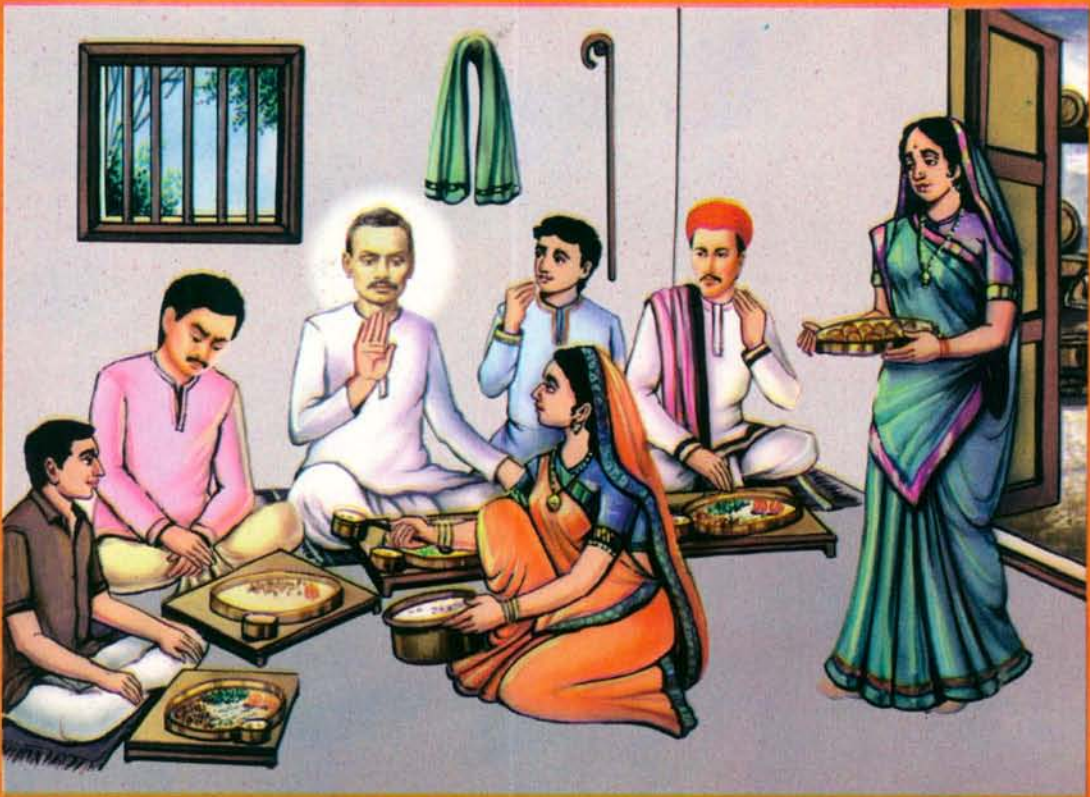
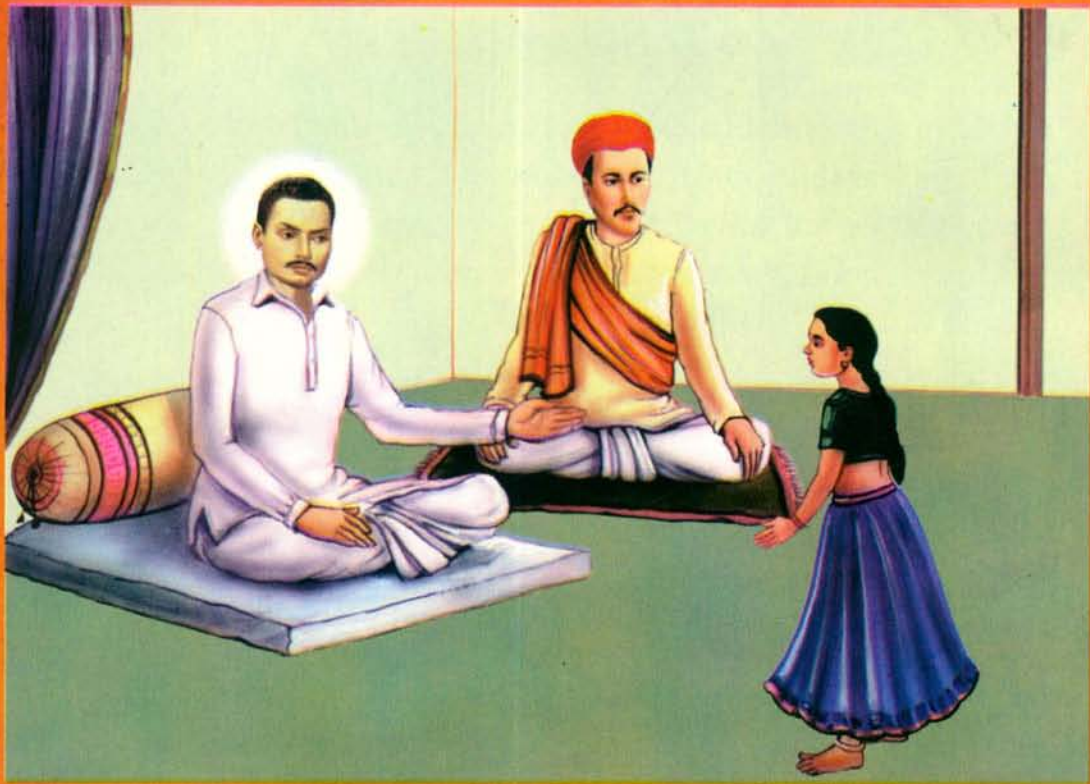
Shrimad in this way showed Manibhai the continuous drama of this world, known as *sansar*. The Self-Realised Soul witnesses this world and its many events from a distance and does not become a part of it, realising that only the Soul is eternal, that all else is momentary. One evening Shrimad, when out for a walk with a companion, enquired about the place they had just passed. He was told that it was a crematorium. Shrimad said that he viewed the whole of Mumbai as a crematorium. Mumbai was a city of glamour and temptations that led the souls that inhabited it to their downfall.

A neighbour of Shrimad's once learned of his extraordinary powers, but also noticed that he was always involved in spiritual activities. The neighbour was deeply involved in worldly activities and concerned with enhancing his personal interests and so he had difficulty understanding Shrimad's *paramarth sadhana*, efforts to understand the ultimate Truth. He asked Shrimad : "You have such exceptional talents. You must be well aware of the current market prices and their trends. Why don't you tell us about them?"

In reply Shrimad told him : "I am not a fool, to do *Swadhyay* to know the direction of market prices."

The word for religious study is *Swadhyay*. Its real meaning, as Shrimad wanted to point out, is the study (*adhyayan*) of the self (*swa*), of the Soul.





## 64. Focus On Self

Shrimad's daughter, Kashiben was very playful and affectionate and was thus everyone's favourite. Once she jumped into Shrimad's lap. He asked her : "What is your name ?"

Kashiben laughed : "Papa, don't you know? My name is Kashi."

Shrimad said : "Your name is not Kashi, it is 'Conscious, Blissful, Eternal soul.'"

Kashiben did not understand what he had said, and so went crying to her mother complaining that her father had said her real name was not Kashi but something else. Shrimad had, in this indirect way, planted a small seed of Truth, in Kashiben's mind. The seeds were to mature later.

Kashiben was afflicted with a serious illness and died at a young age and yet, because of the thought-seeds planted by Shrimad, she focused constantly on That, which her father had said she was, till the very end. Shrimad, as always had a deep concern for the spiritual well being of every soul that came into contact with him.

One Padamshibhai had stayed with Shrimad for a short while in Mumbai and had tremendous faith in him. Once Shrimad asked him what he feared most. He replied that it was death. Shrimad explained to him that death occurs only at the maturity of certain *Karma* and not before that. He suggested that the Soul's main concern ought not to be the physical death but spiritual death from karmic bondage which arises from non-spiritual inclinations, and which lead to the cycle of death and rebirth. The solution is to keep one's thoughts focused on one's own true nature, on the Soul.

Once Shrimad, Maneklalbai Ghelabhai, and others were invited to dinner. At dinner, Maneklalbai refused a serving of vegetables, as on certain religious days, he could not eat them. Next, a yoghurt dish was served, which also he declined. Several other items were also served, and he accepted some, and declined others. Then a sweet was served, and he did not decline it, but Shrimad stopped it from being served to Maneklalbai saying : "He has increased his self-importance by rejecting routine food items, but does not want to deny himself the most tasty dish." Shrimad then explained the real nature of one's attachment to material pleasures, which draw the Soul away from its own true nature.



## 65. Impressions from Previous Lives

Shrimad came to Idar in *Magshar sud VS 1955* a retreat of solitude. His close relative and intimate friend, Dr Pranjivan Mehta, the Chief Medical Officer, had invited him there, being aware of his preference for secluded spots. Shrimad was particularly drawn to this area as he could recall spiritual experiences he had there in his previous lives.

In his discussions with the Maharaja of Idar, Shrimad had referred to the historical significance of Idar. The comments Shrimad privately made suggest some very significant memories : "The last Tirthankar, Lord Mahavir, who propagated the Jain philosophy in its entirety had walked the soil of Idar along with his main disciples. All but one of his disciples had attained Enlightenment. The one who remained has been reborn in these times and it is likely that through him many souls will benefit spiritually."

This and other similar comments made by Shrimad elsewhere indicate the nature of his relationship with Lord Mahavir in a previous life.

Shrimad, the divine soul, born with insights gained from the supreme True *guru*, Lord Mahavir, frequently remembered various auspicious events in the lives of Enlightened Ones from that time.

Shrimad's intention was to spend his time in Idar in total anonymity and seclusion. However, he had hardly been there a fortnight when *Munishri* Lalluji and two other monks arrived and four more were on their way.

Although Shrimad was a gentle and tender soul, he had to be stern and ask the monks to go away. However, touched by their genuine devotion, he relented and allowed them to stay for a few days.

On the third day, as per Shrimad's instructions, the seven *Munis* gathered under a mango tree. When Shrimad arrived, he noticed *Muni* Devkaranji who was physically frail, shivering in the bitter cold. Shrimad asked, "Are you feeling cold? Do you want to get rid of the cold?"

As if he was signaling to get rid of the "cold" of worldly existence, he suddenly got up and walked vigorously up to the top of the hill, ignoring the thorns, bushes and stones in his path, just as he had vigorously scaled spiritual heights in his life, overcoming all obstacles in his way, and so must we !



## 66. Memories of the Past

The mountains and caves of Idar resounded with echoes of the melodious chanting of divine verses. Shrimad set this historic land alive with vibrations that touched the pure soul. Shrimad was so totally immersed in himself that he recalled his past lives, the times when he had walked in the woods and forests of this holy land. He could visualise vividly the different places where he had prayed and meditated. He remembered with great excitement and devotion the moments he had enjoyed in the company of the Enlightened Ones of those days.

Then, he sat on a boulder and said to the monks : "The scriptures state that the Lord sat on 'Pudhvi Shila.' This boulder is *Pudhvi Shila*." Bhagwan Mahavir had once fasted on this boulder for three days. It was this boulder that had made Shrimad recall his past experiences. He then read from *Dravya Sangraha* (a scripture describing the six kinds of matter and principles which constitute the universe) until they were about half way through it. The seven monks were in a state of spiritual ecstasy! Munishri Devkaranji, experiencing a strong feeling of detachment said, "What need is there for us to return to town ?"

Shrimad responded : "Who says you should return ?"

Munishri Devkaranji said : "We still need to fill the stomach."

Shrimad observed that their very stomach brought great benefit to society at large.

He then said : "Whatever one perceives the Soul as, during meditation, is how one sees it." He further explained that often people have their own imagination of what the Soul is and this has an effect on their meditation. For example : If one feels that the soul is like a bull and its tail is like a mountain then the soul will appear like that to him.

The monks met Shrimad again the next day and they started walking briskly up the mountain on a difficult path, thick with brambles and covered with loose stones. When they reached the top, they all sat on a large boulder. Shrimad then said: "Look, this boulder is *siddha-shila* (the abode of Liberated souls), and the one sitting on it, is a *siddha* (enlightened soul)." He was experiencing such bliss, almost a state of *nirvana* (liberation).



## 67. The Divine Voice of Shrimad

Shrimad, the supreme ascetic, engrossed in Soul, roamed the mountains and caves of Idar for seven weeks like a lone, fearless lion. The divine sound of his melodious voice echoed throughout the highlands of Idar. The vibrations of the immortal verses of *Dravyanuyoga* reverberated around their peaks.

"If you want to still your mind to achieve ideal state of meditation, then do not have affection or aversion with regard to favourable and unfavourable experiences of the senses. You can chant and meditate on the five worshipful types of Soul or follow a Guru's instruction for chanting or meditation. When you become one with the object on which you are meditating, only then is your meditation successful."

Shrimad was such an embodiment of non-violence that the vibrations emanating from him were so peaceful that even predatory animals would become calm in his presence. He himself experienced such inner peace and bliss that he noted :

"I am one, I am totally alone, I am devoid of all external attachments, I can expand or shrink to fill any physical body I occupy, I am immortal, ageless, I am eternal, I am pure consciousness, undisturbed by wavering thoughts, a mere witness."

After his stay in Idar, in VS 1955 Shrimad went to Ahmedabad. Sheth Jesangbhai Ujamshi had come to see him. He asked permission to leave as he was feeling sleepy but Shrimad had already started his discourse and he could not leave.

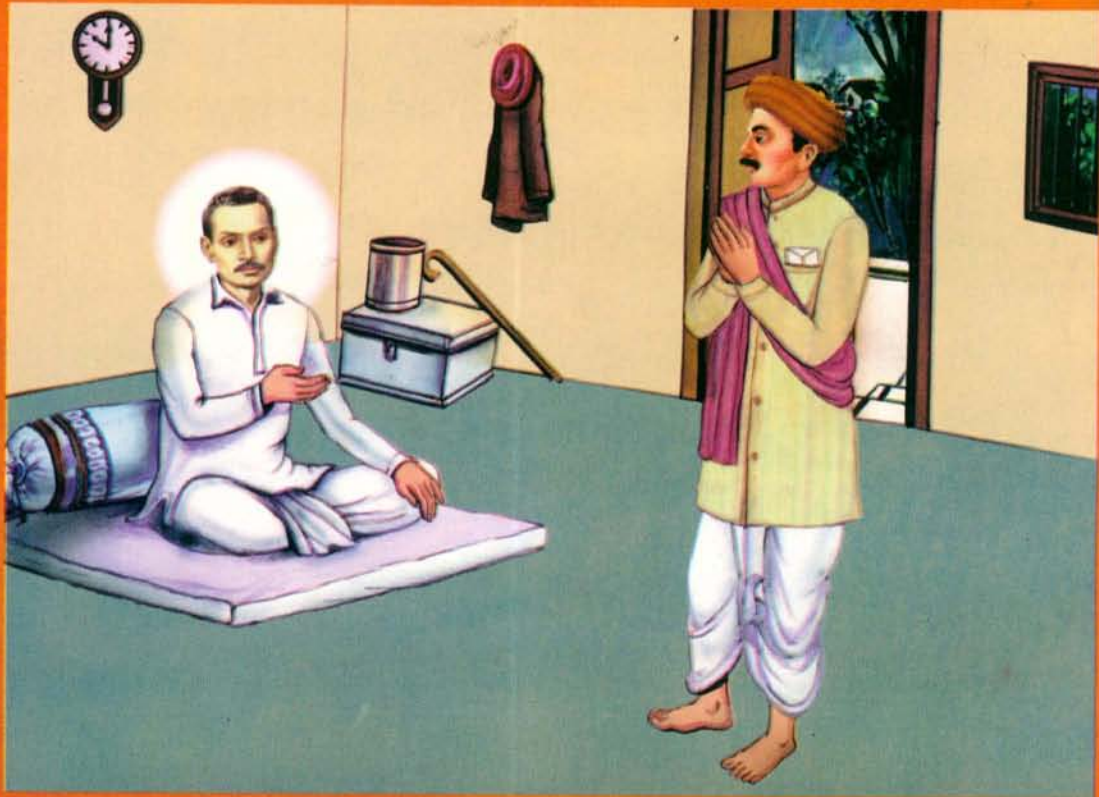
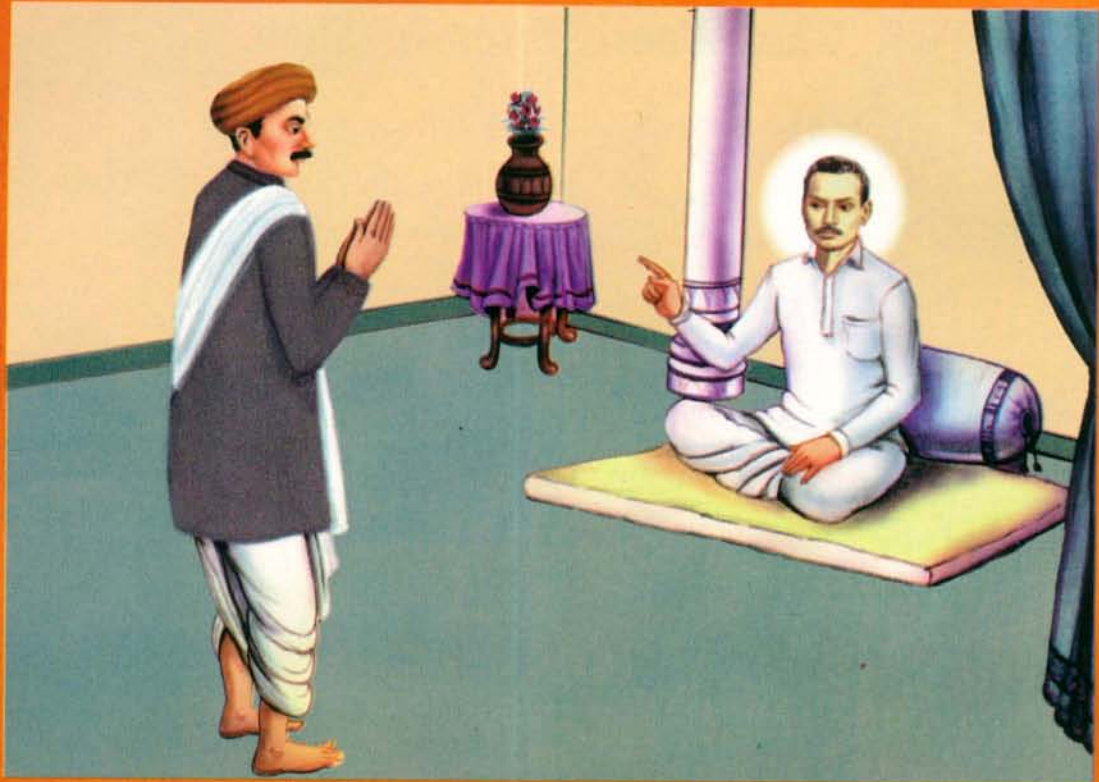
When Shrimad stopped, it was after 3-00 am : nobody had realised the time.

When Shrimad was out early in the morning he was chanting a verse :

"Ponder over the wisdom imparted by the Guru."

In Bhimnath, Shrimad preached *tattvadrashiti* (philosophical insight). He then visited Vavania and Morvi, where he spent about seven weeks and then returned to Idar. In Idar this *siddha yogi* (realised soul) once again awakened the mountains and valleys with the sounds of his melodious voice and with his wisdom.





## 68. Answering Unasked Questions

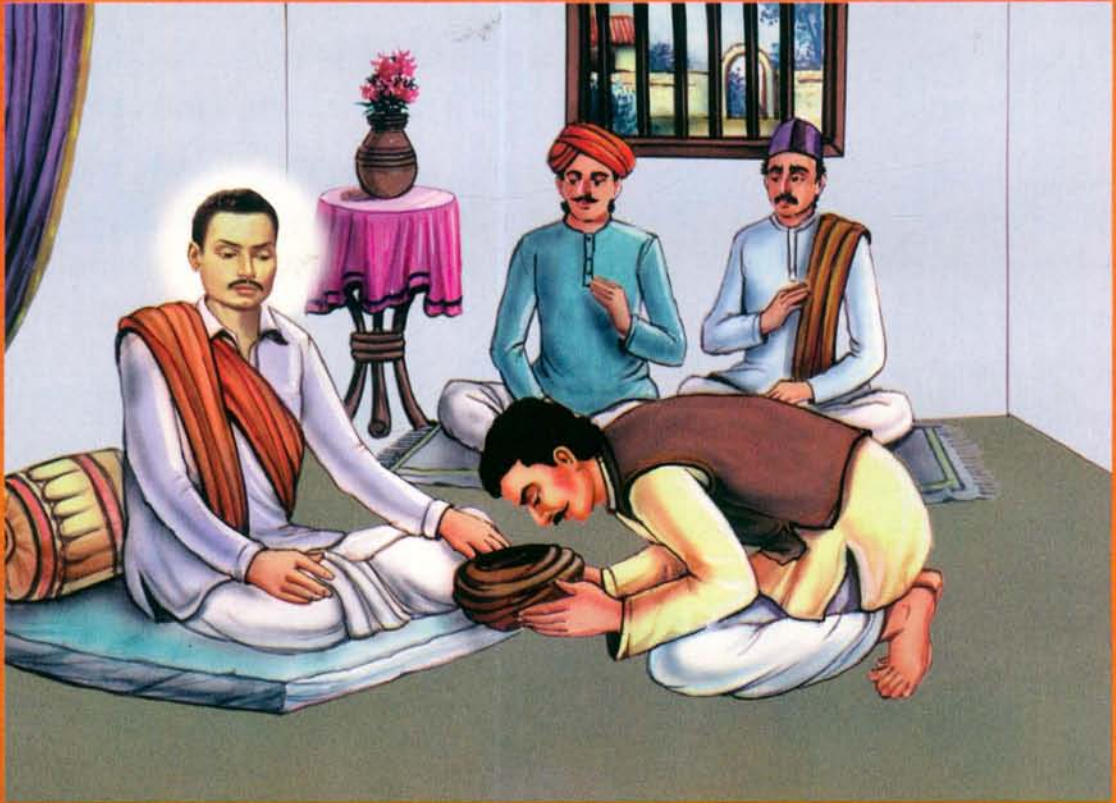
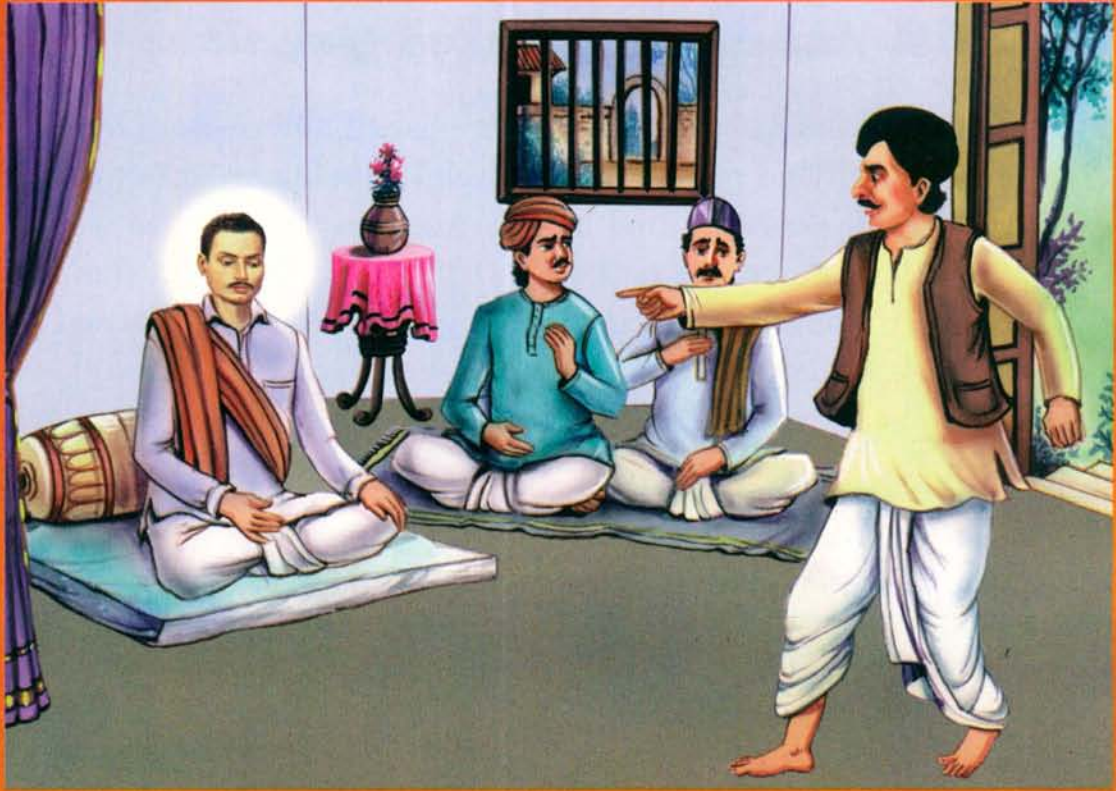
Mansukhram Kiratchand was an accomplished author from Morvi. He had experienced Shrimad's divine personality, and had benefited substantially from his association with him. He was educated in the Western style and was well versed in Sanskrit and other languages. He had firm faith in religion, and the capacity to comprehend the deep philosophical concepts of various faiths. A learned person of Mansukhbhai's calibre was completely drawn to Shrimad's company; similarly, Shrimad had also developed a natural liking and affection for such a devoted scholar.

When Mansukhbhai met Shrimad for the first time in Morvi in *Chaitra Vad* of VS 1955, his mind had been filled with doubts. "Would Shrimad be willing to meet him and welcome him? There would be knowledgeable disciples, would he be given a chance to talk to him?" When he entered the room he saw that Shrimad was engaged in giving a spiritual discourse.

Shrimad had recognised the turmoil in Mansukhbhai's mind. He welcomed Mansukhbhai warmly and asked him to sit beside him. Shrimad put him at ease by asking him about his family's welfare. Shrimad then resumed his discourse. When Mansukhbhai got home, he expressed to his wife his deep remorse that, despite meeting with a divine person like Shrimad, his life was still full of desires and emotions.

About the same time a doubt arose in his mind questioning the Jain tradition of not eating green vegetables on certain days. The stipulated days are the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> in a 15-day cycle; he asked why not on the other days and whether abstaining on other days would be as good from a religious point of view. However, within a few days these doubts faded away. When they met again, Shrimad told him: "Mansukh, you should avoid green vegetables on the stipulated days (*Tithi*)." In this way Shrimad would resolve the doubts of people around him even before they expressed them.

Mansukhbhai's friend worked for the police and was tired of the politics and corruption in his department. He needed advice and wrote his problems on a sheet of paper. On another sheet, he wrote the questions he wanted Mansukhbhai to ask Shrimad. Mansukhbhai went to see Shrimad, who answered all the questions without even looking at the papers. Shrimad did not know Mansukhbhai's friend nor had he ever met him. So pure was Shrimad's consciousness.



## 69. *Forgiveness is Friendship*

*"I forgive all living beings, may all living beings forgive me.*

*I have friendship with all and have enmity with none."*

Shrimad taught that one should live life with love and friendliness towards all living things, be forgiving and bear no grudges, learn to recognise the true nature of soul. He encouraged people to rid themselves of greed, pride and ego and to think of the soul instead of the transient body in which it resides. Forgiveness is the stepping stone to achieve the purity and enlightenment of the Soul, it can be described as the joy in life and the Spring of penitence. At the onset of spring, nature is in full bloom, radiating its beauty. Similarly, if life is lived in forgiveness, then the qualities of the Soul will blossom.

Anger is the opposite of forgiveness. It turns a man into a monster. Anger is in reality alien to the Soul, while forgiveness is the Soul's nature. Anger is hatred, while forgiveness is friendship.

A person called Bhanji Makanji did not quite believe that Shrimad was a saintly person and that he would remain detached from negative emotions. He wanted to put Shrimad's equanimity to the test.

He started behaving as if they were old enemies and made all kinds of accusations against Shrimad. Once, when Shrimad was engaged in a discourse, he started shouting baseless allegations against Shrimad. He was expecting a reaction in kind but Shrimad remained calm as ever. Eventually Bhanji Makanji became tired and came to his senses. He apologised to Shrimad, bowing to him and putting his turban at Shrimad's feet as a sign of repentance.

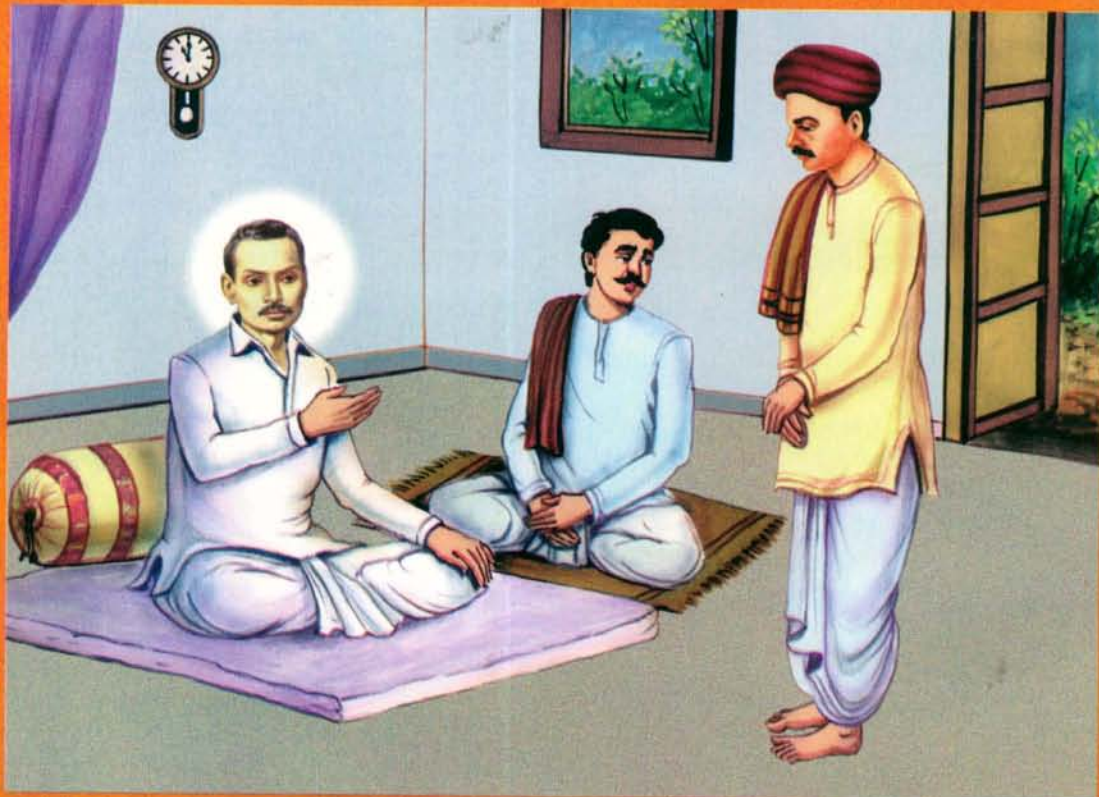
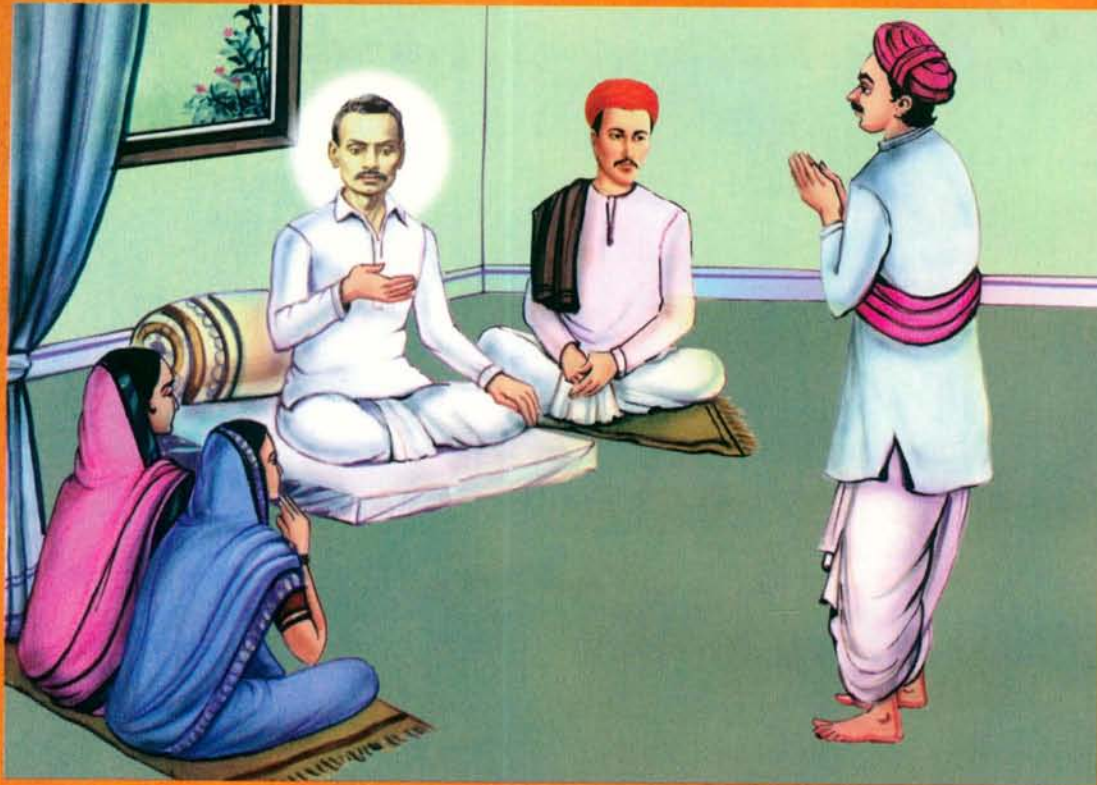
There was only one sentiment in Shrimad's heart :

*Come let us forgive, let us ask for forgiveness*

*The world is full of vices; there is malice everywhere*

*Come let us plant a tree of friendliness*

Bhanji explained to Shrimad that he was trying to test Shrimad's genuineness, and asked for his forgiveness. He had lost his senses and got carried away. From that day he became a devoted disciple of Shrimad.



## 70. *The Existence of the Soul*

In VS 1956 when Shrimad was at Wadhvan, Jesangbhai went to meet him. Shrimad invited him for a meal. Jesangbhai declined: "I have already arranged to dine at the shop."

Shrimad replied : "No, you have arranged for a meal from a restaurant."

Jesangbhai was surprised as to how Shrimad knew this but then realised that it was through his extra sensory perception. Jesangbhai then confessed truthfully that he had.

During a discourse, Tribhovanbhai asked Shrimad : "Sir, I cannot see the Soul. Where would I find it ?"

Shrimad replied : "You feel the hunger, but do you really see hunger ?"

Tribhovanbhai confessed : "No sir, I do not see it but I definitely feel it."

Shrimad then explained, "Soul does exist. You feel sleepy but you do not see sleepiness. Given that experience, Soul is also experienced but not seen."

Tribhovanbhai then enquired : "How does one realise the Soul ?"

Shrimad sat in *padmasan*, the lotus position, and became still in the *Yogamudra*, a posture. Shrimad's posture looked very striking. He was totally engrossed in his Soul.

Shrimad maintained this posture for a short period and then said: "That is how you realise the Soul."

At another time Shrimad had a spiritual discussion with a Vedanta scholar Shri Punjabhai Someshwar Bhatt. Punjabhai asked : "Have you experienced the existence of the Soul ?"

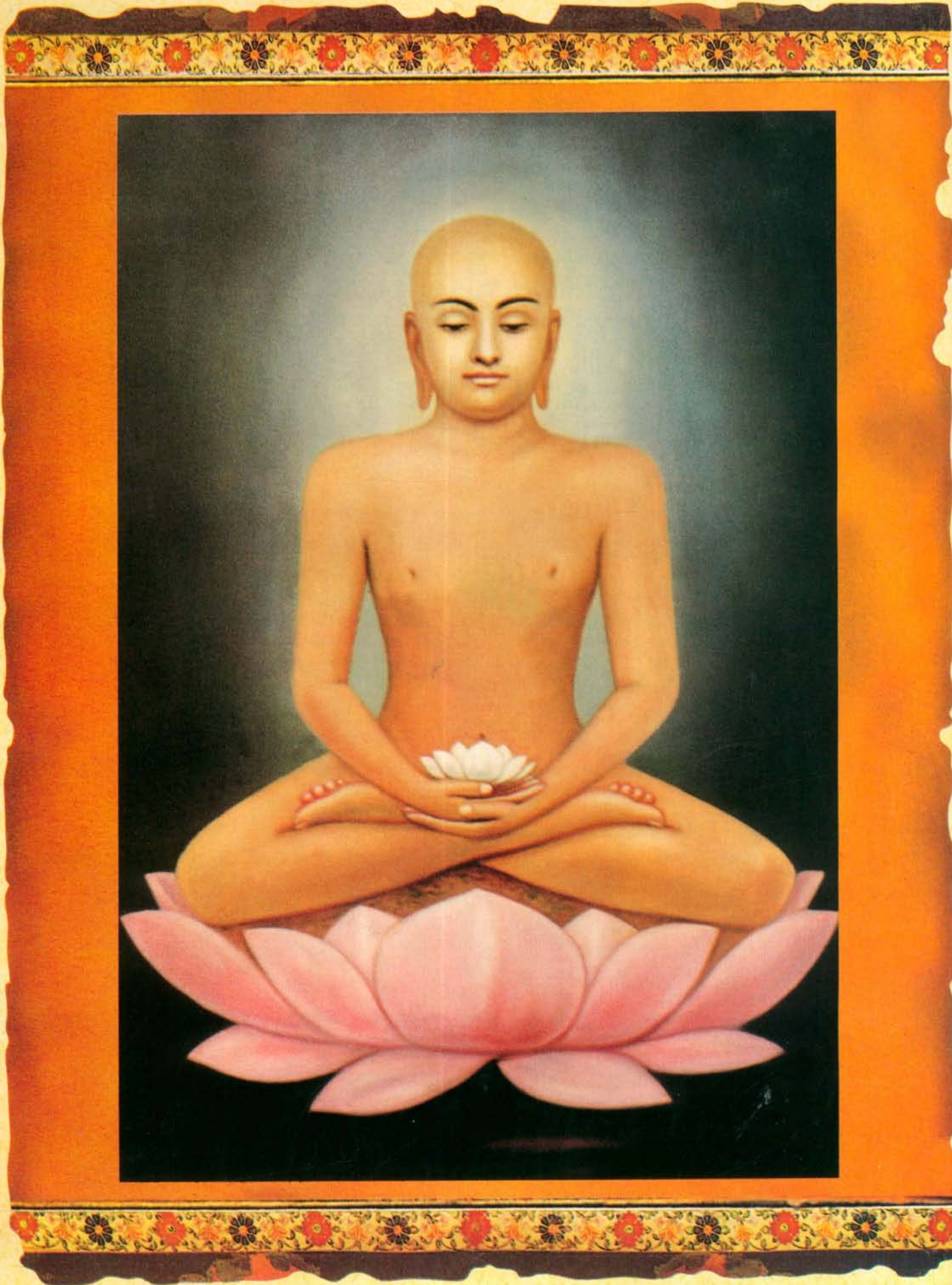
Shrimad replied : "Yes, I have experienced the Soul and can say that it does exist. The taste of sugar cannot be described: it has to be experienced. Similarly, the Soul cannot be described : it can only be experienced."

Punjabhai then asked if reincarnation occurred. Shrimad answered in the affirmative. Shrimad was then asked if he believed in the existence of an 'illusory God' as accepted in Vedanta. Shrimad said he did not.

He was then asked: "Is the reflection in a mirror an illusion or is it made from some matter?"

Shrimad replied: "It is not an illusion, it is made from a certain substance."

Shrimad's clarity of thought, and understanding of philosophy were very evident from that discussion.



## 71. The Original Path

Jain philosophy lists nine fundamental truths. The first two are *Jiva* (conscious life, Soul) and *Ajiva* (physical matter). Although the Soul's identification with matter is the root cause of the cycle of death and rebirth, the two never become one. Shrimad has expressed this fundamental truth in poetry. In *Vikram Samvat* 1947, while in Ralaj, Shrimad composed four incomparable poems, one of which opens with : "The matter always remains matter. Consciousness remains conscious."

In the beginning of *Vikram Samvat* 1956, he composed a deeply philosophical poem which begins: "Matter (*jad*) and Consciousness (*Chaitanya*) are substances with different natures." It recommends the *Nirgranth* path, free from the seven knots of the four passions, and three types of delusion.

"All bodily delusions cast off, they became absorbed in their own nature,  
The path of the *Nirgranth* is a means to end births in future."

Shrimad's wisdom, insight and devotion, are wonderfully expressed:

"O *Samyag Darshan*, Self-Realisation, source of the highest bliss! I salute you with utmost devotion."

"Without your refuge, an infinite number of beings suffer endlessly in eternal worldly existence."

"At your insistence, I was drawn to my own true nature and my faith in total detachment became firm. I embraced the path to ultimate fulfillment."

"O *Jina Vitraga!* (Detached, Liberated Soul who has overcome passions) I salute you with utmost devotion. You have showered endless grace upon this humble Soul."

O Kundkunda acharya and fellow Acharyas! Your teachings have helped this humble being immensely in understanding the *Self*. Therefore I salute you all with extreme devotion."

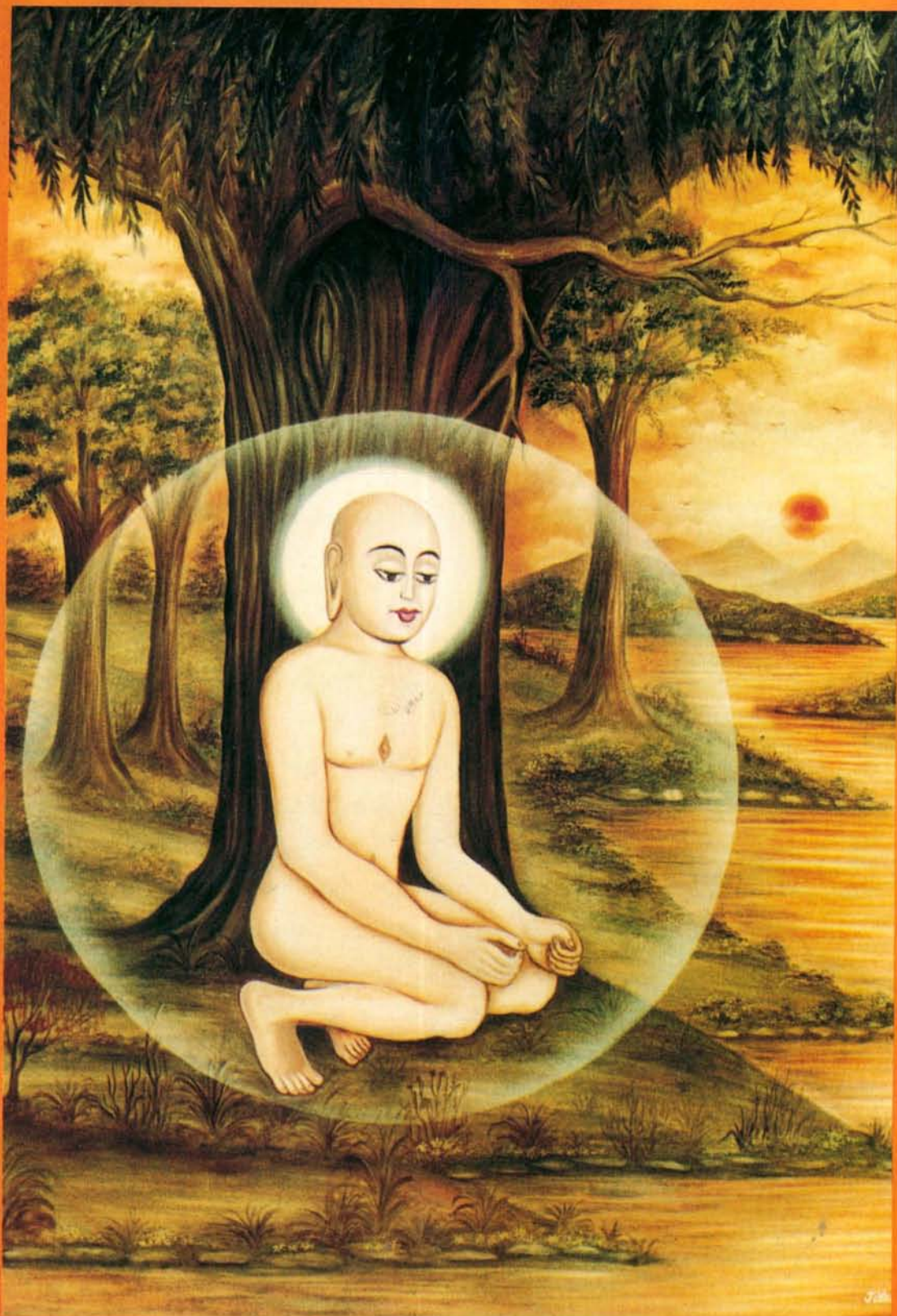
"O Shri Sobhag! By the grace of you company, I recalled my previous spiritual development. For that I salute you!"

Shrimad was totally devoted to Bhagvan Mahavir. His life's only purpose was to realise his Soul, and to help others by re-establishing Bhagvan Mahavir's True message. In VS 1952, he composed a song with this purpose :

*Listen to the True Path of the Jinas, with constant inner focus.*

*With no desire for praise nor love for the pain of rebirth.*





## 72. Revival of the True Faith

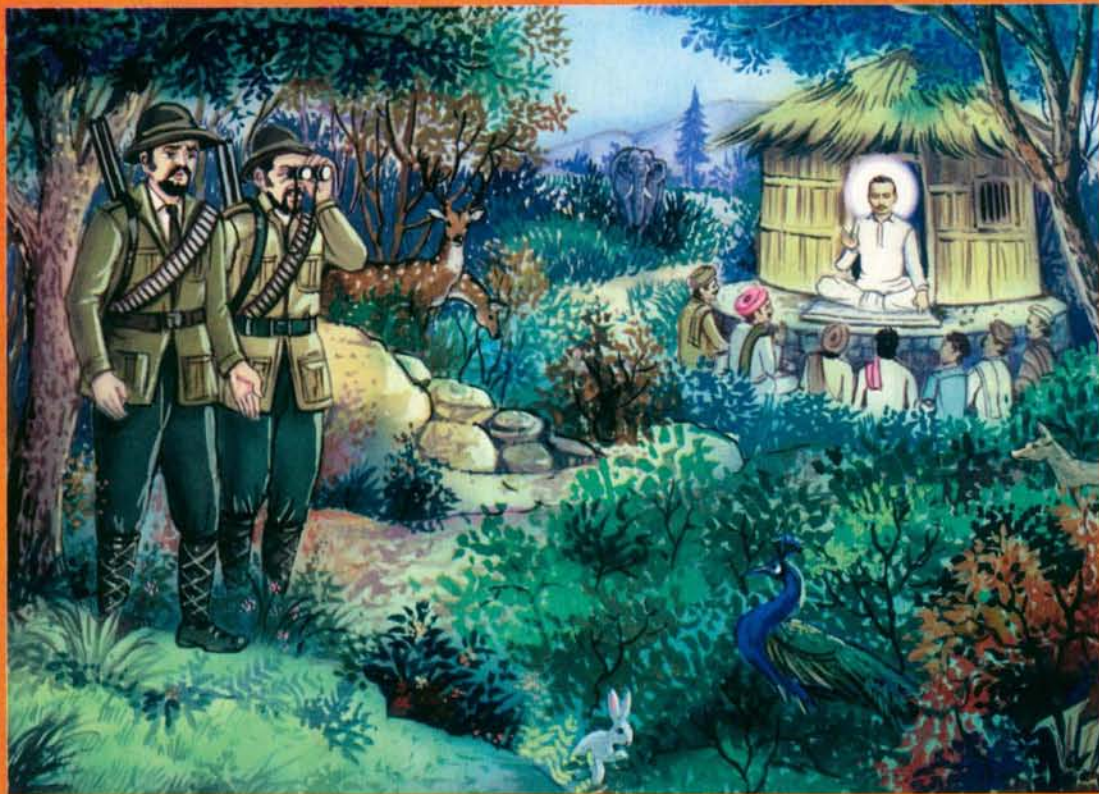
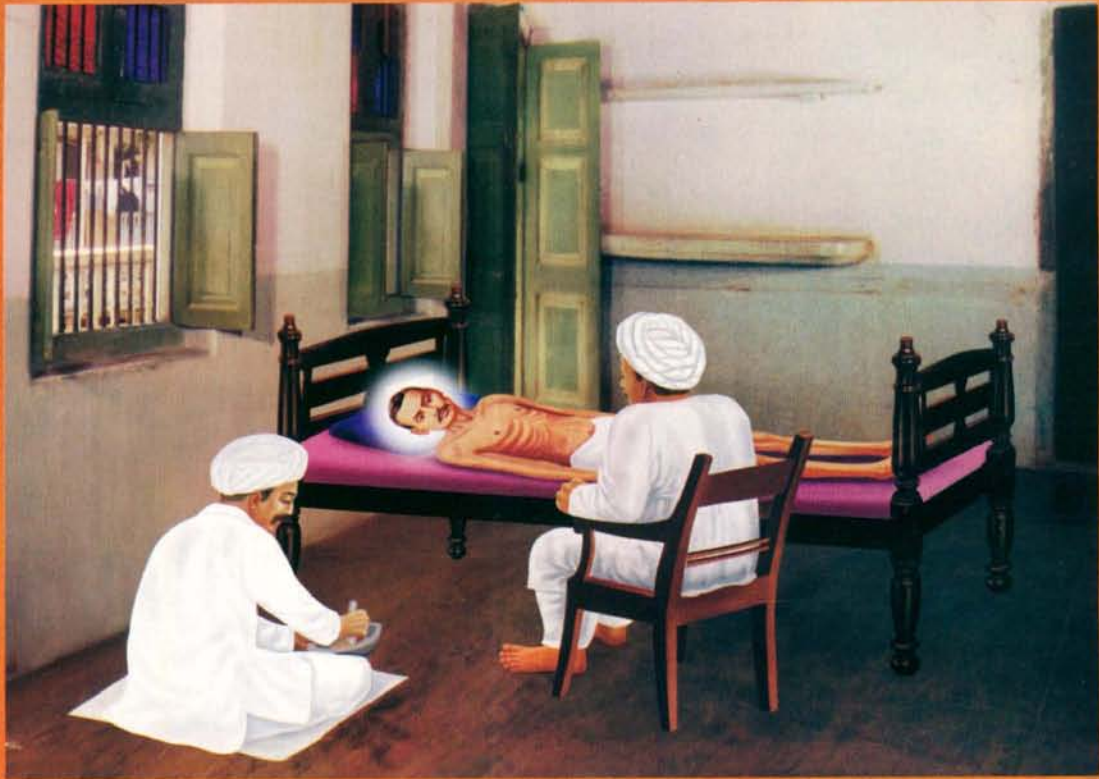
Shrimad saw that Bhagwan Mahavir's message had virtually been lost in his time, with many caught up in excessive ritualism and others in pedantic, dry, philosophizing, all losing sight of the process of cultivating qualities and realising Soul. His heart cried out at the divisions he found: "O Lord! Either let my wish to revive the faith naturally subside or let it be fulfilled. Fulfillment seems most difficult since even on the smallest of issues, there are differences of opinion, which are very deep-rooted and have greatly distanced people from the right path. Their obstinate dogmatism means that it will be difficult to awaken in them a genuine desire for the True path."

Shrimad once outlined the necessary conditions for the revival of a True path :

- (1) That understanding *Bodh Beej* or *Beej Gnan* as originally preached by *Jina*, be universally presented as the True path.
- (2) That the message that obstinate dogmatism cannot lead to the welfare of the Soul be understood and spread widely.
- (3) That religion be understood as following the guidance of a living True *Guru*.
- (4) That light be cast on the philosophy of Soul and matter and on the understanding of the Soul.
- (5) That monks conduct themselves with true detachment and renunciation.
- (6) That light be cast on the nine fundamental realities, *Nav Tattva*.
- (7) That light be cast on the path to be followed by Monks.
- (8) That light be cast on the path to be followed by Householders.
- (9) Introspection.
- (10) That many Souls attain *Samyag Darshan*.

Shrimad was worthy of such a task, and the following attests to his inner state: "Those for whom nothing is loved or unloved, for whom there is neither friend nor foe, who are free from the dualities of honour-insult, joy-sorrow, gain-loss and life-death, and who have thus come to, are coming to, and will come to rest, in their pure conscious nature, cause joyous wonder."

Shrimad was again ready to renounce the world and wander as an ascetic, and also begin the enormous and noble task of spreading the True message of Bhagwan Mahavir. He again sought his mother's blessing. She was, however, concerned that his weak body would not survive the physically demanding path of renunciation. Soon, as she feared, in VS 1956, Shrimad began to suffer from an incurable disease.



### 73. Inner and Outer Stillness

In the month of *Posh* in the year *VS 1956*, Shrimad began suffering from an incurable disease. His health was deteriorating day by day. While it was first thought that he suffered from fatigue, it was later diagnosed as chronic intestinal disorder. Dr. Pranjivandas Jagjivandas Mehta and others were treating him with great care and attention. Shrimad constantly reminded them that as a noble person, he did not wish to be treated with medicines which might have been tested on animals.

The disciples who took care of him during this time included Ambalalbai, Mansukhbhai Devsibhai of Limdi, Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta, Dharshibhai, Sukhlalbai from Viramgam, Mahasukhram and Motilal Bhavsar. His close relatives were also there.

Shrimad was taken to different places for a change of climate and his mother Devba and his wife Zabakben accompanied him. His health fluctuated considerably, and his body became weaker and weaker.

His mother often asked him how he was feeling. His usual reply was that he was neither happy nor unhappy.

He was then taken to the hills around Dharampur in the month of *Chaitra* in *Vikram Samvat 1956*. The political agent of the British Empire had set up a camp there and, as the British ruled India, he enjoyed wide powers. Living a life of great pomp and show, the agent would be entertained very well by local rulers. They would often arrange hunting expeditions for the whole entourage. Unusually, there was no game anywhere in sight. For the duration of Shrimad's stay, no game was caught. It was as if, in the presence of compassion personified, no blood sport could succeed. Even animals are safe in the presence of such great Souls!

Shrimad's host at Dharampur was Ranchhodbhai Modi, a local forestry officer, who enjoyed the saintly company of souls like Shrimad, and he served him well. Despite Ranchhodbhai's warm hospitality and Dr. Pranjivanbhai's treatment, there was no improvement in Shrimad's condition at Dharampur.

During these days, however, Shrimad kept up the study of religious texts, which was reflected in his letters.

One day he wrote : "Both inner and outer tranquility exists."



શ્રીમદ્ના લઘુભાતા શ્રી મનસુખભાઈ

## 74. The Ultimate Truth

Shrimad arrived in Ahmedabad. Many monks had gathered in Naroda, which was then a village on the outskirts of the city. It was decided that Shrimad and the monks should meet at the outskirts and then proceed to the forest. The monks were awaiting Shrimad, and he arrived a few minutes later, accompanied by the *mumukshus* (his disciples). He saw that the monks were bare-footed. "Their feet must be scorched," he thought to himself and then, removing his footwear, he set off, followed by the monks and the *mumukshus*. The entire group sat under a banyan tree to rest for a while. Shrimad's feet had become red in the heat, having walked barefoot, but he did not seem to care. He then turned to Munishri Devkaranji and told him: "We want to lead a life of total detachment and do not wish to meet others. The soul now wishes to remain in control of its senses."

From Ahmedabad, Shrimad wrote to Munishri Lalluji, advising him: "...the seed that has been planted, do not dig it out, for it will bear fruit."

Shrimad then went on to Vavania where he stayed for three months. He then went to Morvi for a month, where he gave a series of spiritual lectures. From Morvi he proceeded to Wadhwan. Shrimad found society with no sense of the true message of Bhagwan Mahavir, and to educate such a society, it would need books. Despite his extremely poor health, in *Vikram Samvat* 1956, he set up in Wadhvan the *Paramshrut Prabhavak Mandal* (Society for the Distribution of the True Teachings) with the aim of publishing the unknown works of great *Acharyas*. Under its auspices, and as a result of the efforts of Ambalalbai and Shrimad's younger brother Mansukhbhai, the first edition of *Shrimad Rajchandra Vachanamrut* (a compendium of his writings) was published in *VS* 1961. After two years of research on it, Shrimad's contemporary Shri Mansukhbhai Kiratchand Mehta, his scholarly disciple, published its second edition.

Under Shrimad's guidance and inspiration, Shri Gandabhai Bhaiji opened *Shri Subodhak Pustakalaya* (Good Teaching Library) in Khambat in *Vikram Samvat* 1957. It was so named as to avoid any association with any sects. Shrimad personally visited Ahmedabad and Mumbai to buy books for this library, for the study of Truth, free from all dogma.

The establishment of the society and the library were driven by Shrimad's gratitude to and love for the Teachings and his longing for a spiritual revival. That Shrimad, so weak with illness, would work so hard, speaks volumes of his compassion.



## 75. A Powerful Tool

In VS 1957, Shrimad arrived in Ahmedabad with his mother Devba and his wife Zabakba. The monks had also come there for the monsoon season (*Chaturmas*). Shrimad had brought two large manuscripts of the Jain Digamber sect, "*Gyanavarna*" and "*Swami Kartikeyanupreksha*," which he had his mother and wife present to the monks Lalluji and Devkaranji.

Shrimad realised that other monks were not keen to carry scriptures as they moved from place to place. He wanted to reawaken their sense of duty, and wake them up from their complacent slumber. He thus turned to them: "My dear monks, this Soul has carried the burden of wife and children, and yet it has not served, or devoted itself to, the Self-realised persons nor to religious souls." He then asked Muni Laxmichandji to carry the *Gyanavarna* manuscript for Shri Devkaranji and asked Muni Mohanlalji to carry the other manuscript for Shri Lalluji, until they had finished reading them. He recommended that they should all read, contemplate and discuss them.

Shrimad's health was worsening and all his relatives and devotees were very concerned, but Shrimad, absorbed in his inner bliss, retained his poise and composure. In Wadhwan, Sukhlalbai, a devotee, wanted to have some photographs of Shrimad taken, and Shrimad consented. Two portraits were made: in one he has posed in *padmasana*, the Lotus Position, and in the second, *kayotsarga mudra*, in a standing meditative posture. These portraits, together with those of the Tirthankars, form the focal points of all ashrams dedicated to Shrimad Rajchandra.

The next day, Shrimad expressed his feelings regarding his inner state when he was photographed, with Mansukhbhai Devshi, saying: "Despite the extreme physical infirmity, I walked there with my will power." He described his inner state as totally detached, similar to that of Lord Parshvanath with no hatred towards the demon Kamath, who harrassed him, and no attachment towards the angel (*Dev*) Dharnendra, who rescued him.

Shrimad had profound love for *shrut*, the teachings of the Enlightened Souls. He recommended constant study of such religious texts, as he considered them a reviving nectar for souls thirsty for liberation. He wrote: "*Vitrag shrut* is a powerful tool. Its significance must be understood from a realised soul, leading to a clear perspective. In the absence of such a realised soul, the teachings are beneficial. Even when it is not possible to associate with a realised soul at all, these scriptures can be of great benefit to those with a clear perspective. It is for this reason that the great souls have composed the Scriptures."





## 76. The Final Journey

While his health was severely deteriorating, Shrimad remained in equanimity. Those who have devoted their lives to material pursuits cannot understand the deeply spiritual perspective of Self-Realised Souls. While the former will see the pain of the body, the latter will be absorbed in the innate bliss of the Soul. "We have lived for the body an infinite number of times, always at the expense of the welfare of the Soul. Seekers of Truth should consider that spiritual thinking will arise in that body, which sacrifices itself for the welfare of the Soul. They ought to thus cast aside all false notions about the body and focus entirely on spiritual pursuits."

Despite moving from place to place in search of a more suitable climate, Shrimad's condition did not improve and his body became emaciated: his weight fell from 140 lbs (57 Kgs) to just 57 lbs (23 Kgs). On the 6th day of Phalgunasud, in VS 1957, Shrimad arrived in Rajkot from Wadhvan.

Shrimad was rapidly scaling greater spiritual heights, casting off many old *karmas*. A month before he passed away, he said: "While the journey was meant to be completed quickly, a Sahara Desert came in the way. I was carrying a heavy burden. Attempting with all the energy of my Soul to bear it in the shortest time possible, my legs tired due to the most intense and tenacious past *karmas*."

Of his inner state, he said: "The True Nature of the Self does not deviate, and that is a source of wonder. Internal awareness remains uninterrupted."

"Why grieve or rejoice while enduring the fruits of *karmas*? Realised souls have defined true religion as enduring them with equanimity. The path of pure conduct is not to deviate from self-awareness even in the most acute pain or pleasure. If one bears these fruits in Self-awareness, which has arisen from calming the passions, then one will shed many *karmas*."

Ten days before he passed away, he was so weak that he could not even write, he was totally alert. As a parting message, he revealed the true meaning of the path to Moksha in a beautiful poem:

*The ascetic desires eternal bliss  
Which is pure soul, the living Jina.*



## 77. Journey Eternal

On the 6<sup>th</sup> day of *Falguna Vad* in VS 1957, Shrimad arrived in Rajkot. He was suffering from chronic intestinal disorder. His physique was rapidly deteriorating and he had become so weak that he needed assistance to even get out of bed. In a letter he wrote from Rajkot about his failing health, he included a wonderful verse on the nature and sentiments of the Soul. In a brief letter to Sukhlalbai Chhaganlal of Bharuch, he wrote :

*"My infinite salutations to Chandraprabhswami, a model of infinite peace!  
When pain causing karmas come to fruition, why should there be joy or grief  
Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti"* (Ref. *Vachnamrutji* - 953)

He was thus indifferent to the severe discomfort of his body, remaining in a wonderful state of equanimity. One who has conquered death does not fear it, for death is end of the body, not of the Soul, which is immortal.

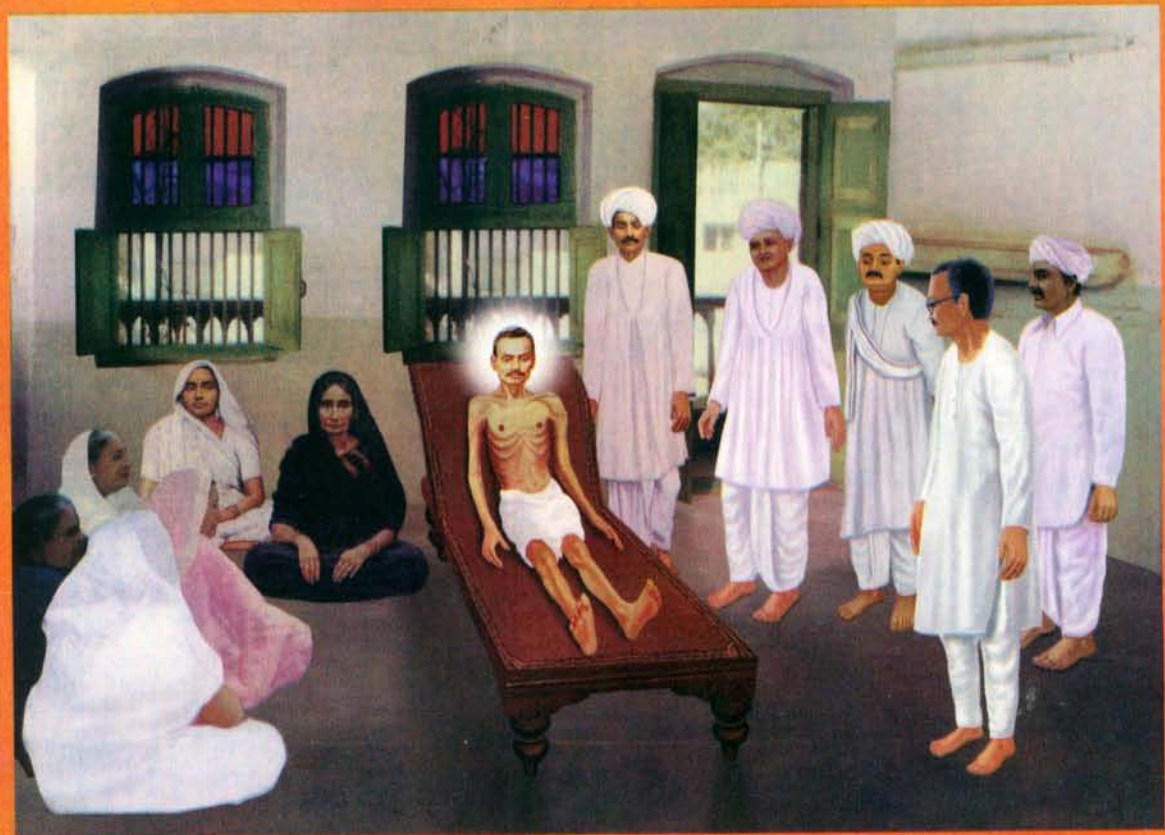
Shrimad was staying in Rajkot with Shri Nanchandbhai Anupchand but moved to Narmada Mansion at the outskirts of the town for fresher air. One day his condition became quite serious and his mother grew very concerned. Shrimad consoled her: "Whatever will happen, will be the day after tomorrow," and said no more. He then asked Devba to chant the rosary.

Shrimad had become so much weak that he could not even sit upright. On the eve of his *deh vilay* (passing away), Shrimad, in the presence of his younger brother Mansukhbhai, Revashankarbhai, Narottambhai and others, said presciently:

"Do not worry. This soul is immortal. It is going to attain a very sublime state. So, conduct yourself with equanimity and continue to remain absorbed in self - meditation. There is no time left for this body to impart the jewels of wisdom. Nevertheless, you must continue your endeavours for spiritual progress."

At 2.30 in the night, Shrimad caught a severe cold. At the time he said: "Do not worry. Your fellow-being will pass away in a self absorbed state."

The cold improved with treatment. Shrimad asked his younger brother, Mansukh to move him to a couch. Mansukh was reluctant to move him as he was so weak, but Shrimad insisted. Mansukh re-arranged the couch, so that he could lie in a meditative posture.



## 78. The Immortal Flame

*I*t was the morning of the fifth day of the latter half of the month of *Chaitra*, VS 1957. Shrimad was given some milk at 7:45 a.m. He was, at that time, fully conscious and aware of his body, mind and speech. At 8:45 a.m., he said to his younger brother Mansukhbhai,:

"Mansukh, don't grieve. Take care of mother. I will now immerse myself in my 'inner-self'."

He lay on the couch in the same '*Kayotsarga*' position in which he had been photographed in Wadhvan. His self - absorbed state lasted for about five hours until 2 p.m., before he breathed his last. There were no external symptoms that ordinarily mark the departure of a soul from the body. It was in a meditative and peaceful state that the relationship between that 'all-pure' soul and the body came to an end.

As his body was sinking, his face grew increasingly radiant. His face was serene, attractive and glowing. His condition at that time amazed all those present and also aroused in them a feeling of reverence.

He had immortalised his final message: '*There is no craving for life, nor is there fear of death.*' How could he have been afraid of death?

Enlightened saints like Shrimad, who have experienced their never-aging, immortal nectar-like Soul, are beyond the physical body, beyond death, and beyond time.

At 2.00 p.m., on the fifth day of *Chaitra* in *Vikram Samvat* 1957, in the city of Rajkot, the divine spirit of Shrimad Rajchandra left the body known by that name. The immortal inner flame rose above this mortal world.

In just 33 years, what Shrimad contributed to the cause of religious reawakening, would normally not be possible even in countless lives. He made up for an infinite number of earlier births in just one life time. Not only did he attain the greatest bliss for his own 'self', he also blessed the world by casting light on the True path to Self-Realisation.

Countless footprints are made on the sands of time, but only the footprints of those rare personalities who strive for universal welfare and the path they lay out remain with humanity as bright rays of hope for the future. Just as the places where the Tirthankars attained *nirvana* have become *Tirthas*, places of pilgrimage, so has Rajkot.

*The abode of eternal bliss is the refuge of a true person  
May focus on him remain uninterrupted for all times  
Eternal and supreme peace and one that is nectar like  
Paying obeisance and giving my self to the state to be one with it.*



## 79. Power of Non-violence

The Divine Light, which manifested itself on *Kartiki Poornima* in VS 1924 in Vavania, in form of Shrimad Rajchandra, left that body on the fifth day of the second half of *Chaitra* in VS 1957, leaving behind an eternal glow, a beacon of hope to countless people caught in the trials and tribulations of this materialistic world and the heady pace of these dark times. That glow has spread widely from the hearts of the truth seekers for the benefit of all mankind. Were it not for the beacon of spirituality that was the life and work of Shrimad Rajchandra, the world in which we live, beset by greed, violence and war, would have been a darker place. He was able to quench Mahatma Gandhi's spiritual thirst by instilling in him the virtue of non violence. Mankind has, as a whole, benefitted from leaders like Martin Luther King (Jr.) and Nelson Mandela. They were both inspired by Gandhiji and his policy of non-violence and all three of them helped to free many millions from oppression.

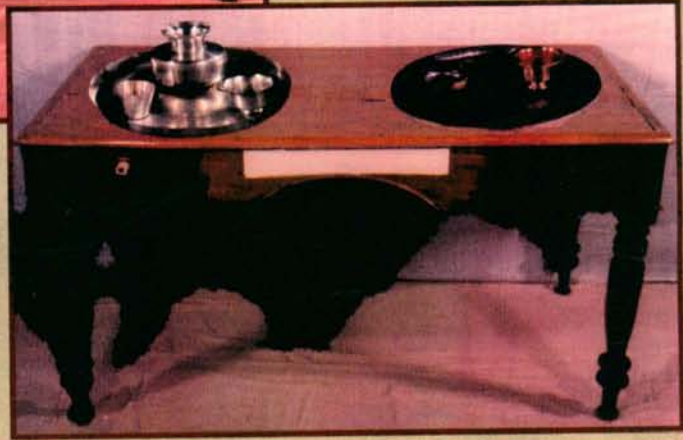
The Divine Glow, has not only radiated throughout the material world but also illuminated the hearts of spiritual seekers, inspiring in them a new purpose and outlook on life. Shrimad overcame the obstacles of orthodox customs, blind beliefs and dogmatism, built up over a time, and showed the true path. He did not want to chart out a new path of his own. His only desire was to rekindle the path, illuminated by *Jina vitrag*, on which he himself had walked to realise his Self. He was eager for the differences among Jain sects to be resolved and to reinstate Jainism as a single united faith to its original glory and magnificence.

From an early age he aspired to show seekers the spiritual path. To this end he composed books on the principles of Jainism in simple language, and created deeply philosophical poems. His words continue to reverberate in the hearts of countless spiritual seekers. He showed them the path to the pinnacle of spirituality.

Maintaining that 'nobody has attained *Moksha* by being dogmatic,' he suggested that dogmatic differences be cast aside and that the focus be only on the path which takes the Soul to Enlightenment. He preached against excessive ritualism and dry, pedantic philosophising, and instead recommended devotion to a *True Guru*, a self-realised person.

Shrimad's personality, his renunciation and detachment, his wisdom and learning, and his compassion inspired many onto the True path, and to Self-Realisation





શ્રીમદ્ વજ્રવદ જે વાપરતા  
તેમાંની કેટલીક વસ્તુઓ



## 80. Infinite Gratitude

*In Mokshamala* and in all his letters and poems, Shrimad maintains that the path shown by the *Jinas* is the true path. He says:

*There are no mantras, machines or medicines by which sins can be removed;*

*Without the teachings of Jinas, there can be no other solution;*

*The discourses of Jinas are the sources of supreme tranquility*

*They are the true medicines to rid births and deaths but are not suitable for cowards.*

Here he indicates the supremacy of Jain philosophy but he does not negate or condemn other philosophical beliefs. *AtmaSiddhiShashtra* is also such an example.

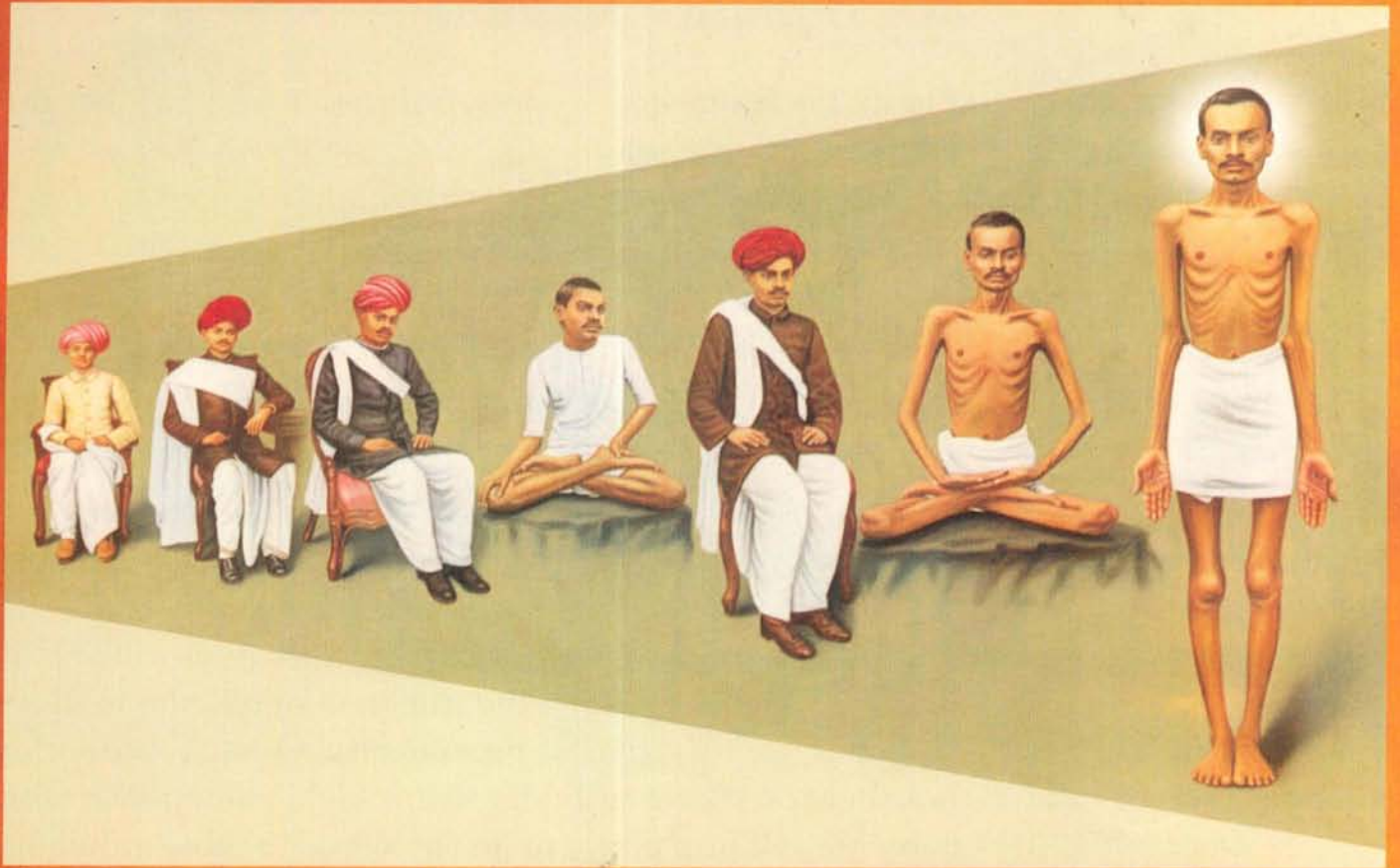
Shrimad has become an oasis for all those people who recognise that they are embroiled in material and worldly affairs. For the modern person digging himself ever deeper in to the material world, Shrimad's message is to turn his focus inwards. He rang the warning bell of true spirituality to awaken those who use religious festivals as an excuse for lavish displays of wealth. He signalled the true path of religion to those scholars, deeply entrenched in their books, and those prejudiced against people with a different point of view. To those bent on taking authority with violence and power with wars, he demonstrated the immense and firm power of non-violence. To those indulging in the mundane pleasures of material life, he became the poet inspiring them with unique spiritual compositions.

His life has illuminated this world in such a way that everyone can find the path leading to spiritual sublimity. Today, the 'right path', charted by him, has become the highway for all spiritual seekers. Let us pray to Shrimad Rajchandra to kindle in our hearts an undying flame of ceaseless striving for that 'right religion' :

*O Param Krupaludev ! You have graciously blessed me by guiding me to the original path of the True person which eliminates all the sufferings of birth, old age and death. I will never be capable of repaying your infinite grace. Also, as you are always totally devoid of desire, all I can offer you is my homage at your feet with my mind, body and speech in harmony. May my devotion to you, and my eagerness for the True path expounded by the Vitraga remain awake in my heart for ever – that is all I ask for – may that be fruitful.*

ॐ Shanti – Shanti – Shanti.

*May the inner strength of the saints acquired by their spiritual endeavour benefit the world*



*'There is no craving for life,  
nor is there fear of death.'*

## MAHATMA GANDHI

IN RELATION TO HIS EXPERIENCES WITH

### SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

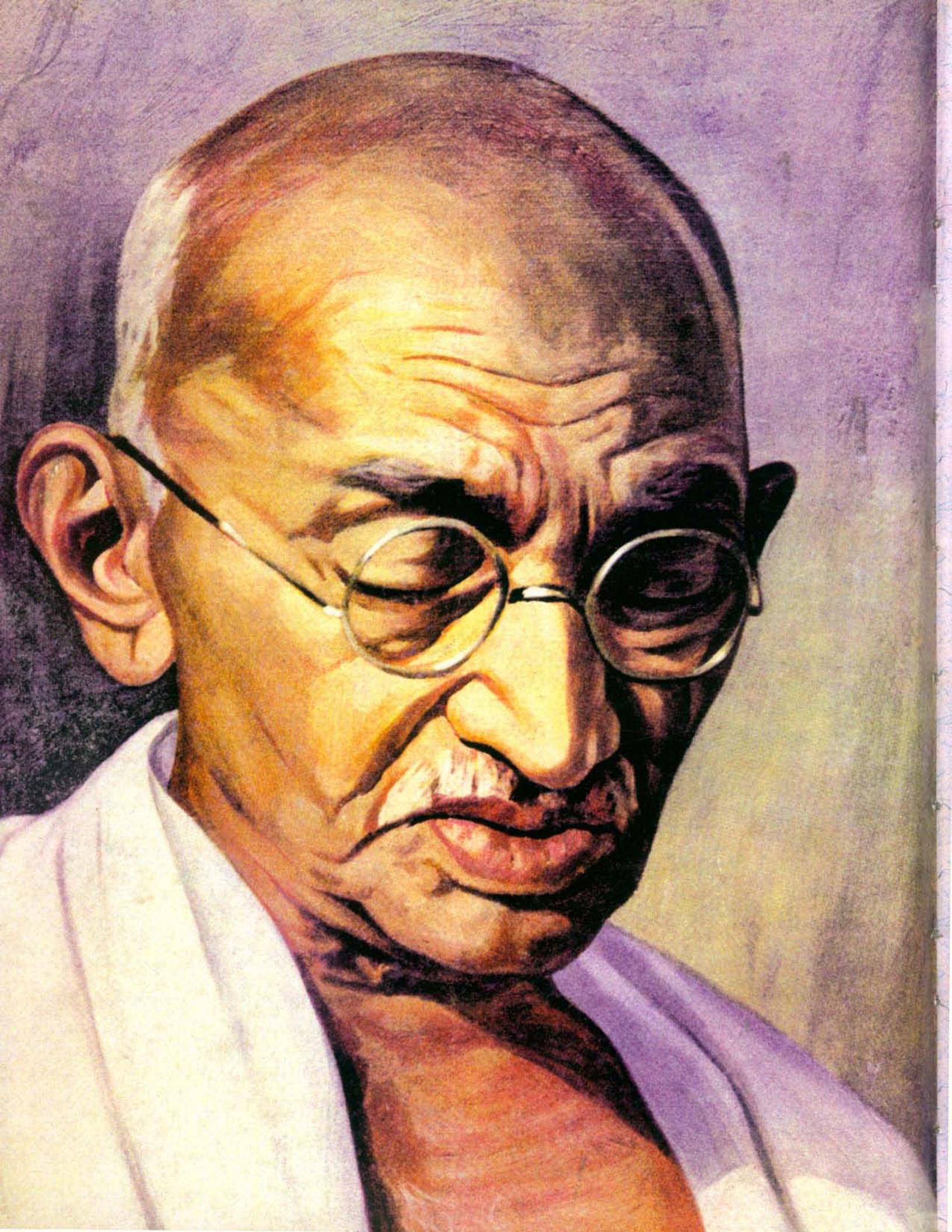
Mahatma Gandhi lit up the world with his message of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and Truth. But who inspired him ? How is it that the barrister Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi became *Mahatma* Gandhi ? How did he become renowned all over the world as a *Mahatma* (Great Soul) ?

It was Shrimad Rajchandra who inspired Gandhi to embrace *Ahimsa* and spirituality. With this inspiration Gandhiji led a political, religious and social revolution in India. Gandhiji said of Shrimad :

“I cannot describe the lasting influence that Shri Rajchandrabhai had on my life. For many years I have been in search of a righteous person in India, but I have not yet met anyone who can be compared to Shri Rajchandrabhai. Amongst European philosophers, I consider Tolstoy to be top class and Ruskin the second order scholar. However, the experience of Rajchandrabhai was superior to both of them.”

Mahatma Gandhi has expressed his deepest respect towards Shrimad Rajchandra in his autobiography “Experiments in Truth” as well as in his various speeches. Expressions of the personal experiences which Mahatma Gandhi had with Shrimad are compiled here :

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“I have learnt much from the lives of many a person, but it is from the life of *Kavishri* (the poet i.e. Shrimad) that I have learnt the most.”

[A lecture delivered by Gandhiji in Ahmedabad in 1921]

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On one occasion, someone suggested to Gandhiji : “to speak a few words in any language before Shrimad and that Shrimad would recite them back in the same sequence”.

This suggestion surprised Gandhiji. Describing himself at that time, he says : “I was young, recently returned from England, and proud of my linguistic abilities. I was also very proud of my English connection, and believed that I was superior to others. With all my knowledge, I first made a list of words in different languages, because I was unlikely to remember them myself ! Then I read out all these words. Raichandbhai recited the words back to me in the same sequence, slowly and one after another. I was amazed and dumbfounded. I formed a very high opinion of the phenomenal memory of Kavishri and envied it. This experience can be considered as an excellent contribution in deflating the pride with which I had come back from England.”

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Of his experience at the first meeting with Shrimad, Gandhiji says :

“The thing that did cast a spell over me was his wide knowledge of the scriptures, his spotless character and his burning passion for self-realisation.”

\*\*\*

“Raichandbhai’s commercial transactions numbered in hundreds and thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds. No business problem was too difficult for him. But all these things were not the centre around which his life revolved. It was the passion to know himself. The man who, immediately on completing his weighty business transactions, began to write about the hidden things of the spirit. He could evidently not be a businessman at all, but a real seeker of Truth. And I saw him thus absorbed in Godly pursuits in the midst of business, not once or twice, but very often.”

[“Satya Na Prayog” or the Story of My Experiments with Truth.]

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“I have since met many a religious leaders or teachers. I have tried to meet the heads of various faiths, and I must say that no one else has ever impressed me as much as Raichandbhai.”

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“His words had a profound impact on me. I had great regard for his intellect and for his moral uprightness. Deep down within me was the conviction that he would never lead me astray and would always guide me with his innermost thoughts. Therefore in my moments of spiritual crisis, he was my refuge.”

[From Gandhiji’s ‘The Story of My Experiments with Truth’]

\*\*\*

“While we are worldly souls, Shrimadji was not like us. While we may have to take many births hereafter, for Raichandbhai his present life may be the last. While we perhaps are running away from liberation, Raichandbhai was heading towards it with a tremendous speed. This speaks volumes of Raichandbhai’s self effort.”

[From Gandhiji’s Pen-Picture of Shrimad Rajchandra]

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(Note: At one stage Gandhiji was considering conversion of religion)

“... I asked a few fundamental questions on Hinduism to Shri Raichandbhai by post and his replies were so logical, so appealing and convincing that I regained my faith in Hinduism and I was saved from conversion of religion. From that moment onwards, my respect and admiration for Raichandbhai increased in leaps and bounds and I considered him to be my religious guide as long as he lived.”

[From Gandhiji's Pen-Picture of Shrimad Rajchandra]

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“He walked with a measured pace and it was clear to anyone watching him that he was deeply engrossed in some thoughts. His eyes sparkled with magic and inner brilliance. There was a constant glow of peace and happiness on his face. They only proved the single-mindedness of his purpose. ... His tone was so sweet that one would not get tired of hearing him. His face was smiling and in full bloom and with joy. It clearly showed the inner joy and peace.

[From Gandhiji's Pen-Picture of Shrimad Rajchandra]

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“He was honest in all his dealings and that was the impression I had of him. Many a time I happened to be present when he was making a deal. His words were consistent and clear. I never saw any ‘smart’ moves on his part. He would always recognise any such moves on the part of his opponent and he could not stand them. He would raise his eyebrows and I could trace the displeasure in his eyes.”

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“There is also a belief that religious people are so innocent that anybody can cheat them; that they have no knowledge of worldly affairs. If this was true, then Lord Krishna and Lord Rama should be considered worldly. Kavishri [Shrimad] used to say that one with pure knowledge would be impossible to cheat.”

\*\*\*

A religious person may be honest but not necessarily knowledgeable. For ones liberation, there is a need for a combination of honesty and self-realisation. Deceit cannot last long in the presence of one who is self-realised. Untruth cannot last long in the presence of truth. Violence is defeated in the presence of non-violence. The darkness of falsehood disappears in the light of honesty. A self-realised person and a religious person immediately recognises a deceitful person and his heart fills with compassion. How can one not recognise others when one has personally experienced the self ?

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The liberator of the soul is the soul itself.

Raichandbhai has expressed this reality in many different ways in his writings. Raichandbhai had studied many religious texts. He had no difficulty in understanding Sanskrit and Magadhi languages. He had studied Vedant, *Bhagavat Gita*. He used to read as many Jain books as he could obtain. His powers of comprehension were immense. It was sufficient for him to read a book only once to grasp its essence.

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In all his discussions with me, he never ever told me that I should practise a particular religion if I wanted to attain liberation. He only told me to be aware of my conduct.

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Raichandbhai used to say many a time that different religious beliefs are like sheep pens, into which humans lock themselves. Those who have made efforts to attain liberation do not need the auspicious mark of any religion on their forehead. Religious differences always bored him and he seldom involved himself in them. He would study the special traits of all religions and would present them to others. I got the same thing from him in my correspondence from South Africa.

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In Raichandbhai's view, there is no need for anyone to relinquish his or her religion or belief. Whilst following ones own religion, one can be liberated. To achieve liberation is to totally shed passions and aversions.

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Such extra ordinary memory, such knowledge and such adoration from all those around him attracted me towards him. You cannot acquire such a memory in school, true knowledge can be acquired from a 'self realise' person if there is a desire and a genuine thirst. To earn respect you do not have to go to England or anywhere else for, if your virtues deserve respect, you will be respected. I learnt this fundamental lesson immediately on my arrival in Mumbai.

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My association with Kavishri lasted for a long time. Some people do have a sharp memory but there is no need to be overwhelmed by it. You see many people with very good academic knowledge but this knowledge is worthless if there is no accompanying culture. Powerful memory together with wide learning are only worthwhile if accompanied by cultural virtues, and they only can bring glory to the world. Kavishri was learned and cultured.

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In my two years of very close association with him, I noted that he never deviated from the detachment which shines through the verses of '*Apurva Avsar*'. The most remarkable feature of all his writing is that he only wrote what he had really experienced – there is no artificiality or falseness. I have never seen him add even one extra line to impress someone. He would always have with him some scriptures and a notebook. He would make a note of all his thoughts. Sometimes he would write prose and at other times it might be a poem. '*Apurva Avsar*' was probably composed in this manner.

Whether eating, sitting or sleeping, in all that he did, there was always a detachment. I have never seen him drawn towards wealth or worldly grandeur.

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I always felt that his writings were a genuine reflection of truth. He never wrote even a single letter merely to display his knowledge. His objective was to share with the reader the joy of the Soul. I am confident that any individual, whether a Hindu or of any other faith, if he genuinely wants to end the Soul's suffering or is keen to know the main purpose of life, would find much in Kavishri's writings.

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During his last days, Shrimad Rajchandra suffered intense physical pain; but this did not bother him, for he was far more concerned with seeing the Divine.

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In his remembrance, we think of the quality of fearlessness with which he brought to attention anything that was of spiritual value. Let us only fear for our conscience; let us beware, all the time, that we do not let this continual source of awareness suffer.

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We should try to study the infinite penance of Shrimad's life, and let us understand how he learned to worship the Soul alone. Thinking ourselves as humble as a little lamb and with our small effort, let us think of the consciousness reigning within us, become as strong as a lion, and make our lives meaningful."

\*\*\*

Two outstanding virtues to be imbibed from Shrimad's life are his love for Truth and *Ahimsa* [Non-violence]. His actions and conduct reflected what he believed to be true. His love for *Ahimsa* was because he was a Jain and also because it was inherent in his nature. Basic *Ahimsa* – which means not to harms even the smallest life-form and so on – (as understood by the Jains) but his *Ahimsa* did not stop there. If any human suffered any pain, Shrimad would also suffer in sympathy and because of this, he would become very detached from the material world.

His detached lifestyle is noticeable from his earliest days. He passed away at the young age of 33 years. His attitude of detachment can be seen in his writings at the age of 17 and 18. From that young age his life's direction was one of detachment and equanimity. Even though he remained a householder and a businessman almost till the end of his life, yet his inner life was one of detachment.

Four lessons for us from his life are : 1) Focus on the eternal; 2) Candour in life and equal treatment to all; 3) Truth, and 4) a life full of *Ahimsa*.

I have read some of the letters he wrote just before his death and I have noticed these virtues in them. Let us remember these virtues and implement them in our lives.

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The relevance of Shrimad's teaching of detachment and the transitory nature of the material world become apparent when incidents like the one below take place.

Today's newspaper carried the news of the disappearance of a P&O steam ship called 'Arabia' at mid-sea. On board that ship were such worthy people as Mr Ratan Tata, a true gem of India, and Mr Jivraj Mehta. There is no trace of either of them. The concern for this loss has created a feeling of despair across the nation. I cannot even imagine how the families of the missing persons muse by feeling.

Shrimad had lived a life full of detachment. After hearing of such accidents one feels that only such a life full of detachment is worthwhile.

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The one in whose remembrance we have gathered was compassion personified, he understood compassion and cultivated compassion in his life.

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He frequently said that he could bear being repeatedly stabbed with spears but he could not bear untruth, fraud and cruelty prevalent in the world. He could not bear the stabbing pain of non-religious practices undertaken in the name of religion. I have seen him many times fuming at cruelty.

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Seek nothing else. Find one who is Truth Personified and surrender, every moment at his feet. After that, if you do not find *Moksha*, come to me for it.

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## KSHAMAPANA

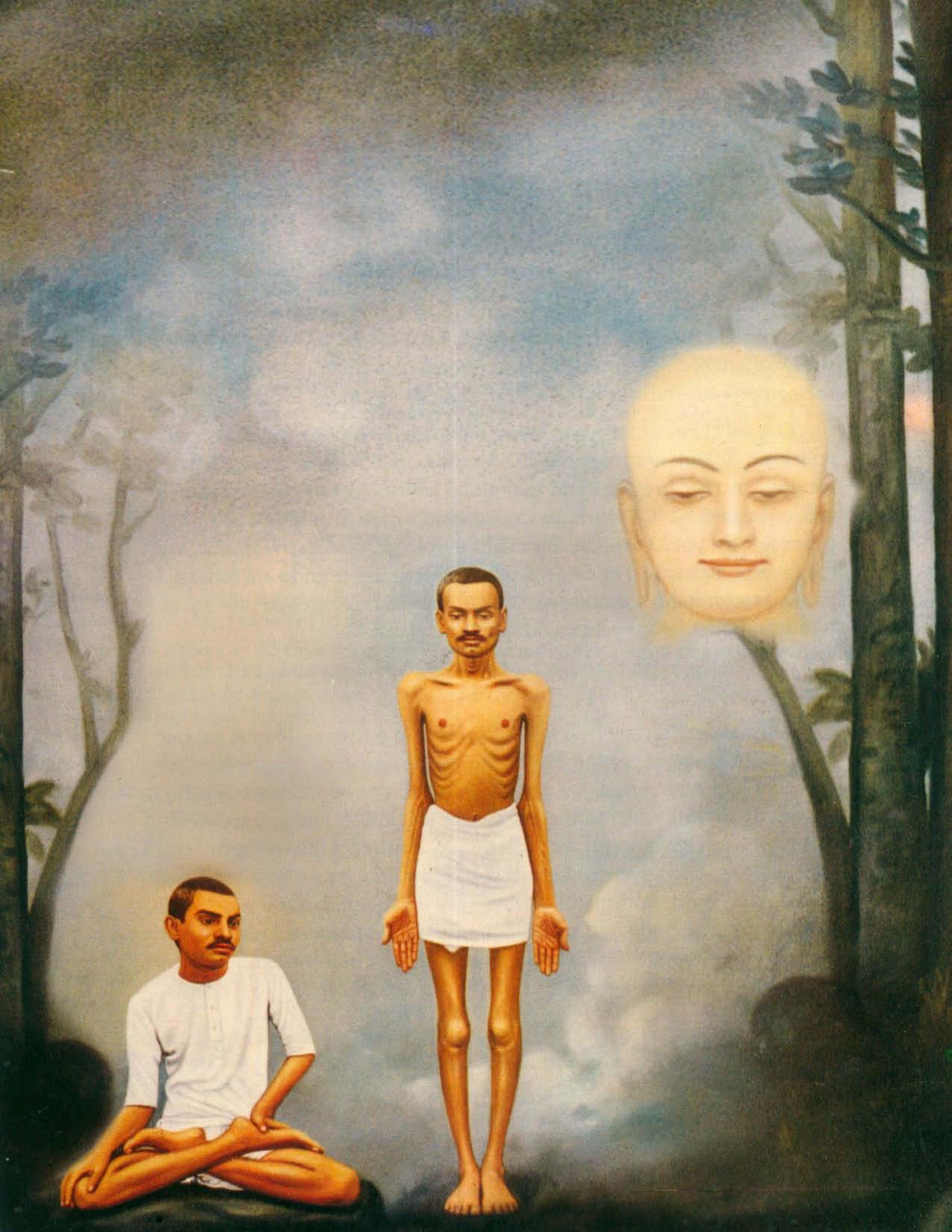
O Lord ! I have forgotten so much. I have not considered the pearls of priceless wisdom you have imparted. I have not contemplated the incomparable fundamental truths you have spoken. I have not observed the excellent code of conduct you have outlined. I have not understood the compassion, bliss, forgiveness and purity you have explained.

O Lord ! I have forgotten, I have wandered, I have drifted aimlessly and I am deeply engrossed in this endless materialistic world. I have sinned, I am full of pride, and tainted by *karmas*. O Enlightened one ! I will not attain *Moksha* without understanding the fundamental truths espoused by you. I am continuously involved in worldly affairs. My folly has blinded me, I have no ability to discriminate and I am foolish, I am without refuge, I have no master. Detached, Enlightened one, I seek refuge in you, in your religion and in your monks.

It is my sole wish that my misdeeds be wiped out and I be freed of all my sins.

I now repent for my past sins. As I descend into ever deeper, subtler thought, the marvel of your Truths illuminates my true nature. You are detached, unblemished, by nature eternal, conscious and blissful, inherently blissful, with infinite knowledge and vision, and you are aware of the past, present and future of all things. Purely for the welfare of my Soul, do I seek forgiveness before you. May I not even for a moment doubt your Truth, and may I always stay on the path shown by you; may that be my hope and my inclination. O Omniscient Lord! What more can I say to you ? There is nothing that you do not know. With remorse, I desire forgiveness for the sins resulting from my past *karmas*.

*Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti*  
Peace, Peace, Peace.



**May the inner strength  
of the saints acquired  
by their Spiritual endeavour  
benefit the world**

