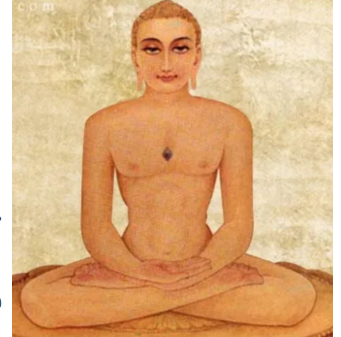


CHANDKAUSHIK

This is a story about Bhagawan Mahavir when he was a monk. He used to fast, meditate, and perform penance. He was traveling barefoot from place to place and village to village. Once Mahavir decided to go to the village of Vachala. On the way, there he would have to go through a forest where there lived a poisonous cobra snake named Chandkaushik. It was said that Chandkaushik could kill a person or animal just by casting its evil, angry glance at them. All the people from the villages near that forest lived in absolute terror.



When the villagers learned about Mahavir's intention to pass through the forest, they begged him to take another route. Mahavir had no fear. He practiced supreme non-violence. He had no hatred towards anyone, and considered fear and hatred as violence to the self. He was at peace with himself and all other living beings. There was a glow of serenity and compassion on the Bhagawan's face. He convinced the people that everything would be all right, and he took the dangerous path. After a while, he noticed the beautiful green land fading out and a deserted, barren land came. Trees and plants were dead, so he thought this must be the land that the villagers were talking about where Chandkaushik lived. So Mahavir stopped there to meditate. Peace, tranquillity, and compassion for the well being of each and every living being flowed from Mahavir's heart.



Chandkaushik sensed that someone had come near his land, so he came out of his abode. To his surprise, he saw a man standing there. He became furious thinking, "How dare he came this close to my land?" Chandkaushik started hissing to threaten Mahavir. He did not understand Mahavir's tranquillity. He became angry and came closer to the Lord and swayed his head, ready to strike. He saw no sign that this man would run away or even felt threatened. This made Chandkaushik angrier and he blew poisonous venom towards Mahavir three times. The venom neither affected Mahavir nor disturbed his meditation. Chandkaushik was not ready for this. Now, he became more irritated and bit Mahavir's toe. When he looked at the man again, he was flabbergasted that not only had nothing happened to him, but instead of blood, milk flowed from his toe.

Mahavir opened his eyes. He was calm and there was no fear or anger on his face. He looked at Chandkaushik in its eyes and told it, "Wake up! wake up Chandkaushik!! Realize what you are doing!" There was love and affection in those words. Chandkaushik calmed down and felt as if he had seen this kind of a person before. He suddenly remembered his two previous lives. Chandakaushik then realized the truth of life, and what the anger and ego of his last two lives had done to him. He bent his head peacefully to the ground. Mahavir left to go on his way.

Chandkaushik peacefully retreated back to its hole with its head inside, while most of his body was outside. After a while when the people came to know that Chandkaushik was not harmful anymore, they came to see it out of curiosity. They saw it lying quietly. Some started worshipping, pouring milk on it, and offered food. While some were still mad because their loved ones had died due to it. They threw stones at it and hit it with wooden sticks. Blood, milk, and food attracted ants. Chandkaushik bared down biting, beating, and stayed calm in peace without any anger. This self-restraint and control on its feelings destroyed many of its bad karmas. Therefore, at the end of its life, it went to heaven.



Describe
Chandkaushik.

Why did the villagers
beg Mahavir to take
another route?

What did
Chandkaushik do on
seeing Mahavir?

What was Mahavir's
reaction when
Chandkaushik bit his toe?
