

BHIMJI SANGHPATI



Sanghpati was a true devotee, a staunch adherent of truth. King Harishchandra, who is known as the truth-loving king in Indian mythology, was one such man who would uphold truth at any cost. Bhimji was a businessman of Cambay and renowned for his business acumen. Bhimji Sanghpati observed scrupulously the vow of refraining from lying. It was the vow of not telling lies about animals and about land. This vow included refraining from misappropriating the deposits, bearing false witness in or out of court, and forging fake documents. The observer of the vow had

specifically to bear in mind that if he practiced treachery and fraud in business and, under temptation, indulged in boasting and spreading rumors, he put his religion to shame and made it an object of ridicule and mockery. He was not to forget that breach of confidence or trust and giving wrong advice were great sins. In short, he was to understand that the secret of earning wealth was through honesty and morality. And in morality lay one's own happiness, peace, mental health and also of others' welfare.

Acharya Devendrasuri arrived in Gujarat from Malwa. Bhimji met him and said, "What vow should I observe so that I receive God's grace?"

The Acharya said, "Decide never to tell a lie. Adhere to the truth at any cost, and you will be happy." Bhimji did as bade by the Acharya and vowed to speak the truth always.

Once a robber, Pallipati Bhil, waylaid him on the bank of the river Mahi and demanded to know how much money he had. Bhimji honestly said, "Four thousand rupees." Pallipati Bhil hides Bhimji in a secret hideout and demanded a ransom of four thousand rupees for his father's release. Bhimji's son sent counterfeit coins to Bhil Pallipati. Pallipati realized a rat on seeing the coins that they were not genuine.

He showed them to Bhimji. Bhimji said that they were not genuine. Pallipati was surprised to hear these words. He thought, “How truthful this man is! he is a captive and will be released only if his son sent genuine coins. But he has the courage to call his son a cheat, and did not lie to secure his release.”

Bhimji’s truthfulness struck him deeply and he thought that any harm caused to such a person would be a grievous sin. He, then, released him.

In A. D. 1271 Acharya Devendrasuriji died in Malwa in Rajasthan. His disciple Vidyanandsuri also died six months thereafter. Bhimji, being a staunch devotee of Devendrasuri, felt sad at the death of his Gurus, and for twelve years he did not eat anything.

Those who observed celibacy, the fifth vrat were given a silk sari and five expensive pieces of clothes by Bhimji. There were four vratas before the birth of Mahavir – non-violence, truth, and non-possession. The religion comprising these four came to be known as the religion of Parshvanath. Mahavir added the fifth vrat i.e. celibacy – brahmacharya – which was given the prime importance. All our woes, he said, could be traced to carnal desires.

Bhimji Sanghapati emphasized the importance of restraint and self-control. It should be self-imposed and Sanghapati Bhimji always loved and respected all those who exercised restraint.

The mantri of Mandavgadh Pethadshah and his wife Padmini were also given these robes. Thirty-two-year-old Pethadshah and his wife decided to’ observe the vow of celibacy and performed pooja wearing the robes given by Bhimji. Bhimji Sanghpati is remembered today for his adherence to truth, supreme devotion to his gurus and unshakable faith in the vows.