

# Bhagwan Mahavir and the Cow Herder



One day as Bhagwan Mahavir was going from one place to another, he stopped near a big tree to meditate. While he was meditating, a cow herder came with his cows. He needed someone to look after his cows so he could go for some errands. He asked Bhagwan Mahavir if he would look after his cows for a few hours. Bhagwan Mahavir was in deep meditation and did not respond to the cow herder. However, the cow herder went away thinking that Bhagwan Mahavir had heard him and would look after his cows.

In the meantime, the cows started wandering away looking for grass. A few hours later, the cow herder returned and found all his cows were missing. He asked Bhagwan Mahavir, "Where are my cows? What did you do with them?" Bhagwan Mahavir was still in meditation and did not reply. The herder started wondering where the cows could have gone. Since Bhagwan Mahavir did not reply, the cow herder searched for them everywhere but could not find them. While he was looking for the cows, the cows returned to the place where Bhagwan Mahavir was meditating.

When the cow herder came back, to his amazement all his cows were standing near Bhagwan Mahavir and He was still meditating. The cow herder became very angry with Bhagwan Mahavir because he thought that Bhagwan Mahavir had been hiding his cows. Therefore, he took out his rope and was about to whip Bhagwan Mahavir with it. Just then, Indra came down from heaven and held the rope. Indra preventing an ignorant cow herder from assaulting Bhagwan Mahavir "Can you not see that Bhagwan Mahavir is in deep meditation?" Indra asked.

"But he tricked me!" said the cow herder. The angel replied, "He is in meditation and did not hear you. He was prince Vardhamān before becoming a monk. He did not do anything to your cows. You would have acquired bad Karmas for hurting him." The cow herder realized that he had made a mistake. He apologized to Bhagwan Mahavir and went away silently.

Then, Indra bowed down to Bhagwan Mahavir and requested, "Oh Lord, I would like to be at your service as you will have to undergo many hardships during your spiritual journey."

Bhagawān Mahāvīr denying Indra's protection Bhagwan Mahavir answered, "One cannot progress spiritually and attain Keval-jñān using others help and support. To attain Keval-jñān and become an Arihanta one has to undertake all the efforts personally on the journey towards omniscience and liberation."

Indra went back to heaven feeling happy that he could stop Bhagwan Mahavir's suffering. Mahavir did not have any bad feelings towards the cow herder because he held no anger towards anyone.

